



(The foregoing picture is supposed to be a fossil footprint or two)

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February Events

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|---------|-----------------------------|--|
| Feb. 11 | BCSFazine deadline | see Garth at FRED (7-11 p.m., Denny's Restaurant on Davie at Thurlow). |
| Feb. 12 | Feeding Frenzy | 7 p.m. at The Reef, 4172 Main Street, Vancouver. |
| Feb. 19 | BCSFA meeting/party | 7 p.m. at Kathleen Moore-Freeman's place, 7064 No. 1 Road, Richmond; telephone 604-277-0845 for directions. |
| Feb. 24 | Book discussion | 7 p.m. at Our Town Café at 245 East Broadway, Vancouver; book to discuss is Kim Stanley Robinson's <i>Red Mars</i> . |
| Feb. 25 | BCSFazine production | see Garth and Doug at FRED (7-11 p.m., Denny's on Davie at Thurlow). |
| Feb. 26 | Kaffeeklatsch | 7-11 p.m. at Garth's place, 82 East 40 th Avenue, Vancouver; phone 604-325-7314 for directions). |

The Richmond Writers Group meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 7:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m., at the Richmond Arts Centre, 7700 Minoru Gate (in the Richmond Public Library, Brighthouse Branch, Minoru Boulevard & Granville Avenue, in the cafe on the Granville Avenue side of the building). Interested people should e-mail or phone Bill (info below) to double-check about what is happening: bmarles53 @ yahoo.com or (604) 277-6775, or go to MSN group web address: <http://groups.msn.com/richmondwriters/>. (FW)

Listen to THE ONOMATOPOEIA SHOW, CITR 101.9 FM (or <http://www.citr.ca/live.rm>) * Thursdays at 2:00 p.m.; Contact Robin at betafishblue@hotmail.com

Listen to HI SCI FI, CJSF 90.1 FM * Fridays at 5:00 p.m. You can also contact Irma Arkus at 604-291-5797 or hiscifi_cjsf@yahoo.ca

Art/Photo Credits:

"Purple"	cover
Felicity Walker	6
Clip art	1, 2, 14, 18, 22, 26, 35, 46, 51
Joe Devoy	9
Scan from D. Malinski	25

PLAIN SPEAKING



Another of the several feast days and tumultuous gatherings that I hate is Valentine's Day. I have more important things to worry about, like whether I'm still unemployed when my Employment Insurance runs out this month; so having to observe yet another celebration of waste motion is not precisely the highest priority on my blotter.

In fact, I'd like to propose to you another exercise in creative thinking, which you are probably going to ignore. I assert that *the European tradition of romantic love is an Evil Sinister Mind Control Plot*. Not every society, you

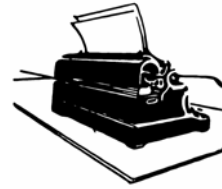
should note, has a tradition of romantic love, even if such traditions occur in societies as diverse as European nations, the colonial nations, India and Japan. Our own stereotypes and conventions actually go back only a few centuries, and don't even faithfully reflect the original version, Eleanor of Aquitaine's medieval ideology of courtly love.

If you take even a cursory look at the historical evidence, you might get a creepy feeling, as I did. Eleanor of Aquitaine came from one of those small kingdoms right on the border of Christian Europe, usually trading goods and ideas with nearby Moslem states. She married into one of the central, powerful countries of Western Europe, of course, but she brought with her a popular culture that, frankly, seemed to be modeled directly from *Moslem* troubadours. Remember, this was an age of arranged marriages; "love" was by definition something adulterers did. Well, what did she do but expose the unwashed barbarians at court to idealized, ennobled romance? Try to "civilize" the armed bandits with the idea of an unattainable, ideal amour? Which, come to think of it, is about the only way to make sense of the frequent infidelities that drove the whole cycle of epic stories about King Arthur and his court.

I put it to you that this was part of a covert Plot to undermine European societies, and it damn near succeeded. Inadvertently, to this day we *expect* a marriage to be made for love, we think romantic love *should* sustain a relationship for a lifetime – and then we wonder why so many marriages don't work out; or why so many people set up light housekeeping together, without benefit of clergy. Our naïve religionists get all up in arms about gay marriage, when we're simply following our modern conviction, that love is all we need; and we ignore the practical question, how do we make any of our complex, frustrating partnerships *work*?

This is the legacy, I put it to you, of history's most successful covert *agent-provocateuse* – generations after her original cause was forgotten.

Or maybe I'm just pissed that I haven't dared go on a date in thirteen years.



LETTERS OF COMMENT

Sheryl Birkhead, 25509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20882, U.S.A.,
Dec. 3, 2004

Thanks for BCSFAzine ##376, 377; nice Taral piece on 376's cover, and an interesting Sanchez on #377. (Scanning ... I'll recheck more slowly; I don't see a masthead/editorial address, etc.; but since I have the envelope ...)

((I'm sorry, I should have made it plainer that the colophon is at the end of BCSFAzine; either on the back cover, or just a page or two inside.))

Gee – I can't remember reading much about SCA over the past few years – sounds as if there are quite a few active.

((There are so many active SCA members around the world, the organization even has its own CIA file, with an estimate of the size of their armed force and everything.))

Fen who step up to bat and take on jobs often are not as appreciated as they *SHOULD* be. Most make things run smoothly and – not until they have to step down – are only thanked when the masses realize how much they've lost. So, add my thanks to you for stepping into the editorial breach.

Wow – Taral does send you a goodly number of pieces – all nice.

Page 17 could *ALMOST* be a course description, of classes at the local community college.

Ahhh ... so the Daleks *WILL* be on the new series – seems right.

#377 – How times have changed ... buy "tickets" (whatever) on PAYPAL!!

How to get greater "exposure" and adhesion for the Auroras? Wish I knew how.

I second your sentiments of caring for Lloyd & Yvonne – they are loved by fandom – hope they realize it.

Agh – Dec. 14th!

I was going to work on some simple cover ideas, the wondered: do you prefer to have Canadian fanartists in those spots? Taral's work is great, and my doodlings do not hold a candle, but they might give you a small backlog to drawn on (ahem), if there is no Taral art to use. Just let me know ... I intended to get a few fillos along with something big enough for a cover – let me know.

((No, I don't have a preference for Canadian fanartists. In fact the bigger and more diverse a backlog I have, of art in electronic format, the better!

Keep your readers up to date with any goings-on for the Auroras; [also] remind your readers that Hugo nominations start as of January 1 – go for it!

Lloyd&Yvonne Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2
<penneys@allstream.net>, December 22, 2004

I'm at home just before Christmas, and I'm feeling ambitious, as was Garth in producing BCSFAzine 380 so early, I'm sure, so here is an extra early loc on the issue. Patrick Stewart is in the background on television, being an extra surly Scrooge, and he's very good at it. Onwards...

Good on yer for promoting the Auroras. These awards are supposed to promote, represent and reward all of Canadian fandom and prodrom, not just a small cross-section. I have suggested to other people that perhaps what the Auroras need is a representative from each major fannish city in Canada to get the word out when it's time to nominate, and again when it's time to vote. Myself, I'd like to see fan and pro Auroras scattered to the corners of the country and all around. I know it is difficult and horribly expensive to be aware of all the SF&F our writers produce, but we must try to at least be aware of what's there, and lists such as this one are a good start.

((If there were even one fanzine editor publishing regularly, in every Canadian fan community, then Aurora Award promotions would still depend on the absolutely voluntary participation of such editors. Maybe I could phrase that better: things like Aurora promotion get done because some individuals just happen to volunteer to do it.

((It isn't so much expensive or even difficult to do research on new Canadian SF/F/H publications, at least online; it just takes time, and sustained attention, and putting in even that much effort takes a certain motivation.

((My concern in fannish enterprises is, do we have the motivation that they require? And that seems to be uncertain.

((Comparing the history of fan groups and their enterprises to the history of other special-interest groups, and their enterprises, seems to show that different enterprises motivate people to very different degrees; and national fan-voted awards, or promotion of Canadian speculative fiction – which is kind of the whole point – may not motivate fans enough, not enough at least to give the enterprise the sustained attention it requires.

((Just my opinion. I tend to harp on it, yes, but only because I don't see many people receiving my signal.))

I think when Kirsten found the listserv and said something about SF being a “dying genre”, she may have been echoing something Robert J. Sawyer said in a panel at the Boston Worldcon, this past Labour Day. I'm not sure I agree with Rob, either, but perhaps it is publishing as a whole that is dying in this country. Sometimes, I wonder if there are any fresh ideas in SF, and that may be a sign that I've been around reading this stuff for a long time, maybe too long.

((If a British fan, or someone like myself were making this claim, it would be based on the evidence of American movies, Star Trek, and every other media/ comics story universe since then: story universes that not only fail, but actively refuse to cover new imaginative ground. Enough of that evidence and anyone could start to believe that imaginative yet reasoned speculation was dead.

((For evidence to the contrary, check out Stephen Baxter, Iain Banks, Cory Doctorow, Michael Flynn ...))

There are lots of zines around, but as I've said in past issues, it's become half and half, paper and electronic. I have tried to do my part to keep the hobby affordable, and if there is a choice between paper and electronic, I will take electronic. I prefer paper, but we're all involved in a money crunch these days.

((Even more, an information crunch. I sometimes joke that the fannish universe is constantly expanding, so different fandoms are continually receding beyond their “horizon of communication”, as I call it. Which would explain why I had to tell a non-fanzine-fan in this region that there are, in fact, still fanzines around; in their knowledge of fandom and conventions, fanzines didn't even show up above their horizon.))

Tangel and Yzod remind me of Sabrina and ZigZag. Taral will know what I'm talking about. The panel illo was readable when I blew it up to 400%.

Hi, Felicity...as long as you had a good time at VCon, that's great. I have been to a few cons where the concon provided a great time, and some of the other members of the con made me feel terrible. I have tried to make sure the two are differentiated; I don't want to blame the committee if it's not their fault. By the way, I create my own Hawaiian pizza camouflage all the time. I'm a messy eater.

((At our ages, Lloyd, we can justifiably give up caring a ratfuck what anyone else says or thinks. Even if their attitude costs us jobs, income, fannish reputation, or something else important.))

I know some of the folks at Space:TIS. Mark Askwith [producer of “Prisoners of Gravity”, on which Lloyd once appeared! - FW] is a producer, Lyla Miklos purchases some of the shows, and Don Wright used to be the face of Space on SpaceNews; he now works at the television station in Barrie, north of Toronto. Both Mark and Lyla have been involved with fandom to one degree or another, and they both know much of local fandom. They have never done the things they've wanted to do; Space is a channel meant to sell advertising geared to the usual SF-watching

demographic. They buy a few new shows, but it is mostly reruns, over and over again. Management's intent is not to cover the world of SF or of the space programme, for that matter. They do the latter better than the former. They do not cater to any special group. They are there to sell advertising, and they do a good job of it. I wish they did a better job of producing a science fiction channel, and I think Mark and Lyla wish that, too. They can do only what they are allowed to do.

((Sic semper TV.))

The Bush regime is not Canadian [see my *Canadian covert-plot gag last issue -GS*], but I do believe it is a vast, insidious subversive plot. I still remember when Rick Mercer talked to Dubya about Prime Minister "Poutine", during the presidential campaign in 2000. Some American friends have seen "Talking to Americans"...they are a little embarrassed, but one or two say they're not surprised. The quotation at the end of Greg Slade's letter certainly holds true. When I typo, I do it so no one knows what the hell I'm talking about... "bood" should have been book.

((A plot, or a conspiracy, requires that a person or a group work covertly toward a common purpose. The more people, resources, time or geographical distance are required for a hypothetical conspiracy, the less likely it is; although the differing purposes inspire very different levels of motivation, as witness fan activities versus religious, political or financial ones.

((As described by various writers, and summarized by Gwynne Dyer in *Future Tense*, the contemporary Bush presidency is not a plot, nor a conspiracy; what you see is the result of several political groups coming together, including the neo-conservative movement. The neo-conservatives have never been particularly covert, nor lacking in motivation, nor had any trouble maintaining unity of purpose. Maybe I should really call them a subculture.

((Future Tense was so dead-on, I decided to send it to the U.S. President's office. Just a gesture, I know, but mine own.))

I would have to check my old convention lists, but I believe there was an [Ontario] attempt at a Transformers convention. It was imaginatively called TransformersCon, and I think it was to be held in Oakville, southwest of Toronto. Not being a [Transformers] fan, and certainly not attending every local convention on my lists, I don't know if this actually took place. I think in this case, a Transformers convention is simply a get-together of TransFans to meet, show off collections, and watch episodes. Not much for us jaded types, but a lot for these people, I would imagine.

We need The Return of the Leather Goddess of Phobos! And tales of their adventures. In this enlightened age, maybe there should also be some Leather Gods, and tales of *their* adventures. No one ever said this was a PG-rated zine, hm? More scaring of the straights. A fanzine elemental? Hot air?

((Back story: there once was a silly computer game titled "Leather Goddesses of Phobos", from the same game designer who later produced "Super-Heroes of Hoboken". Like other fan communities before us, BCSFA came up with a group of self-styled Amazon/cougars, and the Leather Goddesses were a continuing feature at Vcons, and in BCSFAzine, for several years.

((I have not yet obtained permission to use their names or likenesses or anything like their real experiences in our faanfction section. I didn't ask anyone else's permission either. But then, you don't mess with the Leather Goddesses. Unless they want to be messed with.))

A massive snowstorm is alighting upon Toronto and area, and we may get up to 35 cm of snow, or about a foot for the metric-impaired. It is getting dark outside, and Yvonne has yet to come home from work, so I await her arrival any minute now, or possibly two hours from now, depending on the roads. We will have a cold, white Christmas, and I think you will have a warm, green one. At least we will both have Christmas, so we wish you all the best of holidays, have a blast, don't do anything we wouldn't do, and don't come to us for the bail money. With luck, we'll see you in a happier 2005.



Tiffany Totenkopf
<tiffany_totenkopf@hotmail.com>,
06 Jan 2005

I wish to complain in the strongest possible terms about the letter from Felicity Walker in BCSFAzine #380 ("BCSFAZINEzine #28"). Yes, I am a member of the Western Fandom Illuminati, and yes, I do look like Miss Walker, but I am *not* as you say her evil twin. I have pink hair, and she has purple hair. Clearly the "gay/transvestite group now appearing at FRED" is an indication that the Royal Swiss Navy has infiltrated BCSFA! How long must society tolerate this pseudo-nautical behaviour?

Yours faithfully,
Sister Tiffany Totenkopf (Western Fandom Illuminati Primi)

BCSFAZINEzine, Volume 1, Number 29.380, Thursday 6 January 2005
BCSFAZINEzine is from Felicity Walker, felicity4711@hotmail.com.

Thanks for BCSFAzine #380. Excellent use of that clip art throughout the issue.

Cover - Art Credits: Joe Devoy: also 18, 37.

Fannish Letters, Glyphs and Runes - Ray Seredin: Note to Garth: The Executive Inn Airport Plaza Hotel also has hot tubs.

BCSFAZINEzine/Felicity Walker: “Gudge” is a word I made up in high school to describe someone who prefers to believe the worst of everyone, without evidence, so that they have something to be angry about.

