

Colophon

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

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BCSFAzine is distributed monthly at WHITE DWARF BOOKS, 3715 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 2G5, 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, 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).

BCSFA's Web page may be viewed at <http://www3.telus.net/dh2/bcsfa/>
The V-Con Society Web page may be viewed at <http://www3.telus.net/dh2/vconsociety/>
VCon 28's Web page may be viewed at <http://www.v-con.ca>

BCSFA membership rates:

subscribe to email version: \$15.00

New: \$26.00

Renewal: \$25.00

New Family (2 votes): \$32.00

Above prices include subscription to *BCSFAzine*. Make cheques payable to WCSFA (West Coast Science Fiction Association), c/o 86 Warrick Street, Coquitlam, B.C. CANADA V3K 5L4.

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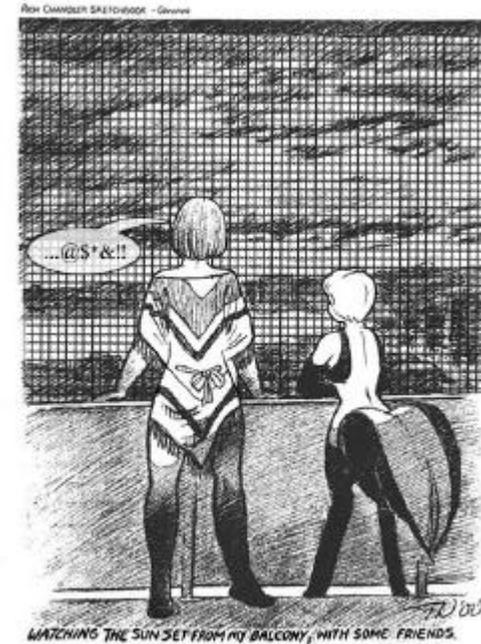
Taral Wayne..... cover

Michael Morse..... pp. 20, 21

BCSFAzine

Vol. 31 No. 11 \$3.00

Nov. 2003



VIEWS, NEWS, VCON 28 REVIEW

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November Events

Nov. 6	Philosopher's Café: "Hate laws: are they useful?"	Cornerstone Café, Coquitlam. Check out www.philosopherscafe.net for latest details.
Nov. 7	The Fog of Journalism	9:05 p.m.: IDEAS features Joe Schlesinger (CBC), in the second Dalton Camp Lecture in Journalism. 690 AM in Vancouver; see cbc.ca/ideas for more information.
Nov. 7-9	Nerdcon	in Gresham (Portland), Oregon.
Nov. 8	Feeding Frenzy	Mystery! Where will Garth decree your next din-dins?
Nov. 12	Can Liberalism Be Exported?	IDEAS features a program on what makes our culture work, or not work abroad.
Nov. 12	Philosopher's Café: "Beauty art and the new world order"	La Zuppa!, 1544 Lonsdale, in North Vancouver (\$5 admission)
Nov. 12	Philosopher's Café: "Are morality and ethics relative to each individual?"	Piece of Cake Dessert Emporium, 107 West Esplanade, in North Vancouver
Nov. 13	James Joyce: A Tale of Two Cities	Why Joyce left Dublin for Trieste in 1904.
Nov. 13	Philosopher's Café: "In Poor Taste": a discussion with Rory Wallace"	Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver
Nov. 14	BCSFazine 366 deadline	See Garth's designated stand-in at FRED
Nov. 14-16	Orycon 25	Doubletree Columbia River, Portland, Oregon
Nov. 16	Philosopher's Café: "Visions, revelations, channelling, dreams - what do they mean?"	Enigma In Point Grey, Vancouver
Nov. 16	Vancouver Comicon	11 AM to 5 PM at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC.
Nov. 20	BCSFA Book Discussion: <i>The Man Who Turned Into Himself</i> by David Ambrose	7PM -- The Brickhouse Pub, 730 Main Street, Vancouver
Nov. 28	BCSFazine production	See Doug and Garth at FRED!

There are more things in Vancouver. – *Garth Spencer*

Plain Speaking

On Conrunning, among Other Thoughts that Won't Let Me Go
by Garth Spencer

The vast majority of conventions are fairly successful, are competently run, and the conrunners have a perspective on fandom, and on the mundane convention industry. The recent VCon is a case in point: despite some challenging hurdles, the concom – and the congoers – created a successful event, of which almost all reports are positive.

Still ... laying aside the rare horror stories, and the truly outlandish fates to which some conventions descend ... if SF conventions have any real, general problem to contend with, it has to be burnout. Overload. A consistent tendency to overburden a whole convention, and each of the concom members. You might ask, why do I keep getting stories that add up to this conclusion?

Well. Despite the number of people who reappear on committees, I keep *not* seeing some Vcon committee members, for more than one or two years running; concommers behaving as though they never want to work that hard again. (When was the last time we heard from Charlotte Nickerson?)

Also, one of the liabilities of spending two decades or so in fandom is that you collect horror stories about conventions. Of course, the times when things work out aren't noticed, get taken for granted, or go undocumented.

That might have been enough reason for me to get the idea that there was Something Really Wrong with the state of conventions. But I had another reason: a truly outlandish convention fiasco was inflicted on my first fan community, in my first five years in fandom. (I phrase it that way because my fan community had nothing to do with the fiasco; and yet years had to pass before any fans could mount a convention in that town again.)

So first impressions are lasting. I still outgrew mine. Nowadays, it looks like the major problems besetting conventions come down to different kinds of overload. On the one hand, we define SF conventions, from the outset, as a wide variety of things happening at once; this means that even a small local convention can be quite a challenge for anyone to organize, if it tries to appeal to more than one segment of fandom. On the other hand, most fan groups define conrunners as volunteers, as unpaid amateurs; perhaps it is no surprise, then, if some of the volunteers drift off, when conrunning turns out to mean sustained effort, and planned, organized, team effort at that. Perhaps it is no surprise if the remaining volunteers who actually shoulder the work find themselves in effect handling another full-time job, by the time their convention comes around.

There are ways to motivate and inspire people to do more, of course; I had occasion to talk with one of the Radcon organizers about this, at VCon 28. Unfortunately, I am not one of the people who can motivate others. In fact I have a talent for *dissipating* people's motivation, principally by talking about work and organizing and planning, and by drawing up written documents for people.

This is not the spontaneous, plunge-into-it, enthusiastic experience fans generally seem to want. The lack of positive response was a difficult thing for me to grasp, and it took a visitor from across the border to bring into focus.

So *why* do some people talk like I ought to chair a con before saying anything, even asking questions, about cons?

Maybe *now*, after reading the foregoing, you grasp why I kept bringing up convention-running issues, and seemed to want to organize how VCons were run, without actually chairing one; I kept trying to do what I *can* do - write you a document, collate and edit some guidelines, a plan for success - without doing something I *cannot* do, which is to chair a convention. Maybe now, the several fans who objected to my voicing my opinions will understand why I stuck to convention publications and fanzine lounges: I *limited* my goals to something within my limits.

Should we limit our conventions to something our manpower base can accomplish, or shall we expand our base of amateur manpower to something that can handle greater conventions? We're going to have to do one or the other.

LoCs

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney penneys@netcom.ca 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2. October 7, 2003

I've got issue 365 of *BCSFazine*, and that means it's time for some comments on the issue. Unemployment means you can catch up with your fanzines, I guess...

The life of an editor is not all skittles and beer, as the old, obsolete saying goes. If nothing else, you know the zine is being read, with all the feedback you're getting. This kind of feedback (generally negative) is very similar to what con runners get. Your best isn't nearly good enough, and what you did wrong, you did it on purpose! TO RUIN MY WEEKEND! You get the idea. Sometimes, the greatest praise you can receive is silence.

I imagine that Ray Seredin is pleased with the BBC's announcement that it plans to bring back Doctor Who. (So are the members of DWIN here.) However, before the party starts and the orgy gathers steam in the

corner, let's find out just what the Beeb has in mind. There's been announcements, followed by disappointments before.

