

BCSFAzine #336

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BCSFazine

is the
monthly newsletter of the
British Columbia Science Fiction Association

Contributor's Deadlines - May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, Sept. 21, Oct. 19. Send, your submissions, comments, locs to **Garth Spencer at P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O., Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1, or e-mail me at hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca.**

Saturday May 12th: Next Feeding Frenzie is at 7:00 pm. The place being "Nakorn Thai Restaurant" at 401 West Broadway, Vancouver. Scheduled the Saturday after VCON 26, this is the perfect place for friends to discuss the convention after the convention.

SATURDAY MAY 19TH: - 2:00 p.m., Video lecture on 'The Way the Future Should Have Been' (sort of 2001 disappointment theme), followed at 3:00 p.m. by BCSFA (or other) club meeting/event?

SATURDAY JUNE 16TH: - 2:00 p.m., Video lecture on 'Teenagers From Outer Space (and other SF films aimed at teenagers).' Followed at 3:00 p.m. by BCSFA (or other) club meeting/event?

F.R.E.D. - Every Friday: The weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in joining us for an evening of conversation and relaxation, with pool table option, at the Burrard Motor Inn opposite St. Paul's Hospital (Downtown Vancouver). When Vancouver's buses are running again, you might note that this is six (6) blocks south of Burrard Skytrain Station. 3 blocks west of Granville (where many buses run). #22 Knight/McDonald bus along Burrard. Begins 8:00pm. **On the Friday before long weekends**, FRED will be at the lounge of Bosman's Hotel. Bosman's is two blocks east and a part of a block north of the Burrard Motor Inn (actual address is 1060 Howe St.).

BCSFA Membership Rates:

New	\$26.00
New Family	\$32.00
Renewal	\$25.00
Family (2 Votes)	\$31.00

Above prices includes subscription to *BCSFazine*. Make cheques payable to BCSFA (West Coast Science Fiction Association) c/o 86 Warrick Street, Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 5L4. *BCSFazine* is also available by e-mail as an Adobe Acrobat .PDF file.(Please e-mail hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca if you wish to receive the magazine by e-mail.)

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This month's cover artist: Cora Lee Healy
Pages 6, 8 Key ClipArt

Hint: I'm running out of *fabulous* topical illustrations from our talented members to scan and publish here.

BCSFazine (c) May 2001 Volume #29, #5, Issue #336 is the club newsletter published by the B.C. Science Fiction Association, a social organization. For comments, subscriptions suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *BCSFazine* c/o Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1.

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OUR TOWN

Welcome to Vancouver, to VCon 26, and to Convention 21!

This special edition of *BCSFazine* is being distributed to all attending members of VCon 26/ Convention 21, as well as to our regular members. On behalf of the B.C. SF Association and the VCon 26 committee, I would like to convey our greetings to you all.

VCon is possibly the longest-running SF convention in the Pacific Northwest, and BCSFA may be one of the oldest existing SF clubs in Canada. We've gone through a lot of changes since our first convention in 1971, with Guest of Honour Ursula K. LeGuin. Our convention committees now include members from the Camarilla, an anime club and a former Star Trek club. Vancouver convention fandom has also changed; an anime con, a Stargate con and a gaming con have recently been established in the Lower Mainland.

BCSFA is a general interest science fiction fan organization. Club interests include: writing, art, movies and television, models and collectibles, personalities and celebrities, comics, music, trivia, writing (a number of our members are published authors), the history of SF, astronomy, space programs past and present, unusual science – in fact, anything at all to do with SF that you can think of – and finally, the phenomenon of SF fandom, in and of itself. At least three of our members are now published science fiction and fantasy writers (Don DeBrandt, Donna McMahon, and Lisa Smedman). Some of our writer members, professional and amateur, occasionally produce a collection together, called *Fictons*. Other members produce self-published fanzines; participate in role-playing games; and many take part in Internet discussion groups and listservs.

Other Vancouver-area clubs to know about include the following:

The Northern Society for Creative Anachronism is our branch of the Society for Creative Anachronism. The Barony of Lionsgate (and the Shire of Seagirt, the Shire of Eisenmarche, and their friends) pursue a number of medieval-recreation activities: period costume construction, medieval dancing, calligraphy, medieval fighting practice, banquets, archery, arts and

crafts. The Lionsgate Web page is www.lionsgate.antir.sca.org.

