

BCSFazine #354

Vol. 30 No. 11

November, 2002



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SHIGATA GA NAI *

Colophon

BCSFAzine -- *Something to ~~offend~~ interest everyone!*

BCSFAzine © November 2002, Volume 30, #11, Issue #354 is the club newsletter published by the B.C. Science Fiction Association, a social organization. Single copies \$3.00 each. For comments, subscriptions, suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *BCSFAzine*, c/o Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1, or email hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca.

BCSFAzine is distributed monthly at WHITE DWARF BOOKS, 4368 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 2H7, tel. 604-228-8223; email whitedwarf@deadwrite.com

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F.R.E.D., the weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in coming, now happens every Friday at 8:00 p.m. at the Jolly Alderman Pub, 500 West 12th Avenue (entrance on Cambie Street, just south of 12th Avenue), in the ground floor of the Plaza 500 Hotel (diagonally across from Vancouver City Hall).

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Vcon 27's Web page may be viewed at <http://www.v-con.ca>

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

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Plain Speaking

Acestilor sînt els mocts secrêts qê el Iésu supâir parleva és Didymus Iudas Tomás scriveva. O qi ziscovrarha el înterpretaziun da acestilor zirînds, o non tastevarha la moart.

Laßetz o qi quaira non terminar sieu quairînd avînt qê o ziscovrarha. Quand o ziscovrarha, o sera turvulentat. Quând o isch turvulentat, o underarha és rôinarha över toct.

Schi os qi voi dîrcia zirent, "Eiceâ, el regipâts isch în çéu." aghôrc las fuglâs del çéu ischent avînt voi. Schi os zirent, "Ça isch în la mar," aghôrc els pêschti ischent avînt voi. Propi qê acest, el regipâts isch în voi és àl exteriör da voi. Quând voi voi conheçarhetz, voi serent conheçats, és voi conheçarhetz qê voi estetz els fieux del patreu vivînd. Más schi voi non voi conheçaretz, voi vivarhetz în cumixhançâ és voi estetz la cumixhançâ.

#

And so on and so forth. The above is the sort of thing I enjoy doing in my spare time (e.g., translating apocryphal scriptures into a language nobody speaks).

What do *you* all do? That's what Doug Finnerty meant to ask everybody, with a survey last issue. Only I didn't understand the survey was supposed to be a part of last issue. What diversity of interests and curious skills have we got here?

Or is it all gamers and mediafans out here?

#

I have a couple or three technical questions, for anybody out there who reads *Scientific American* or *Popular Astronomy* (and indexes the interesting articles).

I'll start with some planetology, or astrophysics questions. First: has anyone with an astrophysics degree evaluated an idea that Larry Niven once used, that a planet as large as Earth has to evolve into a minor gas giant, unless it has a satellite exerting enough tidal force to reduce the atmosphere?

Second: I'm trying to remember where I read an article - must have been about the mid-80s - that speculated that the Moon was volcanically active well into the geologically recent past, and that the ejected gas and dust formed occasional rings around the Earth, which contributed to the irregular glaciations of the planet. Anyone remember anything like that?

Third: I remember a *Scientific American* article claiming that the conditions for life-bearing, or at least intelligence-hospitable planets was a lot more restrictive than we used to imagine - so that not only in planetary systems, but in the whole *galaxy*,

there's an "ecosphere" or narrow band of space, at about our distance from galactic centre, where planets like ours can form. Does anyone else remember something like that?

#

I'm getting more politicized, in a conspiracy-fringe-satire sort of way. In fact I'm entering a frame of mind in which I can't take seriously most of the things people spend time on - sports, or religion, or the arts, or the stereotyped vigilante-heroes-versus-organized-psychopaths fables that form most of our film and television entertainment.

In fact I'm beginning to think, those of us who are masked-crimefighter-wannabes ought to team up to research the people and groups who sold us "free trade", and monetarism, and neo-conservatism (or is it neo-liberalism this week? I forget), and all of them frauds. Frauds like the Fortune 500 corporations, and the C.D. Howe Institute, and the Fraser Institute, and the Chicago School of Economics. Then we ought to target them for practical jokes that destroy their credibility.

Then I remember to take my meds, and I reflect that a whole cloud of witnesses around the world are campaigning against the frauds already, and I don't have any more effective or constructive contributions to make, and anyway you aren't interested in making that much effort, are you? (Well, not if I make the suggestion.)

So I go back to translating Gnostic gospels into Talossan again.

#

How many of us have favourite crank theories? Or their own designs for an all-terrain all-medium vehicle that can go three times around the world on half a can of unsalted peanuts? Or a patent application based on the secret discoveries of Nikola Tesla?

Or a candidacy in the upcoming civic elections? Apparently we have real entertainment happening in Vancouver politics, namely the Dance Party Party, and Brian Salmi (once again) running for mayor.



LoCs

Michael Morbius BCSFAZINEzine, Volume 1, Number 2.353) October 2002

My second issue, using the first issue for layout. Now it's my turn to have to remember to update the issue number and the month! :)

PDFs: In the PDF versions of *BCSFazine*, the Italics in the font Bookman are too oblique. Is this a problem with my computer's copy of the font? It seems OK in this test sentence. | Good news for people whose computers can't read Adobe Acrobat documents: I've discovered that if I save the PDF file to my web-page's data directory and then enter the URL (for example, <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~morbius/big353.pdf>) into the form at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/access_simple_form.html, it will convert the PDF to an HTML page that I can view with Lynx (the Vancouver Community Net's text-only browser) and save to a plain text file!

"Plain Speaking": Keep looking for fannish fandom, and let me know when you find it. :) | "What do you do when your frustration with fandom (or the real world) gets to be too much?" I've never been sufficiently frustrated with SF fandom to find out. The last thing like that to happen was when I left the local Goth scene after five years to avoid the people that were attacking my friends and me. And in that case, all I did was leave the scene and return to a passive interest in the Goth subculture - something I hope I never have to do with SF fandom. Meanwhile, when the real world gets to be too much, I just turn to entertainment-reading books, magazines, fanzines, and comics, watching TV and movies, and listening to music. Sometimes I eat. Sometimes I lie down and go to sleep. Not a very surprising answer, I guess! I should have said something cool, like "I make sculptures out of those AOL CDs, set fire to them on the beach, videotape it, and send a copy of the video to AOL."

