

Ish

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Masthead

Ish Volume 1, Number 4 (April 2008), an occasional genzine produced by the members of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association. For comments, trades, suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *Ish*, c/o #209-3851 Francis Road, Richmond, BC, Canada, V7C 1J6, or e-mail *felicity4711 @ hotmail.com*. This issue's guest editor: Garth Spencer, now at P.O. Box 74122, Hillcrest Park, 4101 Main St., Vancouver, BC, Canada V5V 3P0, *garthspencer @ shaw.ca*.

Contents

An Exhibition Of Editorial Self-Indulgence.....	1
Call Me 'Ish' Mail.....	1
Splitting Hares	4
Zines Received.....	6

Art Credits

Felicity Walker Clipart



An Exhibition Of Editorial Self-Indulgence

Good evening. This is *Ish* #4, the clubzine of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association, and this is Garth Spencer editing it.

One of the first things you noticed about fandom, if you entered in the early 1980s, was how often SF clubs felt obliged to produce a slim, frequent newsletter and a more substantial, infrequent clubzine, as separate publications. It took some time to find out why club members thought the latter was a fanzine and the former was not.

The original concept of *Ish* was to provide more space for articles and, perhaps, faanfiction than *BCSFazine* could afford. Perhaps this concept was not expressed very clearly. I am glad to have an opportunity to edit *Ish* and, if I am able, provide an example of a fannish zine.

A fan in Winnipeg recently showed incomprehension at the word “fannish”. Now, I suppose, the word has to be explained to fans. There was a time, I gather, when fans were Serious and Constructive and either intended to become SF writers, or spent enormous time on critical analysis, such as long lists of SF and fantasy motifs in published stories. Then there was a time when fans took a more lighthearted, humorous, even sophomoric approach to everything, and were interested mainly in fandom, as a sort of community. That was fannish fandom.

My metaphor for this is that you can’t take reality too seriously if you’re used to putting on, and taking off different versions of reality in succession, as an SF fan. Of course, this outlook comes from a time when almost every novel or short story came with a whole new story universe.

(Now ... well, since the 1970s ... there is no one way to describe fandom. Perhaps you can only speak of several leisure-interest, hobby groups, loosely connected and somewhat aware of each other, but really not one community and not interested in pretending to be.)

That sense of fun is something I would like to recapture, and promote.

“Good things are being said about you.”
Chinese fortune cookie

Call Me ‘Ish’ Mail
[LOCs]

[Editors’ remarks in square brackets]

John Purcell, j_purcell54 @ yahoo.com, 4 November 2007

Good morning, Felicity! At least, it is right now as I write this (7:50 AM). Hopefully this cheery greeting will bring a smile to your face whenever you get around to reading it.

[Thanks!—FW]

If I am reading your colophon correctly, one of your cats died. If so, my condolences. Love that name! What did you call him for short? Butterscotch?

[*“Butterscotch” was his full first name, and “Scotty” was the diminutive.—FW*]

Here are a few quick comments on your third issue of *Ish*. First of all, Lloyd Penney is right; contact fanartists—most will send you illos of various sizes, and will do covers if you give them enough lead time—to build up a stockpile of illustrations to use. Clip art can be wonderful, too, as well as the copy-paste feature to capture relevant images if you Google up a term, like “science fiction conventions.” Lots of hits result, and as long as you attribute your source—websites, names, dates, etc.—everybody is happy. I do this all the time for my zines. Heck, with enough lead time you could e-mail an article to a fan artist and commission a header and illos for that article. However you do it is all up to you and what you want to accomplish with your zine.

[*You and Lloyd are right.—FW*]

Judging by Lloyd’s response to the term *yiff*, I am really not sure if I want to know what it means. If curiosity attempts another homicide on one of our felines, I’ll look that term up. YAHOO! Groups can be a lot of fun.

It certainly seems as though your time spent at Canzine West 2006 was productive and enjoyable.

[*It was regular contributor Julian Castle who attended Canzine West; I put his report in the section “Julian Castle’s Submissions to the ‘Ish’ YAHOO! Group,” but I guess I could have made it more clear.—FW*]

Your description of it makes it sound like a mostly comics-oriented convention with a hefty sprinkling of fanzines tossed in for flavouring. I don’t know if you have a digital camera or anything like a scanner handy, but including pictures of a con make for a fun report.

[*I’ll see if I can fit my VCON 32 photos into Ish #4!—FW*]

Hey, next time you see Garth Spencer tell him I say “Hi, Garth, and when the hell’s the next *Royal Swiss Navy Gazette* coming out?” He’d like that.

