

Colophon

BCSFAzine © September 2004, Volume 32, #9, Issue #376 is the club newsletter published by the B.C. Science Fiction Association, a social organization. For comments, subscriptions, suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *BCSFAzine*, c/o Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1, or email hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca.

BCSFAzine is printed most excellently by the good people at

Copies Plus, at 1950 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, tel. 604-731-7868.

BCSFAzine is distributed monthly at WHITE DWARF BOOKS, 3715 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 2G5, tel. 604-228-8223; email white dwarf@deadwrite.com. Single copies \$3.00 each.

BCSFA's e-mail discussion list may be joined by emailing BCSFA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To post a message, email BCSFA@yahoogroups.com

The shortcut URL to this list is <http://www.yahoo groups.com/community/BCSFA> (or <http://www.yahoo groups.com/group/BCSFA> - I have to check on this)

F.R.E.D., the weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in coming, has been meeting at the Denny's on Davie at Thurlow.

BCSFA's Web page may now be viewed at <http://bcfsa.bcgreen.com>

The V-Con Society Web page may be viewed at <http://www3.telus.net/dh2/vconsociety/>

VCon 29's Web page may be viewed at <http://www.v-con.ca>

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BCSFA membership rates:

email version: \$15.00

New member: \$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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You Are Mentioned

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We Want You to Resubscribe

Some News Here Concerns You

You Know.

Well, you *oughta* know.

Whaddayamean, you *don't know*?!

BCSFA Zine

#376

Vol. 32, No. 9

\$3.00

September, 2004



In This Issue:

Lisa Smedman's latest book release

* How to support Vcon * How they brought the good news from X to Y

* Things on top of other things *

September Events

Date	Event & Location	
Sat. Sept. 4	BCSFA Goes Bowling! Meet up in Commodore Lanes & Billiards (838 Granville) at 2 p.m.; at a rate of \$30/lane/hour, and a maximum 6 people/lane, we can play for two hours there at just \$10 a head. (Billiard tables are \$12/hour.) Then, about five-ish, the plan is to truck over to Taco del Mar, three blocks north at 545 Granville. Later, we can head out to a movie theatre, preferably a second-run theatre like Hollywood or the Ridge if something Sfnal is running. Barb Dryer (604-267-7973) seems to be organizing all this.	
Fri. Sept. 10	BCSFazine deadline	At FRED (the Denny's on Davie at Thurlow)
Sat. Sept. 11	Feeding Frenzy	@ 7pm Nyala Restaurant 2930 West Fourth Avenue, Vancouver On the menu is Ethiopian Cuisine, which is described as spicy and very good. For beginners, try starting off with their flatbreads and spicy stews.
Sat. Sept. 18	BCSFA meeting/party	7:00 p.m. at the home of Philip and Kathleen Moore- Freeman, * No. * Road, Richmond, BC. Phone * for directions.
Thu. Sept. 23	Book discussion	7:00 p.m. at "The Brickhouse", 730 Main St., Vancouver. Book to be discussed: <i>The Golden Compass</i> by Philip Pullman
Fri. Sept. 24	BCSFazine production	See Garth and Doug at FRED.
Sat. Sept. 25	Kaffeeklatsch - a Brainstorming Party -	7 pm on at Garth Spencer's, 82 East 40 th Ave., Vancouver. Phone 604-325- 7314 for directions.

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pp. 5, 7, 8, 9	Felicity Walker
p. 8	R'ykandar Korra'ti
p. 10	Joe Devoy

Even Yet More Plain Speaking

I has misspoke myself. Apparently I misdescribed Ashton Green's story about the beginnings of the "Red Army" convention volunteer group, and further offended with my reprint of Chad Ma's account of the same beginnings. I hope I haven't started a fanfeud.

Chad Ma very kindly invited me to attend Anime Evolution, but preregistration was closed by the time I looked up the rates. I hope I can register on-site.

*

Further Errata: Last issue omitted to say that Kathleen Moore-Freeman did tell me when Clinton War would be held; it was scheduled for the end of July, the same weekend as last issue came out. Also, last issue still listed some outdated information, an old address for VCon 29.

*

Policy question: Darryl Huber recently showed up at FRED, to give me his new address; his phone number and email remain the same. But I honestly don't know whether to run changes of address in *BCSFazine* anymore, after the flak I caught the last time I inquired about our maybe running a new BCSFA directory. C'mon, guys, can't I have a *decision* out of you, on matters as simple as this?

*

A lot of this issue is devoted to Lisa Smedman's most recent book release, *The Apparition Trail*, and to the upcoming VCon. Lisa's reading on August 17th at the Grind Gallery and Café, paired with K.A. Bedford's reading from *Orbital Burn*, was attended by about 30 to 40 people: members of BCSFA, some representatives from Edge Publishing (their publisher), and friends of the authors. The authors read selections from their new book releases, and then answered some questions from the audience, followed by general shmoozing.

The wealth of material available for this issue, and the poverty of **new** questions in the 500-point Purity Test, mean that I will forego serializing the 500-question list after all.

I suppose the whole exercise is dated anyway.

*

A recent contract typing assignment – since my last full-time job terminated, that is – involved organizing a paper on folk music, starting with a discourse on how ill-defined folk music is. In the back of my mind, I kept relating this to fandom at large, and to filk music particularly.

You already know there was a time when fans all over the world behaved like one dispersed community; I don't have to rehearse that point. The point here is that, by behaving much like refugee Aphasians whose culture and language were embattled by the forces of melting-pot assimilation, science fiction fans were somewhat isolated from mainstream, and popular culture, felt alienated and treated with contempt, and so it was natural for them to develop some folkways of their own. Including filksongs.

And then SF went mainstream. Or commodified, if the word is better for you.

Trying to define "folk" is as difficult and probably pointless as defining "science fiction", especially since the pure quill king hell uncut stuff was replaced by Star Trek knockoffs. Some of the guidelines for "folk" included a relatively isolated community, communal authorship (i.e., a song or ballad passed through the hands of several artists who each made minor changes, perhaps unconsciously), and similar criteria; and it dawns on me now that some of these criteria applied to fandom, as it once was, before SF was ... well, commodified. Before *fandom* was commodified, come to that.

"Filk", as you probably know better than I, is (or was) a body of folk song inspired by fandom, originally satirical songs about fannish foibles played to popular tunes. Now, filk itself has taken on a life of its own, somewhat out of touch with other fan groups; and filk itself has been commodified, there are several labels and artists producing filksong books, tapes and CDs, for sale at dealers' rooms.

If you have some perspective on fandom – if, let us say, you attended most of the Vcons over the last thirty years and more – you may already have seen an apparently unified special interest group divide up into several subfandoms that don't communicate (rather like the breakdown

of conventional mainstream culture). But it may or may not have become clear that when a fan group like SF fandom forms, it is necessarily *transient*: something that can't carry on as a unit for generations, like a medieval village community, or manorial economy.

I find this unfortunate. But it may be inevitable, given the size, the power, and the motivation of the global market economy to reach everywhere and commodify everything.

I suppose some of this will come up again at a VCon panel about fandom.

Does this subject strike a bell with you, or a dull thud?

Letters from Our Correspondents

Lloyd&Yvonne Penney , 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON, M9C 2B2,
<penneys@allstream.net>, 12 Aug 2004

One reason I'm glad I'm on the BCSFA e-list...I get reminders from Garth about when materials for *BCSFazine* are due. Otherwise, e-zines would simply pile up on my desktop. Here's a loc for issue 375 of *BCSFazine*.

I used to know a lot of SCAdians in the Toronto and Hamilton area, but of course, with most interests, those involved change, some leave and new ones arrive. I used to hear stories of adventures at SCA camps like the Pennsic Wars. My only contact now with anything medieval is the Ontario Renaissance Fair just west of Toronto. Yvonne and I and about a dozen other local fans went off to the RenFair this past weekend, and had some fun there. I know Christina Carr and Martin Hunger have been looking into the idea of setting up a similar Renaissance Fair near Vancouver, but it takes a fair amount of money, and a generous landowner.