"LOCs": I agree that the waitress at Bosman's "was within her rights to expect people in a restaurant/bar to order something," and that "the same issue is liable to crop up at the Jolly Alderman." As I said, "her objection to fans showing up and not buying anything is theoretically valid." However, because of her bad attitude, I no longer felt, by that point, a moral obligation to be a good customer. The Jolly Alderman has yet to do that, however, so I intend to buy a drink every time I go there. | I guess there are public spaces somewhere - libraries, for example - but they don't sell drinks. That's not a problem for me - I don't mind eating at Denny's or hitting 7-Eleven before FRED-but that does take the "D" out of "FRED." :) | Lloyd Penney: I plan to publish a regular zine when I can work out the logistics. Right now I'm not making enough money to do more than put out irregular zines with a print run of one. Thanks for the encouragement, though. | "What kind of stuffed toys would represent

each of us?" An easy question for furrries: just choose your totem animal.

(Editor responds: Alternatively, what cartoon characters do we identify with? From Hanna-Barbera, or Warner Brothers, or Charles Shultz?)

"Advertisements": "10% discount to card-carrying WCSFA members": Oops. I forgot to get that membership for my birthday, and now it's over and I've missed my chance. I'm saving up for VCon starting this Sunday, but when VCon's over, I'll either have enough money left over for a membership or I can start saving again.

"Media News": There seems to be an unusual amount of coverage on YTV and Space of *The Tuxedo*, the new Jackie Chan movie about a magic tuxedo. I wonder if there's any connection between the studio that made *The Tuxedo* and the companies that own YTV and Space, or if it's just a coincidence.

... "NFG, the Magazine": I wonder if they'd pay me for illustrations?

(Editor responds: email them and find out.)

"As Others See Us": *NYPD 2069*: potentially interesting. I always liked the episode of *21 Jump Street* where the framing device is Hanson (Johnny Depp) in the future as an old man, still wearing his leather jacket and listening to Guns 'n' Roses, and reminiscing about a case he worked on back in the 1980s.

(Editor responds: did you perceive the obvious satire the quoted actor was unconsciously making of himself?)

"Fanzines": "Hooper, Byers, and Juarez": it has a nice ring to it, like the Lone Gunmen of fanzine fandom. :) *Chungasounds* cool. "Wouldn't You Like to Be a Latte Too?" -LOL.

"Film Review": I also saw *Signs* and was similarly disappointed. It's one of those movies that appears to be two things but fails to be either. It wasn't SF enough for me; it felt more like an old 1960s *Twilight Zone* five -characters-trapped-in-a-room drama, expanded to two hours - the very description *The Georgia Straight's* critic used, I discovered. And when I summarized the movie for my Dad, he said it wasn't all that religious-that what Mel Gibson's character found at the end was more superstition than faith. Then, of course, there are the "secular" plot holes, so to speak, as noted by Taral. I was pretty surprised that a writer these days would try to get away with that old trick of water being common on Earth, but rare everywhere else. At least in *Alien Nation*, it was salt water.

"A Proud and Lonely Thing": Sometimes I can't tell if SF fans think that mundane zines are a good thing or a bad thing.

(Editor responds: I think they're a weird thing. But then I think alleged reality has been getting increasingly weird, since sometime in the 1960s.

(Maybe the world ended back then, but nobody noticed, and we've all been allowed to coast under

our own momentum, while They finish up the paperwork?)



Lloyd&Yvonne Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, penneys@netcom.ca October 15, 2002

I'm not entirely sure why fanzines and fanzine fans are resented and looked down by [some] other fannish groups. Perhaps it was the decades of crowing about being Trufandom, while all others weren't real fans. (If we were to be fans just like those at the beginnings of fandom, we'd all have chemical labs in our basements. Fannish interests change. We're allowed.) Perhaps it looked too much like hard work to produce an amateur magazine. Perhaps today, it's quaint to produce a paper fanzine when you could easily create a webpage, or maintain your weblog.

(You may want to note the short exposition on weblogs I downloaded, and will reproduce in the next issue of The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette.)

Ted White's Fanzines column starts with some historical information, but I think more information about fanzines are needed to offset any assumptions about them. (Ah, it came later on in the issue.)

(And I still think I missed the points that needs to be made, for neos; e.g., the kind of fun and satisfaction that some of us get from designing and assembling a publication. The particular gratification of placing just the right art beside an apposite article. Or the sense of Christmas that a full P.O. box can give you.)

When my frustration with fandom gets to be too much, and I've certainly had cause for frustration just lately, I back off from that involvement, press the pause button and just get away from that aggravating factor. A rest is as good as a change. I try to identify that frustration, and sometimes make a hard decision about whether the frustration in a particular project is worth putting up with.

*(Editor responds: A recent edition of * featured another edition of "Stay As You Are", Brad Yung's comic, in which one of the twentysomething characters declaims to the other about zine publishers who have given up on paper and moved to Web publishing. That's zine, not fanzine publishers. Plus ça change ...)*

At our own equivalent of the FRED, the First Thursdays and Third Mondays, we've never had any complaints from any pub or restaurant we've been at concerning people who arrive, sit, socialize and order nothing. I think there's the understanding that it is a social event, and all in our group are welcome. At First Thursdays, we leave behind about \$1500 a month for food and drink, so I don't think they're likely to get rid of us all just because a few are there to enjoy the company only. (If anyone's thinking of coming out to Toronto for any reason, get in touch with me ahead of time, and you can get to a First Thursday or a Third Monday. No prizes for guess[ing] when they are each month...)

Which stuffed toys would represent us? When I was the chairman of Ad Astra, I was the ChairBear, which I figured was a teddybear with a gavel or con badge embroidered on my overstuffed gut. Seeing I followed the ChairBeast and ChairWench, and was followed by the Comfy Chair (Oh, no! Not the Comfy Chair!), I was in excellent company.

The definition of fanzine does vary with the fandom it's in. The few Star Trek fanzines I've received over the years have contained news about the club, about the ST franchise itself, any new series, general natter, articles, artwork, etc., and of course, lots of fiction. If you ignored the fiction, and I often did, the contents were much like any other fanzine I might get. The central idea is communication, I believe, for any fan in any fandom.