I got an e-mail from Karl Johanson...subscriptions to *Neo-Opis Magazine* are now available, \$24 within Canada. I am tempted to subscribe to see the beginning of a new magazine...I hope they can generate some excitement the way *On Spec* did when it started up.

I remember Con Hiebner's handmade chocolates, partially because I remember mention of it in this zine years ago, and also because Con returned to VCon the year we were FanGoHs, and brought many fine chocolates with him, to the surprise and delight of many. I definitely miss the Leather Goddesses of Phobos. Perhaps they moved to Britain, for so many of the zines I see often talk about gorgeous young women wearing leather and not much else. (Take that sentence any way you like.)

Michael Morse, October 15, 2003

October Events: Tales of the Lost Formicans looks depressing.

Plain Speaking: "Got any suggestions?" No.

LOCs: Michael Morse - Well, I ended up not going to Gatecon 2003. "(Oh, yeah. Your mini-comics. You sure you can't do a serialized storyline, like Colin Upton did?)" Meh. I'm sure I could do a serialized storyline, but I can't think of one right now.

Hrothgar Weems - Garth's right, Hrothgar. Nobody says "Western Seaboard."

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney - "Yvonne and I are Canadian agents." I think he just blew their cover.

Ernest Wolfgang Friedrich Siegfried Gunther Klaus Inger Stroheim Rupricht Hentzau Schleswig Holstein Trishtrash-am-Wiesen von Ulm-Tupsreg Dlawreppilf eid Redo sad Dnuhreib!! Ay! Reyemretols nu ttog Kcutsnrun sad tsi Nnew?

SF and Fandom News: Prix Aurora Awards - "(How many people haven't a clue who the artistic and fan achievement award winners are?)" I didn't know who Mel Vavaroutsos was. I had been to Don Bassie's web-site. "(Maybe future Auroras should give a short background paragraph on fans and pros who may be unfamiliar.)" Good idea.

WorldCon Fallout/As Others See Us - Robert J. Sawyer isn't bald. He still has what I used to call "the peninsula" (square widow's peak) along the center. That's all that matters. ...

Oddy Knockies: Mutant Aliens - I'm looking forward to this. I haven't seen much of Plympton's animation since it was on the short-lived Fox sketch comedy *The Edge*. I visited his web-site around 1994, but you had to pay to see the animation there.

Broken Saints: Good editing job on my report, Garth!

Fanzines: What's Ted White's address? Would he be interested in receiving a complimentary *This Is What Happens When You Don't Eat Your Vegetables* for review?

Members' Birthdays

2: Rachel-Ann Witherspoon-Li
 4: Tom Barr
 7: Brooke Sackett
 11: Stephen Kawamoto
 12: Wendy Harris
 13: Shelley Mullock
 18: Steve Barclay
 23: Allan Ferguson
 24: Spider Robinson
 26: Amy Morgan / Hearn

Advertisements

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<p>MICHAEL'S BOOKS Michael Elmer, Owner 109 Grand Bellingham, WA 98225 Tel. (206) 733-6272 <i>books in all fields 10% DISCOUNT to our members</i></p>	

<p>METROTOWN WRITER'S GROUP is open to new members. IF YOU ARE: Serious about your prose, short stories, novels, etc., and want constructive advice ... Then this is the supportive peer group you've been looking for. Meetings are held twice a month at the Metrotown library, on Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. For information call Ken, 604-876-5751, email ktran@vcn.bc.ca</p>	<p>IMPERIAL HOBBIES 5451 No. 3 Road Richmond, B.C. V6X 2C7 (across from Lansdowne Mall) tel. 604-273-4427, fax 273-2916 <i>role-playing games, tabletop games, models, comics, supplies, and much more!</i> <i>10% DISCOUNT to card-carrying WCSFA members (on selected items)</i></p>
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Convention Calendar

November 2003

November 5 - *The Matrix Revolutions*

November 7 - *Brother BearElf*- *Jersey Girl* - *Love Actually*

Nov. 7-9: **Nerdcon** in Gresham (Portland), Oregon. The web site is <http://www.kermanenterprises.com/cavenerds/nerdcon.html> and discounts to GMs are offered. We will run RPGA and Hackmaster role playing, and have about one-third of our tables set aside for other sorts of games. Please feel free to contact Ada Kerman at ada@kermanenterprises.com if you have questions that the web site doesn't answer, or if you would like to volunteer.

(sent by John Bartley, Sept. 14/03)

November 14 - *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* (Limited)-*Looney Tunes: Back In Action* - *Master And Commander: The Far Side Of The World*

Nov. 14 - 16: **Orycon 25** at The Doubletree Hotel Portland Columbia River in Portland, Oregon (General SF). Author Guest of Honor: Nina Kiriki Hoffman. Science and Author Guest of Honor: Ken Goddard. Editor Guest of Honor: Toni Weisskopf of Baen Books. Special Editor Guest: Martin Greenberg of Tekno Books. Featured Artist: Gail Butler Friends of Filk Guest: Uffington Horse. OryCon 25 will be a weaponless convention. Room rate is \$95 (plus tax) per night. The Interstate Wing is

designated as the party wing. If you plan to hold a party, you need to make sure your room is reserved there. As before, the hotel will charge a \$100 deposit against damage/cleaning for open parties (they do this for all groups, not just OryCon). To date, however, all such deposits have been completely refunded and the hotel has been very happy with us. Open parties also need to be registered in the convention office, so that we can coordinate with the hotel and help you get needed trash bags and cleaning supplies from the hotel. The best way to book a room is to call the hotel directly at 503-283-2111. You can also book your room through the hotel's web site, using the "Group Code" ORY for OryCon Non-party or ORP for OryCon Party. Memberships: Because of space limitations at the hotel, memberships will be limited to a total of 1600. Once we've sold that many, we'll start turning people away at the door. So get your memberships early! If you're wondering if you have your membership yet, you can search our current membership list. Contact us by: Email - ory25vicechair@yahoo.com, Orycon25Chair@attbi.com; Postal - OryCon 25, PO Box 5464, Portland, Oregon 97228-5464; Telephone - (503) 646-0731.

Nov. 16th: **Vancouver Comicon**, 11 AM to 5 PM at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Special Guests: Doug Wheatley, artist of *Star Wars Episode III Movie Adaptation*, *Superman: Last Stand on Krypton*, *Star Wars: Darklighter*, *Superman: Last Son Of Earth*; Steve Rolston, creator of *OneBadDay*, Penciller of *Mek*, *Pounded*, *Queen and Country*; Ralph Alfonso, creator of *Ralph*; Andy Mori, creator of *Flopnik*; Robin Thompson, artist of *Champions of Hell*, *Captain Spaceman*; Ken Boesem, creator of Barking Raven Press; Trevor Metz, creator of *Crossfire*; Kelly Everaert, creator of *Trilogy of Terror*. Free comics and hourly door prizes!! Dealer's Tables : \$45/\$50. Admission: \$3 (kids under 14 free). For information about either show, please call 604-322-6412 or e-mail ls Wong@uniserve.com. (Sept. 16/03)

Nov. 18: **Alex Ross signing Mythology**, 7PM at Kane Hall, University Book Store main branch (4326 University Way NE, Seattle WA 98105), tel. (206) 634-3400 or 1-800-335-7323 (outside local area)

November 21 - *Barbershop 2 - Dr. Seuss' The Cat In The Hat - Radio*

November 26 - *The Haunted Mansion - In America (Limited) - Timeline*

November 29-30th: **Kumoricon** - Oregon's Premier Anime Convention at the DoubleTree Inn, Eugene, OR. Featuring "... all the usual anime-con activities: anime watching, a cosplay contest, a dealers room, an AMV contest, and much more! Reservations: contact The DoubleTree Inn Eugene/Springfield, 3280 Gateway St., Springfield, OR 97477. (Right off

I5, next to the Gateway Mall). Memberships: There will be different prices for pre-registration and at the door. We will be accepting pre-registrations shortly. You will be able to pay with a credit card (probably via Paypal), or by sending us a check in the mail. You can get in touch with us at the tunac web forum, located at <http://tunac.uoregon.edu/forum/viewforum.php?f=7>.