[*Actually, Garth is guest-editing this issue of Ish, so he’ll read it here in this letter column!—FW*]

(*If I get my shit together, the next RSNG will be coming out about the same time as this zine does. -GS*)

I have never seen any of the *Carnosaur* movies, but if Roger Corman is involved, they are bound to be nutty and ripe for heckling in a convention film room. As with any gawd-awful skiffy movie, there’s always room for sequels. More laugh-fodder for us.

To wrap up, it is good to see you’re pubbing away, and I look forward to seeing another *Ish* from you in a little while. Now I have time to work on my fifth issue to get it ready for posting and printing. Keep the faith and keep the fan fires burning.

Lloyd Penney, 1706 - 24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2B2 penneys@allstream.net
21 November 2007

Ish 3 is here, and I have a little time to write up a LOC, and see if it fits your needs. Be nice with the rejection letter, okay?

Transformers, fanzines in disguise...converts to a paper airplane, no doubt. What else could a Transformers fanzine convert to? (Ohhh, don't answer that one, I just thought of a few ideas, and they're not nice ones...)

The local Canzine here came and went around Hallowe'en...never heard anything about how it fared. Any time I've been to a Canzine or *Broken Pencil* event, the idea of a science fiction fanzine was generally laughed at, and what are you doing here anyway? So, I don't go to them any more. They used to be held at the Imperial Pub, not far from Ryerson University.

BCSFA needs new gods? I guess more people miss the Leather Goddesses of Phobos than I thought. We need new gods for Vancouver fandom, and perhaps for fandom as a whole.

Haven't heard a lot about how VCon went this year, so please tell us. I must come back out some time and see how things have changed since we were last there. Garth will be looking after this zine next time? Got a timetable?

All done. The biggest part of the zine was the *Carnosaur II* review, and I never saw that movie. Take care, see you in the funnyzines, like *BCSFAzine*.

THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY
is looking for
A FEW GOOD FEN!
Write Box 74122,
Hillcrest Park, 4101 Main St,
Vancouver, BC
CANADA V5V 3P0
Or email garthspencer @ shaw.ca



“You have important new business development shaping up.”
Chinese fortune cookie

Splitting Hares
Taral Wayne
(July 2007)

Last night I was watching my new DVD of the first season of *The Power Puff Girls*. As is usually the case, the disk included a variety of special features. The ones that most fascinated me were animatics produced by Craig McCracken at Cal Tech, and shopped around while trying to sell the series. (Originally it was called *Whoop Ass Girls* or *Whoop Ass Stew*. Thank goodness, even in the show biz there are rare lapses of bad taste.)

I'll spare you any extended speculations on the animatics themselves, or *The Power Puff Girls*, but here's my revelation where it concerns a project I worked on a few years ago.

Back then a friend of mine named Joe Strike had invented a concept called *The Incredible Hare*. In brief, an absent-minded professor has his mind scrambled with a lab rabbit's in a freak accident, and gains the power to morph into a rabbit guy. Yeah, it does sound silly, but how is it sillier than gaining spider powers from a bite?

Joe paid me a modest stipend to draw a storyboard based on his script. I did what I could, but admittedly it was a bit rushed, since it was a lengthy job and Joe could hardly afford professional rates. At any event, he was delighted with the boards and has used them in several different ways to help market his concept. Alas, much to Joe's puzzlement, he has had no success. It distresses me as well. Unless *The Incredible Hare* is sold someday, I'll never see another nickel on that job.

The question on my mind is *why*? Why has Joe's concept gathered dust all these years, instead of being programmed four times a day on the Cartoon Network or Teletoon? Sure, it's not *The Power Puff Girls*... or even *Atomic Betty*. But 90% of the animation I see on TV is easily as harebrained. Even without reading the storyboards for *The Incredible Hare*, can you imagine them any worse than an average episode of *Loonatics Unleashed*? For some time I've believed Joe had overlooked some more fundamental issue than quality, which has rarely been a criteria for television programming.

Watching the pilot made by Craig McCracken may have enlightened me. Unlike my storyboards, his reduced the origin of the Power Puff Girls to a few iconic images. (They in fact became the opening sequence for every one of the production cartoons.) Once the Girls' origin had been established, McCracken straight away began a typical, if very abbreviated, story. What occurred to me at that moment is that the storyboard I did for Joe dwelled at far too great a length on The Hare's origin. Unfortunately, it wasn't really very important how The Hare came into being. Far better than an exhaustively detailed account of Harold Hopper's lab accident would have been a very short story that illustrated the character of the Hare in an exciting and graphic way. After all, *The Incredible Hare* wasn't *Lord of the Rings*. The point of the animatic was to sell the concept, not to chronicle the history of Middle Earth and the end of the Third Age.

Think of the ideal animatic as being a theme, in so many beats:

1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6...

1/ -- Begins an almost throwaway explanation of the Hare's origin. "Here's Harold Hopper, bitten by a radioactive bunny, he gains incredible hopping powers!" Cut to the second beat.