I would say to anyone, especially Michael Morbius/Morse, do the fanzine. If you have something to put onto paper, do so. Worry about its publication after you've created it. As much as I prefer paper fanzines, I'd say print paperzines only if you can afford to do so. If you can't, .pdf them. Bill Burns' efanazines site will hold it for you for all who are interested to download the issue, and print it if they are so inclined. There have been so many new faneds over the past five years or so who have burst onto the scene with .pdfed zines. Publish how you can; that's the important thing.

The CD I've been on about for over a year now...as of October 22, you should be able to buy it online. The CD is indeed called *Fears For Ears*, and it is a spoken-word CD with five short horror stories written by Canadian authors. Those stories and authors are "Manifestation" by David Nickle, "Underground" by Tanya Huff, "The Witches' Tree" by Shirley Meier, "The Vampires Next Door" by Peter Sellers and "The Rug" by Edo van Belkom. I had a voice role on the van Belkom story, and did background voices on one or two more. I don't know the price yet, but all information is available on www.fearsforears.com. Yvonne and I are going to the launch party ...

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Our Calendar of Events

November 2002

Nov. 1-7: *Minority Report* plays at the Hollywood
second-run theatre (along with *Unfaithful*).

Nov. 9 at 7pm: **Second Saturday Feeding Frenzy** at
Mekong Restaurant at 678 West Broadway,
Vancouver. A little bit of Vietnamese and a little bit
of Thai, and it's all so good.

Nov. 15: DEADLINE FOR BCSFAZINE 355.

Nov. 15: **Deadline for NESFA Short Story Contest**,
P.O. Box 809, Framingham, MA 01701-0809, U.S.A.
The New England SF Association will accept entries
of science fiction or fantasy less than 7,500 words
long, which must be unpublished original work by
the submitter; either in black type, double-spaced,
on one side of 8.5 x 11 inch white paper with one-
inch margins all around, accompanied by self-
addressed stamped envelopes and either return
postage or International Reply Coupons, **OR** may be
submitted by email in plain text, RTF, PDF or Word
6 file formats.

Nov. 15: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*
opens in movie theatres.

Nov. 17: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall,
3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver,
BC. For information, please call 604-322-6412 or e-
mail lswong@uniserve.com; also see
<http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

Nov. 21 at 7pm: **BCSFA Book Discussion Group**, at BLENZ Coffee at 2506 Granville St. (corner of Broadway and Granville, Vancouver). Book to be discussed: *The Golden Compass* by Phillip Pullman.

Nov. 22-24 (NOT the usual date): **Orycon 24** at the Doubletree Hotel Columbia River in Portland, Oregon; a large regional general SF convention. Writer GoH: Susan R. Matthews; ArtGoH: Lee Seed; Editor GoH: Martin H. Greenberg. Things to Know About Orycon: Orycon, advertised as Portland's premiere SF convention, has to limit its membership to 1600; by policy it is a weaponless convention, and smoking is limited to designated areas only. There is a membership form online at the website. Memberships are available at Wrigley Cross or Future Dreams bookstores; US\$50 up to the door, half-price for children 6 to 12, free to children 5 and under, as long as the children are accompanied at all times by adults. Write Orycon 24, P.O. Box 5703, Portland, OR 97228-5703, tel. (360) 696-3821 (James) or (503) 620-3441 (Lacey), or email all.wilsonsage@attbi.com or laceyax@bigfoot.com. You can also get on the ORYCON-L mailing list.

December 2002

Dec. 6-8: **Smof Diego / Smofcon 20** at the Hacienda Hotel, Old Town, San Diego, CA, USA. the original conrunners' convention, at least in North America. The Smof Diego theme is Networking. Please contact us if you have ideas or topics you'd like to see discussed. Room rates: \$89 single/double, \$10 per extra person, plus 10.5% tax. (A \$3 energy surcharge may also still be in effect.). The con rate is available from the Monday before thru the Wednesday after. Please reserve your room by November 5th - after that date, the con rate may not be available. The hotel has free parking for guests. Memberships: up there. Write: Smof Diego, 3118 Via Valesco, Escondido, CA 92029 USA, or email: smofdiego@fopaws.com

Dec. 13: *Star Trek: Nemesis* opens in movie theatres.

Dec. 18: *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* opens in movie theatres.

January 2003

Jan. 10-12: **Rustycon 20** at the DoubleTree Hotel, Bellevue, Washington; a large general SF convention. Writer GoH: Dave Duncan, Artist GoH: Gail Butler, Fan GoH: The KnightHawks, Special Media Guest: Larry Bagby, Fan Group GoH: KnightHawks. Membership Rates: Pre-registration US\$40 to November 30, 2002; at the door rates \$55 full weekend, \$25 Friday only, \$35 Saturday only, \$20 Sunday; Children under 6 Free; Children 6 to 12 are 1/2 the current rate. Rustycon 20, P.O. Box 84291, Seattle, WA 98124-5591, USA. See www.rustycon.com

Jan. 17-19: **Pandemonium 20**, Inn on the Park, Toronto, ON. Gaming convention. Memberships: Can\$30 pre-registration, Can\$40 at the door. For more information, see www.realmsquest.org.

February 2003

Feb. 6-8: **RingCon** at the Inn at Gig Harbor, Washington; Advance registration at Norwescon and Washington RenFaire; Memberships \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, \$15/day; for more information, see www.ringcon.com.

Feb. 14-16: **Radcon 3C** in Pasco, Washington; a general SF convention, with a gaming emphasis. GoH: tentatively R.A. Salvatore; guest, NeNe Thomas. Radcon 3C is sponsoring a Westercon 52 bailout fund. See www.radcon.org.

March 2003

March 21-24: **Ad Astra XXII**, Toronto Colony Hotel, Toronto, ON. SF convention. Guests: Michael Moorcock, Robert Gould, Alan Lee. Memberships: C\$40 to December 31, 2002, C\$45 to March 7, 2003, Can\$50 at the door. For more information, see www.ad-astra.org.