((I haven't heard about Christina's RenFair proposition in quite a while now. In fact I haven't heard very much from the couple for months, except some brief notes indicating they're way busy.))

Loccol...I certainly agree with Taral in my thanks to Garth for being willing to take on the editorial task for so long. Those fans who sacrifice to make things happen for everyone are few and far between. Just don't let this happen for too long, Garth; there's being fannish and there's hurting yourself, and you know what kind of retirement plan fandom has...

((Actually I'm quite happy, now that I've been let go from the trademark firm.

((The little people who live in my socks are quite happy too, because our undercover agents' mission to reduce the United States to absurdity is nearly accomplished. And nobody has identified the impostors on the Federal administration even yet. Remarkable!))

Hi, Randy...as I said in a separate e-mail, Yvonne and I won't be able to go to Noreascon 4. We've sold our memberships and have pretty well sworn off Worldcons. Too expensive, and right now, our money must go elsewhere. Toronto's summer has been warm, but with only a few days where it might have hit 30 Celsius or more. Few among us recognize old fannish chestnuts like Sturgeon's Law (90% of everything is crap – I think he was an optimist), so I do keep copies of the *NeoFan's Guide to SF Fandom* on hand. Maybe we can check to see if something like that can be anthologized through this very zine.

((Increasing numbers of us in Vancouver are beginning to feel like we're living in a Los Angeles heat wave. In fact the Weather Channel actually issued smog alerts for the upper Fraser Valley.))

What constitutes fakefandom? I regret my comment about OBAVA somewhat...just because this organization may not constitute part of my fandom doesn't mean it's not part of anyone else's fandom. Fandom as a whole is always larger than you think, and I would prefer to be inclusive rather than exclusive. So, OBAVA is part of my fandom, just not a part I'd participate in. At least it's a sign that not all of fandom is retreating to the Internet to hide. "Good enough" for fanzines is a very subjective term, and perhaps reflects the snobbishness of the ultrafannish part of fanzine fandom rather than a lack of quality on my part. Some fanzines I have lost because one or two faneds have changed their own definition of The Usual. Some have even said the fact I write 200+ locs a year somehow reduces the quality of my writing because they might see the same things discussed in different zines. I can't write about 200+ different topics! No one can! Not much I can do about what is said; I rely on the general consensus of the majority of fanzine fandom, and their generally agreed-to standards. Nothing is carved in stone; such is the way of fandom. I write to please myself, and if others are pleased as well, bonus.

((“Fakefandom” is whatever doesn't turn our particular crank, depending on varying values of “us”.

((You're only the second person to report what seems like snobbishness from fannish/fanzine fans. Funny, that wasn't the pure quill original version I got. But then it's one thing to learn about fanzine fandom from fanzines, another to meet famous fanzine fans who seem already to have all the friends they need. That, I think, is the only issue actually at hand.))

Had my first Sectarian Wave rehearsal last night, and the actual recording sessions start on the weekend. The CD with episodes 1-6 will appear in October, and the second six will appear in January. Once it's recorded, I will attempt to help with the marketing aspect of the CDs, so I can get ordering information to the club membership soon. Check VirtuallyAmerican.com for all the details.

I remember the 500-question Purity Test being distributed at an Ad Astra years ago. The *lower* your score, the more sexually experienced you were, or at least claimed to be. Many people compared scores, and I

suspect a few people scurried off to see how they could, ahem, lower those scores...the head of the con suite beamed at the assembled, and claimed a score of 24. A few of us, knowing him, believed him...

I am sure that Ray Seredin knows by now that further negotiations have loosened the purse strings and released Terry Nation's Daleks for use in the upcoming new *Doctor Who* series. The Killer Salt Shakers of Doom will no doubt be held back by the Doctor until they learn how to climb the stairs. Today, the stairs, tomorrow, the world...

Our further adventures...we've decided to forego cons for the rest of the year, and concentrate on getting back on our financial feet. So, I might not have much to talk about until next year, or if I get a new job. Wish me luck on both, and see you next issue.

((Bonne chance. We're both going to need it. Maybe I should follow your program.))

Lloyd Penney again, August 17, 2004:

Yvonne can confirm that she's going to Vancouver for the International Astronautical Congress at the Pan Pacific Hotel October 4-8. Seeing that Vcon is October 8-10, she's going to offer some of the information she picked up at the IAC as a panel or two at Vcon. So, you can expect to see Yvonne at Vcon on the Saturday only, probably.

BCSFAZINEzine Volume 1, Number 24.375, from Felicity Walker, felicity4711@hotmail.com, 12 August 2004

Another clip art issue! I've got to draw more.

Back to Times New Roman for this issue of *BCSFAZINEzine*—I need the italics.

Doubleplusgood Duckspeak – Taral Wayne: OK—now I understand why some of the art looks different. For what it's worth, I've submitted pencil drawings too, but to smooth them out, I've used the stamp filter on *Photoshop* after scanning them. I tried doing that to Taral's cover art for *BCSFAzine* #373, but without much success:



“But we should appreciate Garth more.” I try to make sure he knows how much I appreciate him, but with his damned Anglo-Canadian inscrutability, I can't tell if it helps or not.

((You show your appreciation in the most effective way, by supporting what we're working on.

((Of course if BCSFA had its own cheerleader team, and they gave me backrubs in a hot tub party, I would appreciate that.))

Randy Barnhart: I wish our weather could be rainy and cool all year.

I'd never heard of *Hanlon's Razor* before, so I looked it up: "Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity." (*Wikipedia*) I've heard this before; Garth uses it.

((Or something like it.))

((How many people here recognize what Sturgeon's Law is? How many people care?)) Ninety percent probably don't know or care.

((How many of you would vote for me, if I revived the Rhinoceros Party and started running on a surpassingly silly platform?)) If that isn't a rhetorical question, I'd vote for you (since my vote doesn't seem to mean anything in Richmond anyway) if you privately promised to do good things if you actually got elected.

((What is the proper work of a popular representative? Do people expect favours, or deals, or simply the opportunity to pursue their own business without too much bureaucratic interference? How often does a representative have to sit and listen to some constituent's bellyaching?

((If all the above is part of the job description, no wonder I babble about running for the Rhinos or the Anarcho-Surrealist Party.))

Magic: I'm reading *We, Immortals* (1977, Alan Weisman), about the hypnotic regression seminars of Dick Sutphen, and I'm impressed at the wealth of the professionals in this and related occult fields.

"Hey, is it just me, or is Porthos the most interesting character on *Star Trek: Enterprise*?" **(laugh)**

Lloyd Penney: *((What constitutes "fakefandom" these days? At some point we really have to draw the line and exclude some of these ephemeral groups from Fandom As We Know It.))* Why wouldn't "fakefandom" continue to mean what it's meant since the 1940s? I don't like the term, for that matter; I think being a fan of fandom is sufficiently valid. By excluding ephemeral groups, do you mean exclusion on the basis of seniority, or duration?

Lloyd's LOCs are always welcome; I just haven't produced any zines in months.

((It would...mean more if fans like our readers actually recognized nominatable works. Most of us are fakefans, if media fans are fakefans; most of the nominees for awards are printed works, or artists...most of the Canadian writers and artists are unknown to most contemporary fans.)) Mostly true. I don't know who's nominated. I do read, and look at art, but I don't know much about Canadian writers and artists. I made an effort to learn more at the last V-Con, but I don't have the energy to really stay on top of this problem.

Doug Finnerty: Jun Sushi (site of the first Feeding Frenzy I ever attended) would have been my first choice until recently; I ate there a few weeks ago and the teriyaki sauce tasted really funny.