December 2003

December 5 - *The Last Samurai*

December 12 - *If You Were My Girl - Stuck On You*

December 17 - *The Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King*

December 19 - *Mona Lisa Smile*

December 25 - *The Alamo - Cheaper By The Dozen - Cold Mountain - The Company (Limited) - Girl With A Pearl Earring - Paycheck - Peter Pan*

January 2004

Jan 16-18: **Rustycon 21** at the SEATAC RADISSON Airport Hotel. This year's theme: Strong Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy. *GoHs*: (in no particular order) Octavia Butler, Phil & Kaja Foglio, Betty & David Bigelow, Matt Hughes, Dragon, Don DeBrandt, Sara Stamey, A.M. Dellamonica, and just a whole whack of people. *Rustycon Hotel Changes*: Please note that Rustycon has changed hotels for our 21st convention: Rustycon 21 Returns Home to the SeaTac Radisson Airport Hotel Make your reservations early as rooms are limited and will go fast!! When you register for your room with the hotel make sure to mention Rustycon so they give you the correct pricing of \$94.00 per night. Each room comes with up to 2 parking passes but those without rooms will be charged \$5.00 to park with no in-and-out privileges. To register with the Radisson call 206-244-6000 or toll free at 1-800-333-3333, ask for the Rustycon rate. Please make reservations before December 21, 2003 to ensure you get the special group rate. *Membership Rates*: Pre-registration, \$40 to November 30th; At the door, \$55; Children 6 to 12, half-price; Children under 6, free. You can register online through PayPal or you can print out a registration form from <http://www.Rustycon.com> for your convenience and mail it in the old fashioned way, both options are available. Mail to: Rustycon 21, P.O. Box 27075, Seattle WA 98165-1475, U.S.A.

News

V-CON SOCIETY

New executives as of Annual General Meeting at VCon 28:

For President: Paul Carpentier

For Vice-President: Greg Cairns

For Secretary-Treasurer: Clint Budd

For Members-at-Large:

Lorna Appleby

Marie-Louise Beesley

Andrew Brechin

Ray Seredin

Kathleen Moore-Freeman

Chilam

A Vcon 29 bid is approaching a state of being, and should be officially announced just after this issue goes to print.

BCSFA

New executives of the B.C. Science Fiction Society were to be voted in at the Annual General Meeting on October 18, 2003, at Kathleen Moore-Freeman's home. However, due to lack of attendance, the elections are held over to the November meeting.

Which, I have recently discovered, will be held the same weekend as Orycon 25. We are now to find out how many people don't make it to the election meeting this time around.

TAKE PART IN SF NORTHWEST

Jack Beslanwitch, webmaster of the website SF Northwest Resources, contacted me recently about "reporting on events, club meetings and so forth in western Canada, specifically British Columbia". In order to do this, I would need input both from BCSFAns, and from the fan groups we rarely hear from: the clubs at UBC and SFU, the gamers in Maple Ridge and Abbotsford, the anime and Camarilla groups, among others. Want to take part? Or would you make a better correspondent for Jack yourself?

Take a look at the revamped website at:
<http://www.sfnorthwest.org>.

(Jack Beslanwitch, October 29, 2003)

MONSTER ATTACK TEAM - CANADA -

"November 30th MEETING at the regular place - Common Room (#40) - Whattlekainum Housing Co-Operative At the regular time - 7:30 on Sunday November 30th. Bring your captured monsters! See you there! If you haven't been before you can contact Dennis - who sponsors us at Whattlekainum (and hence can easily explain how to get there) DENNIS KRISTOS (604-436 - 4099) speek1@vcn.bc.ca or you can contact me STAN HYDE 437 - 8483 stanhyde@shaw.ca."

For more information on this plastic-modelling club, on upcoming comics or modelling fan events I haven't heard about, or episodes of Babylon 5 and Jeremiah, see the Monster Attack Team Canada newsletter (#24); ask Stan Hyde to put you on his email list.
(GS)

PRO NEWS

GIBSON WRAPS BLOG

"Cyberpunk author William Gibson told fans on his official Web site that he will be discontinuing his blog to resume writing novels.

"Time for me to get back to my day job, which means that it's time for me to stop blogging,' Gibson (*All Tomorrow's Parties*) wrote on Sept. 12.

"Gibson added, 'I've found blogging to be a low-impact activity, mildly narcotic and mostly quite convivial, but the thing I've most enjoyed about it is how it never fails to underline the fact that if I'm doing this, I'm definitely not writing a novel. ... The image that comes most readily to mind is that of a kettle failing to boil because the lid's been left off.' ...

forwarded from SCIFIWIRE, Sept. 14/03

William Gibson was interviewed on late-night CBC show Play on October 30, 2003, in connection with his recent novel *Pattern Recognition*.

The Vancouver International Writers Festival featured William Gibson, Spider Robinson and Paul McAuley on October 22nd. Judging by the write-up in the Georgia Straight of October 30th, only Spider Robinson was upbeat about the future of SF. Gibson talked about SF immediately acquiring a "patina of quaintness", McAuley said "A lot of science fiction has started to look the same," and Robinson said "One of the reasons I'm in science fiction ... is that I want smarter voters."

(GS)

KING WINS BOOK MEDAL

The National Book Foundation awarded horror writer Stephen King its 2003 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, the Reuters news service reported.

King joins a list of previous winners that includes John Updike, Philip Roth, Saul Bellow and Toni Morrison, the wire service reported.

The 55-year-old King has more than 300 million copies of his books in print, including *The Shining* (1977), *Pet Sematary* (1983) and *Misery* (1987), all of which were made into popular films, the news service reported. ...

From Reuters (Sept. 17/03)

THE SUNBURST AWARD "is pleased to announce the winner of its 2003 award: *Skin Folk* by Nalo Hopkinson (Warner 2001, ISBN: 0-446-67803-1)

"Ms. Hopkinson will receive a cash prize of \$1,000 and the Sunburst medallion at the launch of her new novel, *Salt Roads*. This will take place Wednesday, November 5, 2003, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Bambu on the Lake, 245, Queen's Quay West, Toronto (416-214-6000). For more information about the launch, please contact Heidi Winter at H.B. Fenn (1-800-267-3366 ext. 240)

"The other short-listed works for the 2003 award were:

TALON by Paulette Dubé (NeWest 2002) 1-8963000-47-2
SALT FISH GIRL by Larissa Lai (Thomas Allen Publishers 2002) 0-88762-111-2

PERMANENCE by Karl Schroeder (Tor 2002) 0-765-30371-X
DEAD MAN'S GOLD by Paul Yee (Douglas & McIntyre 2002) 0-88899-475-3

"The jurors for the 2003 Sunburst Award were Lesley Choyce, Hiromi Goto, Terence M. Green, Eileen Kernaghan and Arthur Slade. They selected these five short-listed works as representing the finest of novel-length Canadian fantastic literature published during the year 2002.

"For more information about Nalo Hopkinson, see her web site: <http://www.sff.net/people/nalo/>

"For information about eligibility and the selection process, 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 2004 SUNBURST AWARD. ****

"The jury for the 2004 award is comprised of Caterina Edwards, Claude Lalumière, Yves Meynard, Lyle Weis and Michelle Sagara West. Submission guidelines are available at www.sunburstaward.org. The deadline for receipt of the 2004 award submissions is 31 January 2004. 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.

11-September-03

RUSSIAN SF AUTHOR BULYCHEV DIES

"Russian SF writer Kir Bulychev, whose real name was Igor Vsevolodovich Mozheiko, died Sept. 5, the Locus Online Web site reported. He was 68.

"Born in 1934 in Moscow, his best known works included stories about Alice Selezneva, a young girl from the future, first published in English in 1977 and collected as *Alice: The Girl From Earth* by Xlibris/Fossicker Press in 2002. Other English-language books included *Half a Life* (1977) and *Gusliar Wonders* (1983), both published by Macmillan as part of their Soviet SF line, the site reported. Details of Bulychev's life and work are found on his official English-language Web site."

(forwarded by Michael Morse from SCIFIWIRE, Sept. 14/03)

Media News

(from Ray Seredin, Michael Morse, et al.)