March 28-30: **FilKONtario 13**, Four Points Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel, Mississauga, ON. Filking convention. Guests: Cynthia McQuillan, Dr. Jane Robinson, Mark Bernstein, Robert Cooke. Memberships: TBA. For more information, www.bserv.com/community/fkoa.htm.

April 2003

April 4 - 6: **Sakura Con** - SeaTac (The Pre-eminent anime convention in the Puget Sound area)

April 17-20: **Norwescon 23** in SeaTac, Washington; a VERY large general SF convention. Location TBA. This year's theme: "Dragons, Drakes and Wyrms". Writer GoH: Jane Yolen. Artist GoH: Jim Burns. Science GoH: Geoffrey Landis. Spotlighted publisher: Del Rey. (Memberships?) There is a \$5 (US) discount for NWSFS members. A preregistration form is available online. Write Norwescon 23, P.O. Box 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547, U.S.A., or email info@norwescon.org.

April 26-27: **Dak-Kon VIII**, a gaming event at the Lower Native Sons Hall in Courtenay, BC, on Vancouver Island. Memberships: one-day = \$10, both days = \$15, c/o Peter Dryden, #112 - 680 Murrelet Drive, Comox, BC V9M 3P2.

May 2003

MAY 16-18: **Keycon 20**, Radisson Winnipeg Downtown, Winnipeg, MB. SF literary convention. Guests: Robert J. Sawyer, Carolyn Clink, Jolly Blackburn. Memberships: Can\$30 until December 31, Can\$40 until April 30, Can\$50 thereafter and at

the door. Children's rates also available. For more information, keycon2003.tripod.com .

May 23 – 25: **Miscon 17** - Missoula, Montana (General SF Con)

May ? : **Anime Oasis '03**: Information to be announced at <http://www.animeoasis.org>

July 2003

July 3-6: **Westercon 56** in the SeaTac Doubletree, otherwise known as the Seattle Airport Doubletree Hotel. in SeaTac, Washington. Writer Guest of Honor: Bruce Sterling; Fan Guest of Honor: Saul Jaffe. ArtGoH: Lisa Snellings. Editor GoH: Claire Eddy. Science GoH: Dr. Michio Kaku. TM: Connie Willis. Attending Membership: Adult \$55, Child \$30, 5 years and under free. Write Westercon 56, P.O.Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111, U.S.A. Phone: (206) 723-9906, FAX: (206) 374-2188, Email: info@wester56.org. Also see www.wester56.org

July 11-13: **Toronto Trek 17**, Regal Constellation Hotel, Toronto, ON. SF media convention. Guests and Memberships: TBA. For more information, www.tcon.icomm.ca

July 19-20: **Spacecon 17** at the Radisson Hotel in Portland, Oregon. Full Memberships \$100 to Dec. 31, 2002, payable to Stone Hill, P.O. Box 2213, Plant City, FL 33565, U.S.A.



August -September 2003

Aug. 28 – Sept. 1 - **TorCon 3**. Toronto, ON, Metro Convention Centre, North Building. Hotels: Royal York (location of TorCon 2), Crown Plaza, and Renaissance Toronto Hotel at Sky Dome. 61st World Science Fiction Convention. GoHs: George R.R. Martin, Frank Kelly Freas; Fan Goh: Mike Glycer; Toastmaster: Spider Robinson. Membership: (Attending) Present rate: *. For more info: write TorCon 3, P.O. Box 3, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1A2; email info@torcon3.on.ca or visit their web site at www.torcon3.on.ca.

Sept 19-21: **Foolscap V** at the Bellevue Hilton in Bellevue, Washington. Guests of Honor: Greg Bear and Sergio Aragones. A Flat Stuff convention. Memberships C\$64/US\$40 to April 15, 2003; C\$72/US\$45 to Sept. 1, 2003; C\$80/US\$50 at the door. See www.foolscap.org. Make checks payable to Little Cat Z; send payment to Foolscap V, c/o Little Cat Z, P.O. Box 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461, U.S.A.

November 2003

Oct. 30 - Nov. 2: **World Fantasy Convention 2003** in Washington, D.C.

Autumn, 2004

BOUCHERCON 35, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. World mystery convention. More details to come later.

2005

July

July 1 – 4: **Calgary bid for Westercon 58** – See www.calgaryin2005.org. In 2005, the Stampede will be delayed, and the bid has an opportunity to book the Westin Calgary. Pre-supporting memberships: C\$15, US\$10; Friend of the Bid, C\$75, US\$50. Write to Calgary in 2005, P.O. Box 43078, DVPO, Calgary, AB T2J 7A7.

September 2-5: **Seattle bid for NASFiC** – To be bid upon at Torcon 2003. Pre-supporting memberships US\$15, Pre-opposing US\$30, Friends US\$70. Write Northwest NASFiC, P.O. Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111.



Lies, Damned Lies, and Specifics

VCon 27

Our latest VCon was highly successful, in that it drew nearly 600 members, about 100 of whom were new to VCon; the convention broke even; and the weekend was enjoyed by all. Feedback was "about 99.9% positive", according to chair Palle Hoffstein.

News on the next VCon will be published as matters proceed.

Palle Hoffstein, Oct. 2002

The Blue Book of Marpole

"Barb Dryer lost a notebook at V-Con, probably on Sunday afternoon in one of the program rooms (probably Victoria or Oak rooms). It's a Hilroy 100-page Subject 8-1/2 x 11" wire-spiral-bound notebook full of notes. She was using it to take notes on the panels, and may have left it on a chair. (She has already checked with the hotel and they don't have it.) This notebook was 2/3 full of personal notes as well, and she **really** needs it back. If you found it, or even just remember seeing it, please call Barb at 604-267-7973, or e-mail me at cherns@compuserve.com."

(Howard Cherniack, October 16, 2002)

News from Arizona

One of the interesting features at this year's VCon was the appearance of flyers from, not one, not two, but *four* Arizona conventions:

LepreCon 29, to be held May 16-18, 2003 in Phoenix;

HexaCon 13, to be held July 25-27, 2003 in Phoenix;

CopperCon 23, to be held September 5-7, 2003 in Phoenix; and

ConKopelli/Westercon 57, to be held July 2-5, 2004 in Litchfield Park.

