

WCSFAzine

The Fannish E-zine of the West Coast Science Fiction Association
Dedicated to Promoting the West Coast Science Fiction Community

#4

Dec 2007

AMOR



AMOR #10. August 5th, 1976. Fan-Editor: Susan Wood. Cover Artist: Derek Carter.

‘THE AMOR DE COSMOS PEOPLE’S MEMORIAL QUASIREVOLUTIONARY SUSANZINE’

IMPORTANT STUFF YOU CAN SAFELY IGNORE

WCSFAzine Issue # 4, Dec 2007, Volume 1, Number 4, Whole number 4, is the monthly E-zine of the West Coast Science Fiction Association (founded 1993), a registered society with the general mandate of promoting Science Fiction and the specific focus of sponsoring the annual VCON Science Fiction Convention (founded 1971).

Anyone who attends VCON is automatically a member of WCSFA, as is anyone who belongs to the British Columbia Science Fiction Association, a social organization (founded 1970) which is the proud owner of the VCON trademark. Said memberships involve voting privileges at WCSFA meetings.

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< <http://www.user.dcnnet.com/clintbudd/WCSFA/> >

IMPORTANT STUFF THAT IS VERY COOL

Your membership fee: Nothing!
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WCSFAzine *IS* a fannish E-zine publication sponsored by WCSFA to promote and celebrate every and all aspects of the Science Fiction Community on the West Coast of Canada.

You can download the latest issue (and past issues) from < <http://efanzines.com> > or contact the Editor at: < rgraeme@shaw.ca > and ask me to email you a PDF version of each issue as soon as it is ready.

WCSFAzine is not intended to be an information newswire service, or an industry promotional outlet, but rather an eclectic ongoing anthology of bits and pieces of nifty rumours and misinformation as viewed through a fannish lens. You can expect the focus to be on the West Coast, but with a peripheral vision including the entire world of fandom. Anticipate info on upcoming books, fannish events, local clubs and conventions, film reviews, short essays, weird cover art, spin doctor publicity announcements, peculiar speculations and astounding bits of trivia to put you in touch with your fannish heritage.

WCSFAzine is not intended to be the perzine of the editor, though I will filter everything through my alleged wry sense of ~~imbecility~~ humour.

You, and I mean YOU (!) are invited to submit short (VERY short – say 2 to 3 paragraph) articles, mini-essays, letters of comment, art fillers (small pieces of art) and/or cover art to the Editor at:

R.G. Cameron, Apt 72G – 13315 104th Ave, Surrey, B.C., V3T 1V5.

Or submissions in both electronic text and B & W line drawing in jpg form to: < rgraeme@shaw.ca >

Particularly interested in personal experience/view/opinion/review articles, preferably light in tone. Also any interesting news.

No pay, but plenty of egoboo. Cheers all! The Graeme

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EDITORIAL

Time to put this puppy to bed. (Do you notice I use a lot of clichés? I should! I collect them!) Christmas is coming up and I get a week off (mostly without pay) and I'd like to use that time to relax rather than plunge into last minute frantic work on the next issue of WCSFAzine. So I'm cutting this issue short (at 33 pages!) in order to start work on the next one right away. The more I accomplish in the next two weeks the less I have to do toward the New Year.

This issue sees the return of Mr. Science, whose intelligence and wit used to grace the pages of SPACE CADET, BCSFAzine and ON SPEC. He's mostly retired from writing now, but as a tribute to him (courtesy of his faithful and utterly loyal corresponding secretary Mr. Al Betz) I will be reprinting the entire corpus of the Mr. Science columns for the edification and delight of our readers. At the rate of two Q&A per issue it will take several years. We on the West Coast are very proud of Mr. Science.

I have also decided to reprint some of my allegedly humorous 'B' movie reviews which formerly marred the pages of BCSFAzine. To most of our readers this will be a new and frightening experience. As for those who read them previously, I didn't apologize then, and I'm not going to apologize now. By the time I've run through the lot I should have a bunch of new retro reviews handy. And some people think I never threaten anyone!

And am very happy to introduce my new column 'Upcoming Nifty Film Projects' where I get to spread rumours, cribbed from various on-line sources (who generally got them from VARIETY in the first place) in the glorious tradition of Forrest J. Ackerman in FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND and SPACEMEN years ago who also cribbed from VARIETY news of astounding and real cool-sounding film projects that his average mid-teen reader drooled over but never got to see because many of these projects, while announced, were never actually filmed because they never got financed. However, most of the ones I'm listing are already in the can, incredibly enough. (Possible pun intended.)

So, all in all, pleased with this issue. Hope you like it.

I should have the next issue finished by January 1st. Many thanks to Bill Burns at < <http://www.efanzines.com> > for hosting. Please send me feedback! < rgraeme@shaw.ca > Cheers! Ghod-Editor The Graeme

CONVENTION STUFF

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF VCON 1: Part Four

THE VANCOUVER SF CONVENTION - APRIL 9-10, 1971:

by RGC

SATURDAY, 10TH APRIL, 1971:

Programming (a single track confined to the York room, the 12th floor suite now serving as a hospitality suite) began in the York banquet room at 10:00 AM with about 70 people present. A talk entitled "RUSSIAN FANTASY" by Murray Shoolbraid had originally been scheduled, but was cancelled as he suddenly developed a bad case of flu. SFU Professor Mason Harris was cornered in the party suite Friday night circa 11:00 PM and asked to fill in -- which he did this next morning without preparation, speaking off the cuff -- with a fascinating talk on H.P. LOVECRAFT, (according to my diary notes) "*explaining the weirdness of that peculiar man. Went out only at night. Kept the blinds drawn all day. Lived alone with his maiden aunt. Very peculiar.*"

Daniel Say took notes during Mason Harris's talk and printed it first in his perzine 'ENTROPY NEGATIVE' and then later in a limited edition of 150 copies (together with an interview of Frank Herbert) which were sold at V-Con 3 in 1974. Among other things, Mason Harris stated:

"The pulps are now a bygone era, and Lovecraft, having many things wrong with him from a literary point of view, might have been expected to disappear with the rest of them. Instead he has persisted to the present day, gaining a wider and wider readership and more and more critical attention. People are attracted to him and keep on reading him despite his obvious shortcomings. And it seems to me, finally, that he is probably going to be around for a long time. Maybe he's immortal, who knows? Perhaps people will still be reading Lovecraft stories a hundred years from now...."