Birthdays in August – *Michael Morse/Felicity Walker/Morbius*: Good. ☺

Nobody Told Me There'd Be Days Like These – *The Punisher*: I think *The Punisher* came out already.

Thunderbirds: Craig Charles once described the first season of *Red Dwarf* as *Thunderbirds* with live actors, by which he meant that the sets were very cheap. I prefer those early cheap sets to the current ones, though.

Ancient Myths and Lore of Our Tribe: "Close Encounters of the Fast-Talking Kind" – No comments, but read and enjoyed.

The 100 Point Purity Test... I'm 85% pure.

...for *Non-Virgins* – Oh. Never mind then.

Life Among the If-Ics – *Look Ma, I Are a Domain Name!*: I've checked out garthspencer.com—much more complete and detailed than this *BCSFAzine* mention makes it sound. I've now registered at the site.

More Anime Fandom Stories: I forwarded this article to Ashton, who added it to his LiveJournal. His opponents responded there. I'd like to see the results of the debate (the eventual consensus, rather than the flamewar) published in the interests of fanhistory.

((Perhaps I have instigated a fanfeud. I hoped I had averted that.))

Sturm und Drang: I'm very disappointed in Bradbury. Has he never used a title that was a reference to someone else's work? I suppose the title for *Usher II* came out of nowhere?

((After a while in fandom, you just sit back and enjoy the pompous spectacle that alleged professionals sometimes make of themselves. Maybe this is half the reason for market newsletters like Ansible and Locus.))

The Fen of Half Creation Damning Half Creation's Eyes: Belated thanks to Joe Devoy for help in wording my footnote in that article.

I see that my proofreading was not perfect that time. I *quadruple*-proofread the new column to compensate. I'm looking forward to seeing if that worked.



1970s psychic Kingdon Brown

Nice Work, If You Can Get It... Who wrote this review? The line "Taral supplied the following" implies it was Taral, but I'd imagine he wouldn't refer to himself in the third person so often; the next most likely choice is you, but the writing doesn't seem like your style.

((Of course it was Taral's work. But I'll be more explicit in future. You can't afford to make assumptions, Felicity. As Master Gerrold says, and my life and family have taught me, 'Common sense isn't'. All assumptions we make are wrong.))

Birthdays in September

4: Dixie Mueller disappeared into the wilds of Barnston Island with Art Mueller, but in the not-so-distant past she was the heartthrob of Victoria fandom. Married heartthrob, unfortunately. * Sigh * To my knowledge she was untouched by the first intrusions of the Paramount Fox Alliance with the Illuminati into Northwest cons, i.e., the Constellation Con 83 affair.



9: Rick Smith vanished from BCSFA in the wake of Westercon 44; I don't remember whether he covered the cost of inviting Steve Jackson to be a Guest of Honour, without first consulting the chair.



13: Sam Dulmage won a lottery and quit his position as a part-time lamppost to become a professional detective. He vanished after reporting hints of an Illuminati plot to turn orcas and seals into Liberal supporters.



15: Mike Jackson vanished from BCSFA after Westercon 44; either his professional illustration career took off, or he thought fandom would break his cartooning fingers.



17: Sylvia Skene is a librarian by day, but when darkness falls and the moon rises, she dons her masked crimefighter outfit and becomes THE WILDCAT, foe of evildoers and nemesis of seafood dishes everywhere.



19: Lisa Smedman is our featured fantasy writer this issue, reviewed in Donna McMahon's column, and special guest at Vcon 29 next month. She chaired one Vcon and co-chaired another, and her secret superpower is CLASSIFIED UNDER THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT.



24: Geoff Barton disappeared after looking for Sam Dulmage.



29: Rastus Witherspoon-Li disappeared after looking for Geoff Barton.




30: Mike Lesiak is monitoring BCSFA activities for CSIS. Meanwhile, he is monitoring CSIS activities for the Forces of Darkness. Meanwhile, is monitoring the Forces of Darkness for the Libertarians. He is awaiting recruitment by the Illuminati.



Ads & Commercials

<p>DRAGONFLY MUSIC 106 Harrison Village Mall 196 Esplanade (Box 118) Harrison Hot Springs, B.C. V0M 1K0 Tel. 604-796-9289 10% DISCOUNT to card-carrying WCSFA members</p>	<p>BCSFazine is on sale at WHITE DWARF BOOKS 3715 W. 10th Avenue Vancouver, B.C. V6R 2G5 tel. 604-228-8223 email whitedwarf@deadwrite.com</p>
<p>MICHAEL'S BOOKS Michael Elmer, Owner 109 Grand Bellingham, WA 98225 U.S.A. Tel. (206) 733-6272 books in all fields 10% DISCOUNT to card-carrying WCSFA members</p>	<p>WRIGLEY CROSS BOOKS 1809 N.E. 39th Avenue Portland, OR 97212 U.S.A. Tel. (503) 281-9449 wrigcros@teleport.com www.wrigleycrossbooks.com 10% DISCOUNT to card-carrying WCSFA members</p>

<p>METROTOWN WRITER'S GROUP is open to new members. 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>
<p>THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY is looking for A FEW GOOD FEN! Email rsn@vcn.bc.ca Or write P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O. Vancouver, BC CANADA V6B 5B1 <i>"Battling terrorism with humorism since 1996"</i></p> 	<p>WESTERN FANDOM ILLUMINATI is looking for A FEW GOOD FEN! Email wfi@vcn.bc.ca Or write P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O. Vancouver, BC CANADA V6B 5B1 <i>"Battling the evil Royal Swiss Navy since 1996"</i></p>

Calendar of Gatherings

September 2004

Expected this fall: *The Brothers Grimm*, à la Terry Gilliam

Sept. 3-5: **September Crown Tournament** – limited attendance

Sept. 4-6: **Kumoricon**, Oregon Anime Convention, Marriott Hotel, Portland, OR; see <http://www.kumoricon.org>

Sept. 12 - **Vancouver Comicon**, Heritage Hall, Vancouver, BC. Comics convention. Guests: TBA. Admission: \$3. For more information, users.uniserve.com/~lswong/comicon.html.

Sept. 17-19: **Foolsap VI** at the Bellevue Hilton, Bellevue, Wash. Guest of Honor: George R.R. Martin. A SF/F con for flat things and funny hats. Rooms: (ca. \$81/night?) write Bellevue Hilton, 100 112th Avenue NE, Bellevue, WA 98004, or telephone (425) 455-3330, 8 am to 5 pm.

Memberships \$45 to Sept. 15, 2004; \$50 at the door. Banquet tickets \$26 while available. Make checks payable to Little Cat Z. Mail to Foolsap VI, c/o Little Cat Z, P.O. Box 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461. see www.foolscapcon.org. (Note the correct URL!!)

Sept. 24-26: **Conifur Northwest 2004** – see <http://www.conifur.org>

Sept. 24 – 26: **Holmgang IX** in the Shire of Krakafjord (Vernon, BC) – limited attendance

Sunday, Sept. 26, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.: **The Word on the Street festival** at Library Square and the CBC Plaza (Homer and Hamilton, between Robson & Georgia) in downtown Vancouver, including The Word Under the Street "with locally-produced micro-published "underground" comics and 'zines: special panel discussions and more.

<http://www.thewordonthestreet.ca/vancouver.php>

Sept. 28: *Crier* Deadline in the Kingdom of An Tir

October 2004

Oct. 8 – 10 - **VCon 29**, Vancouver's longest-running SF, fantasy and gaming convention, will be held at the Hilton Vancouver Metrotown. Writer Guest of Honour will be **Dave Duncan** (author of *West of January*, *A Man of His Word* and *The Seventh Sword*); Artist Guest of Honour will be Todd Lockwood (designer for Dungeons & Dragons 3rd edition, winner of eight Chesley Awards and two World Fantasy Art Show awards); Science Guest will be **Dr. Jaymie Matthews** (teacher at the University of British Columbia's Department of Physics and Astronomy, and head of the science team for Microvariability and Oscillations of Stars [MOST], Canada's first space telescope); and Special Guest will be **Lisa Smedman** (local SF/fantasy writer and game designer, co-founder of *Adventures Unlimited* magazine, author of eight novels including the New York Times bestseller *Extinction*).