To find out about their regular annual events, write for a copy of *The North Wind*. The current Chronicler is Heather Bastien at 11146 Kendale Way, Delta, B.C. V4C 3P5, tel. 582-5775, or email lionsgate-chronicler@antir.com or heather@lightspeed.ca.

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

The club has an e-newsline, simply called *The Monster Attack Team - Canada Newsletter*, which reviews news about Vancouver Science fiction and Monster events, toy and model news, new film and TV news, DVD and home video news, somewhere between once and twice a month. The newsline is free and anyone who is interested in joining the list, or who just wants more info in general, should simply email shyde@axionet.com.

Meetings are held on the last Sunday of the month
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LETTERS OF COMMENT

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, 1706 - 24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2 <penneys@attcanada.ca>, April 15, 2001

Another *BCSFAzine* has arrived, and many thanks. Congratulations on your Aurora nomination! I'll have a look at issue 335, and see what's inside.

Hrothgar Weems seems to know who he's talking about. I love the reported fact that Creation Entertainment had to leave Canada when Revenue Canada (now Canada Customs) discovered they hadn't been paying taxes of any kind on revenues and salaries to their actor guests. I know who told Revenue Canada this, too ... lovely revenge.

((Different people sure have different senses of humour. Yours may be the only comment on my April Fool's Day joke that I have received. Don't any other fans remember fannish hoaxes anymore??))

My latest convention list...yes, Vcon 26 is listed. I wish I could be there. I hope all will make CUFF winner Murray Moore welcome out there. I should get another convention list ready for Don Bassie's website, but time has been short.

((Feel free to steal from my list here.))

Bruce Farr did produce a conrunning zine some years ago, name escapes me ... Bruce still has some family in the Montreal area. He was born in Montreal, but his family moved away when he was young. He now lives in Phoenix, Arizona.

Toronto Trek now has four guests announced ... Andreas Katsulas, Robert Trebor, Armin Shimerman and Tim Choate. Yvonne and I will be there doing panels and generally enjoying a convention we're not running. We'll see what's happening once we're there, but we will be

helping with a room party Saturday evening.

Once again, another excellent column from Ted White. I've been a long time subscriber to *File 770*, and it's been one of the ways I've been finding out about world-wide fandom for years. It is one of the few zines I actually pay money to subscribe to, but it is well worth it. ...

I think what fandom could use is a list of fannish listservs. I'm on the BCSFA and Melbourne SF Club listservs, as well as SMOFS, TimeBinders and Memory Hole. But, there seem to be so many of them. We need to be able to pick and choose. If there is already a list, please let me know. It's not that I need more, but that there might be some out there I might like to take part in.

((Now, that would be a very Good Thing. Any takers??))

Continued from page 1

at 7:30 at a co-op near SFU. Our meeting contact is Dennis Kristos (#8 8700 Forest Grove Drive - home: 436 - 4099 internet: speak1@vcn.bc.ca) The meeting is held in the Common Room - #40 - 8700 Forest Grove Drive (Off Underhill if you're coming by the Lougheed Highway).

The club will be doing a day-long **SF and Fantasy Model Contest, and show, on Sunday May 27th, from 10:00 until 4:00**. This will feature a history of fantasy models, a contest, how-to demos, and panel presentations on "monster history." There will be a "small" entrance fee - yet to be determined. The venue is the Kitsilano Neighbourhood House.

Stan Hyde <shyde@axionet.com>, Feb. 2001

The S'harien is a social club whose past events have included video projects, movie nights, mini-golf, bowling, picnics, and more. For further information write c/o Tamara Glazer-Midttun at #74 - 12551 Cambie Road, Richmond, BC V6V 2A4, email tmidttun1901@home.com, or phone 273-1901. Alternatively, see their graphics-rich Web page at <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Corridor/7214/>.

Continued on page 5

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CONVENTIONS IN CANADA AND THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

MAY 2001

May 18 - 20: Anglicon 14 at the Radisson Hotel SeaTac Airport in SeaTac, Washington. GoH: Robert Trebor. Memberships U.S. \$45 to May 8, \$55 at the door. Write to Anglicon 14, P.O. Box 75536, Seattle, WA 98125, or phone (206) 789-BRIT, email anglicon@rocketmail.com, or see www.webwitch.com/anglicon.