"...Bradbury, sophisticated, obviously an important modern author, knows about style, plot, technique; Lovecraft, naive, primitive, overusing adjectives in a horrifying manner, ramshackle plot, apparently no consistent idea of technique, or style or literary discipline... The odd thing is that he does succeed in creating a real sense of horror.... How he manages this I'm not quite sure. It's an interesting problem...."

"...He had cancer and something else too, but I can't help somehow, but feel that his neuroses helped kill him. And his writing got better and better, but as he developed he wrote less and less. His writing seems to have been some kind of attempt to come to grips, unconsciously of course, with his hangups, and as he wrote less and less, I feel his hangups got the better of him and finally did him in..."

"...His racism really redeemed himself in his writings because while he starts sniping at Italians, Poles and so on, he always winds up showing that the true degenerates are the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants...."

"... and he works out a whole system for this called the Cthulhu cycle. I have no idea how to pronounce it. I don't know if anybody does. Mrs. Le Guin has suggested that if we did know and said it, he would appear if you pronounced his name right. I apparently haven't pronounced it right, so far. Not much has been made of the Cthulhu cycle. I don't think much of it myself..."

"...avaricious New England traders.... had interbred with this undersea race who are horrible, froglike, smelly, slimy beasts, to produce a degenerate race in this seaside town with the characteristic Innsmouth look. Sort of low forehead, scally scabby, hair falling out, peculiar small, and frog-like eyes. It's interesting that whenever Lovecraft gets going, he always relates his horror of dark races back to the New England Puritan. I grew up in this area, and I think I have located Innsmouth as Gloucester, Massachusetts. It's a smelly town, lots of fish factories, rather degenerate and decaying because the fishing industry has been driven out of business by Canadian competition. And it's a Portuguese town in an otherwise WASP district.... Lovecraft probably didn't approve of the Portuguese and he seems to have made this the basis of his degenerate race fantasy..."

"... 'THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS'... here are eight foot high penguins in this city which as the things start coming at them run around squawking and gobbling at each other. The giant amoeba rushing up the tunnel is compared to mucous being blown through a nasal passage. One of the young men on the expedition, a Bostonian, goes mad and decides he is trapped on the Boston Subway, and starts shouting "Parks Street Under, Charles Street, Please let me out at Harvard Square." Any of you who have ever used the Boston Subway system will recognize these places immediately. As an old Bostonian, I just cracked up at that point, laughing...."

"We find perhaps the most obvious of all Lovecraft's sexual imagery in Wilbur's abnormally early maturity, goatish odour, hairy lower parts with monstrous protrusions concealed under the clothing, and indecent bodily fluids.... Now it's been said of Lovecraft, and of this kind of thing in horror fantasy generally, that this is false, because the sexual is put outside yourself -- There is the Beast -- It has nothing to do with me. You know -- I don't have any responsibility for this, it's all from Outer Space -- I'd like to point out, however, that Lovecraft always relates this in the end to himself, because it is so obvious that he is a New England antiquary and identifies himself with the Puritan tradition; the Puritans are always practising witchcraft and miscegenation with the Beast from the Deep. And therefore he is really talking about himself and his own hangups...."

"....Therefore I recommend Lovecraft to you as someone who has real psychological interest. You can't take his monsters seriously but one must take the inner darkness of Lovecraft's psyche seriously and that's what I think fantasy is all about..."

Wow! No wonder I found his talk fascinating! It was a revelation to be exposed to such a serious approach. At last I had escaped the mundanes!

Then it was Ursula K. LeGuin's turn to deliver her first speech at a convention (this being her first convention. Seems she accepted the invite primarily because her husband had always wanted to visit Vancouver). It was titled: 'THE CRAB NEBULA, THE PARAMECIUM, AND TOLSTOY.' In my diary I commented: "*She managed to tie it all in. I didn't quite agree with her idea of total order in all levels of the Universe, but it was very interesting.*"

Province critic Michael Walsh described her speech somewhat more accurately in his article 'CITY HOSTS INTERNATIONAL FAN FRATERNITY' appearing in the Province on Monday, April 12th, 1971: "*Mrs. LeGuin argued that from the microscopic atom to the astronomical vastness of the Crab Nebula, nature shows a tendency to order. So too living organisms, from the simple single-celled paramecium to the complexity of man, show the same general order, a generally lawful way of operating.*

'Art does what the universe does,' she said. Her definition of art: 'The rearrangement of experience in an orderly fashion.'

With Copernicus people learned that their tiny planet was not the centre of the universe. Today, Mrs LeGuin said, we are learning that humanity is not necessarily the centre of the intricate web of life.

"The revolution that began in astrophysics ends in the human spirit," she said. Science Fiction takes its place in the scheme of things by asking the questions important to our times just as Tolstoy asked the questions important to his.

Science Fiction, at its best, asks: Who are we? How are we to make our way in this greater universe?

Afterwards Leland Sapiro asked if he might reprint the text of her talk in his RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY. Of course, Mrs. LeGuin said. But only if he threw in a subscription to his fanzine in the bargain. After all, everybody at the convention was a fan."

A panel on 'FANTASY AND LITERATURE' was the next scheduled event, but as the two lectures had run longer than anticipated, the panel was cancelled so that everyone could break for lunch.

After lunch "Films" were scheduled, according to the program book, but no times or titles were listed. If anything other than my 8mm shorts were projected, I have no recollection of it.

At "about 2:30 pm" (to quote the program book), SFU Professor R. D. Callahan delivered a lecture titled 'SF, INSULATION OR ILLUMINATION?' I didn't like it. To quote from my diary: "*Prof. Callahan regards Sci-fi as worthless. His talk was long, at least two hours. Said basically -- though in an involved, obtuse way -- that literature is a mind-opener, an axe with which to crush the frozen sea within, and that Sci-fi merely enlarged the mindless sea due to the stultifying nature of its concepts. Somehow or another he even threw in quotations from an article about the methods employed by certain African tribes to teach girls the pleasures of orgasm and how to prepare for marriage. His entire speech was littered with such oddities, but the thread of the basic premise ran throughout, and I managed to understand almost all of it.*"

TO BE CONTINUED.

VON 32 NOW RETRO! by RGC

VCON 32 (October 19-21, 2007) has come and gone. What follows is a very personal conreport that will convey, not so much what happened at the con, but rather one fan's experience, one perhaps typical of a long-time fan hovering on the edge of the concom (my responsibilities: Video Room & Elron Awards).

OCTOBER 18, THURSDAY, 2007.