If you are interested in volunteering, signing up for the writer's workshop, booking space in the artshow or dealers' room, or advertising in the program book, please contact the appropriate con member as listed at www.v-con.ca. In the short term, please contact Chair Marie-Louise Beesley at beesleybabe@yahoo.com.

Dealers' room rates are CDN \$50 for a first table (6 feet) including one full weekend membership, and \$40 for each additional table, also including one full weekend membership apiece. Table space is limited, available on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional full weekend memberships with a table purchase are available for \$25 each (to a limit of 4 per table).

Advertising in our program book is available at CDN \$150 for the outside back cover (colour), \$100 for inside back or front cover, \$80 for a full page, \$50 for a half-page, \$30 for a quarter-page, \$18 for a business-

card space. The program book submission deadline is **September 25, 2004**.

In addition, anyone who purchases a dealer's table or program book ad may have free advertising space in the VCon 29 website, ranging from business card size (88 x 31 pixels) to full page (198 x 190 pixels).

The Hilton Vancouver Metrotown (6083 McKay Avenue, Burnaby, BC, CANADA V5H 2W7) is next door to the Metrotown Mall, a major shopping centre at a principal public transit nexus. Under the Hilton is a separate mall with its own food court. Room rates are \$105 for a room with a single king-size or two queen-size beds. Rooms may be reserved by phoning 1-604-438-1200, or faxing 1-604-4310-7782, and quoting convention code "VCO" when booking your room; the VCon website www.v-con.ca also accommodates room bookings.

Memberships are CDN \$40 / US\$30 to September 15, and \$50 at the door. One-day memberships are CDN \$20 on Friday, \$25 on Saturday, \$15 on Sunday. A membership form is available online at www.v-con.ca, asking your name, badge name and address, telephone and email information. The completed form can be mailed with cheque, money order or completed Visa information; the correct address is now VCon 29, c/o #209 - 2166 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, CANADA V6K 2A4.

Oct. 29-30 - **Howloween 2004**, Best Western Convention Centre, Coquitlam, BC. Furry convention. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$35 pre-registration, \$40 at the door. For more information, www.howloween.org.

Made Up Stuph

Close Encounters of the Fast-Talking Kind (finale)

By Garth Spencer

"Why kill?" Hrothgar asked, interested despite himself.

"IT'S MY JOB! I DON'T GET MY REWARD UNTIL I KILL SOMETHING!" the voice bawled from inside the unidentified flying muffin. After a beat the same voice bellowed: "YOU A TARGET?"

"Never mind him," the lumpy robed figure interrupted, "he is a subordinate under my orders. Now. Did I understand you to mean that we might *save* something by mounting a political, and not a military campaign? O child, the Ambassadors have been telling this tale to the Dominion High Council since your ancestors were using stone tools."

"Ah," said Hrothgar. He felt just as much out of his depth as he had arguing with his grandfather about Japanese internment camps. "Have you any room to manoeuvre, I mean, any discretion about your program?"

"GIVE ME A TARGET, BOSS!"

"Not very much," the Ambassador admitted.

"Maybe I have a solution," Hrothgar said. "Please, allow me to speak to your excited subordinate."

The Ambassador now identified him, shuffled out of the portal and to one side. A larger, faster-moving figure now stomped out of the portal, and Hrothgar realized why it was hard to make sense of these figures. From the front they stood somewhat like men, but a protuberance or extension followed them ... in fact, they were centauroids. The bulky figure in body armour was easier to resolve. Especially, as Hrothgar now realized, when it stood two inches away and leaned into his face.

"READY TO FIGHT, MONKEY?"

"With what?" Hrothgar quavered.

The massive warrior looked him up and down disbelievingly. "WHAT?! NO WEAPONS?!"

"Not much use for them in this part of the world, at least here in the city. But in other countries, it's a different story ..."

"TELL ME WHERE!"

"Most of the tropical countries," Hrothgar babbled, "much of the Southern Hemisphere, in fact anywhere that the industrialized nations take their resources. That's what we call the Third World." Inspiration hit him. "In fact, if you want to be directed to countries that might *ask* for your military services, you might inquire at the United Nations."

"United Nations?" the Ambassador said. "We wrote them off as another bureaucracy, less useful than most ..."

"Well, several bureaucracies," said Hrothgar. "But they're extremely good for several kinds of information. So is the State Department of the United States. So is the Central Intelligence Agency public website."

"GOOD HUNTING?" said the warrior. Hrothgar finally realized the armour must conceal an audio amplifier.

"Excellent, in some places. I particularly recommend sub-Saharan Africa and some parts of South America," Hrothgar babbled. "It often seems that local governments are deliberately trying to reduce their populations."

"We were beginning to wonder about that," said the Ambassador. He re-entered the portal. Pausing there, he turned to say, "Thank you for your helpful advice. Farewell."

The warrior re-entered after him, and also paused. Assuming a present-arms stance, he announced, "You fought formidably, without weapons, and deflected a threat without even violence. We shall honour your cunning and vigilance, when we meet your con-specifics. Honour and glory to you, and victory if you deserve it!" The portal closed on him.

Hrothgar watched the multicoloured alien muffin weave drunkenly across the sky, realizing that the faint aroma the Dominion left behind reminded him of horse stables.

He never heard of the Dominion again for a very long time.

On the Run by Taral (part 2)



Major Tom's Last Testament

Farewell, dear Earth I must depart
 To touch the star within my heart
 You'll know when I have got my start
 You'll see me shifting to the red

But don't worry, I will not be dead
 As long as gentle words are said
 I'll be a thought inside your head
 That spreads like light from dawn to dawn

For I won't die, I'll just pass on
 And in your hearts, I'm never gone

With every beam of light that's shone
 I'm there to bask and glow

I can't explain... I had to go
 It's no-one's fault, just so you know
 You cannot rein a river's flow
 Just ride its course

It's like an elemental force
 A flow of charge that will, perforce,
 Pursue its path, without remorse
 Until the final light

I could not even try to fight
 That wind that pushed me into night
 I know you all will be all right
 Just wish me well

And if, perhaps, a tear should swell
 Amongst the ones who knew me well
 Remember that I never fell
 I'm shining still....

And I always will.

Farewell... fare well.... farewell....

"Michael J. Bertrand" <fruvous@reddra.com>, 17 Jul 2004

SCHOOL TEACHER ARRESTED

At New York's Kennedy airport today, an individual, later discovered to be a schoolteacher, was arrested trying to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, protractor, set square, slide rule and calculator.

At a morning press conference, Attorney General John Ashcroft, said he believes the man is a member of the notorious al-gebra movement. He is being charged by the FBI with carrying weapons of math instruction. Al-gebra is a fearsome cult, Ashcroft said. They desire average solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on tangents in a search of absolute value. They use secret code names like 'x' and 'y' and refer to themselves as 'unknowns', but we have determined they belong to a common denominator of the axis of medieval with coordinates in every country. As the Greek philanderer Isosceles used to say, "there are three sides to every triangle."

When asked to comment on the arrest, President Bush said, "If God had wanted us to have better weapons of math instruction, He would have given us more fingers to count on."

Stephen Samuel, 16 Aug 2004

Snup, Chapter 2

by Felicity Walker

It was a pleasantly cool, cloudy afternoon as Gerard Ieyasu relaxed in his living room. His cat Shogun stared out the window intently, but Gerard was preoccupied with the sword-and-sorcery fantasy movie on TV—until he noticed something. He saw that the heroine had bigger biceps than he did. He looked at his own reasonably-slim but flabby body, concealed beneath extra-large plaid flannel shirt, and said “I really need to get in shape.”