May 18 - 20: CONduit 11 / 2001: A Space Oddity, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Author GoH: Alan Dean Foster. Special GoHs: Three Weird Sisters. Media Guest: James Rogers. Art GoH, Scientist GoH and Fan GoHs: TBA. Memberships: \$36 from April 19th to the door. See URL <http://conduit.sfcon.org/CONduit/> or Write to P.O. Box 11745, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0745, U.S.A.

May 18-20: Keycon in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Author Guests of Honour: Spider & Jeanne Robinson. Artist Guests of Honour: Phil & Kaja Foglio. Fan Guests of Honour: The Wild & Hairy Guys. Adult Memberships May 1, 2001 - at the door: \$50.00; Children's Memberships anytime: \$25.00; LARP Pass (Includes Friday and Saturday Nights) \$30.00. c/o Pendragon Games & Hobbies, 516 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg MB R3C 0G2; tel 204-772-5415; email pgh@pangea.ca.

May 25-28: World Horror Convention 2001 at the Seattle Marriott Sea-Tac in Seattle, Washington. GoHs: Richard Laymon (U.S.), Simon Clark (U.K.). Editor GoH: Jessica Amanda Salmonson. Publisher GoHs: Barbara & Christopher Roden. Artist GoH: Charles Vess. TM: Jack Ketchum. Attending memberships U.S. \$75 for a limited time, to World Horror Convention. For more information see <http://www.whc2001.org> or write WHC 2001, P.O. Box 5171, Bellingham, WA 98227, email whc2001@uswest.net.

MAY 25-28: Costume Con 19 at the Westin Hotel in Calgary, AB. Memb: \$85 till May 31, Supporting Memb: \$35 (Publications only). Full Memberships \$100 Cdn, \$70 US, \$100 Aus; supporting memberships (publications only), \$35 Cdn, \$25 US, \$35 Aus. Cheques payable to Costume Con 19 at Box 20001, Bow Valley Postal Outlet, 205-5th Ave SW, Calgary, AB T2P 4H3, phone

(403) 242-1807, or email capsam@nucleus.com. Web page URL: <http://www.msight.com/cc19>.

JUNE 2001

June 1-3: Enfilade! at the Best Western Executive Inn, Fife, WA. Enfilade! is the largest historical miniature gaming event west of the Mississippi drawing nearly 300 attendees who participate in almost 200 events and connect with historical miniature gamers from throughout the region and beyond. See URL: <http://nhmgs.simplenet.com/conventions.html>

June 1-3: CONCOMCON 8 (the Northwest conrunners' con). ConComCon will be held at the Ferrymans Inn in Centralia, Washington this year: Exit 82 off I-5. Phone: 360-330-2094. Room rates are: 1 person, 1 bed, \$39.00 + tax = \$42.78 per night; 2 people, 1 bed, \$42.00 + tax = \$46.07 per night; 2 people, 2 beds, \$44.00 + tax = \$48.27 per night. Each additional person, \$3.00 per night. Pets and rollaway beds \$5.00 per night. Price includes a free continental breakfast served from 6 to 10 a.m. When people call to reserve a room they should tell the hotel they are with ConComCon and should be in the main building. Convention memberships U.S. \$25 through May 31, 2001, \$30 at the door. 2001 Chair: Bobbie Dufault. Cheques payable to: ConComCon 8, 14616 Ley Rd., Goldbar, WA 98251.

JUN 22-29: SEATREK 2001 from Vancouver, B.C.; an Alaska Media Cruise. Info: 13931 SW 108th St, Miami, FL, 33186 800/326-8735.

JULY 2001

Saturday, July 15, 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM and Sunday, July 16, 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM at Grant MacEwan Community College, 10700 - 104 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta. ANIMETHON is an annual festival of Japanese Animation, or anime. There are ten viewing rooms showing the best of the newest Japanese movies and television series as well as some of the classics that made anime so popular to begin with. As well, we have a dealers room where anime-related goods are sold by vendors from across



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Canada! We also have contests, events such as cosplay or costume play, game shows, improvisational games, lessons on drawing and the Japanese language, and the ever-popular anime rant! On top of this, Animethon is completely free with a donation to the Food Bank! So come on down and join us at Animethon 7 this July! Don't miss it! *(Now where did I put their Web page URL ... GS)*

July 20-22: Toronto Trek 2001 at the Regal Constellation Hotel, 900 Dixon Road (at Carlingview). Guests so far: Andreas Katsulas ('G'Kar' - Babylon 5, 'Tomalak' - Star Trek: TNG); more guests to come. Note: All guest appearances subject to professional commitments. Toronto Trek, Suite 0116, Box 187, 65 Front Street West, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5J 1E6.