Getting to the Radisson President Hotel in Richmond is a story in itself. Budget so tight I can't afford to cab it in from Surrey. Too much stuff to carry on the Skytrain and bus. So, being on vacation, I wait with bags packed till Chilam (well-known local artist and astronomy student at UBC) arrives in his nifty 92 white Cadillac to drive me across the Alex Fraser bridge and along Highway 91 into Richmond. It's evening, pitch black, pouring rain, and there are no streetlights on the highway as it runs thru some of the last remaining farmland in the Lower Mainland. I can't even 'see' the road. I don't know how Chilam manages to avoid drifting into one of Richmond's notorious car-eating ditches. We're hydroplaning so much we might as well be driving down the Fraser River itself. But we make it.

I'm ensconced on the 11th floor. Marvelous view of the Vancouver International Airport opposite across the river. Jumbos taking off roar past the hotel seemingly close enough for me to count the rivets. (And jumping ahead a bit, a small plane crashed into a nearby apartment building during the convention, killing two people. Yes, it's exciting to be underneath the flight path, but...)

My immediate problem is that it's 8:00 pm, the registration package bag stuffing is scheduled in the Hospitality suite at 8:30, which gives me 30 minutes to handwrite my room number on 500 copies of the video program sheet (I had originally planned a film festival-style multi-page booklet complete with photographs, but for financial reasons had to settle for a single sheet to be folded into a 4-page format, with films listed on the first page and briefly described on the other 3 – if you

can't 'hook' someone with a 3-line description then it's hardly worth padding it further) since my room and the video room are one and the same and con-goers need to know where it is. You see, I didn't find out what room I was getting till I actually checked in, hence the frantic last minute penmanship.

8:30 rolls around and I'm only half-finished. I grab an armful of program sheets and rush down to the 3rd floor and the Hospitality suite at the end of the hall. It's locked. I find out from 'Trapa', Chief of Operations, that virtually all the ConCom are sitting in a broken down rental truck they were using to haul the Art show boards and other VCON paraphernalia from Steve Forty's Basement (S.40 one of the more prominent local fans, former editor of BCSFAzine, former Keeper of the FRED, Life Ambassador for VCON, etc.) to the con. Seems the previous renter had refilled the fuel tank of the diesel rental truck with gasoline. So there would be a delay.

"Great!" I thought, and kneel down in the hall to carry on with signing. Finally I've finished writing in the room numbers and start folding the sheets. Someone in operations takes pity on me and unlocks the Hospitality suite. I get to sit at a table and finish folding.

Susan Walsh (longtime local fan and current concom publicity chief) arrives to inventory hotel items in Hospitality (plates, glasses, etc) before it is inundated with VCON stuff (a good idea!), shortly followed by two other local longtime fans, Kathleen Moore-Freeman and Stewart Smyth, eager to volunteer their services, except there is nothing to do as yet. A not untypical problem at the start of a con. I take this as an opportunity to return to my room and eat supper.

Ah, supper! For them as are business travelers on expense accounts, hotel restaurants generally offer all kinds of local goodies, such as Salmon stuffed with Salmon stuffed with Salmon crowned with a bay leaf flown in from an organic farm outside Ulan Bator. But I, who officially (in terms of Federal Government statistics) reside at the bottom 3rd of the working class income level, am reduced to eating the food I brought with me, namely granola cereal and some melba toast. Still, I enjoy endlessly munching like a demented rabbit as I stare (much like a rabbit caught in headlamps) at the lights of the jumbo jets seemingly aiming for my hotel window. Call it an extremely cheap almost-real video game. None too challenging.

Finally I head back down to Hospitality, now crowded with concom and volunteers giddily circling a table groaning with paperwork for bag stuffing: program book, my vid program sheet, my WCSFAzine promo sheet, assorted advert cards and sheets and... no pocket program? Not finished yet. A bit awkward, as there's no programming listed in the program book – due to last minute difficulties beyond anyone's control. Ah well, tomorrow will take care of itself. At least there's con cash, two single 'dollar' bills (fake of course) redeemable in the dealers room, designed to get people spending like crazy. Since we're covering the 'worth' of the money for the dealer's, we're rather keen on preventing anyone from running them through a photo-copier, so Cindy Turner (concom in charge of Filking) is using a 'unique' stamp to cut a snowflake-like pattern in each con cash bill. I don't feel like getting dizzy running around a circular table, so I volunteer to take over from Cindy.

Oh joy! The stamp will only cut through one sheet of paper at a time, and I have to push down with all my strength and weight to get it to cut at all. Cindy appears relieved I have relieved her, in fact I suspect she is quietly chortling with glee. Only 300 more bills to cut. What fun. But that's just it. All part of the final communal effort to get everything in place ready to go. Innumerable mindless tasks, but each one necessary, each one accomplished adding to the growing sense of anticipation and excitement over the impending convention. Part panic, part frustration, part intense concentration, part exhilaration, part desperation, it all adds up to the standard, typical concom adrenaline rush on convention eve.

Hmm, I suspect this phenomenon is addictive. The only cure is burnout. The average con addict is hooked for three or four years, then burns out and gafiates (fan-slang term for 'get away from it all') for a couple of years, and then the old itch starts worrying away and before you know it – 'hooked' again! For some reason the general public and politicians remain unconcerned about this type of addiction. Shameful. Ah, the horror! The horror!

And mainly, the fatigue! It's midnight. The bag stuffing has ground to a halt as we've run out of con cash, more will be duplicated in the morning and the remainder of the registration packages completed. Eventually 500 bags are stuffed. Only the last three to four people to register will get nothing other than the convention itself. Incentive to show up first rather than last! Overall, a pretty accurate estimate as to how many program books (& stuff) we need. Far more cost effective than, say, printing 100 too many.

Meanwhile, it's still midnight. I'm still tired. Some fans exhibit feeble indications of wanting to practice partying into the wee hours in preparation for the orgy of partying to come, but all I want to do is to collapse on my bed and lose consciousness. I stumble back to my room and carry out my fiendish plan. Ah, sweet oblivion. Paradise, were it not for the hotel room alarm clock. But of that, tomorrow.

TO BE CONTINUED

PREREG NOW FOR VCON 33 in 2008!