“Me too. Maybe you should let me go outside,” his cat said. Gerard looked at Shogun, who had never spoken to him until now. The cat blinked.

Gerard got up and got the door and Shogun enthusiastically pushed his way out as soon as the door was open wide enough. Gerard returned to the sofa and watched Shogun through the living room window. The cat tore across the yard, leaping over fences and startling birds and squirrels. Gerard thought he could actually see the cat’s haunches becoming slender and muscular, but he knew that was impossible—which is why he was completely unprepared for the surprise when he went to pee and saw his own body in the bathroom mirror.

(to be continued)

Not Made Up Stuph

STARTING WITH VCON RELATED NEWS

Steve’s suggestion to Vcon supporters:

“Next time you go to a movie like "I Robot" or "Batman" or ... , take a stack of V-Con flyers with you and hand one out to every person/group in line. I expect that it would be:

- a) An excellent example of targeted advertising, and,
- b) A reasonably efficient way to meet interesting people.”

Stephen Samuel, August 2004

Fran Skene’s V-Con panels list

at 12 Aug 2004

“Hi fans, see below the rough list of possible panels at V-Con - the last Vikingcon inspired a few of them - thx Paul!

“I’m writing to you in case you’d like to be on a panel or three - just indicate which ones that interest you - by number if you like - T5, A8, for example - and let me know. We can’t offer anything but *glory* for participation - see www.v-con.ca for info on registration - but I hope you’d enjoy it anyway.

“I couldn’t even begin to figure out which fans would like to be on panels, and I don’t have a lot of email addresses anyway, which means in a roundabout way that I’m encouraging you to gather friends for a panel and let me know! It’s not too late to suggest new panels or reword ones on the list.

“If you’re a pro already in the SF and Fantasy field let me know so I can grovel and then add you to the guests list.

“When most responses are in and I know which panels are a go I’ll send out tentative schedules for people to have final yea or nay.

ART, WRITING, PUBLISHING PANELS

- A1 — Good covers, bad covers - faves and horror stories (both authors and artists should be on this panel)
- A2 — Illos 101 — how to illustrate for publication
- A3 — Anatomy of fantastical creatures
- A4 — Is it easier to get recognition when an illo or story is published online?
- A5 — Pictionary - with Artist GoH Todd Lockwood
- A6 — Digital painting techniques — with Todd Lockwood
- A7 — Portfolio critiques — attendees bring, you critique — with Todd Lockwood
- A8 — Start and run a writers workshop group
- A9 — Creating new life forms
- A10 — Blue pencils at ten paces — what editors look for
- A11 — Success on several scales — integrating SF into self-employment in more than one field
- A12 — Alternative routes to getting published - ebooks, emagazines, CDROM, Print on Demand, self-publishing, the pluses and pitfalls
- A13 — You don’t kick start a horse — everyday things to consider when writing a story or gaming scenario set in a time before modern technology
- A14 — Starting a magazine or publishing house — Fun and horror stories from the field
- A15 — Crafting and marketing the short story
- A16 — The relationship between plot and theme
- A17 — The mechanics of magic — with Dave Duncan
- A18 — The last gasp — writing death scenes
- A19 — A peek at the strange worlds inside my head — artists/writers on panel
- A20 — Writing in the comfort zone - the risks and advantages of sticking with a tried-and-true formula
- A21 — Poetry Slam
- A22 — Poetry panel
- A23 — Poetry round robin
- A24 — Long and short fiction: a difference in pace
- A25 — Dealing with Microsoft Word - horror stories from the front line
- A26 — Where do you get your ideas for structure and technique - what other stories inspired you? — with Dave Duncan
- A27 — Great ideas we stole — with Lisa Smedman

- A28 — Okal Rel Universe presentation — with Lynda Williams
- A29 — Master Writing Class 401 and Master Writing Class 502 — with Lisa Smedman (and you?) — each “class” an hour long, conducted in seminar fashion while attendees ask questions.
- A30 — Edward Gorey, Charles Addams, Graham Wilson and other classic horror illustrators — with Julie McGalliard
- A31 — What is wrong with publishing on the Internet?
- A32 — The different ways in which Christianity or other major religions might interact with the religions of aliens
- A33 — Joseph Campbell is my mentor - theme, myth, heroes
- A34 — Semi-pro editing and publishing

TECHNOLOGY & HUMANITIES PANELS

- T1 — The info overload problem, or, Drowning in the deluge
- T2 — Creating new life forms - gene splicing and more
- T3 — Artificial intelligence
- T4 — How much are we driven by our evolutionary baggage?
- T5 — Can human beings learn to plan for the long term?
- T6 — Ansari X-prize and Canada’s Da Vinci Project
- T7 — Inventors & patents & mad scientists, ha ha! Intellectual property, scientific epistemology, Murphy war stories from the lab, and MAD science.
- T8 — Are aliens out to get us?
- T9 — Nuclear power generation - pros, cons, the latest info
- T10 — Missions to Mars — with Eric Choi
- T11 — Geek culture
- T12 — Where did the salmon go? Or, why we should listen to the ecologists.
- T13 — Ebola and other interesting (and deadly) viruses
- T14 — Programmable matter (nanotech)
- T15 — This month’s hottest science news
- T16 — Popular delusions as to what science can already do
- T17 — The physics of Hogwarts
- T18 — Government projects that didn’t make it
- T19 — Human-powered helicopters
- T20 — Million dollar sailboats and other high/low tech hybrids

MEDIA, GAMING, READERS’, FANNISH PANEL TOPICS

- M1 — Latest news on SF and fantasy film and TV productions in B.C.
- M2 — Costuming 101
- M3 — Costumes at SF cons - the best and the worst
- M4 — Are online fanzines the norm, or is there still a place for the hard-copy fanzine?
- M5 — Fanzines 101 - History of fanzines — with Garth Spencer.
- M6 — Fanzines 202 — fanzines of the present and future, both hard-copy and online — with Garth Spencer. Attendees will receive a Certificate of Completion
- M7 — Gaming 101 — with Special Guest Lisa Smedman
- M8 — Game design — with Special Guest Lisa Smedman

- M9 — Con running 101 — with Paul Carpentier
- M10 — Dead authors panel — If you’re an expert on a dead author and are willing to channel that author on a panel...
- M11 — Nearly Midnight (11 PM) horror readings. Bring your fave and keep it short and spooky.
- M12 — What are you reading, and why?
- M13 — Reading fiction online - will you or won’t you?
- M16 — Is fandom necessary any more? Pro and con debate.
- M17 — Playing in someone else’s sandbox - why fanfiction is still readable
- M18 — What are the new classics?
- M19 — Retro Future - from Flash Gordon to Captain Proton
- M20 — What’s cool about mid-twentieth century predictions
- M21 — Firefly et al - Should Fox just stay away from series SF?
- M22 — Is the Star Trek franchise finally over?
- M23 — Why can’t TV get fantasy right?
- M24 — Comics - guys in tights
- M25 — Remembrance of past V-Con guests
- M26 — Bad movie producers
- M27 — Buffy and Angel, RIP
- M28 — What’s a blog?
- M29 — Vampires as love interest
- M30 — Military history for gamers - with J.D. (Iliad) Frazer

THE LITERATURE PANELS

- L1 — Speculative poetry
- L2 — Dark fantasy
- L3 — Children’s and YA fantasy - not just for kids
- L4 — Christian fantasy - what is it?
- L5 — World government in SF
- L6 — Canadian speculative fiction
- L7 — The role of the Internet in the future development of SF
- L8 — Erotic fantasy
- L9 — Light sabres and sorcery - where SF and Fantasy overlap — with Dave Duncan
- L10 — and/or: The Mother Lode — fantasy as the root of all fiction — with Dave Duncan
- L11 — The science of Harry Potter
- L12 — Why do so many fantasy novels involve class-based societies?
- L13 — Coming of age in SF and fantasy
- L14 — Invisibility of the downtrodden in fantasy, or, why does only Harry Potter notice overworked house elves?
- L15 — Magic realism, Cross-over, Slipstream — new directions in speculative fiction
- L16 — Fantasies set in real historical periods.
- L17 — Fantasy before Tolkien
- L18 — SF and fantasy short fiction magazines - yes, they’re still around. Good ones to look for.