NEW "DR. WHO" SERIES

(by Ray Seredin)

OK, now put your eyes back in.

Yes that's right, the BBC is bringing back the World's longest running Sci-Fi television series "Doctor Who", (and there was much rejoicing.)

Because the new series will not start airing until mid to late 2005, there are very few details on it. This is what known so far.

- 1) It will be a six to twelve episode series.
- 2) It will be produced by BBC Wales.
- 3) Mal Young head of BBC's continuing series division will act as Executive Producer.
- 4) Russell T. Davies creator of "Queer As Folk", will write the first story.

5) Actor Paul McGann could return as the "Eighth Doctor", however Bill Mighy, Eddie Izzard, Alan Davies, Sean Pertwee (Real life son for the "3rd. Doctor" Jon Perwee.) and Richard E. Grant could step in as the "Ninth Doctor".

6) The Doctor best known miscreants the "Daleks" will likely return will the first story with a few surprises for the good "Doctor".

7) The TARDIS will remain (In part.) a broken down old London Police Call Box.

The Simpsons and Firefly Win Animation and VFX Primetime Emmys

THE SIMPSONS and FIREFLY were the big Emmy winners for animation and visual effects, respectively, at The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' 2002-2003 Creative Arts Primetime Emmys for programs and individual achievements at the 55th Annual Emmy Awards presentation September 13, 2003, at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

THE SIMPSONS continued its Emmy-winning streak for Animated Program (One Hour or Less) while HANK AZARIA was honored for his voice over work as Moe in THE SIMPSONS episode "Baby Blues." This was a previously announced juried award as was the Individual Achievement in Animation Awards AWN reported earlier, which went to Scott Willis, production designer, and Dan Krall, layout artist, for their work on Cartoon Network's "Episode XXXII" on SAMURAI JACK. Marciak Albrecht also won one for his animation on HBO's THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES: SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, "Imagine" and "Turn, Turn, Turn." ...

CHASED BY DINOSAURS, from Discovery Channel, won for Outstanding Animated Program (over one hour). The best visual effects for a miniseries, movie or special went to FRANK HERBERT'S CHILDREN OF DUNE, seen on the Sci Fi Channel. Independent Media, Production Company to the best commercial honors for its FISH, a promo for PBS. ...

Forwarded by Michael Morse
from Animation World Network, Sept. 14/03

WRIGHT REWINDS QUESTOR TAPES

Herbert Wright, executive producer of the proposed television series Gene Roddenberry's *Questor*, told SCI FI Wire that the show has found financing and is moving forward.

Questor will be based on *The Questor Tapes*, an NBC pilot that Star Trek creator Roddenberry co-wrote and produced in 1974, but that never materialized into a weekly series. "We're financed," Wright said in an interview. "We have more meetings, because we've not yet chosen what broadcaster will carry us, whether it will be network or cable. We may still go with syndication."

Questor will follow the plight of an android on a mission to help save mankind from itself. Wright said that the show will launch with a two-hour kick-off episode rather than a standard pilot. "That's what they did with *Star Trek: The Next Generation*," said Wright, who was a co-producer on TNG. "It's not really a pilot, because a pilot means that everyone needs to see it and see if they like the numbers before they go forward. In fact, we're thinking we'll start off each season with a two-hour show. But after the first two-hour, we're planning 24 hourlong episodes. We're doing this show on a prime-time level, with a prime-time budget, so it's obviously of high class, and it's not going to be done low-budget like some of the more recent Roddenberry projects." ...

forwarded by "Questorcoat1" from SCIFIWIRE, Sept. 14/03

WB SPEEDS WITH FLASH

The WB has ordered a pilot for a TV series based on the DC Comics series *The Flash*, Variety reported.

Todd Komarnicki (Resistance) is writing the pilot and will executive produce the project via Warner Brothers Television and his Guy Walks Into a Bar company, the trade paper reported. The WB has attached a hefty penalty to the project if it's not picked up to series.

The Flash, which centers on a man with superhuman speed, is the Frog network's latest attempt to reimagine a comic or literary classic for prime time, following its Superman-inspired *Smallville* and this season's upcoming *Tarzan*, the trade paper reported.

As with *Smallville*, the new *Flash* will have a "no tights, no flights" philosophy, which means the character won't be clad in his classic red suit, the trade paper reported. The new show will also reportedly incorporate a time-travel element: The hero will be a fresh-out-of-college Gothamite who discovers he has the ability to move so fast, he can travel backward or forward in time.

Forwarded from SCIFIWIRE, Sept. 14/03

PYTHON'S "GRAIL" GOES BROADWAY

Mike Nichols, legendary director of both stage and screen, has signed on to helm *Spamelot*, a musical adaptation of Monty Python's wacky 1975 cult film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

The project is the brainchild of Python alum Eric Idle, who wrote the book for the musical based on the script he did with fellow *Flying Circus* members John Cleese (news), Michael Palin (news), Terry Gilliam (news), Terry Jones (news) and the late Graham Chapman (news). ...

(Forwarded by Ray Seredin from INWFen)

11-September-03

BALE IS BATMAN

Christian Bale (*Equilibrium*) has been cast in the starring role of Bruce Wayne in Warner Brothers' upcoming new Batman movie, to be directed by Christopher Nolan and produced by Emma Thomas, the studio announced on Sept. 11.

Jeff Robinov, president of production for Warner Brothers Pictures, made the surprising announcement in a press release.

Principal photography on the film is expected to begin in early 2004. The movie is written by David Goyer (*Blade*) and Nolan (*Insomnia*) and will follow the early career of The Dark Knight, the studio said.

(forwarded by Michael Morse
from SCIFIWIRE, Sept. 14/03)

CARLTON STRIKES MULTIPLE DEALS FOR LAST UNICORN

International has struck multiple feature, TV and home entertainment deals for its children's animated classic, *The Last Unicorn*. First, Carlton has signed a deal with movie production company Continent Film Ltd for a live-action re-make. In addition, the film has been licensed for broadcast to Roadshow Television in Australia. Video deals have been signed with NVC Felix Film in Poland and Goldvision in France and French-speaking territories. In the U.S., Ripple Junction will produce branded women's apparel for *The Last Unicorn* alongside buttons, lunchboxes, stickers and patches. The movie will also be re-released on video and DVD in the U.K. later this year. The film sold 70,000 units on DVD when it was initially released in 2002. ...

(forwarded Sept. 16/03)

TOONAMI LANDS STAR WARS: CLONE WARS

The U.K.'s Toonami channel, dedicated to action/adventure/anime animation, has landed *Star Wars: Clone Wars*. The new 2D series from Lucasfilm and Cartoon Network Studios chronicles the adventures of the *Star Wars* heroes during the events that directly follow EPISODE II. The third Cartoon Network channel in Europe, Toonami, started broadcasting on September 8, 2003 and will begin airing *Clones* on November 10. Cartoon Network will debut the new show in the U.S. on November 7. *Samurai Jack* and *Dexter's Laboratory* creator Genndy Tartakovsky is the lead animator on the series.

(forwarded Sept. 16/03)

YET MORE MOVIES

Dean Cain, Tim Curry, Jennifer Tilly and Jon Lovitz will star in the family comedy BAILEY for director David Devine. Laurie Holden, Kenneth Welsh, Sheila McCarthy and Angela Valee also join the cast. It's the story of a talking dog named Bailey, who can only be heard by his master, a billionaire animal behaviorist. When the master dies, Bailey inherits her

fortune much to the incredulity of the surrounding family, who try various schemes to get their paws on it. Mary Walsh and Heather Conkie scripted.

Keira Knightley is in negotiations to star opposite Adrien Brody in Mandalay Pictures/Section Eight's *The Jacket* for helmer John Maybury and Warner Independent Pictures. Marc Rocco and Massy Tadjedin wrote the script about a soldier convicted of murder who during his treatment in a psychiatric hospital begins to believe he is traveling through time. Through his time travel, he searches for Knightley, who plays a woman he met as a child and is fated to love. The British actress will don an American accent for the role. ...