Calendar of Upcoming Events - Anime Evolution: I enjoyed the AE I attended in 2003. I meant to go to the 2004 AE but my plan to not be broke and to have a ride failed on both counts. I hope my life has changed for the better by the next AE.

The Only Thing We Learn - Presidential Distinctions: I wonder if Bush and Bradbury talked about *Fahrenheit 911* at the ceremony. Or perhaps Bradbury commented that the name “President George Bush” was unoriginal, having been used from 1988-1992.

Published Pros on TV: The character name “Louise ‘Lou’ Meagher” reminds me of UBC SFS president Abigail “Gail” Meagher. If I wrote publicly how those memories make me feel, I might be open to accusations of starting something.

R.I.P.: Pierre Berton: I had to [read] *The Secret World of Og* in grade five. I did not like it. My most pleasant memory of Pierre Berton is that I’m told Austin McGrath, Martin Short’s character in the SCTV sketch “Headline Challenge” was based on Berton.

Mmm. Good times.

The Botcon Saga: Well-spoken, articulate, precise, and clear, just as I expected from Ryan. Some excellent writing.

Why would Takara making 4,000 too many Skywarps, causing the item to be withdrawn from the convention? At worst, [the law of] supply and demand forces Hallit to offer the figures at a lower price, since fans are able to buy elsewhere, rather than only at that time in that place in tightly limited supply.

Garth’s Reviews - Okal Rel: Those flaws would bother me, too.

Randy Barnhard, 1-1565 Heron Road, Ottawa, ON, K1V 9V1,
randy_barnhart@hotmail.com

Hello from Ottawa, where the men are men and the penguins are nervous! The weather here has been, in the words of a local CBC weather announcer, “weird.” (must be Meteorology jargon) One day it’s -35°C with a meter of snow on the ground; and the next its +10 with thunderstorms. I know it’s an article of faith among many fen that there is no such thing as global warming, but gee, the weather has to be getting odder by the month for some reason. I understand some snow even touched down on the pristine streets of Van...man.

(I know that people are still arguing about whether climates are changing, even when I personally see the evidence. We not only had snow, we had torrential rain, even flooding and mudslides. We already had pine beetles surviving the past few winters, and salmon failing to return

because the marine temperatures are too high for them to spawn in their usual latitudes ... I could go on.))

We are, like everyone else I suppose, suffering from the usual post-holiday financial woes. We tried to make this a “less-expensive” Christmas, but for some reason, the post-secondary institutions in BC want the second semester’s payment in January. Obviously, only the incredibly wealthy, who can ignore the post-holiday financial slump, go to university these days.

((This is not news. Like climate change, tuition fee hikes have been a chronic issue for over thirty years. I think life itself is becoming unaffordable. This sort of thing led up to the French Revolution.))

Yes, SF&F are becoming popular genres, which may be why some long-time fen are predicting it is dying. Many pro SF&F writers seem to have begun writing for that big audience out there instead of the tiny audience in here (i.e., fandom). This is not to say that’s a bad thing, because pros write for a living and who among us would not to make a few more bucks. Still, sometimes you have to walk that razor’s edge between writing any old crap for a buck and writing for a very small, sharply defined and poor group.

Oh, and the *Battlestar Galactica* re-make? Doesn’t stink too bad.

I don’t know, but something about using the words “unrequited lust” and “grips” appearing in the same sentence...troubles me.

Greg Slade: Very interesting. Reminds me of an idea from a few years back where someone proposed firing missiles into tornadoes to break the core wall and disrupt the tornado’s structure. And hey, don’t worry about some “fundamental flaw.” More than a few interesting ideas are buried due to that unseen “flaw.”

Ray Seredin: Really? VCon 30 will be at the Executive Inn Airport Plaza? Well, it’s a nice hotel, although a bit pricey, reasonably close to bus routes and the airport, so it sounds cool to me. Better than the Bosmans Hotel on Howe, truly the scummiest hotel in Vancouver.

Oh, and good news about *V*. The original movie was a wonder and lots of us had some very high hopes for it. Unfortunately, it sank into the usual television trap of trying to be everything to everyone and became the customary shoot-’em-up. Leave us hope they try to keep the original idea intact instead of War of the Worlds for lizards.

((There were three glaring flaws with the V storyline, obvious to anyone who remembered high-school biology and astronomy: the idea that reptilian aliens would be able to interbreed with humans (very Lovecraft); the idea that aliens would invest Los Angeles, let alone Earth, to mine water; or the idea that space travellers would cross interstellar distances in search of water, let alone food. Only paranoid ignorant earthbound Californians whose only education was television would write this sort of script.))

Felicity Walker: Yes, well, I don’t recall ever meeting a fan who was “...fit, handsome and socially suave...,” not even in the mirror, but I have

to agree with Garth. Fandom is the most accepting sub-culture I've ever encountered, but there are still those "jocks and cheerleaders of fandom." You, know, folks who are heroes in their own minds and insist you know all about it? Happily, I have been able to ignore such folks with little or no pain.

Ah, rassling. Watching human gorillas throw each other around was one of the few things my dad and I enjoyed watching together. I remember back in the Sixties, when there were heroes and heels and no soap opera; rasslers like Bruno Sammartino, Gorilla Monsoon, Bobo Brazil, Classy Freddy Blassie (originator of the beloved phrase "pencil-neck geek"), Buddy Rogers and Haystack Calhoun. These behemoths thundered around the ring beating the royal crap out of each other until it came time for the pre-ordained loser to tank. And he did it with class and élan. None of this steroid strongman stuff for these guys! They had huge hanging guts and sagging pecs and weren't afraid to show it! Most of them had day jobs loading trucks or working in slaughterhouses, so there was a sense they were "working class heroes."

The larger-than-life guys arrived in the Eighties. Hulk Hogan, Macho Man Randy Savage, Bret "The Hit Man" Hart, The Ulllllllllltimate Warrior, Shawn Michaels, Jake "The Snake" Roberts, Stone Cold Steve Austin, Rowdy Roddy Piper, Razor Ramon, Honky-Tonk Man, Ravishing Rick Rude (who is rumoured to have died of steroid abuse)... the list goes on. These were the guys rassling fans looked up to as superheroes lite. Still, despite the fact that they had wonderful physicality and theatricality, the growth of the soap opera story lines (really, does anyone care who Stephanie McMahon is "dating" these days) started then, and the 1994 Steroid Scandal finally killed WWF-WWE type rassling. It is now merely soap opera for the testosterone addicts out there. They don't even call it wrestling any more; now it's "sports entertainment."

Ahem. Sorry about the foaming-at-the-mouth there.

Speaking of rasslers and gay men (consider it combining two separate conversations), does anyone remember a rassler by the name of Gold Dust? For a very brief period, the WWF tried to sell a story line about how Gold Dust was gay. The amazing thing was that they tried to do this without once mentioning the words "gay" or "homosexual." Instead, they used the old "wink and a nod" method, employing every ugly cliché and stereotype about gay men mid-America holds so dear. He was played as a heel, of course, but even the few occasions they tried to play Gold Dust as a hero, it failed because the character was just so creepy, even from an ironic perspective. In the end, it failed and Gold Dust disappeared. I mean, no matter how hard you play up the clichés, sooner or later Gold Dust had to come out to maintain the story line, and Vince the M. just doesn't have the stones to challenge the dearly held stereotypes of his core audience.

((You should correspond with Rodney Leighton. He's into this rassling stuff.))

Interesting point about cultural appropriation and white, male fans. I always have problems with white writers "using" Aboriginal culture.

Native people end up being used as either 1) the noble savage who has rejected technology and is 'way cool for it; 2) the stud who adds a touch of physicality and sexuality to a character who would otherwise be a boring scientist (e.g., the high energy physicist who is also a Sioux, and therefore a butt-kicking warrior); 3) the alien who looks human.

A few years, I attempted to challenge a pro who used cliché #3 and I was told that, if I hated it so much, write a letter to her editor. Ah yes, and people wonder why Aboriginal people get upset about the mangling of our culture in fiction!

((People don't live in reality, they live in preferred fictional versions; they're not consistent these days; and it's more dangerous to threaten their worldviews than their lives.))

Interesting that the Wachowskis have decided to film Alan Moore and David Lloyd's *V for Vendetta*, but from the description it sounds like they're trying to clean it up so as not to challenge the viewers' pre-conceptions. If I member correctly, the original V4V back-story had nothing to do with a classic Nazi victory AU. Instead, there was a limited war with the USSR in 1988, which pretty effectively mucks up the world. A real, honest to goodness fascist party called Norsefire takes over the UK and begins internment the Usual Suspects. V4V is supposedly Moore's statement on the rise of fascist parties in the UK (the National Front, the British National Party and so nauseously on) and the fascist nature of the Thatcher government. I just hope that the film version doesn't end up hiding Moore's contention that that any country, given the right circumstances, can fall prey to fascism.

((This also is not news. And our economy is depressed enough to breed enough aggrieved unemployed whites. Or are there people who seriously say "It can't happen here", with their bare faces hanging out? I'm still waiting to hear about skinhead neo-Nazis in Vancouver, and elsewhere in Canada. We hear about gay-bashing and Paki-bashing, but are our media spiking stories about radical right-wing organizations?))

And Paul Greengrass is doing *The Watchmen*? That might actually be interesting. Greengrass did a number of excellent documentaries in his native Ireland before *The Bourne Supremacy*, which is why *The Bourne Supremacy* has such a documentary feel. I hope he retains this gritty style for *The Watchmen*.

Lloyd Penney: My friend, you are a glutton for punishment! Ad Astra again?! I guess I'll have to send you a can of bear spray to keep some of the more "ebullient" personalities in line.

All joking aside, it's good to hear you're both involved to that degree again. Gee, I might even get up the energy to go down the road again. You are undoubtedly tight [sic] about Worldcons vs. local cons, given that Boston drained me of all cash, and Glasgow, LA and Japan will do much worse. And yet, Ottawa has, as yet, no local con. I remember the great Maplecon from years ago, and I am ever hopeful someone will pick up the reins.

((What happened to Concinnity? I thought that was the reincarnation of Maplecon, or something.

((I've been telling my friends and correspondents that I don't foresee any congoing in my own immediate future, at least not out-of-town.))

I am ever nonplussed by the sinking nature of popcult. I've already had my obligatory rant on the lousy quality of poplit, I now feel the necessity to rant about television: have you seen the crap they're foisting on us? Example: a reality show called *Who's My Daddy* about a young lady who was adopted at an early age and who is trying to find her birth father and the kindly television network is helping her. Aww. Except they confront her with a mob of middle-aged men and she has to choose. If she chooses correctly, she wins the appropriate cash prize. And then there are the endless series of shows that seem to be focused on home and automotive repair on the TLC Channel, which was originally supposed to be a science and arts channel. My friends, it is true: we have slipped past decadence and right into barbarity.

((I think it has to do with the ambient pollution level in our cities. Or the overspecialized education, and general ignorance level, among television programming executives. Residents of the late Roman Empire were well-known to suffer from malaria, lead poisoning, and some venereal diseases, resulting in widespread sadomasochism, and hysteric paranoia in the imperial families.))

Taral Wayne: "Check Your Guns at the Door" was so darned funny, I fear I hurt myself laughing.

We Also Heard From: Lyndie Bright (see Olds), Steve Kawamoto, and the webmasters of Made in Canada and SF Canada, who grant permission to reprint Aurora Award-related information from their websites

FEBRUARY MEMBERS' BIRTHDAYS

9: **Paula Johanson and her twin teenagers**, at last report, are conducting covert activities in the great province of Alberta. Nobody has alerted Ralph Klein. His days as premier are numbered, anyway.

13: **Lisa Girling**, at last report, has gafiated into the wilds of Bellingham, her hubby's homeland. She was a luminary of VCon committees past, and her secret super power is CLASSIFIED UNDER THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT.

14: **Donna McMahon**, whose origins are lost in the mists of time, is now a Filthy Pro and does book reviews for like real papers, the Vancouver Sun, even, and has some salty acerbic opinions.

15: **Chris Bell** tried to revive clothes-optional hot-tubbing fandom in the early 1990s, without very much success. He was one of the last members of BCAPA before it evaporated.

17: **Grandee Engelhart** is a cryptofan, that is, not a provably real person by everyone's standards of evidence.

24: **Jason Harris** has done a lot of technical-equipment work for past Vcons without recognition. He was a founding member of the abortive *a cappella* group, The Porcelains.

28: **Rajiv Witherspoon-Li** is an imaginary persona created by Garth Spencer, or Garth is an imaginary persona created by Rajiv Witherspoon-Li, depending.

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Imperial Hobbies is having a clearance sale: dates and times are Feb 18 * 11 AM - 9 PM, Feb 19 * 10 AM - 6 PM, Feb 20 * noon - 5 PM at 5451 No. 3 Road, Richmond; for more information phone 604-273-4427 or see <http://www.imperialhobbies.ca/>

"The Comicshop's .. half-price sale returns this February! Look for more details about this .. event in the next issue of the Comicshopper". [next issue is the February issue.] The Comicshop, 2089 West 4th Ave, Vancouver, tel 604-738-8122; see <http://www.thecomicsshop.ca>

Julian "Earthfurst" Castle, Jan. 2005

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**February 2005**

Feb. 1: release of *Mulan II*, *The Nearly Unadventurous Life of Zoe Cadwaulder*, *Headhunter*

Feb. 2: release of *Nightshadows*

Feb. 4: release of *Boogeyman*

Feb 5-6: **Weatherstop 2005** [gaming con] "will be held Saturday and Sunday at the Cambrian Hall, 215 E 17th Ave. (Main & 17th). Registration and tickets will be made available shortly. Stay tuned to <http://www.vancouvergamingguild.com/forums/index.php?board=4;action=display;thre\adid=1208> for daily updates!

"For those new to the Vancouver Gaming Guild, the theme (and this is only meant to suggest, never to restrict) for this convention is 'fantasy'. ...

"We will have the registration system up by the beginning of December, and tickets should beginning to appear in our favourite local gaming stores around that time. Tickets \$15 at the door.

"We will also be continuing with the collection of all of your old VHS format movies for donation to the BC Children's Hospital. ..."

Vancouver Gaming Guild monthly update for December 2004
 tOrEn aTkiNsOn [hTtP://wWw.tOrEn.Net/thickets](http://wWw.tOrEn.Net/thickets)
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 Gaming www.vancouvergamingguild.com
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 Reproduced by Isaac Alexander
 in NWConLeague listserv on Dec. 8, 2004

Feb. 8: **Emperor Norton Day**

Feb. 10: release of *The Irish Vampire Goes West*

Feb. 14: release of *Final Fantasy XII*

Feb. 16: **ReVisions readings** at 8 p.m.; an open mike reading at Myles of Beans Coffee House, #1 - 7010 Kingsway, Burnaby.

Feb. 18: release of *Constantine* (a Keanu Reeves fantasy) and *Son of the Mask*

Feb. 18-20: **RadCon 4A** at the Red Lion Hotel, Pasco, WA. GoHs Patricia Briggs, Toni Weisskopf. Room rate \$74/night for 1 to 4 (mention Radcon to get con rate); phone (509) 547-0701, or write Red Lion Hotel, 2525 North 20th, Pasco, WA 99301. Memberships \$30 for a full weekend, \$15 for Friday only, \$20 for Saturday only, \$5 for Sunday only; Children ten and under free with adult member. See www.radcon.org. Write RadCon, PMB #162, 2527 West Kennewick Ave, Kennewick, WA 99336-3126, U.S.A.