July 5 - 8: Westercon 54 in Portland, Oregon. A Portland Westercon. Theme - It's in the other Hotel. Author GoH: Tim Powers. Fan GoH: Mike Glycer. Artist GoH: Frank Lurz. Editor GoH: Terri Windling. At the Doubletree Hotels Jantzen Beach and Columbia River. Write to: Westercon 54, P.O. Box 5901, Portland, OR 97228-5901. URL: <http://www.osfci.org/w2001/>. Phone: (360) 993-2001 email deaner@pacifier.com

AUGUST 2001

AUG 4-6 COMIC BOOK, SCI-FI AND FANTASY CONVENTION in VICTORIA, BC at the Victoria Conference Centre, Science Fiction, TV/Media Convention, \$35 till 4 Jul, \$40 at door. Anime \$2.00 show, Movies \$5.00/show. Actors pass \$30.00 Full Pass \$150.00 till 4 JUL. Media Guests: Pat Tallman (B5) and Marc Alaimo (DS9). Info: www.victoriacomicon.com

August 10-12: Con-Version 18 at the Metropolitan Centre and International Hotel in Calgary, AB. GoH: David Drake; ArtGoH: Jean Pierre Normand; Scientist GoH: Dr. Bill Brooks. Membership rates (for those 17 and up) are now \$55 from May 1 - July 31, and \$60 at the door. All pre-reg memberships prior to July 31, will receive a free t-shirt at the con! Family memberships: \$130 (inc. 2 adults and up to 3 children) (available at con, shirts not included) The website address is <http://www.con-version.org>. The new

mail address for Con-Version is P.O. Box 20098, Calgary Place RPO, Calgary, AB T2P 4J2. Fax (403)277-4251.

August 17-19: VikingCon 18 at the Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. Guests of Honor: Writer GoH: James P. Hogan (<http://www.jamesphogan.com>); Special GoH: JD Frazer aka 'Illiad' (<http://www.userfriendly.org>); Fan GoH: Jon Singer (<http://www.bazilians.org>); Science GoH: To Be Announced; Art GoH: To Be Announced. Memberships (150 to date): \$32 through July 8, 2001; \$36 at the door. Mailing Address: VikingCon, Viking union box V1, Bellingham, WA 98225-9106. For more information: <http://www.vikingcon.org>. To post a message: VikingCon@yahoogroups.com; to subscribe: VikingCon-subscribe@yahoogroups.com; to unsubscribe: VikingCon-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com.

August 24-26: MosCon XXIII at the University Inn Best Western in Moscow, ID. Author GoH: Jack Chalker. ArtGoH: TBA. Fan Guests of Honour: Tam & Shelly Gordy. Scientist GoH: TBA. Memberships: \$25 to Aug. 21, 2001; \$30 up to the door. See www.geocities.com/moscow_scifi_con, phone Jon Gustafson at (208) 882-3672 (9 a.m. to 9 p.m.), or write Miscon XXIII, Box 9622, Moscow, ID 83843

SEPTEMBER 2001

September 20 - 23: GateCon 2001, "A Gatecon Odyssey"; venue TBA. A benefit convention for Make a Wish Foundation. NOTE: The international group holding Gatecon talks about "tickets" rather than memberships. See <http://www.gatecon.com/home.asp>

September 28 - 30: Foolscap III (a Flat Stuff con) at the Southcenter Best Western in Tukwila, WA. ArtGoHs: Phil and Kaja Foglio. Author GoHs TBA. Banquet \$20 now, \$23 at the door. Memberships \$41 to Sept. 21, 2001; \$45 at the door. Cheques to Little Cat Z in U.S. funds only. Write foolscap III, c/o Little Cat Z, P.O. Box 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461.

<http://www.alexicom.net/foolscap/index.htm>

CLASSY ADS

The BCSFA Members' Handbook (v. 02-01) is now available FREE to BCSFA members! This pinnacle of fannish wit and wisdom is designed *solely* to give each and every one of you the same background information on current BCSFA activities, the news on the next VCon, and the current status of our convention oversight committee. In fact, the *Handbook* is chock-full of clubs and cons and zines all around you in the Northwest and Canada, what I bet you didn't realize was even there! The *Handbook* is FREE to BCSFA members on request, and available for a nominal charge of Cdn. \$5.00 (US \$4.00) to non-members, from Ye Ed, Garth Spencer, at Box 15335, V.M.P.O., Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1. And that's not all! A new and improved expanded version is planned for September 2001! Everyone's suggestions and amendments are welcome!