(Michael, AICN, Sept. 18/03)

Why I Run, and Help to Run, Conventions

(Or : *Why Lorna is a complete and utter masochist*)

by Lorna Appleby

(Note: *Lorna uses the term "ConComming" where some other fen use "conrunning".*)

I have an as-yet-unidentified neuromuscular disease. I have a damaged nerve in my back. I have all sorts of food and drink allergies and intolerances. Or, in short, I just like to claim "I'm broken but not acknowledging it." So what could possibly make me, three or four times a year, put myself through excruciating levels of agony, and *pay* for the privilege of doing so?

I don't have a definite answer of why I end up on so many convention committees. I have excuses, I have justifications, I have guesses: but the bottom line is, I have no idea why I keep doing it month after month, year after year; masochistic tendencies in a stereotypically "nice person" Canadian body, I suppose.

My best guess as to this habitual self-torturing hobby is the people. "Fen" are some of the nicest, friendliest, wonderful people I've ever had the fortune to meet. They'll go out of their way for a complete stranger. They'll happily explain to an innocent mundane what it's all about. They'll show enthusiasm for just about anything, for three minutes. They're happy to meet you. They're happy to drink a beer (cider, wine) with you. They're more than thrilled to explain to you how a game

works, or to show this nifty drawing technique they have, or to wax about the writing technique best for slash-horror-fic (some say, lighter fluid and a match).

The best way to meet people at a convention is to strap a sign around your neck that says "I help organize this beast." People want to ask you questions, they want to help you, they want to get to know you, they want to be your friend, they want to complain, and most infamously, they want your help for "just five minutes." If I'm in an environment where I don't know many people, I tend to be a wallflower, preferring to watch and observe and not really interacting. Being ConCom (or Staff) I have a secure shield to help me establish my own identity in this mass of people. Since discovering this road, I've met more fantastic people to talk to at a con than I ever dreamed of.

Yes, there are people you will seriously regret meeting: people who don't have any concept of hygiene, or people who will glom onto you and follow you around like a puppy, telling you trivial things you couldn't ever possibly care about, or people who just out-and-out creep you out and since you're representing the con you can't tell them ...

But.

The wondrous people who enrich your life and broaden your horizons vastly outnumber those people. Making friends with an intimidating person who growls at the scary people doesn't hurt either. ^_-

So my first and foremost reason for ConComming (Staffing) conventions is the attendees. They are some darn cool people and I'm thrilled to have met them and befriended them.

I don't get out much. It's sad, but true. The main reasons are the long list of health issues listed above; what this means is most of my oldest friends have moved to other cities, gotten wives and husbands, or worse yet stopped gaming or simply gotten lives. (THE JERKS!) Having nowhere to go but the pharmacy is a pretty pathetic life; ConComming gets me out of the house.

Between con meetings, side-planning sessions, picking things up, dropping them off, and other random running around in circles, I'm out of the house and doing some sort of socializing roughly every two weeks. My radius of travel is limited; it's easier for me to get to Bellingham than to Kits. My time limit on how long I can stay at the meeting is even more limited; but the meetings, and social gatherings, are a motivation for me to get off my duff, my nose out of a book and go poke the real world for a few hours. What's even more impressive is these people don't care how limited you are, they're thrilled you made it.

Those other masochists who attend these meetings typically pull me out of my cabin fever and loneliness and make me laugh and snicker and giggle for a few hours. They actually seem to find my cynical sarcasm and smarminess as humorous as it's intended. Worse yet, some have

said that having one person around who'll say all those things that should be said, but everyone else is too polite to say, is a good thing. Everyone wants to feel appreciated, witty and welcome and these strange people seem to make *everyone* who offers their time like they're a special person. That's a pretty powerful motivator to get you out of the house.

If ever you find yourself wondering what happened to your social life as I once did you'll probably follow those thoughts shortly thereafter with wonderings on how you can get more active. Convention running is a very rewarding activity and will certainly keep you active. The key (which I keep dropping) is that you have to make sure to limit what you volunteer for to what you and your schedule can agree to. A head of Ops who hasn't slept in four weeks is never a good thing.

Get out. See some houses of people you've never met. Have several laughs and giggles. Works for me!

Most people like to sit back and look at a masterpiece and say "I helped build that!" And any con that has more smiling people than frowning IS a masterpiece (or miracle.) Staffing (ConComming) a con is like helping to build a huge house of cards. Tense at times, frustrating at times, strangely fun, often leaves you wondering why you're doing it but when you've finished you stand in awe and glow.

It's human nature to create communities and places of gathering. It gives the average human being a warm fuzzy to have created something to which people come and enjoy themselves. Warm fuzzies are a very good motivation to keep living and not just blow your savings on a bookstore's worth of reading and go live in a cabin until you run out of food, books, or both. (I really can't advise eating the books; paper cuts on the tongue are nasty.)

Every time I get asked to do something that's not quite in my field of experience, I get to try and figure out how it should be done, and then work at it until I succeed. I have quite probably learned more through working (and most certainly running!) cons than I ever have through working mundane jobs, or running my own business or any other "fun" thing. What's the wondrous part is often you're standing right along someone else trying to figure out how to fix something. The cooperation in the creation is one of the ultimate rewards.

Volunteering is about creation, feeling warm fuzzies for spending your time to create something for others to enjoy, learning new skills and sharing your knowledge with others. When the cause is something you love doing anyway, it's the perfect way to spend sometimes next to non-existent spare time.

And where else can you find a sucker willing to teach you how to play an instrument for free? ^_^

WCSFA/V-CON SOCIETY MINUTES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF OCTOBER 12, 2003

at VCon 28, Days Hotel Vancouver-Surrey

Present: Lorna Appleby, Leen Beavington, Marie-Louise Beesley, Chris Bell, Devon Boorman, Andrew Brechin, Clint Budd, Greg Cairns, Paul Carpentier, Chilam, Steve Forty, Jason Harris, Jeff Hartt, Palle Hoffstein, Jenny ?, Allan Kelly, Mike Leeson, Kathleen Moore-Freeman, Robson ?, Ray Seredin, Fran Skene, Jean Smith, Garth Spencer, Cindy Turner, Paul Whitmore, Ken Wong

Clint called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Clint moved that an adjustment be made to the agenda, to read the list of nominees for the WCSFA executive positions in 2003-04. The motion was seconded and passed. Garth read the nominees:

For President: Palle Hoffstein
For Vice-President: Paul Carpentier
For Secretary-Treasurer: Clint Budd

For Members -at-Large:
Lorna Appleby
Marie-Louise Beesley
Andrew Brechin
Ray Seredin
Kathleen Moore-Freeman
Chilam
Greg Cairns

Clint nominated R. Graeme Cameron as WCSFA Archivist, and Steve Forty seconded.

Jeff Hartt moved to close the nominations.

Clint asked if there were any objection to a vote by show of hands.

Palle wanted to decline his nomination for President.

Marie-Louise nominated Greg Cairns for Vice-President, and Robson ? seconded. (This subtracts Greg from the Member-at-Large nominations.)

Clint nominated Paul Carpentier for President, and Jeff seconded.

Clint pointed out that anyone nominated, **and** acclaimed, can resign.

Steve Forty asked, isn't this a meeting of the **V-Con Society**? Clint said yes.

Andrew pointed out that he cannot promise his attendance at V-Con Society meetings, so he wanted to be listed as an "occasional consultant". Clint emphasized that filling in at need, as Andrew meant by "occasional consultant", in fact defines the member-at-large position.

Clint moved to accept the candidates (as revised) by acclamation. Somebody seconded.

By way of discussion of the motion, Paul Carpentier asked whether it were legal for him to stand or serve as WCSFA President, not only because he is a United States citizen, but also because if he were to declare bankruptcy, he would not be allowed on a Canadian board of directors. Clint pointed out that neither residency in B.C. nor Canadian citizenship are required of the President; as to bankruptcy, we can deal with any consequences therefrom if and when they come up. Jeff and Ray supported this policy.

Clint called for a vote. All but two present voted aye, two voted nay, and the motion was carried. Clint made a gracious passing-on-the-torch speech and had to run to catch his ferry.

Kathleen Moore-Freeman proposed to combine the next meeting with her next Perihelion Party in January 2004. Discussion of the pros and cons followed.