- L19 — Law and Order: Does Canadian SF reflect greater trust in authority, or less prompt resorting to armed rebellion?
 L20 — Right vs. Left - politics in SF — is SF an intrinsically conservative form?
 L21 — Sources for fantasy — Arthurian legends, Roman Britain, myths, fairy tales, folklore, astrology, and the tarot
 L23 — Archetypal characters, the hero's journey, and the quest in modern fantasy
 L24 — Hard science fiction - how is it faring in our world of constant change?

Fran Skene, Aug. 2004

((Guys – the foregoing appears to be a request for your participation, suggestions and input in VCon programming. Just thought I should point that out to you. –GS))

Badges? We DO Need Steenking Badges!

I have been asked to bring a few items to your attention, and I also have my own axe to grind. Therefore, I crave your indulgence for the following data dump:

It has come to the attention of the VCON conglom that those bitty plastic badge holders (either with pins or strings to go around your neck, sized to hold a 2" x 3.5" card) are ludicrously expensive. Apparently, the pins are made out of platinum, and the strings out of diamond fibre. Either that, or there's an international cartel in badge holders jacking up the price. We plan to get Interpol on the case immediately. However, you know how long these international investigations take: first, the undercover work, then the lawsuits, appeals, and counter-appeals. In short, Vancouver will probably be hosting WorldCon by the time the price of badge holders is anywhere near reasonable.

However, all is not lost. I pointed out that anybody who has been to any number of cons at all probably has a sock drawer full of little plastic badge holders, feeling alone and unloved. (That is why I got volunteered to raise this issue here.) This, friends, is where you get your big chance to be virtuous: you can give your badge holders a new lease on life, keep the conglom from being held to ransom by unscrupulous price fixing within the badge holder industry, do good for the environment, and give your socks a little more heel room, all with one simple act: buttonhole a VCON conglom member in a dark alley some night, and slip them a batch of badge holders in a plain brown wrapper. (Or, if you have been to a *lot* of cons, you can rent a U-Haul truck and deliver them to the same address to which you send your membership forms.)

I thank you, the co-registrars thank you, and the treasurer thanks you. Those unscrupulous price-fixers won't thank you, but do you really want to help support the international convention badge holder cartel? I didn't think so.

Greg Slade, August 15, 2004

How To Be A Supporter Of The Arts Community

"Yes, that's right, ladies and gentlemen, you too can be a patron of the arts. At least, you can if you have a nice big basement. VCON needs space to store the art boards used in the art show from this year's VCON to next year's. The panels are essentially bog-standard 4'x8' panels, although when stacked up, the pile is roughly 6' high. If you have the storage space, we need to hear from you. Please contact Chilam, the art show curator, to discuss how you can become a benefactor. Just think: now, you can support art within the fandom community, and have a reason to tell your weird brother-in-law that you don't have the space to store his matchbook collection, all at the same time. Act today! Operators are standing by!

Greg Slade, August 15, 2004

Speaking of Basements

"I should add to the art show boards, there are the supports and hardware as well so it takes up a little more room. There is more equipment as well, some time we should get the VCON people over and decide what they want and what to chuck (they take away). I also have some old Gestetners, electrostencil cutters, ink, BCSFA 24 pound paper, as well as my own, and other related stuff. If you want any of it let me know-it is free to carry away except the BCSFA paper (it can still be used by BCSFA). BCSFA supplies you would have to talk to BCSFA (years ago they said I could give away the Gestetner and electrostencil cutter as no one wanted it then). There is black ink, orange ink, red (I think there is a tube left) and maybe one or two of another colour. The ink goes with a Gestetner - not by itself. There are seven Gestetners with different ink in each. You have to carry [them] though as I carried them in, but my back is not as good as it once was."

Steve 40, August 17, 2004

Where Is Al's Equipment??

"Speaking of basements, does anyone have any of the audio equipment which disappeared some years ago after VCON use? There were six dynamic and four condenser microphones, mic stands, mixers, a dual Dyna preamp and power supply, and cables, and more that I don't remember. Some of this equipment belonged to (then named) WCSFCCA and some was my own."

Al Betz, August 17, 2004

Sick Among the Pure Solicits Submissions

"Writers: Start your engines!! SickAmongThePure.com is now seeking submissions. I (Jett Black) am the new editor-in-chief for this online magazine. Check out the content at: <http://www.SickAmongThePure.com>.

"Send submissions to editor@SickAmongThePure.com. Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month. Zine updates are posted by the 2nd day of each subsequent month. Start looking into it NOW, and send

me any article ideas that you may have ready or may wish to develop. New writing assignments are made ONLY to Senior Writers.

"If you decide to join us, then we'd bring you on board first as a Contributing Writer. That means that your submissions begin with your own article ideas. Please begin to develop a sense of familiarity with this growing web zine. A wider scope and more posted submissions is on the side-burner waiting for gradual transitioning into SickAmongThePure.com as the remaining months in this year unfold.

"Of course, your articles are always welcomed at our message boards: <http://nocturnalmovements.net/ubb/ultimatebb.php>

"By all means, please keep in touch!"

From Jett@NocturnalMovements.net, July 19, 2004

Felicity Walker <felicity@vcn.bc.ca> 12 Aug 2004

Mark's Rare Comics Newsletter

"We're redesigning the website and have put up some new pages on Mark's Rare Comics! ...

New Comics Every Day: "We have added more of your favorite comics, including Archie, Pearls Before Swine, Penny Arcade, Liberty Meadows, Over the Hedge, Ripley's Believe It or Not, Rudy Park, True Nuff, Wizard of Id, PvPonline, Peanuts, Nancy, Get Fuzzy, Garfield, Foxtrot, For Better or For Worse, Drabble, Doonesbury, Dilbert, Calvin & Hobbs, Big Nate, B.C., Adam@Home at Mark's Rare Comics (<http://rarecomics.home.att.net>). Check back every day! You can also buy collectible comics and comics related items.

DVDs — THE NEW COLLECTIBLES OR A LOT OF COASTERS

The advent of DVDs has spawned new collectors of movies. Keeping track of these disks and information regarding their content is a daunting task as the collection grows. Now, Mark's Rare Comics (<http://rarecomics.home.att.net>) is offering FREE software to enable an easy method of organizing and managing our collections. DVD Collector enables serious DVD collectors to successfully manage their collections. You can also buy DVDs as well as collectible comics and comics related items.

We now have Harvey character maquettes for sale on our sites. In addition, our new affiliate, Entertainment Earth, offers multi-theme action figures, maquettes, costumes, games, toys, collectibles and more.

We welcome your suggestions for new products and recommendations for features on Mark's Rare Comics. Just reply to this email ...

Mark Arnold thft@att.net, 08 Aug 2004

So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy

"is an anthology of original new stories by leading African, Asian, South Asian, and Aboriginal authors, as well as North American and British writers of colour. [...]"

Number of Pages: 304

Price Can: \$24.95 - Available May 2004

from http://www.arsenalpulp.com/select_book.php?book=176

Julian "Earthfurst" Castle, jcastle@vcn.bc.ca

((NOTE: Arsenal Pulp Press is a Vancouver small press, formerly associated with the Labour Day weekend 3-Day Novel Writing Contest. - GS))

Live Action Role-Playing Games

Thought you might get a kick out of this... <http://streetwars.ca/>

"Tila Pelletier [VH]" <tpelleti@vanhosp.bc.ca>, 11 Aug 2004

((NOTE: Upon examination, StreetWars appeared to be a version of paintball played on city streets. -GS))

Goth House Newsletter, 30 July 2004, Vol. 3 Issue 18

This fortnight: Part 4 and final of "Empty Rooms."