VCON 33 -- (Oct 3-5, 2008) Vancouver, BC. Canada's oldest ongoing Sci-Fi convention (VCON 1 was held in 1971). Author GoH: Patrick Rothfuss (author of 'Name of the Wind'), Artist GoH: Lisa Snellings-Clark. Current pre-registration membership price: \$45 Cdn. Make out cheques to 'VCON' and mail to VCON, c/o Box 78069, Grandview RPO, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V5N 5W1. 85 members pre-registered so far. Details re hotel, rates, dates, more GoHs, etc to be announced. If you'd like to help write: < vconchair@gmail.com > For updated info: < www.vcon.ca >

FANATICAL FANAC FABLES

RETRO FANZINES: AMOR #10

August 5th, 1976. Faned: Susan Wood

FANED BIO: SUSAN WOOD – 27 Aug 1948 to 12 November 1980.

Susan was a renowned Canadian BNF (fannish slang = Big Name Fan) who won the best fanzine Hugo in 1973 (jointly with then husband John Glicksohn) for their fanzine *Energumen*. She also twice won a Hugo for best fanwriter. From 1975 on she was assistant Professor of English at UBC where she taught, among others, William Gibson and Stan G. Hyde. She was well known worldwide for promoting feminist panels at Sci-Fi conventions, including and especially Westercon 30 (held in Vancouver July 1-4, 1977) which included the following program put together by Susan:

"A ROOM OF OUR OWN "is intended as a gathering place and informal function space for all... interested in discussing questions of feminism, sexism, sex-role stereotyping and related concerns (and what we can do constructively to overcome stereotyping) within science fiction and fantasy literature and fandom. We hope that spontaneous discussions will occur...." Specific programming items pertaining to this theme included: "Dennis Howard discusses his feminism and anti-sexist magazine, WOMEN AND MEN"; "Chelsea Quinn Yarbro discusses MARKET CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN WRITERS -- WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT"; an ALTERNATIVE TO PATRIARCHY: AN EXPLORATION OF CHARACTER AND CULTURE IN SF panel with Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Terry Carr, & others; "Suzy McKee Charnas discusses her novels" and "SF and mystery writer Liz Lynn discusses her CLASS ON FEMINISM AND SF"."

Susan also devoted much time and effort to Vancouver's annual convention VCON, the BCSFA (British Columbia SF Association), and people she knew in BCSFA. She collapsed from a fatal medicine interaction while on her way to class. Her family donated much of her fanzine collection to BCSFA where it forms the basis of the current archive. Susan was a rising star, sorely missed by all her friends.

To give you an idea of her writing accomplishments, she wrote book reviews, articles and essays for Pro & Semi-Pro zines *Locus*, *Agol/Starship*, *Science Fiction Review*, *The Washington Post*, *Pacific Northwest Review of Books*, *Amazing Stories*, and more. Among the fan publications her work appeared in were: *Energumen* of course, her own zines *Aspidistra* and *Amor*, also *Genre Plat*, *Osfic Quarterly*, *Xenium*, *Kratophany*, *Outworlds*, *FAPA*, *AnzAPA* and *A Woman's APA*. In 1980 she was nominated again for a Hugo, this time for her editing of a collection of essays of Ursula K. LeGuin titled *The Language Of The Night*.

AMOR #10

AMOR #10 "is actually the twelfth issue of my small, frequent, informal lettersubstitute... available only for editorial whim...the mailing list is finite...tell your friends that I ... can't send them my fanzine because I don't really publish one. This-is-the-letter-that-grew. Merde alors, did it ever, this time..."

At 25 pages plus covers, with 9 contributing artists (Derek Carter, Terry Austin, George Barr, Jim Mcleod, Joe Pearson, Bill Rotsler, James Shull & Dan Steffan – "AMOR #10 is dedicated to the artists whose work enhances these pages, with admiration") and 4 contributing writers in addition to Susan, plus a healthy loc column, this is indeed one heck of a bulging letter substitute.

Doug Barbour writes about a Rolling Stones concert he attended in Paris. Weirdly, it began with "can can music and a line of hoofers", then the 'Meters' disco band, followed by African percussionists and a fire eater (turns out the concert was produced by Radio-Television Luxembourg), and finally the Stones. "Jagger had to call a roadie on to wipe up some spilled kerosene."

Highlights of the concert included: "...an incredible 'Ya gotta move' in which all but Charlie and bill joined in a kind of rock/blues Gregorian chant over Ron Wood's delicate guitar line, until the final chorus, in which the whole band kicked out the jams while Mick and Billy Preston traded shouts – it blew my head off; an incredibly powerful 'Midnight Rambler', utterly unlike earlier versions but equally stunning, from Jagger's opening harp solo, through Ron Wood's solo, to the whole climatic rush of the song..."

"One final point. I first really began to enjoy the stones in 1966, ten years ago, after they had been around for a few years. I cannot agree with those critics who look back to what they were then and deny their continuing greatness now...Yup, they're over 30, but they still rock... they remain gloriously alive and raunchy; the very best." Written 31 years ago! And STILL the Stones are touring!

Michael Carlson contributes 'Many a Tear has to Fall' in which he describes how the lyrics of an Ian & Sylvia song moved him to tears, how the ending of the movie 'The New Land' (starring Max von Sydow & Liv Ullman) moved him to tears; likewise the movie 'Lovin Molly'. He explains: "It's that sense of the finality of the past, and the way you accept it,

that gets me... when something comes along to remind us that all the beauty and pain is transitory, but the memory isn't... well, that hits me in a weak spot." I strongly suspect Mike was one of Susan's students. I do hope he toughened up a little by the time he entered the real world. (I myself put in four glorious years at UBC, which I regard as the greatest vacation from reality I've ever experienced...☺)

Lynne Dollis has a short but amusing piece on the proper use of umbrellas (shower cap, planter, weapon, etc) appropriate to the rain-soaked West Coast, and Eli Cohen reveals the intricacies of that purely Canadian sport Curling: "Sweeping is a very important part of the game, not least to keeping you from freezing your ass off when you're not throwing... Throwing a rock is a highly developed art... I myself have developed a unique method: Beginning in a perfectly poised semi-crouch, I push the rock with a graceful flowing movement, and follow through with an elegant slide down the ice on my stomach and right elbow..." How Canadian is curling? The first broadcast of a cable TV 'human interest' news show featuring footage of VCON 32 was preempted by local curling championships. THAT'S how Canadian!