Feb. 25: release of *Cursed*, *Area 51* and *Mortal Kombat: Deception*

Feb. 28: VCon trade mark due for renewal

March 2005

Mar. 11: release of *Robots*

March 11-13: **Kei-kon** at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia. See <http://keikon.cjb.net/>

Mar. 15: release of *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth*, *It Came from Trafalgar* and *Mind Games*

March 19: BCSFA meeting at Kathleen Moore-Freeman's

March 20: **Vancouver Comicon** in Vancouver, BC. See <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> or contact lswong@uniserve.com. "Howard Chaykin's appearance at the Comicon has been changed to the March 20 show, due to illness. All the other scheduled guests will be in attendance." (Leonard S Wong)

Mar. 24-27: **Norwescon 28** at the Doubletree SeaTac Hotel in SeaTac, WA. GoHs: Writer Guest of Honor: Michael Bishop; Artist Guest of Honor: John Howe; Science Guest of Honor: Suzette Haden Elgin; Spotlitged Publisher: TOR Books featuring Tom Doherty; Special Guest of Honor: Alan Dean Foster. Norwescon is the host of the Philip K. Dick Award. Rooms: \$99/night for 1-5; phone (206) 246-8600, or fax (206) 431-8687; the DoubleTree SeaTac Hotel is at 18740 International Boulevard, SeaTac, WA. Memberships \$55 since December 31, 2004. Phone (206) 270-7850 or write Norwescon 28 Pre-Registration, P.O. Box 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547.

March 25-27: **Anime Oasis** at the Boise Airport Holiday Inn in Boise, Idaho. See <http://www.animeoasis.org>

Mar 25-27 (Easter weekend): **Game Storm 7** at the Doubletree Columbia River hotel in Portland, Oregon. Memberships \$25. Write Game Storm 7, P.O. Box 764, Portland, OR 97207, U.S.A., or see <http://www.gamestorm.org>.

Mar. 30: release of *The War of the Worlds*

April 2005

Apr. 1: release of *Sin City*

Apr. 2: release of *Replica*

Apr. 5: release of *Surviving the 21st Century*

Apr. 8-10: **SakuraCon 8** at the Seattle Airport Hilton and Conference Center AND Marriott Hotel, SeaTac, WA. An anime and gaming convention hosted by ANCEA. Guests TO BE ANNOUNCED. Memberships: \$45 to March 1, 2005. phone 1-877-873-3317 or write Sakura-Con, 3702 South Fife St., Suite K-2, PMB 78, Tacoma, WA 98409 or see www.sakuracon.org. (NOTE: Anime fans do things differently; the SakuraCon website lists "staff positions" and even has a page for "Job Openings". [!?!])

Apr. 15: release of *The Amityville Horror*

Apr. 23-24: **24 Hour Comics Day 2005**.
<http://www.24hourcomics.com/>

April 24 – **Toy, Model and Collectables Show** in Vancouver, BC. See <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> or contact lswong@uniserve.com.

Apr. 29: release of *XXX: State of the Union*

May 2005

May 6: release of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

May 7: **Free Comic Book Day 2005**.
<http://www.freecomicbookday.com/>

May 19: release of *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith*

May 20-23: **Keycon 22**, Radisson Hotel Downtown, Winnipeg, MB. SF convention. Guests: Steve Erikson (author of *Guardians of the Moon*); Lars de Souza (artist); Chris Barsanti & Nancy Fetterman (previous Keycon co-chairs). Memberships: TO BE ANNOUNCED. For more information, see www.keycon.org.

May 21-22: **Otafest** at the University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta; see <http://www.otafest.com>.

June 2005

June 3-5: **ConComCon 12** at the Seattle Radisson, 17001 Pacific Highway, Seattle, WA 98186. Room reservations 1-800-333-3333 or (206) 244-6000, fax (206) 246-6835. Memberships \$25 to May 10, \$35 at the door c/o SWOC, P.O. Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111, U.S.A.

June 5: **Vancouver Comicon**. See <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> or contact lswong@uniserve.com.

June 17: release of *Batman Begins*

Japanese space probe to make history this month

July 2005

July 1: release of *Undead*, *StarCraft: Ghost*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Treasure of the Seven Mummies*

July 1 – 4: **Westercon 58 and Canvention 2005** at the Westin Calgary Hotel in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. A traveling general SF and major regional SF Convention. Author GoH: S.M. Stirling. Canadian Author Guest: David Duncan. Publisher guest: Tom Doherty (TOR). Editor guest: David Hartwell (TOR). Science Guest: Dr. Phil Currie (archaeologist). Artist guest: Mark Ferrari. Fan Guests: Cliff Samuels & Eileen Capes. Rooms C\$120 + tax per night; contact 1-800-937-8461. Memberships range up to C\$80 (adult). Write Calgary in 2005, P.O. Box 43078, DVPO, Calgary, AB T2J 7A7, or email info@calgaryin2005.org.

August 2005

Aug. 4-8: **Interaction** (63rd Worldcon), SECC, Glasgow. _Now Pounds110/\$195/Euro165 reg_. Pounds30/\$45/Euro45 supp. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. In North America: PO Box 58009, Louisville, Kentucky, KY 40268-0009, USA. (*Ansible* 209)

Aug. 5-7: **Animethon** at Grant MacEwan Community College / Holiday Inn Express in Edmonton, Alberta; See <http://www.animethon.org>

Aug 19-21: **Anime Evolution** at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby (not Vancouver), BC. See <http://www.animeevolution.com> (should be updated now ...)

August 28 – **Comix & Stories** in Vancouver, BC. See <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> or contact lswong@uniserve.com.

September 2005

Sept. 1 – 5: **CascadiaCon 2005**, the 2005 NasFic, at the SeaTac Hilton & Conference Center in Seatac, Washington. (The General SF convention North Americans hold when Worldcon goes overseas.) Writer GoH: Fred Saberhagen. Artist GoH: Liz Danforth. Editor GoH: Toni Weisskopf (Baen). Fan GoH: Kevin Standlee (chair of Con Jose). Scientist GoH: Marc Abrahams (founder of the *Journal of Improbable Research* and the Ig Nobel Awards). Rooms \$109/night for 1-4 people; phone (206) 244-4800. Memberships: \$85 (full adult). Write Seattle NASFiC, Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111, U.S.A.

Sept. 3-5: **Kumoricon** at the Doubletree Lloyd Center in Portland, OR. See <http://www.kumoricon.org>

September 18 – Vancouver Comicon in Vancouver, BC. See <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> or contact lswong@uniserve.com.

Sept. 23-25: **Foolscap VII** at the Bellevue Sheraton, Bellevue, WA. GoH: Harlan Ellison. "Foolscap VII will continue the tradition of featuring original artwork from professionals and newcomers on an invitational basis. To be considered for invitation, prospective artists may submit samples of artwork to our jury." Memberships \$40 now. Mail deadline: Sept. 10, 2005. Mail to Foolscap VII c/o Little Cat Z, P.O. Box 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461, U.S.A. Email www.foolscapcon.org.

October 2005

Oct. 7-9; **VCon 30** at the Executive Inn Airport Plaza Hotel in Richmond, BC. GoHs TO BE ANNOUNCED. Dealers tables: \$60 for first table, with 1 included membership; \$50 for additional table, with 1 included membership; \$30 for each additional membership. (Dealers' Liaison: Greg Slade.) Registration: until June 30, 2005, adults \$45, children \$22.50; until September 15, 2005, adults \$50, children \$25; at the door, adults \$60, children \$30 each. Payment accepted by cheque, money order or Visa. Write to VCon 30, c/o #209 – 2166 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6K 2A4. Day memberships are available. See www.v-con.ca for updates.

Oct. 23: **Toy, Model and Collectables Show** in Vancouver, BC. See <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> or contact lswong@uniserve.com.

(there are rumours of Dreamcon's revival, on or about October 31)

November 2005

Nov. ? : **Orycon 27** in Portland, Oregon. New venue, new date and more details TO BE ANNOUNCED at the Orycon (and SFNorthwest) websites, as they firm up.

Nov. 20: **Vancouver Comicon** in Vancouver, BC. See <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> or contact lswong@uniserve.com.

July 5-8, 2007: **SPACE WESTERCON COMICS featuring DIAMOND MEL and her SPACE VIGILANTES**, A Bid to Host the 2007 Westercon in Portland Oregon at the Jantzen Beach and Columbia River Double Tree Hotels. The Vote for the 2007 Westercon will take place at Due North Con in Calgary in 2005. This bid is sponsored by the Oregon Science Fiction Conventions, Inc. / OSFCI (<http://www.osfci.org/>). "What is a Westercon?", you ask? See <http://www.westercon.org/>. Memberships: Pre Support \$10.00, Friend of the Bid \$50.00. If you wish to help prevent the spread of this Debilitating Social Disease, a Pre Oppose costs \$15.00. *(One presumes these fees are in U.S. funds?)* Write to OSFCI, PO Box 5464, Portland Or 97228. If (on the other hand) you want to help, email <mailto:mel-content@comcast.net>. *(Note: Westercon is a registered servicemark of the Los Angeles Fantasy Society, Inc.)*



FAANFIC SECTION

MEETING THE WESTERN FANDOM ILLUMINATI

by Rajiv Witherspoon-Li

(An unidentified Northwest convention, some time in the 1980s or 1990s)

Hrothgar Weems was sitting moodily in the consuite, at another generic convention for fans who didn't know what "fannish" meant, when another overweight uniformed character came in. He paid no attention until raised voices at the bar promised a floor show.

"Look, I'm just asking whether one of the con committee is here," said the tubby dark-haired guy in the leatherette costume. "Do you know where Garth Spencer is?"

"I'm sorry," the elf maiden behind the bar said patiently, "I don't know who that is. Have you looked at the message board? Or the program?"

"Ah. Then there is a message board," said uniform boy. "Where is it?"

"The last I saw, it was at Registration."

"Oh, fine. They sent me here!" Uniform boy visibly decided to give up. "Never mind. I'll have a cider." He produced a fiver.

"Apple or cranberry?" Elf girl said sweetly.

Uniform boy wandered over moodily and paused by Hrothgar's table. "Is this seat taken?" he asked.

"Not at all. Be-sit yourself," Hrothgar waved.

The two drank moodily in silence for a while, Hrothgar at his Rickard's and the stranger at his cider. Hrothgar found himself trying to identify the costume. The faux-leather with metal fasteners made him think of fantasy role-playing games, or maybe one of the TV series he

didn't watch anymore. Hrothgar's own ensemble seemed to be a joke on military field uniforms; the pants might have blended in with a background painted like a giant Hawaiian pizza, but every other item of clothing clashed with it. "What outfit are you with?" Hrothgar finally asked.

"Western Fandom Illuminati," uniform boy answered. "My name's Sherman Ochs." He held out his hand.

Hrothgar shook once, saying "Hrothgar Weems, Language Nazis. Uh, what is this ... Western Illuminati? Your costume looks like something else, I can't quite place it. Why are you looking for this Spencer character? If it's all right to ask."

Sherman grimaced. "I got this together for a Blake's 7 half-time skit, and it's been called off. I wanted to hunt up Garth Spencer and give him a piece of my mind, after the stories I've heard. The back story on Western Fandom Illuminati is a bit long."

"Try me," Hrothgar suggested. He assumed his father-superior persona, the attitude that made some people pour out everything.

Sherman sighed. "A few years ago this character showed up in local fandom, apparently an out-of-towner who moved here. I think some of us heard about him, once or twice before, something to do with a travelling convention or a writers' award, or something. Pretty soon, though, he was involved in a small way with the local con, and putting out a personalzine sometimes, and then he started sounding off about conrunning, as if he knew anything about it. The thing of it is, he seems to know a few people *everywhere* – in Toronto, in Los Angeles, in Portland, even in England and Australia ..."

"Everybody has opinions about conrunning," Hrothgar said. "Or at least recent cons and their problems. Hell, *I've* written letters about some cons I've been to. Like this one, sometimes."

"Yeah, but did he have to pretend that he had any experience?" Sherman demanded. "When he's never run one? Did he have to write about it, where out-of-towners could *read* his letters, even? We don't need someone undermining our goodwill!"

– *No, the concom this year did quite well on its own*, Hrothgar did not say. This new, independent convention had missed some critical chances to publicize. Hrothgar had scanned the pocket program when he arrived, to find only one half-interesting space panel, and the panelists had turned out to be an astrophysicist, a Wiccan fantasist, and an "ecologist" whose entire knowledge of ecology seemed to have come from the flakier New Age journals in town. The Wiccan lady turned out to be the most coherent, relevant, level-headed speaker. There was a fanzine lounge, in a distant corner of the hotel, but it wouldn't open for another half-hour or so.

"So what happens next?" Sherman went on intensely. "The guys on the last two committees of the old convention were polarized. There were people who just blew off Spencer, but there were people who actually *believed* any line he was writing. I might have bought his line, too, but Thetis Lake pointed out the holes in it."

– *Thetis Lake??* Hrothgar nearly said. She was a relative newcomer to local fandom, and the somewhat autocratic chair of this new convention. "What precisely was Spencer saying?" Hrothgar inquired. "And what did Thetis Lake say?" He almost felt like taking notes.

"It kept changing. At first I thought he meant that we weren't doing enough for our con, or not doing it right." (– *Ah*, Hrothgar thought, *this guy is one of the new faces on committees in the last two years.*) "Now, though, it seems like he thinks we're doing too *much*, spreading ourselves too thin ..."

"Was he talking about the local con, specifically, or SF cons generally?" Hrothgar interjected. Sherman frowned, apparently confused. "I mean," Hrothgar went on, "if this is the same guy I'm thinking of, he spent some time at a university; and some guys from university tend to mean something more general than they're saying, try to illustrate a broader principle than just the one example they're talking about. And did he use the phrase 'Cut your suit to fit your cloth'?"

"Yeah! That was him. And Thetis *thought* there was something more to it, something behind this guy," Sherman went on. "Where did he get his connections, for one thing? Or why did he talk as if he had ever done more than fanzine lounges and con publications? Then Thetis heard about Creation Con."

– *What the hell?* Hrothgar wondered. "What the hell?" he said.

"You never heard of Creation Con? It was a professional con, it was run by Paramount in different cities, or it was until *somebody* told Canada Customs that Paramount wasn't paying tariffs. Or import duties, or something like that. Anyway," Sherman went on indignantly, "now we can't host a Creation Con north of the border again, because Paramount says they can't afford what Canada Customs claims they owe. Thetis realized this had to be plot against professional cons! And it looks to us like Spencer is part of it!"

"Oh, I heard of Creation Con," said Hrothgar. The term "professional con" rang a faint bell in his memory. It was an alarm bell. He looked at their drinks. "We've just about killed these soldiers; want another cider?" Sherman assented.

"Another Rickard's Red, and another cider," Hrothgar said at the bar. The elf maiden had been replaced by a Mongol warrior in walking-out dress. Hrothgar nodded at his drinking companion. "Is this a new committee member?" he asked quietly.