Palle moved to adjourn. Garth asked what about discussing VCon 29? Palle said that his procedural preference was for the WCSFA exec. to accept, rather than to construct upcoming bids, and for the WCSFA exec. to review the hotels in the Lower Mainland every two years.

Discussion of the unofficial VCon 29 bid (which is currently forming) now followed. Steve Forty asked, can you recommend a hotel? Lorna suggested, maybe we can just present the whole bid and its ideas now? Paul pointed out, actually WCSFA must wait for the bid to be ready for formal submission. Discussion ensued between Marie-Louise and Paul about the nascent VCon 29 bid; while seven to eight people are on board, well more than required minimum of five, the bid has not yet established a budget, Guests of Honour, or a hotel. A formal submission is not yet ready, but should be ready within two weeks.

Ray said we should have a meeting before November 11th, bringing up things like the upcoming Christmas shopping season for some reason.

Jean moved to end the discussion. Andrew seconded, and we adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

VCON 28 REPORT

A report by Michael Morse

Arriving on Friday:

In the lobby I saw Paul Carpentier [chair of VCon 28]. He asked if I had everything I needed for the trivia game. I said that I'd meant to hit a store and buy some prizes but I'd forgotten, and he said he had some in his room. He and I went there and he gave me four nice prizes (one for each member of the winning team) which had been provided by Imperial Hobbies. (Good for Imperial Hobbies! They're my regular comic shop, so the next time I go in there I'll make sure to thank them.)



After stashing my suitcase in my room and the trivia supplies in the ballroom, I registered. Clint Budd was working at registration. I went to the dealer's room, where Fruvous said he would be with Garth Spencer at Garth's Stop Press table, but no one was there, so I moved along.

I checked the gaming room to see if there were *Vampire: The Masquerade* games scheduled, but there weren't. It was just as well—even though I did bring my character sheet, I'd hate to have missed any panels because I was too busy gaming.

Opening Ceremonies: Despite claiming to be unprepared, the guests of honour were witty at the opening ceremonies at 7:00 p.m. Esther Friesner told the story of her first con and also how to find where a vampire is buried (have a nude adolescent virgin male—or "male equivalent of a maiden," as she put it—ride a white horse through a cemetery, and where they stop is the vampire's grave). Nalo Hopkinson and Adrian Kleinbergen were more shy but still managed to acquit themselves humorously, and Jordin Kare gave a clever joke history of physics. ("On the seventh day, God rested, and an object at rest tends to remain at rest.")

My notes are the least detailed for this next part as I was too busy working on the event itself to record it for history. I apologize in advance if I've forgotten any one of the many people who were kind enough to play in or audit the game. If I've done so, feel free to write in and identify yourself—and give yourself a pat on the back. I appreciate everyone who participated.

Trivia Preparation: At 8:00 p.m. it was time to prepare Ballroom A for the trivia game schedule for 9:00 p.m. We set up a podium and two long tables that could seat four people each. This configuration was aesthetically perfect, but it meant that we needed an extension cord for the buzzer system (belonging to Al Betz and stored by Sidney Trim). I went to the front desk, where Vinny got Haroon to take me to the supply room and get one. I got two just to be safe, a short white two-prong cord and a long orange three-prong cord. As it turned out, we needed both. The buzzer system didn't completely work at first and we were afraid it had been in storage too long, but Joe managed to get it working. Joe and Fru suggested names for the teams (ones that only fans would get): the Klingon Smooth-Headed Mothers, and the Breen Bikini Team, so I made signs for the tables.



I checked the sign-up sheet. At T-minus forty-five minutes, there were only two people signed up—Fru pointed out that as long as these two showed up, at least we'd have enough players for one to compete against the other. Fortunately, as time went on, more people showed up (James, Tim, Cindy, Tom), and of the two friends I asked to fill out the teams—Marius and Stanley Foo—I only needed one (Marius). Stanley, Ray, and other friends joined the audience and provided good vibes and moral support. One person present was Keith, but I can't remember in what capacity—player or audience member.



That Trivia Thing! The game went well. We had a good-sized audience, and both teams played very well—the scores were very close (23 -20). Fruvous did a great job as host, bantering with the contestants and audience with his reservoirs of wit and charisma. Thanks to Tila making a special effort to show up at FRED the week before, we also had the beautiful "collage" trivia question storage boxes that she made for us (to replace my Pop Tart box, which kept getting people's hopes up about there being

Pop Tarts at FRED).

The audience was allowed to answer the questions if neither of the teams could, and Peter Tupper got many correct answers. One the players even nailed the trick question "Who are the members of *Spider-*

Man and His Amazing Friends?”, in which the trick is that most people forget to mention the obvious—“Spider-Man.”

Fruvous saved ten minutes at the end of the game to award the prizes and read credits for everyone who helped make it happen. I was touched that I got a round of applause as creator (Fru prefers to call me “producer”) and head writer. When it was over, Joe, Fru, and I packed up the game, and we were free to enjoy the rest of the convention.

Mutant Aliens: I caught the last half of *Mutant Aliens*, a film by Bill Plympton that had started playing at 10:00 p.m. It was a lot darker and more depressing than his early-nineties shorts, but a clever premise, a lot of great comedic moments, a riveting story, and some good music and acting made up for it. Even so, it left me in a weird, dark mood for the next hour or so.

Hidden Talents: (Don’t these read like DVD extra track titles?) Two guys were sitting at the free table giving away the copies of the book *Hidden Talents* that had been provided there. Since they had nothing to do with the book itself, they asked everyone that walked by to autograph their copies. I did so.

The Midnight Snack Panel: Julie McGalliard ran The Midnight Snack Panel, about all the types of humans that eat other humans—cannibals, vampires, werewolves, and brain-eating zombies were the classic examples, but it was pointed out that devout Catholics eat the body of Christ. Someone wondered if people who compulsively chew their nails or hair counted. It was pointed out that hair is not digestible, so author Don H. DeBrandt said he’d write about “hairpires,” vampires that eat hair to live. I didn’t know until I attended this panel that werewolves ate their victims, but I was told that they do.

We talked about what vampires represented—sex, control (power), or class? I’ve always thought of vampires as *sensual*, but not *sexual*. Cannibals and zombies could be said to represent the poor eating the rich, Julie said. It was agreed that something feeding from a human is even scarier when the victim is a baby, for example a vampire drinking blood from a baby (as Dracula’s three women did in *Dracula*—only implicitly suggested in Bram Stoker’s book, as opposed to shown in Francis Ford Coppola’s movie, according to Julie). Someone noted that in some cultures people eat the placenta after the baby is born. I blurted out the punchline which at that point spontaneously occurred to me: “‘Placenta’?! I thought you said ‘polenta!’” and it got a laugh. Julie pointed out that brain-eating zombies are actually ghouls.

Cannibalism as a fetish is hard to study, said Julie, because a fetish by definition is shared by a minority of the population, so it’s difficult to get large enough numbers. Artist Mike Jackson asked about

Frankenstein’s monster (hereafter referred to as “Frankenstein” for simplicity), who didn’t eat people, but was made of other people, or cannibalized from them, as it were. Julie replied that to her Frankenstein fell into the category of “creepy undead cyborgs.”

Mike Jackson and Steve Lyons, two people I used to know at the UBC SFS, were there for parts of the Midnight Snack Panel. After the panel, I said hello to them, and they asked what I was up to these days. I gave Steve my business card, and gave Mike the latest issue of *This Is What Happens When You Don’t Eat Your Vegetables* so he could see how I was drawing these days (during our SFS era, he was concerned with my artistic development, and sometimes offered advice or encouragement). None of us got a chance to meet again for the rest of the convention, so we’ll never get to exchange stories about the nine lost years where we were out of touch.