Does anyone from Vancouver fandom get out that way at all?

Tenth Planet Out There?

Early October science news indicated that astronomers have indirect evidence of a tenth planet, orbiting the Sun beyond Pluto.

Astronomers at The Open University in England and at the University of Louisiana noticed the furthest orbital points of some long-period comets seemed to be bunched together, on a circular orbital path, such as a distant planet should have. The best explanation seems to be a tenth planet disturbing icy debris in the outermost solar system.

The hypothetical tenth planet is estimated to have a mass between one and ten times that of Jupiter, and an orbital distance about three trillion miles from the Sun.

ABCNews, Oct. 7, 2002

Down Under Fan Fund 2003

Nominations for the 2003 Down Under Fan Fund are open from now to November 15, 2002 for a North American fan to tour Australasian fandom and

attend the 42nd Australian Natcon, Swancon 2003, on April 17-21, 2003 in Perth (Western Australia). ...
October 15, 2002

Too Much Grant Money?

The 2002 Ig Noble Awards (given each year for scientific achievements which "cannot or should not be reproduced") have gone to:

- A study of the courtship behaviour of ostriches towards humans under farming conditions in Britain;
- A demonstration that beer froth obeys the mathematical Law of Exponential Decay;
- A study titled "The Effects of Pre-Existing Inappropriate Highlighting on Reading Comprehension";
- A study titled "Scrotal Asymmetry in Man and in Ancient Sculpture";

Among other gems. For a complete list of the accomplishments "honoured" by the *Annals of Improbable Research*, see www.improbable.com.

www.curiousimes.com, October 17, 2002

Bad Cheques

"I recently vended at the Shrewsbury RenFaire and received a bad check. Apparently this woman and or women is passing bad checks professionally and any vendors should be ware of her. The checks were for a business called Maiden, Mother, & Crone out of Oakdale California. The signature on the check was Debbie Graziano. But there is no such person. The checks were issued to an address in Southbeach Oregon and the account has not been good for at least three years. If any of the vendors on the list have a bad check from her you can contact: Dawn Bradely Berry, Dreamlizard Pearls & Plunder, P.O. Box 2251, San Marcos, CA 92079, &07-761-4916, 760-518-2411(cell).

"She is putting together a case against this woman. So far the evil scum has passed checks in three states all to crafters and artists. Most of us do this because we love our art, but we also live on a shoestring and can't afford to be burned like this. Thanks for the rant space and look out for these people.

Lauryn MacGregor, lauryn@efn.org,
October 1, 2002

Life Imitates Star Wars

Tens of thousands of Australasians marked their religion as "Jedi" in the March 2001 census in New Zealand, and the August 2001 census in Australia. The numbers seem to have fallen off greatly since the "second" Star Wars movie came out.

In March 2001 an email circulated, claiming that if 8000 people marked "Jedi" on their census, the creed could be registered as an official religion. 53,715 New Zealanders and 70,509 Australians responded.

Since the "second" Star Wars movie came out, however, the "StarWalking" organization in Australia has dwindled to a few hundred members; JediFaith and JediAustralia no longer have websites up.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics and Statistics New Zealand only asked peoples' religious affiliations because, they said, religious organizations are the biggest providers of social services such as education, hospitals and aged-care facilities; the affiliation numbers figure in community decision-making about social services.

Wired.com, August 2002

Locus

Charles N. Brown 'announced that after 500 issues he is stepping down as editor of *Locus* and is leaving the day-to-day running of the magazine in the capable hands of Kirsten Gong-Wong and Jenni Hall.'

Dave Langford, *Ansible* 183, October 2002

2002 Sunburst Award Winner

"The Sunburst Award committee is pleased to announce the winner of its 2002 award: WHEN ALICE LAY DOWN WITH PETER by Margaret Sweatman, Alfred A. Knopf, Canada ISBN: 0-676-97315-9.

"On Thursday, September 26, at the Canwest Global Performing Arts Theatre as part of the Winnipeg International Writers Festival, Margaret Sweatman was awarded a cash prize of \$1,000 and a "sunburst" medal. Ron Robinson, host of CBC's The Weekend Morning Show, presented the award at the awards ceremony which was attended by all shortlisted writers.

"The other short-listed works for the 2002 award were: *PARADIGM OF EARTH* by Candace Jane Dorsey (Tor, ISBN: 0-312-87796X); *THE KAPPA CHILD* by Hiromi Goto (Red Deer Press, ISBN: 0-88995-228-0); *SALAMANDER* by Thomas Wharton (McClelland and Stewart, ISBN: 0-7710-8833-7); *CHRONOLITHS* by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor, ISBN: 0-312-87384-0).

"The jurors for the 2002 Sunburst Award were Douglas Barbour, Nalo Hopkinson, Tanya Huff, Hazel Hutchins and Don Hutchison. They selected these five short-listed works as representing the finest of novel-length Canadian fantastic literature published during the year 2001.

"For more information about Margaret Sweatman, see her web site: www.margaretsweatman.com.

"For more information about the Winnipeg International Writers Festival, visit www.winnipegwords.com/index.html.

"For information about eligibility and the selection process, we invite you to visit the Sunburst Award web site, www.sunburstaward.org, or write the committee: The Sunburst Award, Attn: Mici Gold, Award Secretary, 106 Cocksfield Avenue., North York, Ontario, CANADA M3H 3T2, 647-282-8379, email mici@sunburstaward.org.

*** THE 2003 AWARD.**: The jury for the 2003 award is comprised of Lesley Choyce, Hiromi Goto, Terence M. Green, Eileen Kernaghan and Arthur Slade. Submission guidelines are available at www.sunburstaward.org. The deadline for receipt of the 2003 award submissions is January 31, 2003. Six (6) copies of each eligible book may be sent to the

address above. American publishers: please mark packages PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS to facilitate their passage through Canadian customs. For more information, contact the award secretary."

Peter Halasz peter@sunburstaward.org, September 29, 2002

Dick Geis relishes *Ansible* for 'the notices of ill health, drastic therapy and approaching death. [] I approve of the Death Watch section(s) since they assure that when my time comes I'll be mentioned and perhaps tracked to the grave. What more can a fan ask?'