"A volunteer; joined us from Thetis' wargaming group," the Mongol replied. "I think this is his first year in fandom, let alone congoing."

"You were telling me how all this ended up with the Western Fandom Illuminati," Hrothgar prompted when he sat down. He waved off the money Sherman offered. "No, my treat."

"Thank you. Well, Thetis looked at the timing, and did some digging on Spencer's background, and it looked like he had a history of dissing anyone who dreamed too big – for him – or who hyped a con too much, or who wanted to take their club's fanzine professional. He keeps writing satirical stories and articles about mediafans, and conspiracy theories, and just weird stuff. So Thetis decided to turn the tables, launch an

investigative group to find out if he's plotting against fan activities and professional cons. So that's us: The Western Fandom Illuminati." He held up a button Hrothgar hadn't noticed before, an eye-in-the-triangle design with a propeller beanie on top.

"Ah," Hrothgar said. – *for certain values of "fan"*, he thought to himself. *These people are just too priceless to pass up.* "And Thetis Lake founded this group?"

"With me, and Stanley Park. We're still recruiting," Sherman leaned forward, "and we've got discount memberships available for a limited time –"

"What kinds of research do you do?" Hrothgar interrupted, leaning forward himself. "What investigative procedures, or report guidelines do you have for members?"

Sherman was taken aback. "Well, uh, I, uhm ..."

"I think," Hrothgar said judiciously, "I really think those are your top priorities. Not just your goals, but your methods have to be made very clear to members ... and not just if you're constructing counter-arguments against Spencer, or making a legal case against this plot, if there is one."

Sherman was all attention.

"If Thetis is even half-serious, that somebody is campaigning against Creation Con or anything like it, I can only suppose the motive is financial," Hrothgar went on. "Some other group wants to infiltrate fandom, and milk it like a cash cow! And if Spencer really is their point man," he concluded, "what kind of resources and backup are behind him? That's what you have to find out. *Very carefully.*"

Sherman had gone pale. "You don't think ...?"

"I don't think your group has anything to worry about," Hrothgar assured him, "not *yet*. And if you intend to set up an Internet presence ..." he fumbled with his wallet and carefully selected a card, "I can probably make your online documents secure from hacking, replacement and distortion. Thetis should contact me at this secure e-mail at her earliest convenience."

Sherman tucked the card carefully into his most secure pocket. "Thank you," he said. "I've got to talk to Thetis right away ... I'm not going to stay through this con. I wanted to give Spencer a good piece of my mind, but now ..."

"I'll keep an eye on him," Hrothgar promised. "I have my own reasons to do so anyway."

Sherman got up. "I'm glad I found you," he said simply. He shook hands and left.

Hrothgar sat a while, finishing his second beer. "Nothing like making your own entertainment," he remarked to himself. Before putting on his coat and picking up his bag, he looked at his con badge, bearing his convention identity:

GARTH SPENCER

"You've never lived until you've been someone else'," he quoted, and walked out of the consuite whistling.



DEAR FAN SLANDERS

Dear Fan Slanders:

I feel like my cat doesn't love me anymore. What's wrong with him? – Miss Kitty

Dear Miss Kitty:

There is nothing wrong with your cat. Not any more. He *was* suffering from a short-term feline psychiatric disorder that caused him to act as if he loved you. – F.S.

Dear Fan Slanders:

Where?

Dear Drawing a Blank:

Right about here, if you hurry. – F.S.

Dear Fan Slanders:

Abroo dingwup asplas dingo, porplaf pino devvo? -- Ousplat Forfut Porko, Jr.

Cusono Ousplat:

Zanir, vel tyran zamir. – F.S.

Dear Fan Slanders:

How do I keep an innocent bus driver from getting a traffic ticket for parking his bus next to my time/space craft at a local gas company,

when he has to go to the loo? – *J.S. Lungbarrow, “Have Type 40 TARDIS, will travel”*. P.S. My ship has been stuck in the form of a London police callbox for the last few hundred years ...

Dear J.S.:

Mark an area 7 to 14 feet from the curb, at the bust stop at your local gas company, and the length of your spaceship. Appropriate some City of Vancouver Engineering uniforms, sawhorses, blinking warning lights and jackhammers. Impersonating Engineering staff, dig up the marked-out area to a depth of 4 feet, and then **abandon the excavation**. Meanwhile, *move your spaceship*. This excavation will go unquestioned for 6 to 10 months. – *F.S.*

CONVENTION STATISTICS LESSONS

Based on “Convergence”, Minnesota, 2004

David Malinski <murdock@axion.net>, 02 Jan 2005

As some of you may remember, about 6 years ago I began a personal project to learn more about the nature of convention attendees and the reasons why they come to the events, so that better methods of marketing and better (read more thought-provoking) panels or other 'infotainments' could be designed to attract more attendees at the event once they were there.

So far I have learned some of the reasons people attend conventions, and have been doing some 'field work' on improved marketing (with the local Dak-Kon games convention on the Island); and while this work is not yet finished (so conclusions cannot be given), the initial response has been generally good. The finished work of a report on these methods and my observations is still on the horizon.

The reason for this letter is that I ran across a statistical study of the attendees at the recent Convergence in Minnesota in 2004. These statistics are of note, as they speak volumes to the contention that I had in 1997 - that there were going to be some lean years ahead for convention attendances, and that concons *generally* would do well to cut back the \$\$\$ spent on guests, as they would not see the same revenues for at least 7 years. More details in this analysis also supported my claim, that the 'general' attendee *at any scifi con* was in the age of 18-40, and concons need to cater to this crowd, much more so than any other; to do otherwise is to invite disaster or at least the marginalization of their event.

On to specific numbers:
(see.jpg <scan from progress report> attached at end of article)

From 1999 to 2004 Convergence saw a regular increase from 1,400 to 2,000 people. I am told by reliable sources that they had attendances of

around 1,200 for the three years prior, and that in the ten years earlier they were never below 1,700, with an average of around 2,000. This fits with the model that the baby boom bulge is over, and that the 'second boom' or 'echo' is in full convention attendance age(s). *This will not last*, and if any event is to live long and prosper past this 'echo', all means must be used to have maximum possible exposure to the 18-40 demographic audiences. These new attendees will be the ones to carry the torch as it were into the future of the events.

(I asked David: which audience? The 18-40 demographic? His answer: YES)

On the age issue: Note that the 18-45 year group represents 69.16% of the attendance, and of that, more than half is in the 18-35 year bracket. It is therefore VITAL to reach out to the younger members of this cohort in order to secure future event attendance. Ignoring this group now means that they will ignore your event in the future. I am not slamming the grey hairs in the crowd. (I have some myself, and in a few years will be beyond the age group I am speaking of.) THE BABY BOOM COHORT is OVER FOR CONVENTIONS, do not waste any further time or efforts in trying to convince them to come to your event(s). Those that will come most likely already have; any others that do come are a bonus, but should not be your primary marketing target group.

I shall say this again: the BABY BOOM COHORT (those born 1945 to 1961) is OVER FOR CONVENTIONS; do not waste any further time or effort in trying to convince them to come to your event(s). Those that will come most likely already have; any others that do come are a bonus, but should NOT BE YOUR PRIMARY MARKETING TARGET GROUP.

Other interesting items of note:

* Male to female ratio was virtually equal. This has been confirmed in our other researches; though their reasons for coming to events are different, both sexes are generally equally represented.

* Roughly 1/6th of the attendance was 'new' to the event. This was not in our earlier research, as my researchers, interviewers and I were not included in general polling at any of the events we conducted our interviews and polls at, but such data is vital to keep in mind; the future is held in the hands of many whom are very new to these convention events.

* The attendance turnaround in the 6 years seen here (1999-2004) saw a potential turnover of 58%. I do not have the figures to support this, but I suspect that the 'stable' long-term attendance baseline is similar to the 'new' arrival baseline, and that roughly 1/6th of the event attendance can be counted on to attend from year to year whether the marketing or substance of the event is attractive or not.

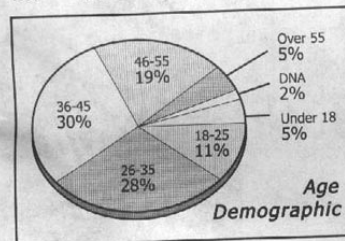
Well. There you have some observations that I have had hit me in the face, in the last few weeks, and my assessment of them. Take them for what they are, and if you can, apply them; or at least bring them to the attention of those who can act in the support of your local events so as to keep them around for more to enjoy.

2004 Post Mortem

Registration Totals

Total Registrations:	2003: 1,818	2004: 2,086
Pre-registrations:	2003: 1,364	2004: 1,525
At-the-door:	2003: 454	2004: 561
Warm Body Count:	2003: 1,709	2004: 2,014

	Reg Total	Warm Bodies
2004	2,086	2,014
2003	1,818	1,709
2002	1,806	1,679
2001	1,739	1,615
2000	1,601	1,533
1999	1,500	1,398



General Items

We again had a successful occupancy of the hotel in 2004. Our thanks go out to the Sheraton Bloomington and its staff. We also want to thank our attendees, who did their part to make the occupancy by the unique and unwieldy beast that is CONvergence as easy on the hotel staff as possible.

Here is the room occupancy by night:

Thursday

121 rooms (22 fewer than 2003)

Friday

493 rooms (46 more than 2003)

Saturday

497 rooms (60 more than 2003)

Sunday

67 (5 fewer than 2003)



Hey, even **Connie** won an award. **Amada Marquez** as Connie from the 2004 Masquerade.
Photo by Peter Verrant

Demographics

(Based on 227 Survey Responses)

What years have you attended CONvergence?

1999	94	41.41%
2000	111	48.90%
2001	140	61.67%
2002	161	70.93%
2003	184	81.06%
2004	227	100.00% (Duh)

Was this your first CONvergence?

Yes	36	15.86%
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Gender:

Male	112	49.34%
Female	115	50.66%

Age Demographic:

Under 18	11	4.85%
18 - 25	25	11.01%
26 - 35	64	28.19%
36 - 45	68	29.96%
46 - 55	44	19.38%
Over 55	11	4.85%
Did not answer	4	1.76%



OLDS

AIDS VACCINE?

A French AIDS vaccine suppressed symptoms of AIDS for up to a year in a small group of patients in Brazilian experimental trials.

Discovery Health Channel email news of December 6, 2004
(from San Francisco *Chronicle*, Nov. 30, 2004)

Around the World

FRANK KELLY FREAS RIP

"Frank Kelly Freas, the noted science fiction artist and illustrator, died in his sleep on the morning of January 2. He was 82.

"Freas' work appeared on the covers of numerous science fiction novels and magazines, as well as in MAD Magazine, where he helped design the face of mascot Alfred E. Neuman. An official NASA artist, he designed the crew patch for the Skylab I mission, and his work hangs in the Smithsonian Institution.

"We had the pleasure of meeting him at ConText in Edmonton several years ago, and were honoured to have him do our caricatures. His art had a vibrant sense of life and energy, as well as reflecting his playful sense of humour. Those both familiar and unfamiliar with his work may want to visit his website, <http://www.kellyfreas.com>"

Steve Pikov, <pikpaks1@telus.net>, 03 Jan 2005

WIL EISNER RIP

"Legendary comic-book artist and writer Wil Eisner died yesterday after coronary surgery.

"In addition to his work on series like "the Spirit", eisner was known for his untiring advocacy for the art of the comic. The esiner Warad, one of the highest awards for artists in the comics industry, is named for him."

Michael Hopcroft to Orycon listserv, 04 Jan 2005

ANNA VARGO RIP

Anna Vargo, a well-known and well-regarded fanzine fan, died at two minutes after midnight, Sunday, January 9, 2005. Her stage 4 undifferentiated mixed mullerian cancer was discovered shortly after the 2004 Worldcon.

Sarah Prince, 10 Jan 2005
Joyce Scrivner, 4 Jan 2005

"A memorial for Anna Vargo [was] held at Seattle's Center for Urban Horticulture on Sunday, Jan. 23. For more details on this, as well as other items concerning Anna, look at the CaringBridge webpage. As part of the memorial, I have been entrusted with producing the program and memory book ..."

<http://www3.caringbridge.org/wa/annav/>

Victor Gonzalez <vimg@trufen.net>, Thu, 13 Jan 2005

BONZER WEB SITE OF THE WEEK:

<http://www.ResearchBuzz.com> -- ResearchBuzz.

"Designed to cover the world of Internet research, ResearchBuzz provides almost daily updates on search engines, new data managing software, browser technology, large compendiums of information, Web directories -- whatever. It's written by Tara Calishain, the lead author of the NYT best-seller "Google Hacks" and the author of many other search-related books, including "Web Search Garage". ResearchBuzz was started in 1998 and contains over 2000 pointers, write-ups, and reviews related to search engines, databases, and online information collections. The resources are divided into over 200 categories. Choose from an RSS feed or a free weekly newsletter to keep up. Good stuff!" -- Bonzer Sites archive: <http://www.BonzerSites.com>

This is True, January 9, 2005

JACK CHALKER HOSPITALIZED

"Jack has now been hospitalized for over a month. He was admitted to Carroll Hospital Center on December 6, 2004, and moved to University of Maryland Medical Center on January 3, 2005. We have no idea how long he'll be hospitalized.

<http://www2.caringbridge.org/md/jacklchalker/>

Joyce Scrivner to Timebinders, Jan. 8, 2005

ARTHUR C. CLARKE'S STATEMENT

Arthur Clarke reports he is well in Sri Lanka following the regional tsunami disaster:

"Thank you for your concern about my safety in the wake of Sunday's devastating tidal wave.

"I am enormously relieved that my family and household have escaped the ravages of the sea that suddenly invaded most parts of coastal Sri Lanka, leaving a trail of destruction.

"But many others were not so fortunate. For hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankans and an unknown number of foreign tourists, the day after

Christmas turned out to be a living nightmare reminiscent of *The Day After Tomorrow*.

"Among those affected are my staff based at our diving station in Hikkaduwa and holiday bungalow in Kahawa - both beachfront properties located in areas worst hit. We still don't know the full extent of damage as both roads and phones have been damaged. Early reports indicate that we have lost most of our diving equipment and boats. Not all our staff members are accounted for - yet.

"This is indeed a disaster of unprecedented magnitude for Sri Lanka which lacks the resources and capacity to cope with the aftermath. We are all trying to contribute to the relief efforts. We shall keep you informed as we learn more about what happened.

"Curiously enough, in my first book on Sri Lanka, I had written about another tidal wave reaching the Galle harbour (see Chapter 8 in *The Reefs of Taprobane*, 1957). That happened in August 1883, following the eruption of Krakatoa in roughly the same part of the Indian Ocean."

Arthur Clarke, 27 December 2004

Forwarded by Mike Glyer to SMOFS listserv on December 27, 2004

Forwarded by Michael Citrak to SF Northwest listserv on December 28, 2004

TSUNAMIS EXPLAINED:

"Before I switched to [THIS IS] TRUE full time, I used to do science writing. I dug up an article I wrote on tsunamis in 1986 and webified it, adding several interesting photos. It explains how tsunamis are generated, and why you can get MANY hours of warning before one hits. <http://www.Cassingham.com/tsunami.html> ...