Late Friday Night: Both Fruvous and I were hungry, so we went to the lobby and asked the front desk clerk whether any of the hotel restaurants were open. They weren’t, but the clerk suggested Knight & Day down the street. We tried it, and it was great. I hadn’t been to Knight & Day in several years because the only other time I ate there, the food was dry and overpriced, but this time, the burger was big and succulent and reasonably priced. Their dessert menu wasn’t great, so I tried a bowl of bubble gum flavoured ice cream, which turned out to be blue, with actual pellets of bubble gum in it. “This is going to turn my tongue blue, isn’t it?” I said. “Yes,” replied Fru, “but it’ll be worth it.” The service was incredibly fast; every time I finished a glass of pop, it was immediately replaced with a full one before I even had to time realize I’d be needing one.

Saturday – Art: I put free copies of my mini-comics on the free table and also on Garth’s table. Then I took a quick tour of the art show. I enjoyed the pages and illustrations from *GothHouse* (Julie McGalliard’s comic), as well as the display for the sculpture that artist GOH Adrian Kleinbergen had made for an *On-Spec* cover last year, of a skull behind a brick wall. (I *have* that issue! It was free with my membership package at the last VCon!) Ironically, that’s all I have to say about the art show, even though I’m a fanartist. I don’t know if I could trust myself to give a fair review of an art show, because I have high standards for fanart (and proart—if that’s a word). Heck, my own art doesn’t meet the standard at which I’d pay money for someone’s art, so there you have it.

The Upcoming Star Wars Movie

WARNING: SPOILERS!

At 11:00 a.m., professional film critic Gareth Von Kallenbach whetted our appetite for the upcoming *Star Wars: Episode III*. Here’s

what seems to be hard fact: The film was shot in studios in Australia, with no location shooting. Anakin Skywalker, Mace Windu, and Yoda will have battles—Anakin will fight Count Dooku, and Mace will fight Palpatine. Padmé Amidala will die. Obi-Wan Kenobi will become a fugitive (just in time for *Episode IV*!) Anakin will become Palpatine's bodyguard. There will be a new character, the leader of a droid army, who wears white armour and wields light sabers, though he himself is not a droid, a Jedi, or a Sith! Anakin will not be a pretty sight. In an early scene, Anakin will show us why he's the best fighter pilot in the galaxy. Obi-Wan will fight Anakin and slice off Anakin's leg in attempt to slow him down enough to reason with him—but Anakin will fight on, taking more damage, and eventually "a hot bath." Obviously, this will make Anakin even more angry. We will find out who erased the file in *Episode II: Attack of the Clones* that told about Kamino, the planet where the cloning was done—it was someone we saw on-screen in *Episode II*, with the implied assumption that only a Jedi could have done that—but maybe not; maybe that assumption is meant as a trap. ("It's a trap!") The cockpits of the new Jedi fighter ships will look like TIE Fighter cockpits. Palpatine will get the most screentime in this movie, and a cool catchphrase that will dominate e-mail signature files for years to come. Anakin's first words as Darth Vader will also be epic—he will say *one* word and everyone in the theatre will be shocked. Boba Fett will be in the film, but sadly, still a child. Ewan MacGregor was given an exact replica of Alec Guinness's light saber, will wear prosthetic makeup to look more like Guinness, and will have Guinness's hairstyle. Neither Han Solo nor the *Millennium Falcon* will be in the movie. Clone trooper armour will start to look even more like Stormtrooper armour. Bail Organa will be flying the *Tantive IV* (name provided to me by my friend Ryan Hawe), the ship from the opening of *Episode IV* over Tatooine, dropping off Obi-Wan and baby Luke Skywalker. And yes, the droids will be mind-wiped at some point in the film, so Tatooine will still be new to them in *Episode IV*. (No doubt George Lucas wishes he could do the same to *Star Wars* fans so they don't remember how much better the movies were before the *Special Editions*.)

Rumours: "Who remembers what Obi-Wan said to Luke when Luke said he couldn't see with the blast shield down?" asked Von Kallenbach. We raised our hands, and he motioned to me to say the line. "Your eyes can deceive you. Don't trust them," I said in my best Alec Guinness impression, causing a couple of people to chuckle. (I was having a "good impression day"; usually when I try to do Guinness it comes out like Ringo Starr.) Von Kallenbach then explained why he brought that up: Palpatine's human face, as seen in the first two prequels, might actually be a projection. It could be that he's always looked like he did in *Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*, and that he's over a thousand years old—one of the original Sith! Lucas says that *Episode III* will be the last *Star Wars* movie

ever. (Fans remain skeptical.) Vader may be kept alive by dark Force energy—possibly from Palpatine himself, giving Vader an incentive to not kill Palpatine.

Finally, Von Kallenbach dropped the bomb, his controversial opinion that people complain about the horrible writing in the prequels, but if you go back and watch *IV-VI*, it's just as bad—and that Von Kallenbach believes that fans are being unfair for worshipping Peter Jackson for getting *Lord of the Rings* right—he only adapted an existing story (*Lord of the Rings*), while Lucas made up his own story. Von Kallenbach also said that Lucas's visionary genius should be acknowledged—Lucas anticipated the profits he'd make from the toy license, then used that money to become an industry leader in sound technology (THX) and visual effects. I still didn't feel that this made Lucas a good writer. I, and Ryan—who incredibly had missed this panel—would have a chance to debate this (in a friendly way) with Von Kallenbach later when we met him in the Tiki Lounge and bought him and his wife a drink. But let's stay in chronological order—

Taxonomy of Genre Fiction: At 1:00 p.m., panelists Bluejack, Karl Johanson, Mary Kay Kare, Rhea Rose, and Marcie Tentchoff, along with the audience, had fun with yet another return to the old can of worms, "Is it SF?" The idea for the panel came from flamewars over the question. Mary Kay Kare said she just had to add herself to the panel when she heard about it. Bluejack (who, with his long grey hair and goatee, looks like a wizard) said that you can't really define SF, because it has no inherent meaning that will have no exceptions. Why categorize at all? Kare said for personal or political reasons; Tentchoff said for practical reasons like shelving and marketing. In a bookstore, double-shelving a book is inefficient, and can be deceptive, since a copy can sell out in one location, but still be listed in the inventory as existing in the other location—but some customers might not think to look in the other location. Bluejack said that some software doesn't even let you put a book in two categories. Kare said that was some bad software. Johanson said that categorizing can be useful, since you have to narrow your choices because nobody can possibly read or afford to buy every SF book that comes out these days. If you liked a book, and know that it's in a particular category of SF, that might help you find other books you'll like.

Bluejack said he chose the "taxonomy" metaphor because SF branches off into different species as its numbers and diversity increase. Tentchoff approached the recent terms "slipstream" and "magic realism." Sometimes authors and reviewers use them to exclude from the category "science fiction." (They're lying, of course!) Johanson said that not calling SF "SF" might be a good thing, because it might trick a mundane into reading an SF novel, and realizing that he enjoyed it and

that there might be something to SF. “But if you tell someone that says they don’t like spaceship, ‘Read this—it’s not about spaceships,’ and then it *is*, they’ll be pissed!” countered Kare.

Kare talked about mystery fans, and how they prefer to read only their favourite subgenre (she listed a bunch, including a term I didn’t know: “cozy”; she defined it later, when I asked, as typically having an amateur sleuth, and an upscale, cozy setting, such as a tea shop in an English village). A mystery/SF novel can’t call itself “mystery/SF” because mystery fans won’t read SF, whereas it *can* call itself “mystery,” because SF fans will read *anything*. Johanson made an interesting point: in China, “science fiction” and “fantasy” are diametrically opposed—science fiction is always about a bright future where technology has solved our problems, while fantasy is understood to be about the mythological past.

Kare said that humans are categorizing animals. Mystery fans like to read mysteries that follow the same formula; so do SF fans, sometimes. Bluejack worries that writers who set out to write for a particular subgenre (for example, “steampunk”) will not be as creative, because instead of exploring, they’re limiting themselves. The panel needed a black felt pen to begin drawing a diagram of genres, so I lent them my medium-fine -point Sharpie.