NEWS

THE BLACK CHALICE, a historical fantasy novel by Canadian author Marie Jakober (Edge SF and Fantasy Publishing, Calgary), has been selected by *Locus* magazine for its annual Recommended Reading List, despite stiff competition from *Harry Potter*, an onslaught of over 250 new fantasy novels, and the publishing clout of SF&F publishing giants such as TOR, Bantam and Del Rey.

Carolyn Cushman, *Locus* reviewer, said "The Black Chalice is an unusually complex historical fantasy, set in the war-torn Germanys just after the end of the First Crusade, with an unwilling narrator, a monk who was involved in magic in his youth, now forced to write the truth in more painful detail than he can stand."

The Black Chalice is Marie Jakober's fifth novel and her first to be selected for the *Locus* Recommended Reading List.

From: *EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing*, April 11, 2001

Deadline for submitting fiction to *FICTONS EIGHT* is still July 1, 2001. Send your works and/or request for guidelines (guidelines are also in *BCSFAzine* #334) to:

FICTONS EIGHT
c/o Doug Finnerty
113 Ovens Ave
New Westminster, B.C., Canada
V3L 1Z1

Continued from page 2

The *Telefantasy Appreciation Society of Canada* (TASC) holds meetings and publishes *Jigsaw* magazine approximately monthly; email Bob Furnell at bob_furnell@telus.net or write to #1408 - 1005 Jervis Street, Vancouver, BC V6E 3T1. Web page: <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Realm/2972/jigsaw.html>.

The Trumpeter Tabletop Gaming Society is a gaming club in operation since 1964. Their flyer says that game nights are held 6:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., one Friday every month, at the Bonsor Community Centre in Burnaby at Metrotown. Upcoming games will be April 20, May 11, June 15, July 20, Aug. 17, Sept. 21, Oct. 26, and Nov. 23rd, 2001. A gaming convention will be held March 16-18 this year at the Bonsor Centre. Contacts include their president (Steve Allen, 899-4970, big_dog@telus.net), their treasurer (Kelly Jones, 988-9884, VaubanEnt@aol.com), their editor-in-chief (Eric Hotz, 619-6925, erichotz@direct.ca), and their Games Master (Terry Sawchenko, 942-6166, gamesmaster@home.com).

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

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OF FANZINES RECEIVED

by Garth Spencer

Last issue I foolishly printed *two* instalments at once of Ted White's fanzine reviews, with which we see profiles of fanzine fandom. This issue I shall have to fill in by profiling some of the trades *BCSFazine* has received:

Australian SF Bullsheets #164-167, 2001, an e-mail newszine produced for the Australian National Science Fiction Association by Marc Ortlieb, P.O. Box 215, Forest Hill, Vict, 3131, AUSTRALIA (e-mail: mortlieb@vicnet.net.au).

I have trouble sometimes deciding whether ASFB is more of a fan newszine or a pro newsletter - Marc Ortlieb seems to cover *everything*, from Australian awards and new book publications through upcoming conventions, con reports and fanzines. The details about Australian fans and their lives reminds me both of club newsletters and church circulars - it really seems like a window into a small community.

Con-TRACT Vol. 13, no. 2, March-April 2001 (John Mansfield ed., 516 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3C 0G2, pgh@pangea.ca); a bimonthly e-mailed newsletter aimed primarily at concoms, dealers and artists. *Con-TRACT* is a bimonthly calendar of upcoming Canadian conventions, prefaced with some opinion/editorial pieces and con-related news. This issue features Sherry Neufeld's thoughts on the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, Dale Arnold's inflation calculator formula, Elspeth Kovar on a plan to encourage congoers to commit early, news about more Con-Adian grants (to encourage congoers as far away as Vancouver to go to the next Toronto Worldcon), and con reports.

DASFAX (Vol. 33, no. 4, April 2001) has finally arrived!! The Denver Area SF Association newsletter (c/o Rick Halmich, 16245 E. Purdue Plc., Aurora, CO 80013, U.S.A.) One of the distinctions of this newsletter from others is a list of local fannish websites, ranging from the local club and local bookstores to the Mars Society and the World Horror Con (in 2000).