<http://www.gothhouse.org/>

The San Diego Comic-Con was fun, as usual. I have a complete write-up of my experiences there, which will go up on the web site as soon as I have a chance to edit it.

The postcards have gone out, so if you pre-supported Issue 5 and didn't get one, now is the time to let me know. The definite launch date is now October.

October is "Comics Month" in Bellingham, because Jonathan Sodd (who draws Harmless Free Radicals, another B-ham comic) and I decided it was. He has started a comic group that meets a couple of times a week at The Black Drop coffeeshop downtown. So, our plans are to have an art show, a reception for the show, a cartoon jam, and a custom flavor of ice cream happen during the month of October.

Of course, most of you on this list don't live in Bellingham.

I decided to get one of the "Patriotic Percival" tank tops for myself to see what the experience of ordering from CafePress was like. The tank top looks pretty cool, except that it's white, but they run small.

Welcome to the fortnightly issue of the Goth house newsletter. To subscribe, send pleasantly warm e-mail to info@gothhouse.org. To unsubscribe, send blisteringly hot e-mail to info@gothhouse.org. Pray for rain.

Julie McG julie@gothhouse.org — 30 July 2004

Efanzines news

"Right on schedule, the latest issue of Earl's bi-monthly e-zine, *eI* 15 for August 2004 is now on line at <http://efanzines.com>

"This issue has contributions by Jon Stopa, Ian Williams, Jan Stinson, Bruce Gillespie, and others, as well as more illustrated stories of Earl's life in the publishing business.

"The PDF is also ready, 77 pages for those who can't resist the printed word.

"The latest issue of Arnie Katz's zine, Flicker #3 for July 2004, is also now on line at <http://efanzines.com>"

Bill Burns, August 4, 2004

New V Cancelled

>> From: Frank Garcia <fgarcia@shaw.ca>
 >> A "V" Sequel? Forget It
 >> Posted: Wednesday 13 July 2004, 11:14 p.m. (Au-EST)
 >>
 >> Author: Garth Franklin (from *Dark Horizons?*)
 >> A while back NBC planned to develop a three-hour TV movie sequel to the classic '80s alien invasion series "V," plans which changed to a four-hour mini-series to be penned by creator Kenneth Johnson.
 >>
 >> Now, the *Post Gazette* reports that Jeff Gaspin, NBC's miniseries and movies chieftain, said there was not enough newness to the most recent miniseries draft to green-light it — "I just don't think it was different enough from the original, frankly. ..."

From Dennis Kristos via Ryan Hawe:

Forwarded by Felicity Walker <felicity@vcn.bc.ca>, 10 Aug 2004

Aristotle Jones sent the following links under the title "Thunderbirds are Gone!":

<http://www.futuremovies.co.uk/review.asp?ID=214>
<http://www.ericdsnyder.com/view.php?mrkey=2136&PHPSESSID=15d09321ce774b9ce71cbbc1b6071e38>
<http://www.empiremovies.com/reviews/reviews.php?id=378>
<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/thunderbirds/>

((NOTE: I gather that these reviewers didn't think much of the Thunderbirds movie. -GS))

Media News

Doctor Who: *The Daleks Return*

After weeks of both the BBC and the estate of Terry Nation saying that the best-known of the Doctor's adversaries, the Daleks, will not be part of the new series, they *will* be part of the new series.

The BBC said on 4 August 2004 that an arrangement has been reached between the two parties that will let the intergalactic pepper shakers be part of the *Doctor Who* universe, and keep the look that viewers have known so well since January 1964. Also, they will still be yelling their familiar "Ex-ter-mi-nate! Ex-ter-mi-nate!! Ex-ter-mi-nate!!!" (with the voice of John Scott Martin, who took part in the very first Dalek story, providing it) every time they run into the Doctor or anyone else trying to stop them from universal conquest. However, there are also a

number of changes that will bring these classic sci-fi monsters into the 21st century.

I, like many other series fans, think that the BBC always wanted the Daleks to be part of the new series, and as I said in the July edition, they may not be part of the first season, but they could return in a future season — and doing *Doctor Who* without them would have been like doing *Star Trek* without the Klingons. It looks like the plan—for the first season, anyway—is to have the first story with the Daleks filmed second.

As for the second story, titled "The Revenge of the Autons," it's almost complete as of the day of this writing (10 August 2004). Joining the new series cast are Camille Coduri playing role of Rose's mother Jackie (who will be around for six episodes), John Borrowman as UNIT's Captain Jack, and Noel Clarke as Mickey, Rose's boyfriend. Clarke is a casting first for the series — a regular cast member who's [in] an ethnic minority.

What I'm getting from all the news on the net is that the new series will be like a cross between the classic *Who* series, *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer*, and *Star Trek*, with a little *Babylon 5* in there to make it all work. The people who are saying that the new series will not be the classic series are the same kind of folks who were saying that *Star Trek: The Next Generation* would never be classic *Star Trek* before the first *Next Gen* episodes aired back in 1987. I feel that the classic *Doctor Who* will always give the long-time viewer a nostalgic rush, while the new series will be bringing new blood to the Doctor's universe.

However, with this good news comes some bad news. The first broadcast of the new series has been moved back to the end of February or the beginning of March, since BBC1 wants to air the *Little House on the Prairie* mini-series the same week as the Americans. I feel that the BBC is taking a risk, since most of the new viewers will be quite upset at a two-part story that has a two-week break in it. *Little House* may be a good lead-in to the new series, since the original *Little House* has been airing on the BBC/Sky cable service since 1992 (two-and-a-half years before *Doctor Who* first aired on it) and has just as much of a following as classic *Who*. Then, there's always that chance that the Americans could air *Little House* in November, so the first airing of the new *Doctor Who* series would be unaffected.

Also as of the time of this writing, the BBC is not looking for a North American outlet for the new series. The Sci-Fi Channel may or may not be interested in it, but some people are saying that the station will make some kind of announcement on the series in September (which would then determine whether Space: TIS would pick it up in Canada). With the BBC not looking, if Sci-Fi said "No thanks," it's likely that the series would air on BBC America (and BBC Canada up here) or on a public broadcaster like PBS, the Knowledge Network and the like.

That's all for now. I'll be back with more *Doctor Who* news next month, here and on the BCSFA posting board.

Cosmic Ray Seredin

Rocky Horror Review

If you do include it, put it immediately after the first sentence ("...Douglas College."), then a paragraph break *after* the new text, and before "It was OK." (And change "It" to "The show".)

On Tuesday 10 August 2004, I went with my friend Paul to the live "Rocky Horror Show" at Douglas College. I was dressed as I normally would be as Felicity, but anticipated that given the event, my clothes might be taken as Rocky Horror fan crossdressing. When we first arrived, everyone else there was dressed normally, but as showtime approached more people came dressed up. I still felt out of place, since I was there dressed in female clothes but not any of the show costumes. I decided to play it safe and use the men's washroom (even though I have a note from my doctor that allows me to use the women's washroom in most circumstances), but I still got dirty looks. At a college campus with "Boys Will Be Girls" transgendered pride posters in the hallways. On Rocky Horror night.

The show was OK. (OK?! *OK?!* I'm afraid I can't do better than that.) The actors over-acted and sang painfully off-key. There were technical problems with the cast's microphones randomly turning on and off. Two newly-added usherette/cigarette-girl characters provided the audience participation lines, or other similar responses, which too often spoiled the double meanings of the actual script by spelling them out. (I didn't really need to have them scream the word that Frank-N-Furter was probably thinking of during the pause when he said he wanted "to take Charles Atlas by the...hand.") I reminded myself that changes like that were the prerogative of a director doing an interpretation of the original stage musical rather than a reproduction of the film.