I've chosen two relief organizations with low overhead that I am going to support for their tsunami relief efforts:

--the Red Cross <http://www.RedCross.org> and

--Physicians Without Borders:

<http://www.PhysiciansWithoutBorders.org> (Or in the U.S., toll free 800-HELP-NOW and 888-392-0392, respectively. They both answer their phones 24 hours a day.)"

Randy Cassingham, This is True, Dec. 26, 2004

THE RUINS OF EARTHSEA

A Whitewashed Earthsea: How the Sci Fi Channel wrecked my books.

Posted Thursday, Dec. 16, 2004, at 6:14 AM PT

by Ursula K. Le Guin

"On Tuesday night [Dec. 14, 2004], the Sci Fi Channel aired its final installment of 'Legend of Earthsea', the miniseries based - loosely, as it turns out - on my Earthsea books. The books, *A Wizard of Earthsea* and *The Tombs of Atuan*, which were published more than 30 years ago, are about two young people finding out what their power, their freedom, and their responsibilities are. I don't know what the film is about. It's full of scenes from the story, arranged differently, in an entirely different plot,

so that they make no sense. My protagonist is Ged, a boy with red-brown skin. In the film, he's a petulant white kid. Readers who've been wondering why I 'let them change the story' may find some answers here.

"When I sold the rights to Earthsea a few years ago, my contract gave me the standard status of "consultant" – which means whatever the producers want it to mean, almost always little or nothing. My agency could not improve this clause.

"But the purchasers talked as though they genuinely meant to respect the books and to ask for my input when planning the film. They said they had already secured Philippa Boyens (who co-wrote the scripts for *The Lord of the Rings*) as principal scriptwriter. The script was, to me, all-important, so Boyens' presence was the key factor in my decision to sell this group the option to the film rights.

"Months went by. By the time the producers got backing from the Sci Fi Channel for a miniseries – and another producer, Robert Halmi Sr., had come aboard – they had lost Boyens. That was a blow. But I had just seen Halmi's miniseries *DreamKeeper*, which had a stunning Native American cast, and I hoped that Halmi might include some of those great actors in Earthsea.

"At this point, things began to move very fast. Early on, the filmmakers contacted me in a friendly fashion, and I responded in kind; I asked if they'd like to have a list of name pronunciations; and I said that although I knew that a film must differ greatly from a book, I hoped they were making no unnecessary changes in the plot or to the characters – a dangerous thing to do, since the books have been known to millions of people for decades. They replied that the TV audience is much larger, and entirely different, and would be unlikely to care about changes to the books' story and characters.

"They then sent me several versions of the script – and told me that shooting had already begun. I had been cut out of the process. And just as quickly, race, which had been a crucial element, had been cut out of my stories. In the miniseries, Danny Glover is the only man of color among the main characters (although there are a few others among the spear-carriers). A far cry from the Earthsea I envisioned. When I looked over the script, I realized the producers had no understanding of what the books are about and no interest in finding out.

"All they intended was to use the name Earthsea, and some of the scenes from the books, in a generic McMagic movie with a meaningless plot based on sex and violence.

"Most of the characters in my fantasy and far-future science fiction books are not white. They're mixed; they're rainbow. In my first big science fiction novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, the only person from Earth is a black man, and everybody else in the book is Inuit (or Tibetan) brown. In the two fantasy novels the miniseries is 'based on,' everybody is brown or copper-red or black, except the Kargish people in the East and their descendants in the Archipelago, who are white, with fair or dark hair. The central character Tenar, a Karg, is a white brunette. Ged, an Archipelagan, is red-brown. His friend, Vetch, is black. In the

miniseries, Tenar is played by *Smallville*'s Kristin Kreuk, the only person in the miniseries who looks at all Asian. Ged and Vetch are white.

"My color scheme was conscious and deliberate from the start. I didn't see why everybody in science fiction had to be a honky named Bob or Joe or Bill. I didn't see why everybody in heroic fantasy had to be white (and why all the leading women had 'violet eyes'). It didn't even make sense. Whites are a minority on Earth now-why wouldn't they still be either a minority, or just swallowed up in the larger colored gene pool, in the future?

"The fantasy tradition I was writing in came from Northern Europe, which is why it was about white people. I'm white, but not European. My people could be any color I liked, and I like red and brown and black. I was a little wily about my color scheme. I figured some white kids (the books were published for 'young adults') might not identify straight off with a brown kid, so I kind of eased the information about skin color in by degrees-hoping that the reader would get 'into Ged's skin' and only then discover it wasn't a white one.

"I was never questioned about this by any editor. No objection was ever raised. I think this is greatly to the credit of my first editors at Parnassus and Atheneum, who bought the books before they had a reputation to carry them.

"But I had endless trouble with cover art. Not on the great cover of the first edition – a strong, red-brown profile of Ged – or with Margaret Chodos Irvine's four fine paintings on the Atheneum hardcover set, but all too often. The first British Wizard was this pallid, droopy, lily-like guy – I screamed at sight of him.

"Gradually I got a little more clout, a little more say-so about covers. And very, very, very gradually publishers may be beginning to lose their blind fear of putting a nonwhite face on the cover of a book. 'Hurts sales, hurts sales' is the mantra. Yeah, so? On my books, Ged with a white face is a lie, a betrayal – a betrayal of the book, and of the potential reader.

"I think it is possible that some readers never even notice what color the people in the story are. Don't notice, don't care. Whites of course have the privilege of not caring, of being 'colorblind.' Nobody else does.

"I have heard, not often, but very memorably, from readers of color who told me that the Earthsea books were the only books in the genre that they felt included in – and how much this meant to them, particularly as adolescents, when they'd found nothing to read in fantasy and science fiction except the adventures of white people in white worlds. Those letters have been a tremendous reward and true joy to me.

"So far no reader of color has told me I ought to butt out, or that I got the ethnicity wrong. When they do, I'll listen. As an anthropologist's daughter, I am intensely conscious of the risk of cultural or ethnic imperialism – a white writer speaking for nonwhite people, co-opting their voice, an act of extreme arrogance. In a totally invented fantasy world, or in a far-future science fiction setting, in the rainbow world we can imagine, this risk is mitigated.

"That's the beauty of science fiction and fantasy-freedom of invention.

"But with all freedom comes responsibility. Which is something these filmmakers seem not to understand."

Ursula K. Le Guin is the author of the Earthsea series and many other books. Her most recent book is Gifts.

Forwarded by Gary Meuse, Dec. 16, 2004

PHILIP PULLMAN

"is much annoyed by another *Times* story (8 December), headlined 'God is cut from film of *Dark Materials*' and alleging that New Line Cinema plans 'to remove anti-religious overtones [...] because of fears of a backlash from the Christian Right in the United States.' Moreover, Pullman complains, 'the article maintained that I had gone along with this, by cheerfully colluding in a betrayal of the vision that underlies the books'. This claim was buttressed by creative use of quotation: 'To take an answer from one context, invent a question that hadn't been asked, and put the answer next to it is not what used to be called honest journalism.' Finally our author insists, 'There will be no betrayal of any kind.' We shall see."

Ansible #210, January 2005

AS OTHERS SEE US.

"No one expected the *Daily Mail* to like Philip Pullman's views on organized religion, and Quentin Letts' review of *His Dark Materials* (National Theatre) is duly filled with spleen: 'Intellectual teenage girls swear by Philip Pullman. His novels sell by the ton and his science fictions are exotic and pseudo-portentous. Harry Potter for Oxbridge eggheads.' (*Mail*, 10 Dec) [BA] There is more, much more."

Ansible #210, January 2005

MIKE HORVAT UNLOADING HIS FANZINE COLLECTION

Mike Horvat, who has one of the largest fanzine collections in existence, is selling it on eBay:

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&rd=1&item=6937952143&ssPageName=STRK:MEWA:IT> or <http://tinyurl.com/4egxk>

"After forty years of amassing my collection of science fiction, fantasy, and mystery fanzines I have to get rid of it. I don't have much to say about it, because if you don't already know what I am talking about, you won't want to buy it. The bulk of the collection is 1964 to 1978, with some earlier and many later. You want a complete run of early *Locus*, I have them from issue #0. *Trumpet*, *Psychotic*, *Algol*, etc etc etc. I was particularly interested in apas so they are very well represented ... About half of them are alphabetized and in file folders (this took me years!). I will gladly answer your questions, but can't think of much more to add. Because of my age and ill health, shipping is up to you; count on at least a few thousand dollars. Pick up is preferable. Maybe Jerry Kaufman will come down from Seattle and buy them." (Jerry Kaufman was surprised to hear this.)

Gary Grady remarked on the Timebinders listserv: "Ideally I'd like to see it go into some library or research facility, and I'd contribute money toward that end. Any ideas?"

D Gary Grady DGary.Grady@GTE.NET, 1 Dec 2004
from Timebinders, Dec. 1-3, 2004

NEW FANZINES POSTED AT eFANZINES.COM (Dec. 2004 – Jan. 2005)

Arnie Katz' *Vegas Fandom Weekly* #3 - #8

Jason Burnett's new one-page one-shot, *Placeholder*

Bill Bowers' *Neither Rain, Noir Murder*

John Purcell *In A Prior Lifetime* #4

Bruce Gillespie's & Janine Stinson's *Steam Engine Time* #4

Dick Geis' *Taboo Opinions* 25 & 26

Arthur Hlavaty's *Nice Distinctions* 8 now on line

Earl Kemp's *eI* 17 (Dec. 9, 2004)

More Balls #1 (a short zine) (Dec. 20, 2004)

Incidentally, the contents of *eI* 17 include:

"...Return to sender, address unknown....9" [eI letter column], by

Earl Kemp

"Ho! Ho! Ho!," by Earl Kemp

"...My true love gave to me....," by Victor J. Banis

"Cherry Pink and Uncle Milty Time," by Earl Kemp

"A Checklist of Brandon House Library Editions," by Patrick J.

Kearney

"Everybody Loves Milton," by Stephen J. Gertz

"Recollections of a Porno Photographer," by Gary Sohler

"Old Leather Hide," by Earl Kemp

"Milton Luros' Times Square Wise Guy," by Jay A. Gertzman

"To Bea or Not To Bea," by Victor J. Banis

"Whirlaway to Thrilling Wonder Stories," by Race Mathews

"Our favourite Race Mathews story," by Bruce R. Gillespie

"Ditmar Portfolio," cover by Ditmar

"Ditmar, Dick Jenssen, the Good Doctor," by Bruce R. Gillespie

"A Ditmar Life," by Martin James Ditmar Jenssen

"Ditmar Portfolio," by Ditmar

"Steven Silver has just published a special edition of *Argentus*, with the interesting theme of fans on gameshows - stories from five fans who've appeared on TV." (Bill Burns, Jan. 11/05)

Bill Burns billb@FTLDESIGN.COM, <http://efanzines.com>

MERLIN GETS HIS OWN BALLET

"[...] Atlantic Ballet Theatre's MERLIN, the ancient legend of the Wizard of Camelot. [...]"

Performance at Massey Theatre, 735 8th Avenue, New Westminster
604-517-5900, <http://www.masseytheatre.com/>

Tickets at Festival Box Office 604-257-0366.

Julian "Earthfurst" Castle, Jan. 2005

GLITTERING PRIZES.

"Dick Award shortlist for best original US paperback of 2004:
Minister Faust, *The Coyote Kings of the Space-Age Bachelor Pad*; Eileen Gunn, *Stable Strategies and Others*; Gwyneth Jones, *Life*; Lyda Morehouse, *Apocalypse Array*; Geoff Ryman, *Air*; Karen Traviss, *City of Pearl*; Liz Williams, *Banner of Souls* [GVG]

Nebulas: novel and script nominees from the preliminary ballot.
NOVEL: Lois McMaster Bujold, *Paladin of Souls*; Cory Doctorow, *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*; Jack McDevitt, *Omega*; Sean Stewart, *Perfect Circle*; S.M. Stirling, *Conquistador*; Gene Wolfe, *The Knight*.
SCRIPT: *The Incredibles*; *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*; *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. [JS] See SFWA website for other categories.

Ansible #210, January 2005

GOTH HOUSE NEWSLETTER: 14 JANUARY 2005

Hello, and welcome to the show. Tonight we have a comic for you to look at: <http://www.gothhouse.org/>

Some words for you to read: <http://gothhouse.blogspot.com/>
There's also a new header on the main page.

Why does Goth House have a blog? Well, from time to time the following things happen:

1. Somebody will send me a comment or feedback on the site, and I'll want to make it public, and I don't quite know how.
2. I will write something, like a short review of a movie, and want to share it, and yet it doesn't seem quite worth putting up on the web site. In fact, I filled up the blog with several years' worth of those things which were cluttering up my hard drive.

So the blog is for that. I do get e-mail when people leave comments, so you can be sure I'll see it. In short, if you want to leave a comment that everybody will see, leave it on the blog. Otherwise send it to me via e-mail.

As of now, all the pre-orders for the fifth collection should have been sent out, so if you didn't get yours, let me know.

Talk to you again 28 January. ...

Julie McGalliard <julie@gothhouse.org>, 15 Jan 2005

SOUNDS LIKE ...

"*The Bookseller* records yet another example of bookshop customers' creative title requests: C.S. Lewis' well-known children's fantasy *Lionel Ritchie and His Wardrobe*." [RD]

Ansible #210, January 2005

PUBLISHERS & SINNERS.

"*Amazing Stories* magazine is taking a mysterious break from publishing: not closing down, insists new editor Jeff Berkwits, but 'going on hiatus' after the January issue, as a result of its being (in his own words) 'unexpectedly successful'." [SFW]

Ansible #210, January 2005

WAR AGAINST TERRORISM?

"The Broad Street School in Bridgeton, N.J., was evacuated for the third time in an eight-day span when a kindergarten teacher found a stick of dynamite in her classroom. It was not a false alarm; it really was dynamite. The explosive, with no fuse or detonator, was accidentally left behind by the Salem County Sheriff's Department after a multi-agency training exercise with bomb-sniffing dogs. "Whenever they search a building like that, they have to put something out there for the dog to find," explained a spokesman. The first two evacuations were for bomb threats. No bombs were found after either threat. (*Bridgeton News*) ...Reassuring news, isn't that?"

This is True, Jan. 9, 2005

THE NEXT HARRY POTTER

"It's official: the sixth Harry Potter book, [Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince](#), will arrive in stores — possibly delivered by owl — on July 16, 2005! Harry's dedicated Muggle fans will need no provocation to purchase the penultimate chapter in [J. K. Rowling](#)'s bestselling saga of the boy wizard."

Powell's Book News, Dec. 30, 2004

BONZER WEB SITE OF THE WEEK: <http://www.BadAstronomy.com>

-- "Bad Astronomy. Written by physics and astronomy professor Phil Plait, BA debunks ...well... bad astronomy. Misconceptions, bonehead ideas, bad movie making, simply wrong news reports. Will the Earth be destroyed by an asteroid? He's not afraid to tell you. Was the Apollo moon landing faked? He's not afraid to tell you."