Ethel the Aardvark #95, March 2001, P.O. Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Vic. 3005, Australia; MSFC@eGroups.com. This issue: There are a *lot* of book reviews, coexisting uncomfortably with mediacon ads and reports. Apart from the regular clubzine features, and some of the late Ian Gunn's cartoons, Karl Roemer slags Star Trek on the criteria of commercial television.

Opuntia 47.1B (March 2001), Dale Speirs, Box 6830,

Calgary, AB T2P 2E7; available for \$3 cash each, or trade for your zine, or letter of comment. Dale alternates between historical articles, in whole-numbered issues, and other themes in fraction-numbered issues. This issue: a short editorial and letters, and a wide range of trade fanzine reviews. Dale has not only built up a worldwide selection of trades, his correspondents range from other fanpublishers to mail artists. This issue features book reviews on *Old Typewriters*, a book profiling the history of technologies that didn't survive, and *A Geoscience Guide to the Burgess Shale*, a profile on the famous British Columbia fossils that I always considered proof that God plays practical jokes.

The Ottawa SF Statement #281, March 2001, c/o A.G. Wagner, 456 Gladstone Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1R 5N8 (or c/o Sharon Fall, ed.,); monthly newsletter of the Ottawa Science Fiction Society. This issue features upcoming club events, news from president Joel Polowin, a retrospective reprint article from Hildegard Henderson, and assorted articles from out-of-town contributors, including Ted White's fanzine reviews and some entertaining delusions from the Royal Swiss Navy.

Pulsar #269, March 2001, P.O. Box 4602, Portland, OR 97208, U.S.A.; the newsletter of the Portland Science Fiction Society. This issue: lots of internal club news; a notice of the Robert A. Heinlein Endowed Chair in Aerospace Engineering, at the United States Naval Academy; letters, reviews, media news, and a new anime column.

Westwind #256, February 2001, NWSFS, P.O. Box 24207, Seattle, WA 98124, U.S.A. *Westwind* is a very professionally produced monthly newsletter, with a *lot* of social events in the Pacific Northwest, in Seattle and in the Northwest SF Society to report. This issue also continues a series by Burt Webb on the search for extraterrestrial life.



BOOK REVIEWS

by Donna McMahon

THE FOX WOMAN, Kij Johnson (Tor, Jan/00)
THE SNOW QUEEN, Eileen Kernaghan (Thistle-down, 2000)
ENDER'S SHADOW, Orson Scott Card (Tor, Sept/99)

“Evocative” is the word Charles de Lint used to describe *The Fox Woman*, and I certainly can't improve on it. Expect to see Kij Johnson win many awards for this historical fable, set in medieval Japan, about a fox who falls in love with a nobleman and is transformed into a woman.

The story follows three characters: Kitsune, a young fox who is fascinated by humans; Yoshifuji, a pensive nobleman who is fascinated by foxes; and Yoshifuji's wife, Shikujo, a woman who is isolated from her husband by barriers of custom and personality, and yet is terrified of losing him to the foxes.

Johnson's depiction of the lives of the medieval Japanese nobility is simply fascinating. Yoshifuji is expected to attend court, currying favour until he gets a posting to some government sinecure. Shikujo lives with a retinue of women servants in a world shielded by screens and fans – completely isolated and yet never private since the houses have paper walls. Every aspect of their lives is dictated by custom, fashion, and propriety. Shikujo hides her thoughts and feelings behind those customs, but Yoshifuji, unhappy and restless, longs to break out.

All the characters in this book are vividly depicted and fully human. Even the foxes hiding in the crawlspace under the house are wonderful, their brief violent mating contrasting delightfully with the solemn exchanges of poetry going on above. And Johnson's writing is superb.

However, some readers may find the thoughtful pace of this book very slow after a while. *The Fox Woman* was originally written as a short story and then expanded, and it simply doesn't have much plot for a full length novel. I'm an impatient reader with a limited sympathy for characters' internal angst, and I confess that around halfway through I started skimming.

Still this is a book worth buying and re-reading, and a special bonus is the gorgeous jacket art by Susan Seddon Boulet.

* * * * *

Readers who like *The Fox Woman* may also enjoy Eileen Kernaghan's lovely retelling of Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tale, *The Snow Queen*.