Dave Langford, *Ansible* 183, October 2002

To Boldly Go ...

A researcher into the Hollow Earth is looking for an additional \$15,000 in funding; Dallas Thompson plans to fly a helicopter into a hole in the South Pole, through the interior, and out through the North Pole. Thompson was reported last September to have raised \$100,000 to purchase a mini-helicopter, and plans to make the trip next May.

www.curiousimes.com, September 2002

LIONEL FANTHORPE, according to his latest book jacket (*The World's Most Mysterious Objects*), is now Magistral Chaplain General and Knight Commander of the Templar Priory of St. Mary Magdalene. I don't know whether you can get that one by mail order....

Dave Langford, *Ansible* 183, October 2002

IN TYPO VERITAS. 'Mrs Sundquist pureed her lips ...' (Robert Wadholm, 'From here you can see the Sundquists', as reprinted in *The Best of 2001*, ed. Robert Silverberg & Karen Haber) [BJ]

Dave Langford, *Ansible* 183, October 2002

C.O.A. Harry Andruschak (correction), 734 W 214th St, Apartment 12-A, Torrance, CA 90502-1907, USA.

Dave Langford, *Ansible* 183, October 2002

Lovecraft's Weird Mysteries - Pentagram Publications, c/o John Navroth, PMB 270, 11410 NE 124th St., Kirkland WA 98034-2168. Address submissions as indicated here. "LWM is a digest-sized print magazine of classic horror in the tradition of the pulps of the '30s and '40s, and especially in the spirit of *Weird Tales*. Stories in the traditional style are always considered over those with contemporary settings. All stories must contain strong, atmospheric elements of horror and the supernatural and should be driven by plot and action. Ghost and occult detective stories, ancient sorceries, and weird adventures are preferred themes. We also strongly advocate the perpetuation of the body of work known collectively as the 'Cthulhu Mythos' and are not, like a number of other 'zines currently on the market, averse to seeing 'pastiche' in the Lovecraft style.

"Recommended classic horror authors to read for inspiration are: HPL, Derleth, Clark Ashton

Smith, Bloch, Kuttner, Jacobi, and Seabury Quinn, as well as antiquarian ghost and horror stories such as those by M.R. James, Algernon Blackwood, and F. Marion Crawford. Again, LWM seeks tales of horror, suspense, the supernatural and 'Mythos' stories with a 'pulp' flair and a feel for the types of stories popular in the '30s-'50s; 'modern' themes are acceptable, not preferable, and must not contain excessive quantities of contemporary jargon, including product placement (e.g. 'Coke,' 'Budweiser,' etc.) and swilling grog at the local tavern to begin your story. Stories should grab the reader's interest from the first paragraph and sustain both action and mood throughout until the end. Strong plot and characterization is preferred over stories that meander and plod along with little to offer, but what leads to a (usually weak) climax on the last page.

"Minor profanity and sex is allowed, but avoid superfluous vulgarity. No futuristic, sf, sword & sorcery or alternate world fantasy, please. If you are serious about being published (and paid) in LWM, the above are words to write by.

"While poetry has been used sparingly in the past, it is almost always by invitation only.

[Submissions] To 4000 words; pays \$10, on acceptance for one-time publishing rights.

"Electronic subs are not accepted. Submit one manuscript at a time. If your work is accepted, the preferred method of final submission is to send, whenever possible, either an E-mail or an IBM-formatted 3½" disk, with your work saved as a Word for Windows '.doc' file or as a '.txt' file. This method, as mentioned, is preferred as it reduces greatly the amount of production time." No simultaneous subs. [E-mail: lotus@oz.net; www.oz.net/~lotus]. RT-3-8 weeks or longer.

Gila Queen's Guide to Markets #108,
Sept. 30, 2002

WHITLEY STRIEBER's on-line journal warns of what lies in wait for people like himself who fearlessly oppose the world UFO cover-up conspiracy: 'What has been happening to me is this: every night as I go to sleep, something begins moving against my skin, creeping like some sort of very slow insect. I have seen and held this object. I have tried to crush it. But I cannot. I cannot get a sample. It seems like a living thing, but I do not believe that it is alive in the same sense that we are. [] About a week ago, I woke up and found it penetrated into my chest just above my collarbone. I pulled it out and tried to crush it between my fingers, to gouge it with my fingernail. It struggled furiously in my hand. It would not break up. I turned on the light and sat up, with the intention to take it into the bathroom and capture it in a water glass. But when I relaxed my grip just a little, it disappeared before my eyes, for all the world like some kind of a magic trick. [] It has tormented me night after night....' [BB] These are interesting symptoms; I'm trying not to be reminded of the opening of Philip K. Dick's *A Scanner Darkly*.

Dave Langford, *Ansible* 183, October 2002

EVEN YET MORE ADDITIONAL AWARDS.

Rhysling Award for sf poetry: LONG Lawrence Schimel, 'How to Make a Human'. SHORT William John Watkins, 'We Die As Angels'. [] Gaylactic Spectrum Awards: NOVEL Hugh Nissenson, *The Song of the Earth*. SHORT Alexis Glynn Latner, 'Kindred'. OTHER *Bending the Landscape: Horror* ed. Nicola Griffith & Stephen Pagel. [] British Fantasy Awards were presented at the one-day Fantasycon 2002 in September. NOVEL (August Derleth Award) Simon Clark, *The Night of The Triffids*. ANTHOLOGY *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 12* ed. Stephen Jones. COLLECTION Paul Finch, *Aftershocks*. Short: Simon Clark, 'Goblin City Lights'. Artist: Jim Burns. SMALL PRESS Peter Crowther's PS Publishing, for the second year running. The special Karl Edward Wagner award wasn't presented.

Dave Langford, *Ansible* 183, October 2002

More Publishing News

"My name is Xina Marie Uhl and I'm the publisher for *Word of Mouth Speculative Fiction Reviews*, a free email newsletter in which new and old science fiction, fantasy and horror novels are reviewed. Our slogan says it best: "Your twice - monthly dose of opinionated, eclectic and humorous reviews of old and new science fiction, fantasy, and horror novels by the U.K.'s one and only literary interior designer." Below, I'm forwarding you a copy of our latest newsletter. Our hope is that you'll like *Word of Mouth Spec Fic* enough to recommend it in your publication, or perhaps to place a link to our website?"