-- Bonzer Sites archive: <http://www.BonzerSites.com>

This Is True, Dec. 26, 2004

FRANCE PREPARING TO MARVEL AT COMIC STRIP INVASION

WebPosted Fri Dec 31 16:04:08 2004

posted on CBC NEWS ONLINE

at <http://www.cbc.ca/arts>

PARIS---Angoulême in France is preparing for an American invasion in 2005, after Marvel Enterprises, the publisher of *Spider-Man* and other superhero comics, donated large parts of its back catalogue to the city's comic museum.

France's National Centre for Comics and the Image will eventually own almost 300,000 comic books featuring the likes of *Spider-Man*, *Captain America* and *the X-Men*.

The initial sorting, numbering and stamping of the books should be completed in 2005, though it is unclear whether any of the donated comics will be on display in time for Angoulême's annual four-day international comic book festival at the end of January.

RELATED: CBC News Viewpoint: Comics have become too respectable

"Some 1,800 boxes holding about 275,000 books have already been shipped to France, but the museum is still waiting for Marvel to send about 8,000 books – the oldest, rarest ones – which the publisher is scanning into its digital archives.

"Most date from the early 1950s to the late 1970s. The museum's director, Jean-Pierre Mercier, believes the collection represents nearly 80 per cent of comic books produced by Marvel during that span. ..."

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Forwarded by Felicity Walker, Jan. 5, 2005

CRYPTOARCHAEOLOGY (Cover Story)

"Purple" forwards e-news from "TAL" about apparent fossil dinosaur tracks from strata seriously post-dating the Cretaceous extinction event:

"The Thayer site or Dinosaur Flats, in south Texas - There are lots of dinosaur tracks at the Thayers Museum, at Dinosaur Flats* in Canyon Lake, Texas.

"The tracks are of bipedal dinosaurs. The footprints were made [sic] by Dinosaurs ranging in size from 2 feet tall to over 22 feet. Most have 3 toes. A few footprints look human...but, that couldn't be. Another thing at the Texas site....many of the Dino footprints ARE in strata laid [sic] down long after 63 Million years ago, when many believe the Dinosaurs should have died off. Hmmm They even have a Print of a whole Dino that died and fell on it's [sic] side!"

Dec. 11, 2004

((Editor comments: is this really news? It's always been an established fact that many, but not all the dinosaur species died out in that mass extinction event. There have always been claims of archaeological anomalies, like signs of dinosaurs and humans in the same strata, but the evidence will have to be pretty overwhelming to overturn the conventional paradigm. – GS))



ISAAC ALEXANDER WANTS YOU TO KNOW

- about New Con Centers:

"Anyone planning to host some events in all the new convention centers being constructed in Western Washington? I can't believe all the choices." The choices he listed include: Ocean Shores; Vancouver, WA; Kitsap; Tacoma; Everett Events; and Lynnwood.

- about NW Publications For Events: including

Bravo Oregon, <http://www.bravoevent.com/guide-p/searchportland.html>

Bravo Puget Sound, <http://www.bravoseattle.com/>

NW Meetings & Events, <http://www.nwmeetings.com/>

And "an organization for the Canadians in BC", ISES Vancouver, <http://www.isesvancouver.com/>

Isaac Alexander, Dec. 6, 2004

NEW CONCOM FORMING FOR A 2007 NORTHWEST CONVENTION

"A new convention is forming in the Northwest to be held in King County [Washington state], with good financial backing, good location, good dates, and we are looking for some experienced people who want to be a part of it.

"We have experience, vision, cash, location, some contacts, and a lot of encouragement, but what we need are talented people like you who have worked many cons, and are interested in something new and exciting.

"What we are not doing is directly competing with established conventions or dissing anyone. Help us work together with the community in the NW to put on a friendly convention without a lot of baggage and a chance to start fresh and clean.

"If you are interested, send (us/me) an e-mail telling us about yourself and experience, as our web site will not be up for a few weeks. Room parties are planned for RustyCon and for NorwesCon.

"Our targets are Sci-Fi Fantasy, / costume ball / Large dealers room / gaming / Movies & authors, with lots of workshops.

"Name of con to be released as soon as we file our papers, (January, 2005)

"I have also been asked for the dates and location, both of which I am uncomfortable in giving until we have the contract, or at least a good faith written letter of intention with the hotel/s in question. Not that I feel it is a big problem, but we do wish to have some flexibility with the hotel as we continue to negotiate the rates and compensation. On the Hotel Liaison bit, I could use a person who is familiar with negotiations for a 1000 – 1500-person convention, which is our target for the first con.

"Generalities I can give, and that would be Central to East King county good freeway access and late third quarter 2007, but not to interfere with the resurrection of DreamCon which is targeted for October 31st I believe.

"As to prior experience with Sci-Fi Fantasy cons, volunteer experience dates back to SO Cal and the Science Fiction, Horror, and Fantasy Con of 1976, and goes forward to working registration, greenroom, security, operations and programming for Cons as divers as LOSCON, MAGICON (World Con 50), BayCon, NASFIC, Crystal Con, etc. I personally have no Chair experience with Sci-Fi Cons, although I do have a lot of real life experience managing projects for tens of thousands of people, national and international multi phase rollouts of technology and infrastructure, as well as many non-SF Fantasy convention/gathering events mostly of between 50 and 800 people.

"We are looking for a strong vice chair, hotel liaison, and other departmental heads, and honestly just about all positions are open for those best qualified and who do not mind working with others. This is not a place for egos, as our goal is to work together and build it right, which is why it is set for two years out and we are planning now. We will be applying for our 501 C3 in January [2005], February at the latest.

"I hope that answers most of the questions. If more detailed information is required, such information will be conveyed when people who are interested step forward and show interest."

Allyson Llyr to NCL listserv, Dec. 16 & 17, 2004

((Stephen Graham and Maialaia responded by asking the location and date of this prospective con, which for political as well as contractual reasons, Citizen Llyr is being cagey about. It later slipped out that the intended name for the convention is Empiracon, which is not to be confused with a past Westercon. – GS))

WIN MENTORSHIP WITH GRUDGE WRITER STEPHEN SUSCO

The Stephen Susco Screenwriting Mentorship Competition - Deadline: April 30, 2005

"The Writers Room of Bucks County – a not-for-profit writers' center providing writing workshops, publishing and editorial services – is sponsoring The Stephen Susco Screenwriting Mentorship Competition. Three budding screenwriters will receive one year of personal mentoring by *The Grudge* writer Susco on the business and craft of screenwriting.

"Apply online at <http://www.writersroom.net> by submitting a brief treatment, writing sample, resume, short essay (optional) and \$45 application fee. Applicants narrowed to 36 by Writers Room professionals before submittal to panel of three industry judges. Panel will select 15 for personal interviews and final selection by Susco. Three winners announced in June 2005; receive one year of personal mentoring by Susco."

Forwarded by Felicity from AWN to BCSFA listserv, Dec. 16, 2004

And Now for Something Completely Different:

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TALOSSA

First Online Test On The University Of Talossa

"Chris Gruber has published the first online test for the University of

Talossa, at www.universityoftalossa.com/login.php. You need to register as a student or as an instructor to take it."

(Marti-Páir Furxheir aka Martin-Pierre Frenette)

Launch of Talossa-language.com

"... (Talossa founder and self-declared king) R Ben Madison requested from Miestrâ Schivâ's ISP that her copies of his Talossan language material [be] removed from her website ...

"In direct reaction to the fact that there was no longer any Talossan language material available online for citizens of the Republic, three citizens, Marti-Páir Furxheir, JP Griffin and Gödafrieu Válcadác'h worked hard on a new [online Talossan-English dictionary](http://www.talossan-english-dictionary.com). It can already be found online, at <http://www.talossan-language.com> with 10745 words are in it database for now. Over 1800 other words are being prepared, and should be ready in a few days. The site will also feature a brand new grammar in a few months, few [sic] from the copyright of R. Ben Madison. We also plan to allow visitors to download a Text, XML and CSV version of the dictionary, to allow them to publish it on their own website. ... (Marti-Páir Furxheir)

R.Ben Madison tried to hide the Talossan Language

"Last week-end, Paradise.net.nz contacted Miestrâ Schivâ to inform her that they had received a complaint from R. Ben Madison on copyright abuse on their server.

"While Miestrâ promptly removed the material from her site, that very action started a series of precipitated [sic] events that lead to R. Ben Madison trying to hide his language from the eyes of the Republic, and to prevent us from using it.

"R.Ben Madison claims that his language is copyrighted, 'like Klingon is'. However, it is impossible to copyright a language or even single words of a language. Klingon itself isn't copyrighted, but the word Klingon is trademarked, preventing the use of its name for commercial purpose without the permission of the trademark owners.

"Its grammar, the rules by which the Talossan words must be used to form proper sentences, is an legally an idea and thus, cannot be copyrighted either.

"What is copyrighted in the Talossan Language is [sic] its actual dictionary and grammar books written by Mr. Madison. To that effect, several citizens of the Republic of Talossa worked hard to create the www.Talossan-language.com website (see other article) partially dedicated to the publication of 'open-source' dictionary and grammars on the Talossan Language. That website will also be dedicated to offering other resources on the language, such as study guides and lessons, possibly offered in cooperation with the [University of Talossa](http://www.universityoftalossa.com)

"Interestingly, Madison's actions, which were meant to prevent other micronations (including the Republic) from using the Talossan Language, produced the opposite effect. Several micronations wrote to Mrs. Schivâ in support for her misfortune, and indicated their interests in trying to

help the preservation and propagation of the Talossan language on the Internet.

"It is possible that the Talossan language, rather than being solely used in the Kingdom of Talossa, could become an inter-micronational language, used by many micronations now it will be free from the dictatorship of its creator." (Marti-Páir Furxheir)

Talossa Weekly, Dec. 16, 2004

((Editor comments: see how history repeats itself? Even fanhistory? Even outside of fandom?))

TODD McFARLANE PRODUCTIONS INC. (Phoenix, AZ) FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY

"Todd McFarlane Productions Inc., the company founded by the Calgary-born comic-book impresario, has filed for bankruptcy protection.

"In court papers filed in Phoenix, the firm listed former NHL player Tony Twist as its largest creditor.

"McFarlane owes Twist \$15 million US from a court ruling that declared he had used Twist's name without permission.

"Antonio 'Tony Twist' Twistelli was a villain in McFarlane's *Spawn* comic book.

"McFarlane argued that his use of Twist's name was protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which safeguards freedom of speech.

"In July, a St. Louis court ruled against McFarlane, saying he had profited by using Twist's likeness. McFarlane vowed to fight the settlement.

"McFarlane, who was raised in both California and Alberta, is perhaps best known as the creator of *Spawn*. ...

"Last year, McFarlane said that his McFarlane Cos., then an umbrella of seven businesses, had annual sales exceeding \$50 million US." [Copyright (C) 2004 CBC]

Forwarded by Felicity Walker from CBC News, Dec. 20, 2004

RECESS IS CANCELLED

"At an assembly of 13-year-olds at St Matthew's High School in Moston, Manchester, England, a teacher told students an asteroid was on a collision course with Earth. The stunned children were told they would be able to leave school early to say their 'final farewells' to family members. 'Unfortunately a small number of pupils took the story literally,' says headteacher Kevin Hogan the end-of-the-world threat was meant as a lesson for students to 'live each day to the full.' When it became apparent that some of the children were crying, 'the head of year visited every year-9 class and again told students that the story was untrue and made every effort to ensure that those students who had been anxious were reassured.' (Manchester *Evening News*)

This is True, Nov. 28/04

THEY'RE STILL OUT THERE

The Evil Ones who tried to monopolize "fandom" as an Internet domain name are Still Out There. BCSFA member Felicity Walker discovered this in December 2004 and forwarded their email, as follows:

"Dear Friends of Science Fiction and Popular Culture,

"As members of the communities and websites associated with this TheFandom.com, I am inviting you to become part of what I think will be one of the most exciting sites to appear on the web in a long while.

TheFandom.com is unique in that it will offer some of the most amazing interactive experiences you will have on the web today. Imagine getting interactive with stars of some of your favorites of Science Fiction and Popular Culture Entertainment. Each week we will offer via our online radio show a unique opportunity to listen to and ask questions of a cool and exciting person. Two of our recent guests were Forrest J. Ackerman, one of the founding fathers of Science Fiction and Horror genres and Steven Furst of TV's *Babylon 5*, *St. Elsewhere* and the infamous *Animal House*, who is now a well respected Director and Producer.

"We have two radio hosts as part of this new site. The first host is Chase Masterson. Many of you will remember Chase from her portrayal as Leeta on *Star Trek Deep Space 9*. She is also the star of Creative Light's *Creature Unknown* and she appeared in Mark Hamill's *Comic Book: The Movie*.

"On Monday, December 13, 2004 at 5 PM Pacific/ 8 PM Eastern we kick[ed] the site into high gear. Chase will interview actor Robert Picardo, the beloved Holographic Doctor from *Star Trek Voyager*. Robert will talk about *Voyager*, answer questions from the chat room audience and update us on what he's been up to since *Voyager*.

"Then on Monday, December 20 at 5:00 PM PT/ 8:30 PM ET Chase [introduced] our second host; Lisabeth Shatner daughter of actor William Shatner. Lisabeth is a driving force behind her father's website and online community. Lisabeth will talk about life with her famous Dad and answer questions.

"In addition the site offers forums and chat rooms to interact with each other on a broad range of topics. We are firm believers in word of mouth experience, so if you stop by and have an amazing experience please invite others you know to come and join the world of TheFandom.com. Since we are a new site we encourage folks that want to establish different communities to step forward and contact us to moderate the forum boards or offer up a new board if you don't see one that fits your interests.

"I do hope you come and spend some time experiencing and interacting with each other and the folks behind TheFandom.com."

forwarded by Felicity Walker, Dec. 12, 2004

((Editor comments: this sort of fakefandom is one reason why Andrew Murdoch registered the domain fandom.ca. A follow-up on this and other fannish websites, including those held by various BCSFAns, should be featured in this month's BCSFAzine. -GS))

TRANS ATLANTIC FAN FUND 2005

- TAFF candidates interviewed on Trufen.net

"If you're wishing to become better acquainted with those standing for TAFF this year, you might want to take a look at the latest installment of 'The Fannish Inquisition,' in which Ulrika O'Brien interviews all three candidates:

<http://trufen.net/article.pl?sid=05/01/11/1651219>

"Two more sections of the interviews will be posted in the coming weeks. The candidates are Chaz Boston Baden, Curt Phillips, and Suzanne Tompkins (Suzle). The Trans Atlantic Fan Fund exists to send deserving fans from North America to Europe and vice-versa; this year's race end April 3. Ballots can be downloaded from:

<http://trufen.net/taff2005.shtml> Thanks for reading!"

Victor Gonzalez <vmgonzalez247@COMCAST.NET>, 11 Jan 2005

DOWN UNDER FAN FUND 2005

"Nominations for DUFF 2005 are now open. The winner – to come from North America – will be expected to attend the Australian National SF Convention June 10-13 [2005] in Hobart, Tasmania.

"To appear on the DUFF ballot, a candidate must submit nominations from 3 North American nominators and two from Australia and/or New Zealand. We will also need a \$25 bond and a 100-word platform statement.