The loc column is hefty, and includes a letter from Ursula K. LeGuin in which she writes, referring to the difficulty of pleasing critics: "...It's exactly the same in the woman's movement. In room A I am a ranting bitchy libber and in room B I am a cop-out married mother of three who cooks, which is even worse than having mostly male protagonists. Somewhere, however, I believe there is a room C. I guess Virginia Woolf knew of it; she called it a room of one's own." Aha! Was this loc the inspiration for calling the feminist programming at Westercon 30 the following year "A Room of One's Own"? Now I understand what it means.

Susan's section is titled simply 'Susan's Section'. This issue it consists mostly of personal musings about the setting in which she lives: "One of the reasons there hasn't been an AMOR for six months is that I have been looking at mountains... When I walk to the end of the block, I can look north and see, cloudcapped, snowcapped, the peaks of the coast range... On these clear days, the mountains rise, high and majestic, blue into the northern distance... Some days, the mountains are mysterious. The air is moist and misty, the light delicate, the mountains faintly outlined in pastels against the sky: Japanese watercolours, brushstroke suggestions of peaks. Often, clouds trail like banners from the sharp peaks – or the fog, rolling off the water, boils around their bases so that they seem to be floating in the sky in improbable balance." This is one of the best descriptions of the north shore mountains I've ever read. Would well fit into the writings of Malcolm Lowry (who spent most of his life in a squatters shack on the north shore scribbling wonderfully descriptive novels and stories).

Now Lowry's stuff tended to be depressing, and Susan describes how, in a fit of depression marking student papers (were they *that* bad?), she abandoned them and went off to see the "Haida and Kwakiutl totem poles, and two grave houses... left to themselves in a cedar grove. The sun filtered through green branches onto moss-covered stumps and ferns, small pink-white daisies, carved and mysterious cedar. The raven crowning one pole floated, grinning, above the wind-tossed trees; whiskeyjacks called from the branches. The wind smelled of growing things, promising spring even in mid-winter."

Wonderful experience wonderfully described. No doubt in my mind Susan could have made a living writing fiction, at least in terms of offering the kind of description which brings scenes to vivid life in the imagination of the reader.

Alas, this particular experience was spoiled "by a clumping band of four German-speaking tweed-suited persons (visiting anthropologists?) who gravely photographed the poles, read the discreetly-posted labels aloud, and strode off without actually *looking* at anything." Must have been academics.

Susan, of course, much to her horror perhaps, was herself an academic, and defends herself thusly: "One of these (my) classes, though, is U.B.C.'s first credit class in sf. (Thus the V-con, which was fun but tiring, and Worldcon, for which I am organizing a panel on women and sf, are 'scholarly conferences.'" Genuinely – if only because they will be reminders to me that I am a fan first, and an academic very much second: not, I hope, one of those ~~Bug-Eyed Monsters~~ Evil Rotten Academics who, folk wisdom saith, are out to make sf Dull and Boring.")

According to Stan G. Hyde, a former student of hers (and now a respected teacher and an even *more* respected authority on Godzilla) she was anything but, namely highly inspirational and a huge influence for the good on all who took her classes. Plus, she's the one who introduced editor Terry Carr to William Gibson, which led to the Ace special edition of 'Neuromancer', and the evolution of a major Sci-Fi literary career. Every student writer dreams of a Prof like her.

I saw her at a few panels at early VCONs, but never actually met or knew her. I *can* confirm that all who did value their contact with her and miss her to this day. She was one of the legendary Canadian fans of the twentieth century and certainly one of the most influential. I look forward to retro-reviewing some of her other zines in future issues of WCSFAzine.

(This review courtesy of the issue preserved in the BCSFA/WCSFA archive. Also, take note that the totem poles described above were later transferred from their beautiful, 'hidden' setting and plunked down behind the 'new' anthropology museum. Pity.)

LATEST C.U.F.F. (CANADIAN UNITY FAN FUND) NEWS

By Murray Moore

I have added our newest CUFF administrator, Peter Jarvis, to the list of CUFF admins. Welcome Peter.

((GhodEd-note: Current CUFF admin list consists of former CUFF winners: Lyndie S. Bright (2003), R. Graeme Cameron (1997), Michael Hall (1981), Colin Hinz (2002), Peter Jarvis (2007), Linda Ross-Mansfield (1992), Murray Moore (2001), Lloyd Penney (1998), Robert Runte (1989), Garth Spencer (1999), Paul Valcour (1990), Rene Walling (1996), & Taral Wayne (1988).))

I am pleased to announce that I have received a cheque for \$900 from Torcon 3, the second and last grant for CUFF. The first grant was \$1,000. As administrator for Torcon of the CUFF money I will send each year to the current CUFF administrator \$200. I have written a cheque payable to Peter and only need to get from Peter his realmail address.

More good news: Keycon 25 < www.keycon.org/index.php >, host of the 2008 Convention, will comp a room for the CUFF winner. Keycon is four days through the 2008 Victoria Day weekend, in Winnipeg.

And much money was raised during VCon 32. Fran's popular annual turkey reading raised \$150. The way it works is, Fran collects very, very bad writing, Lionel Fanthorpe/Pel Torro, etc. Volunteer readers read a section of very bad writing. For example the characters are a knight, a peasant, a princess, and three ogres. Audience members volunteer to be the characters. The reader begins reading and the volunteers mime the actions of the characters. Laughter ensues.

When someone becomes bored, that someone donates money for that reading to stop. Someone else will donate more money for the reading to continue. Each donation must be larger than the previous donation. Some times one of the volunteers donates money to be able to stop. Peter also auctioned an Anticipation membership and other donated items with a very good result.

((GhodEd-note: Last issue I reported the VCON Turkey readings raised \$600 for CUFF, the money going toward Peter Jarvis's expenses, based on 2nd hand verbal info I received. Fran has since confirmed \$150 raised by her Turkey reading, and the rest raised by auction as reported below.))

((GhodEd-P.S.: I believe Fran introduced the Turkey Reading concept as a CUFF fund-raiser at VCON 13 in 1985. I asked Fran where she came up with the concept and she said she had been inspired by a short-lived turkey reading she'd seen once or twice at a Portland convention that had been done to raise money for a scholarship fund two years in a row and then been discontinued. As to where the American fans had come up with the concept? At any rate, Fran's Turkey Readings have proved very popular and very lucrative for VCON & CUFF over the years.))

LATEST 2007 C.U.F.F. WINNER FINANCIAL REPORT

By Peter Jarvis

Breaking out the money:

2007 Turkey's was \$146.25 which Fran rounded up to \$150.

2006 Turkey's was \$140, which Fran had been holding on to and passed onto me.

The CUFF Auction brought in \$219.30 and everything donated was sold (which was a big relief as I did not have to carry anything back). Of the \$219.30, \$100 was for an Anticipation membership, and \$15 for Keycon membership.