Xina Marie Uhl, Word of Mouth Newsletters
For those who feel naked without a BOOK!
www.xcpublishing.com/wompage.html
October 6, 2002

COURT CIRCULAR. As everyone not living on a remote Tibetan mountain peak now knows, Nancy Stouffer's never very convincing plagiarism case against J.K. Rowling didn't just fail on 19 September but rebounded spectacularly. Deciding that Stouffer had naughtily improved the evidence about her creation of Larry Potter and the Muggles, the judge fined her \$50,000 for a 'pattern of intentional bad faith conduct', warned her never again to claim that Harry Potter violated her trademark, and ordered her to pay part of Rowling's costs. Oops! [BB/AP] *Ansible* 156 (July 2000) gleefully noted that OED citations for 'muggle', a word Stouffer said she'd invented and trademarked, go back to 1205.

Dave Langford, *Ansible* 183, October 2002

Sources include: Ansible 183, October 2002; *The Asian Post*; *Curious Times*; *The Gila Queen's Guide to Markets* #108 (Sept. 2002) & 109 (Oct. 2002); Peter Halasz; *News of the Terribly Odd*; *The Republic*; Amy Sheldon; *Terminal City*; *This is True*; and the *West Ender*

Fanzines



By Ted White

Fanzines are a basic part of science fiction fandom, having been in existence as long as fandom itself – the past 70 years. Fanzines are a reflection of many fans' interest in the printed word and amateur publishing. The publication you are reading this in is a fanzine, but a specialized one. A variety of other fanzines are also available – many of them by request – and this column will cover some of them each issue.

All fanzines are published as a hobby and lose money. Their editors appreciate money to defray their expenses and sometimes list single-copy or subscription prices, but they appreciate even more your written response – a Letter of Comment, or LoC. Feedback – better known in fandom as “egoboo” – is what fanzine publishing is all about.

Check out the fanzines below and broaden your participation in fandom.

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LITTLEBROOK #1, August 2002 (Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins, editors & publishers; available for “the usual” (letters of comment, contributions, or fanzines in trade) or \$2 a copy; 3522 N.E. 123rd St., Seattle WA 98125; e-mail to jakaufman@aol.com or suzlet@aol.com)

Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins are well-known in fandom for their long-running genzine, *Mainstream*, the final issue of which appeared a few years ago. *Mainstream*, like entirely too many good genzines, had a publishing schedule which had deteriorated to one issue every several years or so – and it would not have surprised me if yet another issue was first rumored and then eventually appeared in another year or two.

Instead, Jerry and Suzle have launched a new smaller fanzine: “here’s the plan for *Littlebrook*: smaller issues, a little more frequently published...” The first issue runs 12 pages, double-columned, and consists of three pieces. “Bewitched, Bothered and Bemildred” is Jerry’s editorial column and includes,

in addition to the usual editorial matter about the issue, four complete smaller articles/essays which remind me of what a good fanwriter Jerry has become over the years. Andy Hooper contributes “Sausage Time,” subtitled “a column about contemporary fanzines.” Hooper explains that since he stopped putting out a small frequent fanzine five years ago he’s gradually lost contact with the current fanzine scene – and then provides insightful commentary on four current fanzines anyway. The issue finishes with a slightly augmented version of Moshe Feder’s Guest of Honor speech at this year’s Corflu (where the GoH’s name is drawn from a hat and the Lucky Winner has a day to come up with his or her speech or presentation). Moshe proved himself equal to the challenge, as has always been the case with Corflu GoHs.

A surprisingly solid issue, despite consisting of only a dozen pages.

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FLOSS! #2, May 2002 (Lilian Edwards, 39 Viewforth, Edinburgh EH10 4JE, Scotland; L.Edwards@ed.ac.uk, available by editorial whim, so ask)

Lilian Edwards has been putting out fanzines for around 20 years by now and has it down to a fine art. *Floss!* is the successor to *Gloss*, a fanzine which had managed three somewhat contentious issues. This issue focuses on British conventions, covering Damn Fine Con (a *Memento*-ish chronologically-reversed report by the eponymous Max), Helicon II (by Juliette Woods and, separately, by Tanya Brown), Novacon (by Tony Keen) and Corflu (by Randy Byers). In addition, Lilian contributes “Indefinite Articles” (a disguised editorial about the joys of the internet’s Live Journal) and “I Went To IKEA” (where she did not find bliss), Jae Leslie Adams gives us “Barbie the Feminist,” and there are four pages of letters. *Floss!* has 33 pages of single-columned text, illuminated by photos from the various conventions and cartoons by Dave Hicks, and a great (color) cover depicting a fannish version of the game Clue.

Floss! exemplifies the better, less formal, British fanzines of the day. It’s full of in-jokes that depend on knowing who the people referred to are, but not to the point of obscurity – you can pick it up as you go along, and the spirited writing will ease that task.

BCSFA (i.e. Garth) RECENTLY RECEIVED:

Dark Echo (a writers’ market newsletter); *De Profundis* #357 (Sept. 2002) (a club newsletter); *The Gila Queen’s Guide to Markets* (more markets); and *Opuntia* #51.5A & #51.5B (Dale Speirs’ personalzine). I have asked the editors of *Pulsar*, *Westwind* and the *Ottawa SF Statement* if they have been receiving *BCSFazines* regularly ...

Book Reviews

by Donna McMahon

RESTORATION, Carol Berg (Roc. Aug/02, mm, 471p)
THE DISAPPEARED, Kristine Kathryn Rusch (Roc, July/02, mm, 374p)
KINGDOM OF CAGES, Sarah Zettel (Tor, June/02, mm, 588p)

I started reading *RESTORATION* with little expectation of finishing it. I am not a Fantasy enthusiast and the Frazetta-esque cover art put me off. Also, it's the third book in a trilogy and I hadn't read the first two.

But much to my surprise I quickly became caught up in the action of this strongly written novel about a sorcerer who has taken a demon into his soul.