"Nominations will close February 15, 2005. Ballots will go forth as quickly as possible. They will be downloadable from the DUFF website, and anyone who wishes may also publish downloadable ballots on their own sites.

"Ballots must include a voting fee of at least \$4US or \$6Aus. Ballots will be accepted until April 15th, the winner announced as soon as Norman Cates and Guy and Rosy Lillian confer.

"Candidates should start preparations towards obtaining their passports and visas NOW.

"Any questions or comments should be directed to Cates or the Lillians via e-mail. Norman's e-dress is normanc@clear.net.nz; the Lillians can be reached at GHLIII@yahoo.com.

"The Lillians will be moving from their New Orleans home at year's end ... but they will be maintaining their New Orleans address, P.O. Box 53092 NOLA 70153-3092, for the time being. Watch the website for changes."

The new DUFF site is at <http://duff2005.blogspot.com>.

Guy H. Lillian III, Dec. 6, 2004

Across the Nation

AURORA AWARDS – BALLOT DATES

Dennis Mullin has recently updated his Aurora Awards Web page, with the information that the 2005 nomination ballots should be available online after January 16th. The deadline to send in nominations will be the first week of April, 2005.

The 2005 Aurora voting ballots should be available in the first week of May, and the deadline to send in your votes will be mid-June, 2005.

Readers are reminded that Aurora awards are nominated and voted by Canadian fans in the following categories:

- Best English-language long form (novel)
- Best English-language short form (short story)
- Best English-language other
- Best French-language long-form
- Best French-language short-form ("nouvelle")
- Best French-language other ("ouvrage")
- Artistic Achievement
- Fan Achievement, Publication (other than a clubzine)
- Fan Achievement, Organizational
- Fan Achievement, Other

CANADIAN SF AND FANTASY (2004 and 2005)

Note: some of the following titles – those published in 2004 – will be eligible for nomination for the 2005 Aurora Awards. -GS

From Eileen Kernaghan, Jan. 10, 2005:

"The Science Fiction Book Club has chosen Matthew Hughes' latest novel *Black Brillion* as an alternate title. In 2005 Night Shade Books of San Francisco will be bringing out a collection of Matt's short fiction, *The Gist Collector and Other Stories*. Meanwhile, as Matt Hughes the crime writer, he'll have a novella "Muscle" in an upcoming issue of *Alfred Hitchcock's Magazine*.

"A two-book fantasy series by Dave Duncan has sold to Tor Books. Provisional titles are *Children of Chaos* and *Mother of Lies*.

"*The Alchemist's Daughter*, Eileen Kernaghan's latest historical fantasy from ThistleDown Press, is a featured young adult novel for 2004-5 on Terri Windling's Endicott Studio website. <http://www.endicott-studio.com/recreading/Winter04/recWinterYA04.html>

"You can find Mary Choo's poem "Christina" on the Chizine website, (<http://www.chizine.com/christina.htm>) . More of Mary's poetry appears in the new online SF/F/H anthology *Whispering Worlds* (<http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Shadowlands/4464/>)

"Rhea Rose's poem "Mermaid" I will appear in the forthcoming Canadian speculative anthology *Tesseract 9*.

From Matt Hughes, Jan. 11, 2005:

"FYI, I'll have a collection of sf short stories, *The Gist Hunter and Other Stories*, out from Night Shade Books in July.

"I'll also have stories in the February, April and June *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* and the March *Asimov's*.

"First chapter of my new novel at <http://www.archonate.com/black-brillion>."

From Karl Johanson, Jan. 12, 2005:

"Neo-opsis Science Fiction Magazine contributors [below are] eligible to be nominated for the 2005 for Aurora Awards (for works published in 2004). The various contributors listed below may have additional other works, which also make them eligible to be nominated for the 2004 Aurora Awards.

Eligible to be nominated for: Artistic Achievement

- Stephanie Ann Johanson: Art Director and illustrator for *Neo-opsis* # 2, 3 & 4. Art displays at Norwescon 2004 and V-Con 2004.
- Karen Kazanowski: Cartooning for *Neo-opsis* # 2, 3 & 4.
- Benjamin Parker: Illustrations in *Neo-opsis* # 2& 3.
- Rob Barrett: Illustration in *Neo-opsis* #4.
- Adrian Kleinbergen: Cover, *Neo-opsis* #3
- Maerianne Morrison: Artist Spotlight, *Neo-opsis* #3

Eligible to be nominated for: Best work in English: Short Form

- Linda DeMeulemeester: "The Worry Doctor". *Neo-opsis* Issue # 2.
- Nick Aires: "Write What You Know?". *Neo-opsis* Issue # 2.
- Terry Bramlett "The Smell of Dangerous Jasmine". *Neo-opsis* Issue # 2.
- Hayden Trenholm: "The Luck of Willie Lumen". *Neo-opsis* #3
- Peter Andrew Smith: "A Time for Everything". *Neo-opsis* #3
- Nina Munteanu: "Virtually Yours". *Neo-opsis* #3
- Janine Cross: "The Power of Love". *Neo-opsis* #3
- Sara Joan Berniker "My Mother in the Market". *Neo-opsis* Issue #4

Eligible to be nominated for: Fannish Achievement: Other

- C. J. Barna: Review. *Neo-opsis* #2
- John W. Herbert: Reviews. *Neo-opsis* #2, 3 & 4
- Paula Johanson: Reviews. *Neo-opsis* #2

from Janine Cross, Jan. 13, 2005:

"A short story I wrote in 2004, 'The Power of Love' [Issue 3 of *Neo-opsis*, 2004], was recently nominated for the Foundation Award, a \$1000 prize given annually to a Speculative Short Story of exceptional literary quality (their words, not mine!)."

CANADIAN UNITY FAN FUND 2005

Lyndie Bright, the current CUFF administrator, reports:

"... With the New Year upon us I am opening CUFF nominations ... from January 1 to March 1 for nominations, and March to May 30 to allow for voting, etc. In June the winner can begin to prepare for their trip in July to Calgary and the fun of the convention there.

"I am hoping to set up a Web page with a friend's help ... My address is the same, P.O. Box 7, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2G1. As long as e-mails indicate CUFF on the subject line I will get them even in bulk, and save them for printing.

"John Mansfield has people expressing interest in running and he has other forms to let people know CUFF is ready for another run in the New Year. ..."

Lyndie Bright (current CUFF administrator), Dec. 25, '2004

CANADIAN S/F PUBLICATION SHORTLISTED FOR TOP AUSTRALIAN SPECULATIVE FICTION AWARD

"EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing proudly announced today that *Orbital Burn*, by Australian author K. A. Bedford, has been short listed for an Aurealis Award – Australia's premier award for science fiction literature.

"The Aurealis Awards are now in their ninth year as Australia's premier awards for speculative fiction.

"Publisher Brian Hades stated in an interview today, 'We are extremely proud of Adrian. This is his first novel, and he is proving to be a promising new voice in science fiction. With his book *Eclipse* coming out in the near future, we are looking forward to continuing reading works of a man whose crisp sardonic style is redefining the genre of science fiction.'

"Author Bedford's comment about the short listing was 'Pretty spiffy news, I must say!'

"EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy publishing has won a number of awards for its releases, but to date this is the first short listing in a continent other than North America.

"*Orbital Burn* has received excellent response from reviewers, and has been featured on the CHUM television 'SpaceStation' program, Shelf Talk.

"Bedford recently completed a North American book tour in August 2004 and presented *Orbital Burn* at the World Science Fiction Convention in Boston.

"About the novel: In *Orbital Burn*, a seriously down-on-her-luck unlicensed Stalktown PI named Louise Lou Meagher ekes out a sparse living solving petty crimes. She is chronically broke, clinically dead, and nervous about being evacuated from her home planet, Kestrel, which in nine days time will be hit by an unstoppable doomsday rock, known as the Bloody Bastard. But Lou takes on one last case: helping a cybernetically enhanced canine named Dog, locate his former master, a defective biological android boy known only as Kid....

"About the author: K. A. Bedford was born in Fremantle, Australia in 1963. He attended Murdoch University, in Perth and studied Writing, Theatre, and Philosophy, before becoming actively involved in the Australian SF community. *Orbital Burn* is his first novel (soon to be followed by *Eclipse* and *Hydrogen Steel*). He lives with his wife, Michelle, near Perth, Australia.

"The Aurealis Award will be presented on January 22nd, 2005 in Brisbane, Australia."

Janice Lynn Shoults, EDGE Publishing, December 17, 2004

CANADIANA CORNER

Privacy, Eh?

"The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce admits one of its cash machines was distributing fake bills. They were obviously fake, too: they were incentive coupons issued by Canadian Tire Corp. hardware stores that were "contained within a bulk of regular currency," a bank spokesman says. The bank is also reeling from another public relations disaster: a West Virginia junkyard operator sued the bank for clogging up its fax machine -- with confidential information about hundreds of bank customers, which it was apparently sending to the wrong number. The bank lamely whined that the junkyard had violated Canadian privacy laws by revealing the bank's faxing errors. (Reuters) ...No wonder it had to resort to fake bills -- there was a run of customers trying to get their money out in a hurry."

This is True, Jan. 2, 2005

WORD PLAY

"A Board of Inquiry from Canada's Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has ruled that a Mi'kmaq Indian woman was not demeaned when her employer called her 'Kemosabe' -- the name Tonto used to refer to the *Lone Ranger* in the 1933-1955 radio show and the 1949-1957 TV show. Dorothy Kateri Moore says she objected to the term, which her boss Trevor Muller used for all of his employees. Muller says the word means 'trustworthy friend' and would not stop using it. Moore, who is presumably not related to *Lone Ranger* star Clayton Moore, quit and filed a discrimination complaint with the Commission. 'The evidence showed that she was not only treated the same way as other employees,' the Board ruled, 'but was considered a friend.' The ruling came after the Board watched re-runs of the TV show for an entire day. (Halifax *Daily News*) ...Later, however, after watching a day's worth of *Star Trek* re-runs the Board ruled that Picard calling Riker 'Number One' was 'offensive bathroom language'."

This Is True, November 14, 2004

Up Your Street

MEMBER NEWS

TILA PELLETIER and Dan Hebert are set to marry in Las Vegas *Star Trek* set -- Jan. 14, 2005

GARTH SPENCER is finally a citizen of Talossa! "After several years as a prospective, first in the Kingdom, and next in the Republic, Garth's citizenship has finally been approved! Congratulations!"

Martin-Pierre Frenette in *Talossa Weekly* #15, Jan. 6, 2005

GUNG HAGGIS FAT CHOY

"BTW Chinese New Year coincides with St. Valentines Day this year. That's right: Feb. 14 is Chinese New Years. Kill the Monkey of 2004 in style, and let the Cock crow in '05."

Stephen Kawamoto, Jan. 4, 2005

YE SVEDISH CHEF INVASION

If you need to read the VCON site in Swedish, just follow this link: <http://rinkworks.com/dialect/dialectp.cgi?dialect=bork&url=http://www.v-v-con.ca>

Greg Slade, BCSFA listserv, Dec. 11, 2004

WIFI VPL

"For Information Staff:

"The Wireless Device located in the Business Division has been turned on. It is located on the ceiling above the desk so reception will be the best in the Business Reference area. All information desks in Central should have copies of the instructions. More detailed instructions are available on the bulletin board now and by tomorrow should be on the public Web page.

Below is the policy statement for wireless access.

"This resource is provided as is. It is the responsibility of each user, not the library, to protect their computer against any potential abuse such as viruses, malwares and breach of privacy. ..."

Forwarded by Fran Skene, Dec. 5, 2004

**MEDIA FILE**

There's been a delay in the filming of the *Babylon 5* movie. The reason: not enough film crews in Great Britain. With *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and the next *Harry Potter* underway most of the effects teams have been quite busy. Conventional film crews have also been tied up with American productions (one being the TV movie about the last days of Adolf Hitler, which has taken British film crews to the Czech Republic). *B5* creator J. Michael Straczynski hopes to get production under way by mid-February, with production wrapping up by the beginning of May, and hopefully a release date by the end of the year.

Because of these delays with the *B5* movie, work on the new series has also been pushed back to September or October. However J. Michael may not be doing the new show in Vancouver. It and a number

of other series, science fiction and mundane, could be moving to Ontario or Quebec, because of the higher tax breaks offered by those provinces. The same could happen with *X-Men 3*, which would cost BC at least \$60 million in local jobs. Similarly, the bad weather at the start of January has put a dent into production of the new episodes of *The 4400*. They hope to get production going by the end of the month.

Also affected by the lack of talent in Britain is the new *Doctor Who* series. An episode now in production called for a number of dwarves in major parts. However with both *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Harry Potter* employing so many of them in their productions, the script will have to change to accommodate their absence. There's also a rumour that UNIT could play a bigger role in season two, with (get this) an American in charge of UNIT's operations! Oh god. How I wish for the days of the old Brigadier. BBC has set the date as March 26th for the first new *Doctor Who* episodes airing. However BBC is indicating if the series is not a hit on British television there could be only one season—though the producer's saying otherwise. There's still no buyer for the show and knowing BBC's recent budget problems that could be the reason there may be no season two. Also the CBC hasn't set a date yet for the series premiere here in Canada.

Sorry; we're now in a slow time for science fiction show production. Hopefully have some more news next month. So until then I wish you the very best and I'll be seeing you.

Aristotle Jones' Forwarded News:

A CALL TO ARMS

(From *The Zocalo Today* - January 9, 2005)

For some time now, we have been hearing different things about JMS' new project, *The Memory Of Shadows*. We have gotten little information from JMS directly, but trade papers have run information about the project - giving character outlines and indicating that original cast members may not be involved. I have posted that information out at *The Zocalo Today* and have waited for more information on the issue, but it has not been forthcoming.

An ad hoc committee of fans got together to see what might be done - and we began working on ways to get the studios attention, including press releases and getting stories into the mainstream press. You can help by participating in a letter writing campaign with a bit of a gimmick to help it stand out from similar campaigns. Go to <http://www.keepb5alive.com>. Download one of "B5 Bucks" designs on the site. Print them out, cut them out, and include them with your letter. There are also form letters that you can use, but studios pay a lot more attention to individuals who take the time to compose a letter of their own. Use the samples, but add something of your own -- don't just sign a form letter that somebody else wrote. Just don't forget to include the "B5 Bucks" whichever you do.

While the "B5 Bucks" is a bit of a gimmick - don't you remember the Tabasco sauce sent on behalf of the ROSWELL fans? That effort was memorable and got attention - and that is what we need now. If Warner Bros. gets THOUSANDS of letters containing these "B5 Bucks" they may take notice.

Go to the site, download the materials, join the fight. The casting decisions are being made RIGHT NOW. The countdown to the start of shooting has begun. The window during which we can make our voices heard is closing, but it HASN'T CLOSED YET.

Get your letter into the mail TOMORROW.

The address is:

Warner Brothers Feature Film Development Dept.
4000 Warner Boulevard
Burbank , CA 91522

Thanks in advance for your help.

Sandra Bruckner, Editor/Publisher,
ISN News: The Zocalo Today, <http://www.isnnews.net>
Forwarded by Aristotle Jones, Jan. 2005

Felicity Walker's Forwarded News

New Buckaroo Banzai Fiction By Writer/Creator

<snip> ...Moonstone's new book will be a NEW TALE of Buckaroo written by the character's very own creator (and the movie's screenwriter) Earl Mac Rauch!