This is a very hard book to peg. It's not exactly a novel – it truly IS a fairy tale. It could be read and enjoyed by children, but much of its depth will only be appreciated

by adults. Consequently, I suspect that some bookstores and reviewers will not be quite sure what to do with it.

Gerda leads a comfortable, sheltered life in Victorian Denmark, but her world is turned upside-down when her boyfriend, Kai, is ensnared by a powerful sorceress. None of the adults seem to understand the danger or be willing to pursue the Snow Queen and rescue Kai, so she sets out by herself – naive and utterly unprepared for the rugged trip ahead.

After being robbed and captured by Saami bandits in northern Sweden, Gerda finds an unlikely ally in Ritva, an angry young Saami tribeswoman, rebelling against the expectation that she must become the local shaman, like her mother before her. Despite their differences, Ritva and Gerda embark on a quest to defeat the Snow Queen in her icy northern lair.

I only vaguely remembered the original Anderson story from childhood, so I decided to reread it for this book review, and let me tell you, it's AWFUL. Anderson was stickily sentimental, sexist, racist, trite, and overbrimming with priggish Christian morality.

In contrast, Kernaghan takes the bones of the original fantasy and adds real period detail and strong characterization to create a vividly textured story. (My favourite character was Ba – Ritva's gaunt, elderly reindeer, who plods along with morose loyalty under the burden of their gear.) Kernaghan's prose sounds deceptively simple, but she has chosen each word with great care.

I liked this book and I loved the ending. I won't spoil it for you, but TAKE THAT, Hans Christian!

* * * * *

I've never read *Ender's Game*, the Orson Scott Card novel that made such a hit back in 1985, so I figured I'd make a pretty good test subject to see if Card's new novel, *Ender's Shadow*, stands on its own. Neither a sequel nor a prequel, *Ender's Shadow* is what Card calls a “parallax” book, in which he revisits the same story and themes, but through the eyes of another character. It's a wildly ambitious undertaking, but for the most part I would have to say that he succeeds.

The street kids in Rotterdam named him Bean because the starving four-year-old was so tiny. But Bean was smart – in fact, so phenomenally intelligent that he changed the whole social structure of the street and drew himself to the attention of Sister Carlotta, a nun who also happened to be a recruiter for Earth's International Fleet.

At five, Bean became the youngest recruit ever sent into orbit to Battle School to join an elite team of children being trained to fight the Buggers – aliens who threatened to destroy the whole human race. There he met his own nemesis – “Ender” Wiggin – a kid who was not only as

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smart as Bean, but had natural leadership skills that Bean couldn't begin to compete with. Half-admiring, half-jealous, Bean set out to compete in a contest where cleverness was not all that counted, and the stakes were higher than any of the children were being told.

Orson Scott Card can certainly write a riveting book and this one had me glued to the pages right from the start. Bean is an interesting character, with the strangely skewed viewpoint of a child who is as intelligent as an adult, but lacks experience, perspective and empathy. He is very much the focus of the book, but Card also makes effective use of other viewpoints (most frequently Sister Carlotta) to broaden the reader's view of the action, and often to show just how wrong Bean can be.

I had a few problems with this book. While I admired Card's depiction of Bean, it never entirely worked for me, and in particular I found some of the details of Bean's background were not credible. Not all the minor characters in the book stood out. In particular, the military instructors at Battle School blurred together in my mind – something Card may have deliberately exacerbated by presenting most of their scenes as transcripts.

Finally, I didn't like the sentimental tone of the very last chapter of the book. The way in which Card wrapped up the final details was so much at odds with the flavour of the rest of the book that if this had been a Hollywood movie, I would have suspected the studio of doing a last-minute rewrite.

However, these are minor issues. *Ender's Shadow* is a strong book, with good characters, a compelling plot, well-considered ideas, and lots of thorny ethical issues. It definitely stands on its own as a novel. And most of all, it's a good read.

Comments? Questions? Rebuttals?

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OUR TOWN

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

VSWAT – The Vancouver Sleep is for wimps Anime Team (<http://users.uniserve.com/~ryanm6/vswat/>) is run out of Port Coquitlam by Ryan Matheuszik (ryanm6@uniserve.com).

Alternate Realities Club – The anime club run out of SFU by Jen Wong, who put on a yearly “Showcase” in the summer, a weekend of anime at SFU Harbour Centre. Note: “Showcase” features no dealers, or guests. See <http://www.sfu.ca/ar-club/>