I may not have been completely honest on the virginity question. I had lost my *RHPS* virginity, but hadn't seen the all-live show before. I probably could have been more specific and told them that, but decided I didn't really want to do the ceremony this time. The ceremony was similar to the one last Halloween, so I guess wasn't wrong to decline; the gang of virgins was narrowed down to about a dozen, who were asked to fake an orgasm, then narrowed again until the final two had their cherries popped and were declared the slut and the asshole and married in a Rocky Horror wedding. On the one hand, I can imagine that being sort of stressful. On the other hand, how many people can boast that they've been the slut or asshole at Rocky Horror, and have been married in a Rocky Horror wedding? A small, proud elite, I would think.

At first there was no consensus in the crowd about whether or not we were supposed to do anything. I opted to keep quiet, as did Paul. Large chunks of the audience booed the Criminologist throughout all his scenes, which I didn't think needed to be done to the live actor. (I also like the Criminologist character, so I felt sorry for the character getting heckled at the movie showing, too, as much as it may be a tradition.) Other than that, most people kept quiet, occasionally doing the Time

Warp and not much else. However, one die-hard fan near the front felt compelled to participate constantly, even when the cast tried to tell her to stop. The actor playing Frank sat on her lap and sang directly to her, and that didn't intimidate her. Finally, what happened was this: at the part where Riff Raff gets paranoid and says "They didn't like me! They never liked me!", the fan yelled "*I* like you!" and the actor playing Riff ad-libbed "Fuck off!" The audience cheered enthusiastically for that. I felt a little sorry for the woman, even if she had brought it on herself by refusing to heed the warning signs; Paul felt sorry for the actor playing Riff, who he said seemed a little thrown off by the intensity of the crowd's reaction (although I thought she improvised beautifully by pointing her anti-matter gun at different sections of the audience in a paranoid way).

The performance was dedicated to Fay Wray. When I saw on the news a few days before that she had died, my first thought was of the lyrics, "Whatever happened to Fay Wray?/That delicate, satin-draped frame?/As it clung to her thigh/How I started to cry/'Cause I wanted to be dressed just the same." There was an brief, awkward moment when, after "Whatever happened to Fay Wray?", the vocal fan yelled "She's dead!" This, according to Paul, has always been the correct audience response line, but he agreed that it was still too soon after her actual death to use it.

On the whole, I think I preferred the film showing with live cast and some audience participation that I went to last Halloween. But I should say that I agree with Paul, in that I'm glad to see local Rocky Horror activity going on, and grateful that they had a pay-what-you-can-night so that everyone got to enjoy it.

Felicity Walker, 14 Aug 2004

Book Reviews

Donna McMahon

THE APPARITION TRAIL, Lisa Smedman (Tesseract Books, 2004)
THE AIR LOOM GANG: The Strange and True Story of James Tilly Matthews and his Visionary Madness, Mike Jay (Four Walls Eight Windows, Apr/04)

THE APPARITION TRAIL, Lisa Smedman (Tesseract Books, 2004)

It's 1884 on the prairies, but a very different 1884 than the one in Canadian history books. Since a mysterious comet struck Earth's moon in 1877, magical phenomena have become real. For Europeans, this has manifested in the development of perpetual motion technology, which is swiftly replacing coal and steam on the partially completed Canadian Pacific Railroad. And for tribes like the Cree and Blackfoot, magic holds the promise of powerful spells to banish foreign interlopers from the plains and restore the vanishing buffalo herds.

When Corporal Marmaduke Grayburn is summoned to see RCMP Superintendent Sam Steele, he is dismayed, fearing his secret past has caught up to him and he will be discharged. Steele is interested in something Grayburn has kept quiet, all right, but not what Grayburn feared. The Mounties want to hear about Grayburn's paranormal and precognitive abilities because they are forming Q Division — an elite psychic task force.

Settlers, railroad workers and even Mounties are disappearing all across the prairies, and nobody knows how or why. Grayburn is being sent to investigate — a mission that will lead him along the strange and terrifying *APPARITION TRAIL*.

Canadian audiences will very much enjoy Lisa Smedman's alternate history setting and the many real historical figures who populate it, ranging from Sam Steele to Francis Dickens (son of novelist Charles Dickens and a very inept RCMP officer), to a cameo appearance by Sir John A. himself. Smedman has done her research, and she does not neglect the Cree, Blackfoot, Assiniboine, Salteaux, Blood and Peigan tribes, nor skate over their brutal exploitation by the Canadian government, RCMP and CPR.

Fantasy elements of this story are appropriate to their setting. The sorcerer, Wandering Spirit, uses Cree spiritualism in his magic, while, among the Europeans, Smedman has a great deal of fun introducing perpetual motion machines, including redesigned train engines and air bicycles (held up by helium balloons).

This well developed background and a complex plot are the strong points of *THE APPARITION TRAIL*. Unfortunately, this is not a character driven novel, and Marmaduke Grayburn comes across as a rather stiff and colourless narrator until almost the end of the book (a problem somewhat exacerbated by Smedman's deliberate use of a formal 19th century writing style). I would have found the story far more compelling if I had known Grayburn's personal dilemma earlier, and had more backstory on the mysterious Blackfoot woman, Emily.

Finally, this is a nitpick, but a map would *really* have been a boon for those of us who navigate Canada these days by highways rather than river systems.

THE AIR LOOM GANG: The Strange and True Story of James Tilly Matthews and his Visionary Madness, Mike Jay (Four Walls Eight Windows, Apr/04)

I'm taking a slight departure from my usual review fare to look at *THE AIR LOOM GANG*, an unusual work of non-fiction, because I think it's likely to intrigue the eclectic SF/F reader or writer.

In 1810, Dr. John Haslam published *Illustrations of Madness*, a detailed study of an articulate, educated patient who believed that his mind was being controlled by a gang of revolutionary thugs operating a secret machine called an "Air Loom." Haslam's landmark treatise about patient James Tilly Matthews earned a place in the history of psychiatry

as the first example of an "influencing machine," or as author Mike Jay put it:

"For everyone who has since had messages beamed at them through their fillings, or their TV sets, or via high-tech surveillance, MI5, Masonic lodges, or UFOs, James Tilly Matthews is Patient Zero."

Understandably nobody at the time believed in the Air Loom, any more than they believed Matthews' other claims: that he had undertaken secret missions to France during the last days of the French Revolution, or that he had been imprisoned in Bedlam (the famous London mental hospital) by enemies in the English government. But extensive digging by Mike Jay has revealed a startling likelihood: that this is one paranoid who had real enemies, and most of what he related was true.

THE AIR LOOM GANG is a fascinating account of one man's unusual and ultimately tragic life during an age of great political, social and scientific upheaval. Matthews' incarceration at Bedlam occurred amid a fundamental shift in medicine, when doctors first began trying to diagnose and treat madness as a disease, rather than a moral failing or act of God (a movement triggered, in part, by the notorious madness of King George in the late 1780's).

The late 18th century was also political turning point, with millennia-old monarchies threatened by demands for representative government. Matthews, a London tea merchant, was an idealist and political dissenter who supported the republican revolution in France. He most certainly travelled to France as an emissary to the revolutionary government and tried to carry messages back to the English government — a dangerous game to play even in England, where alarmed officials were clamping down on civil rights (with rhetoric uncomfortably reminiscent of 9/11).

In this vein, it's chilling to consider just how much of this first "clear-cut" scientific account of paranoid-schizophrenia was based on erroneous assumptions. While James Tilly Matthews certainly suffered from delusions — possibly even caused by the conditions at Bedlam — author Mike Jay reveals him as a compelling, intelligent man striving to survive a nightmare. Imaginative, idealistic, and forward-thinking, Matthews might even, in another age, have been a science fiction writer....

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Comments? Questions? Rebuttals? donna_mcmahon@sunshine.net



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