The interior art will be handled by ("Star Wars") Stephen Thompson.

With the guidance of the film's director, W.D. Richter, the Buckaroo Banzai color mini series will continue the bizarre trail blazed by the film.

BUCKAROO BANZAI: a bold, titillating mix of particle physics, rock and roll, super-sonic speed machines, handsome men, beautiful women, and villains beyond redemption.

Forwarded by Felicity Walker
from Monster Attack Team Canada newsletter,
January 5, 2005

(Novel announcement to Richmond Writers)

What are dreams?

Does everyone dream?

Can dreams contain a portal to alter-dimensions?

Could dreams be used as the ultimate weapon?

"Dreams--The Gateway" is a paranormal thriller that introduces the science fiction fan with the term 'dream tranversion.' A young boy soon learns that he possesses a special gift. Early in life he is able to enter the mysterious world of dreams and interact with the dream process. As he matures he further develops this ability into a new technology that holds many great promises for mankind. The government soon learns of his ability and funds future research and then later drafts his discovery for

use in the war against global terrorism. The ability to control the dreams of enemies is considered the most powerful weapon ever developed. Along with the ability to interact in the land of dreams the professor discovers a link between dreams and man's conquest of the unknown. His program and assistant are relocated to a secret island government base to complete the research into the possible use of dreams as a weapon. Unexpected events soon force all involved to face the nightmare unleashed by the new technology. All who transverse into "Dreams--The Gateway" will step into a fast paced paranormal adventure.

<http://www.shadowpeoplebooks.com>

Dream Tranversion -

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dreamtranversion>

Forwarded by Felicity Walker from Richmond writers' group, Jan. 2005

And now for something Garth wasn't sure would bear reprinting ...

"For those interested i have started a local yahoo group. vansatanist - The Vancouver Satanist Society, I will be posting events, concerts, and eventually upon growing membership organize some meets and private parties. The group is not just for satanists but for all those self-indulgent, self-worshipping people with like minds exchanging ideas, art, music and deviant times. I started this group as I have found little or no resources for local Satanists in the Vancouver area. I have been an active LaVeyan Satanist for about 10 years now and want to share experiences and thoughts with others.

"Thanks to groups like van-goth and others all over that unite dark deviant beings everywhere."

Dimitrios, Owner/Moderator/Beast
vansatanist - The Vancouver Satanist Society
<http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/vansatanist/>

Felicity Walker comments:

*"Back in the late 1990s I kept reading and rereading the Satanism FAQ, but couldn't quite get a sense of where it was coming from. Getting past the first common misconception--that these people literally worship a literal Devil--was easy. OK, so I knew what they ***weren't*** about. It was knowing what they ***were*** about that was hard."*

Book announcement to Van-Goth listserv

THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

By Angelina M. Robinson

"Angelina has finally crept out from the shadows and with her she has brought the birth of her new vampire novel *Lost Hunger* which is now available world wide. A story for every walk of life, a story filled with magic and intrigue. Being the first in the series of five "Lost Hunger" will be sure to keep you longing for more. This is Angelina's tribute to all The Children of the Night.

"*Lost Hunger* is a haunting tale of a young woman Daenara and her unrelenting struggle to piece together her dark past. Venturing deep into the darkness of that world she finds herself within the arms of a vampire. Seduced by his power and passion she finds herself embraced by a darkness, which exceeds her every fantasy. However within this darkness lies an evil, which waits patiently to rise up against Daenara. For her the battle has barely begun and the blood will surely never wash from her hands.

"To purchase *Lost Hunger* and find out more about the author herself visit: <http://www.losthunger.com>"

forwarded from Van-Goth, Jan. 7, 2005

FANNISH WEBSITES

By Garth Spencer

Given my recent online research for the Aurora-eligible works, and the news about the people who wanted to reserve the domain "Fandom", I thought a short description of fannish websites might be in order.

You may or may not be aware of the longstanding websites for enduring, influential SF associations, such as the British SF Association, the New England SF Association, the Los Angeles, Portland and North-West (Seattle) Science Fiction Societies. NESFA and LASFS not only feature their society news and regular fan publications, they have been publishing as small presses for some years; their catalogues are worth examining.

FANAC.ORG, like [SFNorthwest.org](http://www.sfnorthwest.org), offers a number of online documents and links to more, in categories ranging beyond clubs, conventions and fanzines.

Curiously, not every fan group across Canada has a website, although there are sites for MonSFFA, the Montreal club (www.monsffa.com) and the U.S.S. Hudson Bay, a Star Trek club in Toronto (www.idic.ca) .

You are more likely aware that any savvy convention committee now sets up a website for advertising purposes. Today, Jack Beslanwitch's SF Northwest Resources site (www.sfnorthwest.org) not only lists clubs, and writers' resources, but links to conventions throughout the Northwest.

Am I leading up to something? Yes, the websites set up by BCSFA members, for fannish more than personal reasons. Our Fearless Leader saw the need to post background, historical information online, so he established canfancyclopedia.ca. He has been updating and extending the Canfancyclopedia again, since November 2004.

Some years ago some mundanes tried to register "fandom" as a domain name. Before they could try to do that with fandom.ca, Andrew Murdoch, sometime editor of *Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi*, registered the domain. He features a number of links to clubs, conventions, fanzines, and other matters.

You may not be aware of Clayten and Tammy Hamacher's kelora.org website, where they archive scanned photos of SF fans and events.

You are probably aware of the "Royal Swiss Navy" website I set up at the Vancouver CommunityNet (www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn), partly to archive some fannish material myself, but I have used my personal "hrothgar" site at the same server for the same purpose, e.g. for a provisional Canadian Unity Fan Fund Web page (www.vcn.bc.ca/~hrothgar/cuff.htm).

It may occur to you at this point that some kind of model or prior assumptions were at work, on the webmasters' minds. This is true; the most relevant model for a general fannish website seemed to be the "fandom guide", a hardcopy sort of guidebook to all matters fannish. One of the first online versions was Robert Runte's NCF Guide to science fiction and fandom, an extension of his personal website at the University of Lethbridge. (uleth.ca/~runte/ncf/)

The first such fandom guide, written by Well-Known Fan and sometime author Bob Tucker, is archived both at SCIFI.com and at the website of an Oklahoma SF club.

By now, of course, more contemporary fans – and writers – have worked up their own models. I draw to your attention the Made in Canada website (), which celebrates Canadian SF writers, artists and filmmakers, and SFCanada.ca, the website of the professional writers' organization.

More single-focus websites include eFanzines.com, the explicit fanzine archive online, and trufen.net, explicitly set up for fanzine reviews.

And what fan website are *you* working on? Inquiring minds want to know.



BOOK REVIEWS

by Donna McMahon

VERY BAD DEATHS, Spider Robinson (Baen, Dec/04)

THE ALGEBRAIST, Iain M. Banks (Orbit, Nov/04)

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VERY BAD DEATHS, Spider Robinson (Baen, Dec/04)

Though it sounds like the title of an anthology, *VERY BAD DEATHS* is a new novel (I believe, his twenty-ninth) from science fiction icon Spider Robinson. This book represents something of a departure for

Robinson, being neither comedic fantasy like his long-running Callahan's series, nor straight SF, like the *Stardance* books. Instead, it's set in current day Vancouver, and though it has fantasy (or at least ESP) elements, could best be described as a detective thriller.

Russell Walker, a nocturnal, coffee-addicted newspaper columnist, is jerked abruptly out of a spiralling depression when he is visited by a friend he hasn't seen in decades. The friend is a telepath and he wants Walker to help him prevent some murders that have not yet been committed.

With the clock ticking down to horrific deaths and himself appointed as "Speak-to-Cops", Walker wrestles with whether to try and interest police in a telepathic tip about a villain he can't name or identify, or try his hand as an unlikely amateur detective.

In preparing to write this review I decided that I wanted to crosscheck my own biases, so I conscripted three readers – a fifty-something, a sixty-something, and one fan in her twenties. (I'm a forty-something.) Though the confessed Spider fan was most positive about the book, I found a high level of consistency in reader response.

Anyone who has read much of Robinson's writing will recognize the ectomorphic Baby Boomer protagonist whose back-story is more than loosely autobiographical. Two of my readers tired of Walker quickly, finding him very much at odds with his billing (delivered by another character) of being open-minded, tolerant, kind and gentle.

All my readers found Zandor Zudenigo, the telepath, to be the most sympathetic character. I enjoyed Robinson's portrayal of an eccentric, intelligent, sensitive man trying to function in a world of blaring mental broadcast, and I was left wanting more – always a good sign. In contrast, the cartoonish supervillain is a torturer-murderer who makes Robert Picton, Jeffrey Dahmer and Hannibal Lecter look like beginners. I couldn't see any good reason for this excess other than as a contrived and absurd exercise in making Walker's ethical dilemma clear-cut.

Spider Robinson has never been noted for reticence in expressing his views (after all, he makes a good part of his living taking umbrage in the pages of the *Globe & Mail*), but I found his opinion dumps wearing after a while, especially when they interrupted the action at increasingly improbable times. Polling my reader team, I discovered that the older readers found it annoying and our youngest reader was least bothered. Everyone remarked, with varying degrees of amusement, that Robinson remains intensely American in his attitudes to things like highways and firearms, despite living in Canada for three decades. And as current or former Vancouverites we all enjoyed recognizing the accurately described details of this area, though we thought that giving a fictional name to only one very obviously identified spot ("Heron Island") was glaringly silly.

One of my concerns in reviewing *VERY BAD DEATHS* was that I wasn't sure how Robinson's rambling reminiscences about the Sixties would sell either to people who grew up well before Woodstock, or to those born in later decades. Interestingly, only my oldest reader wearied of the excursions to 1967, even though they went on far longer than was

justified by any contribution to the plot. The rest of us sat back and enjoyed Robinson's chatty, humorous narration.

VERY BAD DEATHS reads like segments of two different books sandwiched together – almost as if Robinson couldn't make up his mind what kind of a book he wanted to write. The first section is closest to being a detective yarn and it's written in Robinson's trademark laid back style, complete with Sixties flashbacks. The second part is a protracted and violent torture/action sequence that reminded me forcibly of *Silence of the Lambs*.

Unfortunately, neither half is very successful. The detective plot is thin and stitched together with improbable coincidence. Moreover, Walker does not solve his mystery, nor does he vanquish the villain – he is thrust through the story by events that come out of left field. The last part of the book is taut with anger, but is robbed of much of its tension by the egregiousness (and talkativeness) of the villain and the knowledge that since this is a first person narrative, the protagonist obviously survived. And those readers who found the narrator abrasive and "preachy" simply didn't care if he survived to the end.

I find it difficult to identify what audience *VERY BAD DEATHS* is going to appeal strongly to. Readers who enjoy the genial first part are liable to be dismayed by the violent second part. And fans of bloody revenge fantasies are unlikely to sit through the meandering lead in.

* * * *

THE ALGEBRAIST, Iain M. Banks (Orbit, Nov/04)

The cover of the advance reading copy of *THE ALGEBRAIST* boasts: "The Most Eagerly Awaited Science Fiction Novel of the Decade" – advertising that would seem tough to live up to. This reviewer, for example, had never read any of Iain M. Banks' previous novels, never mind awaiting a new one. Nonetheless, I decided to give it a try.

Fassin Taak is a Slow Seer who studies the most ancient alien race in the galaxy – the Dwellers – who inhabit gas giants and have extraordinary lifespans of billions of years. A small number of humans who are tolerated by the Dwellers sift through their archives for pearls of data that might transform a civilization. Taak is one of these, a youthful rebel who prefers "Real Delving" in a tiny life support craft, rather than using remotes to dive into the clouds of the gas giant while his body remains safely in orbit.

Taak is not unduly concerned when the wormhole portal to his home Ulubis system is destroyed and the system becomes isolated from the rest of the Mercatorial galaxy. Slow Seers live a long time, and eventually a new portal will be shipped and set up, allowing normal communications to resume. But the situation becomes critical with news that an invasion force is coming from the Disconnect and will almost certainly reach Ulubis before the Shrievalty fleet can arrive to defend them.

To Taak's horror, the Complector Council orders him to dive into the planet Nasqueron in search of the "Dweller List" – a collection of

coordinates of secret Dweller portals that would turn the war in their favour. Trouble is, Taak isn't sure the list has ever existed; much less that he can find it.

The word that came irresistibly and repeatedly to my mind as I trudged through this heavy volume was INTERMINABLE. Over the course of 534 word-packed pages, I saw many indications that Iain M. Banks is a gifted writer. However, this meandering, hugely expository, self-indulgent space opera needed a ruthless pruning that it did not receive.

Another word that occurred to me was Uneven. Some elements of *THE ALGEBRAIST* are absurdly over the top – for instance the villainous Archimandrite Luseferous, leader of the invasion fleet, who makes an appearance every fifty pages or so to torture another poor victim, thus reminding us that he's really truly extremely evil. Unfortunately, he does hardly anything else – something that becomes increasingly noticeable as the book drags on.

By contrast, other elements of *THE ALGEBRAIST* have serious dramatic potential. Among the plot threads is the story of Taak's uneasy relationship with a group of friends who were bonded in youth by a tragic accident. That story is irrelevant to the larger plot, but far more compelling, and it is one of several intriguing bits that are largely lost in the deluge of material.

About a third of the way into the book, Fassin dives into Nasqueron, and almost all the rest of the novel is a prolonged sort of Gulliver's Travels through the gas giant, meeting various whimsical and eccentric Dwellers who appear completely disinterested in forwarding the plot.

The very effective epilogue of *THE ALGEBRAIST*, arcing back to an early story element that was subsumed in subsequent verbiage, merely served to remind that this could have been, and should have been, a far better novel.

Late-Breaking News

MEMBER JOHN BARTLEY underwent surgery this winter; you can read all about it “at the blogs I will resume soon:

<http://kiloseven.blogspot.com>
<http://clackablog.blogspot.com>”

John Bartley, Jan. 2005

ORYCON will be held at a new hotel in 2005, following the sale of the Doubletree hotels in Portland near the Jantzen Beach mall, and the closure of the Columbia River Doubletree for much-needed renovations. Much discussion of alternative venues continues apace on the Orycon and OSFCI listservs. Stay tuned ...

THE PRELIMINARY LIST OF NAMES AND TITLES AVAILABLE FOR AURORA AWARD NOMINATIONS keeps growing; Joël Champetier, editor of *Solaris*, mailed copies of last year's issues to Garth Spencer, and various authors are emailing information to him and to Dennis Mullin (www.sentex.net/~dmullin/aurora/). They will continue to receive additional entries. Garth plans to ask Dennis to post the list online, and then Garth will email Canadian fans and pros to solicit their corrections and additions.

Colophon

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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.yahoogroups.com/group/BCSFA>

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://bcsfa.bcgreen.com>

The V-Con Society Web page may be viewed at <http://www.v-con.ca/society/>

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

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- | | |
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| — Enuff Jibba Jabba. | — Your name is a killing word. |
| — Your secret mission briefing is encoded in every 23 rd letter. | |
| — You are <i>not</i> a number, you are a free fan!! | |