Total taken in at V-Con was \$509.30.

"non-money" items was \$119 for one room night, since I shared with Keycon Co-Chair D Strang for 2 nights.

I'll have more particulars in my report.

(After the con) Received a cheque for \$250 from Murray Moore for CUFF. \$200 as part of his annual payment from Torcon and \$50 his personal donation.

MAD SCRAMBLE FOR 2008 C.U.F.F. WINNER UNDERWAY!

Or at least, the CUFF Admin collective is thinking about it. The winner will be flown to Keycon 25 in Winnipeg come May 16-19, 2008 and be comped a free room for the duration. Pretty cool, eh?

Trouble is, that's only half a year away. Doesn't leave much time for the current Cuff winner and Administrator Peter Jarvis to raise money, seek nominations, and conduct a Canada-wide mail-in ballot election. Still, it's been done before. And he'll have the help of numerous former CUFF winners as listed above.

Point is, *you* could be the 2008 winner!

To be eligible, you must reside East of the Manitoba/Ontario border (since the target convention is in the West this year, and typically CUFF sends an Eastern fan to a Western convention, or vice versa, to promote Canadian fannish unity. But 2007's target convention was also in the West, so maybe this year the eligibility will extend Canada-wide. Up to Peter to

decide.) and be an 'active' Sci-Fi fan (active in the sense of organizing, planning, and doing, as opposed to mere passive participation) and be engaged in one or more of the following activities: SF fanzine activity, SF club/organization activity, SF convention-running activity, or anything else deemed suitably fannish.

You must be nominated by six nominators, three from the East and three from the West, all of whom must be 'well-known' fans engaged in one or more of the above listed activities. If you are the only candidate successfully nominated, you will win. If there is more than one candidate, a mail-in ballot election will take place, to which any Canadian fan can participate, providing they pay the voting fee (yet to be determined), one of many ways CUFF raises money to cover the winner's travel expenses.

The catch is the winner then becomes, post-con, the principal CUFF administrator whose duty is to organize the next CUFF election. But this can be a lot of fun. You get to hound Canadian fans relentlessly. Plus you're expected to write a humorous trip report to help publicize CUFF. The main thing is to have a good time both at the con and being administrator. I did. You can too. Think about it.

Probably the campaign will kick into high gear come the new year, so the next issue of WCSFAzine will probably be full of concrete details of use to both potential candidates and potential nominators. Stay tuned!

C.U.F.F. FACEBOOK ESTABLISHED!

Legendary Canadian fan Robert Runte, a former CUFF winner and (long ago) prolific fanzine editor has started up a facebook for former CUFF winners/administrators and any other interested fan for the purpose of promoting CUFF and aiding the current winner/administrator Peter Jarvis. Waiting on a healthy number of members – current membership 9 – before beginning on discussions. Will need to start soon, given that the next Convention/host convention Keycon 25 is a mere six months away. Still, quite excellent that moves are afoot to share the burden of promoting CUFF. Makes the task of being a winner/admin much easier, or at least less solitary.

Current members include Lloyd Penney, Paula Johanson, Fernando Novo, Peter Jarvis, Linda Ross-Mansfield, Cathy Palmer-Lister, R. Graeme Cameron, Rene Walling & Dr. Robert Runte.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6119342503> >

AURORA NOMINATION PAGE ONLINE!

The Aurora Awards on-line nomination page is up and available to Canadian fans.

Please check it out at [www.< http://www.prixaurorawards.ca >](http://www.prixaurorawards.ca) and while you're at it please change any bookmark that you have for the Aurora site to that URL. As of the last CSFFA Business Meeting it has become the official site.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would circulate this information as widely as possible. It has always been the stated position of the Constitution of the CSFFA that Aurora Nominations and Voting (which will also be available on-line through PayPal) are available to all Canadians - certainly all Canadian SF & F fans, of whatever persuasion.

All the best, Clint Budd - Chair of the Aurora Awards Committee

CHRISTOPHER GARCIA WINS TAFF!

Date: November 20, 2007 12:50:00 PM EST

Subject: [trufen] 2008 TAFF Winner Announced

“Chris Garcia has won the 2008 TransAtlantic Fan Fund race by a clear majority of the 174 votes cast. Further details of voting will be announced shortly. We would like to thank the other TAFF candidates - Linda Deneroff, Chris Barkley, and Christian McGuire for standing for TAFF this year and making it a real race.”

“Chris will be attending Orbital, the 2008 Eastercon, next March as part of his trip. Details of his TAFF itinerary will be announced when they are available.”

- Bridget Bradshaw, European TAFF Administrator.

“Betcha his TAFF report will be pubbed before he announces his itinerary.”

- John Purcell

Why not? Irish fan Walt Willis wrote ‘Willis Discovers America’ *before* he visited the States in 1952, and the legacy of that trip was the creation of TAFF. - GodEd.

“I won. I didn’t believe it was possible. I really didn’t. I’ve been working at this for a year and a half and now it’s over and I’ve somehow managed to snow enough people into voting for me that I get to make the trip to Eastercon and finally get to meet all those British fans I’ve never had a chance to chat with. In short, I’m gonna get to be a TAFF delegate.”

“And then there’s the trip report. I’m not going to do a printed version. It’s just not what I do. I will be starting a challenge called TAREWriMo that I’ll talk more about later. It’s gonna be the biggest part of my fundraising, hopefully.”

- Christopher Garcia (from his ‘The Drink Tank #152 – TAFF Winner Issue.’)

FANCYCLOPEDIA #3

The first serious effort to compile a third general Fancyclopedia appeared in The Fanac Fan History Project, an enormous website devoted to everything fannish put together by Joe Siclari and Jack Weaver. This Fancyclopedia was an ongoing work in progress that never really got very far, till recently when it was absorbed into a new project begun by Jim Caughran. Now all thereof the above fans are editors of the new version.

The new Fancyclopedia 3 can be accessed at: < <http://www.fancyclopedia.editme.com> >

If all you want to do is read, click on ‘Index’ and an alphabetical listing of each topic will appear on the right. Choose a topic and it will appear on its own unique page, albeit on the right in a narrow column format, then click on index again to choose another topic.

What makes this online Fancyclopedia different from the first two is laid out under the guidelines appearing on the home page:

“Fancyclopedia 3 is a collective enterprise of all of fandom. Based on the previous works by Jack Speer and Dick Eney, it is to be written by fans who want to contribute.”