2/ -- Start of a typical day for your hero. "Today I have to precipitate a titration of guinea pig brain and chicken soup, dum de dum... Wait, what's that? The Rabbit Alarm?"

3/ -- He turns into The Hare! and bounds off to save the day.

4/ -- The hare arrives on the scene of the trouble, and discovers that "The Hip-Hopper" is teaching some naïve kid on the street to disrespect his family, his teachers, and his flag by talking funky jive. "Yo, man. That's whack! Booyah! Now ya got talk!" The kid repeats the ebonically mangled English of The Hip-Hopper, graphically illustrating the terrible extent of the emergency.

5/ -- Hare tries to reason with the kid -- remind him of his loving family, the efforts of his teachers, and that the Patriot Act punishes little snots like him who don't show respect to the sacred flag. When that doesn't work, The Hare demands The Hip-Hopper back off.

6/ -- Hip-Hopper laughs him off. He and The Hare square up to fight. It's an epic battle of words. Hip-Hopper speaks almost impenetrable rap-speak, but The Hare's impeccable rendering of JFK's "Ask Not" speech sends him packing back to the 'hood.

7/ -- The kid drops his Ebonics like a dinner of refried beans and cabbage. Beaming with pride he speaks perfect English, now, as he expresses his gratitude to the Hare for saving him from a future of petty crime and diseased hoes.

8/ -- Hare flies off, theme music swells to orgasmic levels, the day is saved.

9/ -- Back at the lab, our hero discovers his triturerated guinea pig brains have congealed. "Fap!" Canned laughter.

The whole thing should take about thirty seconds. Forty-five at the outside.

There is of course the basic question – did the idea suck? I hate to say anything as blunt as that, though some people I know *have*. (Professional jealousy among animators is endemic.) I would prefer to say that Joe's love of cartoons must have been imprinted on him in the 1970's. *The Incredible Hare* aimed to educate and instill positive social values, rather like *School House Rock* or *Captain Planet*. Thoroughly 70's goals that were utterly out of step by the 90's. The trend then (and now) was toward wacky humour or imitative anime, and the bottom line was whether or not a line of toys and card games could be marketed on the back of the series. Or was it the other way around? None of the suits cared.

What could be done about to revive *The Incredible Hare* now, I have no idea. Ideally, Joe would reach deep into his pockets for money and pay me to do the storyboard all over again, updated, punchier, and then work it into a well-orchestrated campaign of forcing the New Improved Hare on hapless studio heads. But I rather suspect that's way of out of the question. Joe's pockets are shallow and contain mainly fluff. In all likelihood The Hare is fated to remain in the can.

But I have this fan-TAS-tic idea of my own about a loaner Batmobile...
Seriously. Let's have a working lunch over it.

“This is a carburetor,” Hank tells his son. “Take it apart, put it back together; repeat until you’re normal.”—*King of the Hill*

John Bartley, July 5, 2005

Zines Received

Hardcopy trade zines:

Ansible from Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. URL: <http://ansible.co.uk>. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (e). Available for SAE or petals from St Klaed's computer. [NET NOTE. See <http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/Ansible/a216.html> for the nice HTML version. Mailing list subscribe/unsubscribe information appears below—please *don't* send such requests to my own e-mail address. DRL]

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BCSFazine. From Garth Spencer/BCSFA, now at P.O. Box 74122, Hillcrest Park, 4101 Main St., Vancouver, BC, Canada V5V 3P0, garthspencer@shaw.ca.

Burnaby Writers' Society newsletter, from 6584 Deer Lake Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5G 3T7. Memberships \$30 (\$20 for seniors, students or the “unwaged”). Sample issue available for SASE. Tel. 604-421-4931, tel. info@bws.bc.ca, URL www.bws.bc.ca.

Chunga from the Seattle editorial team of Andy Hooper, Randy Byers and Carl Juarez; postal address 1013 North 36th Street, Seattle, WA 98103 (send three copies in trade). Email: Andy Hooper, fanmailaph@aol.com; Randy Byers, fringefaan@yahoo.com; Carl Juarez, heurihermilab@gmail.com

DASFAX, newsletter of the Denver Area SF Association, c/o The Editors at 741 King Street, Denver, CO 80204, email editor1@dasfa.org. URL www.dasfa.org.

De Profundis c/o LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood, CA 91601, USA

Ethel the Aardvark Melbourne SF Club, PO Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, VIC 3005, Australia.

Impulse & Warp, c/o MonSFFA, P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, QC H2X 4A7.

The Gila Queen's Guide to Markets is an electronic publication by Kathy Ptacek, GilaQueen@worldnet.att.net. Subscription Tsar: Timothy Boggs; Major Factota:

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“It takes a NEWFIE to steal a parking lot!”—Fruvous