A guy wearing a “University of Mordor” t-shirt said that Eugene Yong “broke out of the genre ghetto” and made kung fu novels respectable by being well-educated and showing it in his writing—but that that doesn’t work here, as with Tolkien, who was also well-educated, but was still “in the ghetto.” Bluejack disagreed: Kurt Vonnegut, and Margaret Atwood also got out. Political satire was disguised as SF in the works of Stanislaw Lem—another author who mundanes call “not SF.” SF courses are finally being taught at universities, yet, ironically, you can’t get away with writing SF in a writing course. Kare had had an experience where the *professor* was OK with SF, and gave Kare constructive criticism on her actual writing skills, but the *class* hated the SF. Tentchoff was invited to teach a writing class once, and was told that it was great to finally get a published author to teach a class, “but don’t tell them you write SF! Tell them you write children’s literature—that’s not as bad.” She decided not to take the job.

Someone asked what steampunk was, and Johanson concisely defined it as “What if the information revolution happened at the same time as the industrial revolution?” and added that steampunk could also be classified as “alternate history.” “Magic realism,” which came from South America, is like “hard fantasy”—it has to have consistent rules for magic.

As the chart began to grow and branch out, it had to be pointed out that the chart was not saying that one thing evolved from another—only

that one thing was a subtype of another. For example, “gothic” preceded “horror,” but today “gothic” is a subcategory of “horror.”

“Slipstream” was what Bruce Sterling used for a name when he thought he’d thought of a new genre, in which literary aspirations were the operative factor, said Bluejack. Now, however, said Tentchoff, “slipstream” is used to mean anything that isn’t categorizable.

Submission guidelines were declared a good place to use genre definitions. If you run a magazine and you already have 600 deal-with-the-devil stories and don’t want more, you should probably mention in your ad that you don’t want any more deal-with-the-devil stories for a while, said Johanson. On the other hand, countered Kare, a “don’t” list sometimes inspires in authors a perverse desire to write and submit exactly what they’ve been told not to. Tentchoff said she once read an ad that said “no laundry lists,” so she wrote a story about one and sent it in.

Bluejack asked, “What if we call SF ‘what SF fans read?’”—tautological, yet still not without exception: Kare said, “But I read everything!” “OK, SF fans *as an aggregate*, then,” Bluejack qualified, and wondered how this affected what to call novels *about* fandom, like *Cavalier and Clay*—little or no speculation, but still aimed at fans.

In the main hallway, I talked to modeller Bob McDonald while he built “The Homer” (the car designed by Homer on *The Simpsons*) and the Jetsons’ car. We ended up on the subject of bananas—I’d heard that there might be a shortage because banana growers had only grown one breed, which had turned out to be decimated by a disease or a pest (I forget which). McDonald said not to worry; only the *industrial* bananas were in short supply, while the *commercial* bananas I get at Safeway would still be there. I like bananas.

B Movies/Cult TV R. Graeme Cameron was in his element here, along with Lynne Fahnstalk, Steve Fahnstalk, and Tim Palgut, at this 3:00 p.m. panel. Graeme started us off with a brief history of B movies. The term came from the era of the studio system, in which studios would have stars under contract and cast them in studio-owned projects. Some movies got the A-list stars and high budgets, and some got less-famous or unknown actors and smaller budgets. Both types of movies were still intended to be the best movie possible, however. What changed that was the distribution of independent films. Indy filmmakers of the 1950s discovered they could make a movie for \$5,000 and sell it to a distributor for \$10,000, who could in turn sell it for \$20,000. The cheaper the movie, the higher the profit margin. American International Pictures would make their teen movies two at a time and then sell them as a double-bill. B movies came to be thought of as schlocky.

Roger Corman is still thought of as a B-movie director, even when he has a big budget. Bill “One-Shot” Bodine was a director who never did retakes. It didn’t matter if there was a huge mistake in the shot, it was still good enough. The studios didn’t mind because he was always under budget and ahead of schedule, and he made hundreds of films, including *Billy the Kid vs. Frankenstein*. Someone in the audience said that Bodine’s method was later used by the Dogma 95 movement.

Why do people like B movies? Because they represent a simpler, more innocent time, and thus are refreshingly pleasant in contrast to the cynicism of modern movies, said Graeme. Also, B movies can have wilder, more creative ideas that would never make it into a mainstream movie, added Palgut—you’ll never see Hitler’s head kept alive in a cardboard box in a normal movie. Nostalgia is also a factor, said Graeme, but what’s “nostalgia” is different to each generation; he knows someone for whom only Laurel & Hardy are far enough back to be nostalgia. Steve Fahnstalk pointed out that there’s a lot more choice with B movies—there are very few truly good A science fiction movies, but there are thousands of B movies. According to Lynn Fahnstalk, a nice thing about classic B movies is that what are now clichés weren’t clichés back then, so watching a B movie in the right frame of mind can allow you to experience the ideas as they were before they became cliché.

Although Graeme likes *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, he doesn’t feel that making fun of B-movies is really “getting it.” *MST3K* is funny, but for B-movie purists, slightly annoying. Similarly, the panel and audience agreed that “deliberate” B movies don’t work; the charm of B movies is that they’re *trying* to be good; the director of *Robot Monster* (1953) always said that for the budget and the time he was given to make it, it was a work of genius. So B movies shouldn’t be self-aware. The only part of *Mars Attacks* that Graeme thought was a true homage to the trading cards was the opening scene with the stampede of burning cows. And of course there are attempted A movies that are just so bad, they’d almost be B movies, but they don’t have that good B-movie feel to them. For example, *Battlefield Earth* was bad, but not a cult movie (except insofar as it’s related to the cult of Scientology, said someone in the audience, getting a laugh). Graeme finds that mundane writers and directors, not having been exposed to SF, unconsciously parody SF.

As for cult TV, it helps if the show is smart and creative, like *Doctor Who* or the original *Dark Shadows*. Ideally, it should look like it was fun to make (1960s *Batman*), and to be “cult,” it would have to be below mainstream radar and appreciated by a smaller audience (*The Prisoner*). Someone put forth that cult TV is TV that you’d be embarrassed to be caught watching, but the panel and Steve Forty countered that that covers a lot of current mainstream TV, like “reality” shows (*Survivor*, *The Bachelor*). *Biker Mice from Mars* was mentioned by an audience member

because it showed an affection for science fiction and a love of B movies, making references to those things in every episode.

Graeme asked if anyone actively seeks B movies, for example by going through the listings for the channel Space. A majority of the audience responded in the affirmative.

Had Enough of Anti-Heroes?

My friends expected me to go this 4:00 p.m. panel because I’ve ranted about the subject on multiple occasions. In summary, *my* problem is with anti-heroes that are assholes who always win and are therefore supposed to be respected by the audience. However, there were many other types of anti-heroes discussed by panellists Marcie Tentchoff, Janet Waters, and Lynda Williams, and I don’t mind the other kinds.

Sometimes we forgive anti-heroes because they have good qualities, but on the other hand, sometimes we forgive them just because they’re cute, said Tentchoff. Brian Dubberley said that he’s most sympathetic to anti-heroes that represent what we could all become if we were tempted, a little at first, but then finding ourselves too far down the wrong road, like Londo Mollari from *Babylon 5*. Ryan Hawe said that Grand Admiral Thrawn from the *Star Wars* books was a compelling anti-hero—smart, talented, classy, and with good intentions (believing that the galaxy was better off with the order the Empire could provide). Waters and Williams agreed with me that “assholes who win” are not good anti-heroes; this problem is nothing new (as in peculiar to our culture or era), but it also still isn’t good. A big guy in the audience said that Wolverine’s claws were second cousin to Freddy Krueger’s knives. The panel agreed with a different big guy in the audience that capitalism is anti-heroic, in that when someone’s rich, we assume that they must have good qualities or at least strengths. However, added the panel, if it’s OK to for the very rich to get rich by dishonest means, then we shouldn’t be any tougher on young gang members.

Waters and Williams said that since there’s no longer an external moral authority, it’s hard to define right and wrong. Tentchoff seemed to think that the only alternative to writing about anti-heroes would be to force ourselves to write about heroes that are “nicey-nice.” I said that you didn’t have to go *that* far; not all badasses are assholes—sometimes they’re only mean to mean people, which is OK. Tentchoff rolled her eyes and sneered at me. A panellist said that “moral” shouldn’t be a bad word; shouldn’t automatically have the connotation of Sunday school and lame preachiness.

To be continued