“Unlike Wikipedia, Fancyclopedia is to be an edited encyclopedia. Your editors will impose their own iron whim on content, style and presentation. Nonetheless, like Wikipedia, fans are free to contribute and edit topics, suggest authors, and argue with the editors on matters of content, style or presentation.”

“Please register. Registration requires approval by the editors. If you are not known to the editors, please provide a reference to another fan who can vouch for you. After vetting, you will be free to contribute as you like, editing and adding articles.”

“To register, click the odd icon to the upper right of the text area. A menu will open up; click **Register**. Fill out the form and wait for acknowledgement.”

“Like most encyclopedias, Fancyclopedia will contain articles on people, events and organizations. It will also have a Fanzines category. It contains a glossary of fanspeak which will be referenced by articles using fannish terms (based on rich brown's glossary).”

“People: Biographies of important fans and their achievements and exploits.”

“Events: History as well as formal events such as conventions.”

“Organizations: Fan clubs, including city clubs, apas, online lists, etc.”

“Fanzines: Influential or focal fanzines or fannish websites.”

“Articles will be selected on the basis of importance and relevance. Initial articles will include the articles from Fancyclopedia 2, identified as such. We depend on your contributions; get busy and write something. Articles will be credited.”

“Articles should be relevant to science fiction fandom as such. While comix fandom, animé, and the Society for Creative Anachronisms (as examples) arose from science fiction fandom, they are now largely independent. Articles on other fandoms should note their relationships with science fiction fandom and provide links to sites concerned with those fandoms.”

I was invited, on the strength of my Canadian Fancyclopedia, to join forces with the Fancyclopedia 3 crew and submit articles as I saw fit to include. Trouble is, my time and energy is limited, and when I get a moment to work on Fancyclopedia-type-stuff I prefer to add more research to my Canfancyclopedia rather than spend the time transferring articles to the new Fancyclopedia 3 (at least, up to this point, I may change my mind as time goes on). So I was very pleased when Jim Caughran added a link to the Canadian Fancyclopedia on the homepage of his Fancyclopedia 3.

Given that my Fancyclopedia includes fewer completed topics on American fandom (because I’m concentrating on researching Canadian fandom) and Caughran’s Fancyclopedia is bare of references to Canadian fandom, as matters stand now the two reference works compliment each other nicely, each filling in the other’s gaps. Both, in my opinion, are useful reference sources worth consulting.

The new Fancyclopedia 3 is to be found at: < <http://fancyclopedia.editme.com/> >

My Canadian Fancyclopedia is located at: < <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html> >

And the first two Fancyclopedias are at: < http://www.fanac.org/Fannish_Reference_Works/Fancyclopedia/ >

LATEST CANADIAN FANCYCLOPEDIA UPDATES

The Canadian Fancyclopedia is the Graeme's ongoing attempt to put together a 'Fancyclopedia III' but one with an emphasis on the history of 20th century Canadian Sci-Fi Fandom. See < <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html> >

No updates due to my fooling around with this issue of WCSFAzine. Plan to get a head start on the next issue soonest, which will hopefully free up some time to get serious about the Canfancyclopedia once again. Promise!.

LATEST ZINES ADDED TO EFANZINES.COM ARCHIVE

WCSFAzine #3, e-APA (members only electronic APA), Christopher J Garcia's *The Drink Tank #149*, & *Printzine New Series #4*, Kristina Kopnisky's *Consonant Enigma #2*, Bob Sabella's *Visions of Paradise #122*, Jean Martin & Chris Garcia's *Science Fiction/San Francisco #54*, John Purcell's *Askance #5*, Chris Garcia's *The Drink Tank #150 & 151 – The corset Issue*, Liam Proven's *Sailing North*, Ned Brooks' *It Goes On The Shelf*, Chris Garcia's *The Drink Tank #152 – Taff Winner Issue*, Arnie Katz's *Vegas Fandom Weekly #102*, Jean Martin & Chris Garcia's '*Science Fiction / san Francisco #55*'.



ASK MR. SCIENCE!

(As submitted by Al Betz, Corresponding Secretary for Mr. Science.)

Ms. SC, of Burnaby, B.C., asks: What are cosmic rays?

Cosmic rays are distant relatives of the Manta Ray, and swim in the great sea between the stars. Although immense by terrestrial standards, they are curious and gentle creatures, and have brought harm to no one. They are very tenuously constructed, however, and when they accidentally fall into the earth's atmosphere they shrink tremendously in size, until they can only be detected by cloud chambers or other sophisticated apparatus. They are killed, of course, when they strike the ground at high speed, and it is feared this species will someday become extinct.

Mr. AB, of Surrey, B.C., asks: What are conservation laws in science?

It was felt that it would be best if quantities of certain kinds of things in the universe remained constant. Hence parliament passed, in 1873, what are known as the "Scientific Conservation Laws." A little-known conservation law is Conservation of Adipose Matter. This law states that if you go on a diet and lose weight, someone else must gain it, in order that the total amount of fat in the universe remains constant. So the next time you selfishly want to look and feel better by dieting, remember the harm you are inflicting upon some unsuspecting innocent person, who is probably a friend of yours.

ZINEPHOBIA

ASKANCE Vol 1#5, November 2007, Faned John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845 USA. Available for free download at < <http://www.efanzines.com> > Contact email < j_purcell@yahoo.com >

Cover is a wonderfully vivid chalk (?) drawing of a bat-winged dinosaur rock star by Frank Wu.

Starts off with a short, introductory articles 'What's in this issue?' & 'Who's in this issue?' which is not something I've ever noticed in any zine before. Usually intros are reserved for the beginnings of individual articles. Not sure if this is the intention, but collected-intros make it easier for readers to choose which articles to read or not to read. On the other hand, anyone checking out all the archived copies will find it a very convenient aid for browsing quickly thru the entire set.

James Bacon contributes a hilarious article on his successful attempts to get teenage fans involved in masquerades as herds of stumbling zombies. He and some buddies started doing this in 2005. "*Elvis has been making various blood types for years, experimenting, only as person who preserves teddy bear bits in formaldehyde could... I personally like red and*

black food colorant mixed with golden syrup... I prefer greens, greys and nasty purple for complexion... There are over 800 recognised zombie movies, I have a guide book that lists them all, and reviews over 200 in depth, and to be honest I have watched a few, but not that many. I suppose it's on the periphery of my leisure entertainment, but I know a zombie from a ghoul. I just utilise the whole genre to entertain kids and have a good time."