When the king of Azhakstan is murdered, enemies accuse his son, Aleksander, of treachery and drive him from his kingdom. But Seyonne, former body slave to the prince, knows that Aleksander is the kingdom's best hope. So he leaves his quiet retreat in the countryside and returns to Aleksander's service, following him into exile and using his growing magical powers to help the rightful king regain the throne.

That's a large enough mission, but the demon sharing Seyonne's soul is leading him into even more dangerous realms. Through dream journeys he meets Nyel, the last of the ancient gods, who is imprisoned in a fortress in another world. Seyonne is the only man who can release Nyel, but ancient legends warn that freeing this beautiful god will destroy all humanity.

Carol Berg is a heck of a writer. *RESTORATION* is a long book, crammed with detail, and Berg has to squeeze in a lot of necessary background from her two previous books; nonetheless she kept me turning pages. The novel seethes with blood, dust, dung, and martial mayhem, but what really carries the story is the compelling and charmingly flawed protagonist, Seyonne – a man who strikes terror into his enemies as he swoops onto the battlefield like an avenging angel, but who is socially awkward and terrified of talking to his own young son.

Although the medieval setting of *RESTORATION* is fairly standard, Berg makes considerable effort to depict the lives of poor people in her society, not just nobles. I liked this commendable (if not-entirely-convincing) attempt to redress the Fantasy genre's rose-coloured view of brutal autocracies and subsistence living. (Heck, if we just put a GOOD king on the throne then everything will be perfect!)

However, that's a flaw of the genre rather than Berg, and my enjoyment of her sword and sorcery epic only goes to prove that a talented writer can craft a riveting read out of almost any subject.

Readers with a taste for high adventure should enjoy *RESTORATION* very much and might want to track down the prequels (*TRANSFORMATION* and *REVELATION*) in order to read the whole saga in sequence.

#

Detectives Miles Flint and Noelle DeRicci don't usually cover the docks, but when a space yacht full of bodies drifts into port on the Moon, they get handed the case. It looks like a Disty vengeance killing – repulsive, but legal under interstellar law – and Flint is ready to chalk it up as a rare, distasteful fluke until two other cases involving alien warrants fall into their laps.

As Flint investigates he begins to suspect that somebody is hunting down people who have used "disappearance" agencies to flee alien justice, and is selling the humans to alien bounty hunters.

The law is clear, but neither Flint nor Noelle can stomach giving up two human fugitives to alien "justice" – a baby taken from his parents as retribution for his father's crime, and a brilliant lawyer condemned to hard labour because she defended a guilty client. Flint is determined to find some evidence, some loophole, some ruse to save them from a terrible fate.

THE DISAPPEARED combines three distinct subgenres: space opera, the detective novel and the cop partner story (a veteran and rookie are forced to work together despite their differences). The characters are solid, if not outstanding, and story tension is cranked up by problems from the past, bureaucratic indifference and a race against the clock.

It isn't wildly original, nonetheless Rusch handles the story very competently, and she surprised me a little by leading her novel and characters toward obvious plot resolutions, and then twisting in more interesting directions. Also, her theme of international extradition and political refugees is inherently strong, and it is bolstered by protagonists who get emotionally tangled up in their work.

I had some quibbles. Like most detective novels, *THE DISAPPEARED* takes an uncritical view of our legal system, assuming that it is superior to all others on Earth (and in this case, the galaxy). This is a hobby horse of mine – nobody in the English speaking world seems to know a thing about the Napoleonic Code, for example, which forms the basis of two thirds of the world's legal systems.

I also found the theme of the book unintentionally humorous, given that the number of American bounty hunters, police and spies operating clandestinely inside Canada has reached an all-time high. I can only hope that our police show half as much sympathy to Canadians being abducted to face prosecution under repressive American laws, as Rusch's cops are willing to display for human victims of nasty alien laws.

Well, those are personal gripes. *THE DISAPPEARED* is a capably written formula story and a good light read.

#

The phrase "shit disturbing" takes on a whole new meaning when you work a backbreaking shift in the local sewage treatment plant, but Chena Trust, 13, is a born agitator and she's unhappy.

Everyone tells her how lucky she is to move to the planet Pandora, but conditions there seem unbelievably primitive to a girl raised on a space station. Colonists live in tiny villages, eking out a subsistence living under harsh rules that forbid them from using machinery or modern medicine – anything that might conceivably disturb Pandora's pristine biosphere.

It doesn't take long for Chena to start overstepping boundaries in this tightly regulated society, unaware that her violations may give officials an excuse to force her mother to become a human guinea pig in genetic experiments.

This very brief summary does not do justice to the plot of *KINGDOM OF CAGES*, a strong novel with a complex and interesting backdrop. Humanity is in trouble. Planetary colonies are collapsing, and a flood of refugees has carried plagues back to an Earth that's already devastated by centuries of ecological mismanagement and overpopulation. Only Pandora is different because the colonists there built sealed habitats so they could live without disturbing the planet's ecosystem.

But now waves of refugees are threatening to overrun the planet and many Pandorans are willing to kill the interlopers to preserve their paradise. Tam Bhavasar, senior administrator of Pandora, is grappling with this crisis and also pursuing a more subtle problem. He has begun to suspect that somebody with a damaged Conscience implant is sabotaging attempts to find a cure for the galaxy's "Diversity Crisis."

The central theme of *KINGDOM OF CAGES* – finding a balance so that humans beings can live in their environment without destroying it – could hardly be more relevant today, and Zettel raises plenty of good questions. She also comes up with an interesting plot element in the Conscience chips – a well intentioned social control mechanism gone horribly wrong.

The writing is solid, too. Zettel handles all her characters well, especially her teenage protagonist and the relationship between Chena, her younger sister Teal, and their mother, Helice.

In fact, Zettel has enough ideas, characters and story threads in *CAGES* to fill out a couple of novels – and it's ultimately more than she can handle in the one book. For most of the novel the action keeps moving and tensions rise, but the climax is weak, leaving many plot and character problems insufficiently resolved.

Still, I consider this a book worth reading. I also liked the striking Michael Whelan cover although, as far as I could figure out, it had nothing whatsoever to do with the novel.

Comments? Questions? Rebuttals?
donna_mcmahon@sunshine.net

I know I forgot something again ...