Lee Ann Lavell has a fascinating nostalgia piece on her early introduction to Sci-Fi, starting with the OZ books and 'Big Little Books' versions of Burroughs Martian series (I never knew there *were* BLG adaptations). In the spring of 1945 she "*discovered both a copy of Donovan's Brain and a collection of stories by H.P. Lovecraft (with whom I was familiar from radio dramatizations) in cheap hardbound editions.*" (Lovecraft had frequently been adapted to radio? I would have thought he was too obscure back then.) She goes on to discover various prozines, then learns that back issues were available from used book stores, and later the astounding reality of specialist hardcover Sci-Fi/Fantasy book publishers like Shasta, Gnome, Arkham Press and FPC. All this while still in high school! She found it hard to find anyone who shared her enthusiasm, but all that changed when she joined a Sci-Fi club in 1950.

Arnie Katz contributes a short but excellent piece on 'Who's a fan?' I particularly enjoyed his comment: "*One thing I've often heard is: "If you think you're a fan, then you're a fan." That's ridiculous. We would not define any other word in that fashion and that is especially true of "fan" which is a term in the subcultural language of Fanspeak. You can say you're a giraffe, but that doesn't make you one, especially if the opinion of actual giraffes is the deciding factor*"

Linda Bushyager contemplates what would have happened if she hadn't become a fan. Turns out a lot of people probably would never have met and never married, a lot of zines never published, a lot of career choices never made. One fan *can* make a difference!

Convention listings and a large loc column round up a really good 'genzine' (a type of fanzine covering all aspects of the genre via contributed essays). Intriguingly John himself writes: "*One of my plans is to do a follow-up article to the interview with James Halperin in the third issue. I am sure that I am not the only one who is wondering how the cataloging/inventorying of Harry Warner, Jr.'s fanzine collection is going, and if Mr. Halperin has any thoughts or commentary about the collection.*" Yes! Harry never threw anything away, and he collected fanzines in trade from the late thirties on. Probably the best collection extant. What wonders does it contain?

ALEXIAD Vol 6 #5, November 2007. c/o Lisa & Joseph Major, 1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, KY 40204-2040 USA < jtmajor@iglou.com > Available for the Usual (LoC, trade, contribution) in paper, email text, or PDF.

The usual solid chunk of thoughtful and detailed book reviews (such as most authors would *kill* to get in the newspapers), and movie reviews. I was quite pleased with the review of '300' by Major, not least for starting off with a 'blast-from-the-past' reference: "*In my misspent youth, there was a syndicated television show called "The Sons of Hercules". It consisted of Italian so-called "sword and sandal" movies, mostly featuring a character called in the original "Maciste", who would go to a town ruled by a wicked king (who perhaps might have just overthrown a good one), heave his flunkies around, finally dispose of the king, and then on to the next one. The films were cut and shown in two hour-long episodes. Fortunately for the viewer with an irregular schedule, because of the lengths of these films, the second episode was filled out with copious recaps of the first, to the point where one need not have seen the first part at all.*"

I loved The Sons of Hercules! My Saturday morning routine included The Sons of Hercules, The Three Stooges (two reelers edited for children), and cartoons. My parents would park me in front of the TV set and not have to worry about my whereabouts for hours. What I remember most from the Hercules films is endless variations of villains popping out from behind boulders as the hero trudged along assorted dusty Greek country roads. Not much different from the ambushes depicted on the innumerable TV Westerns of the period, except that instead of getting shot, the villain would be hoisted high in the air, twirled about, then thrown down in the dust. Wrestling victories instead of six-gun victories. Great fun.

As for the film '300', after pointing out its historical 'accuracies', Major comments: "*Small wonder that the Iranian government has added to its list of insanities the declaration that the whole Persian War never took place, that the Spartans executed Leonidas for his belligerence and sent his head to Khšayarša as tribute.*" Wow! I had not heard that. But Canada can do better than Iran. We should teach our youth that until the depression era of the dirty thirties there was no such country as the United States, that Canada had bordered Mexico, and that it was Texan rebels who sparked the rebellion that created a new, artificial country with a false history, and to make a long story short, we should plot with the Mexicans to take back the lost provinces of our empire. Sounds good to me. (Hmmm, methinks the Mexicans are further ahead with their part of the conspiracy than we are...)

Lisa Major reports on the NASFIC 2007 (NASFIC is the pseudo-Worldcon which takes place in the United States whenever the Worldcon is held outside that country), this year's NASFIC also called 'Tuckercon' in honour of the late legendary fan Bob Tucker: "*And then, there was this guy who looked like he'd tried to stifle a sneeze and it came out whatever way it could; Christopher Garcia....*" I've seen pictures. That's an excellent capsule description of Chris.... "*There were several panels on Bob Tucker. Well, that was the idea, it was called "TuckerCon". If it weren't for the fact that at the one I got to, the audience was about the same size as the panel . . . The attendees had no sense of history...*" Tucker was a major force in fandom for decades, injecting a healthy, playful sense of humour. He was noted for his 'Tucker Hotel' scheme, for instance, an ideal hotel to be constructed entirely according to fannish requirements. Fen used to send individual bricks in the mail so he could get on with building it... "*The party scene was rather low-keyed. But then, the party hotel was the Holiday Inn, the center of the entire crisis. (The Holiday Inn had gone bankrupt due to poor*

management, and the trustees were demanding advance payment in full, with a copy of one's credit card on top of that. Many fans were less than enthusiastic about that.)" Sounds a bit like the hotel we had at the recent VCON 32! The concom had to pay for all the facilities up front, and no parties allowed. It is to arrgh!

Issue concludes with a lengthy, entertaining loc column by all the usual suspects. Working on WCSFAzine, I can't seem to find the time to loc the zines I'm reading. I hope my fellow faneds will accept these reviews as loc substitutes.

BCSFAzine #414, November 2007. Faned: Garth Spencer., P.O. Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6B 5B1. Available, at the editor's discretion, for the usual, or \$3 Cdn per copy, or free with annual BCSFA membership of \$26 Cdn. Canada's longest running clubzine.

This issue is rather disappointingly small, and late, but then editor Garth Spencer was held up by VCON 32 activities. It consists mostly of three articles I provided (printed also in last month's WCSFAzine), namely my Elron Awards, the Aurora Awards, and the 2007 Convention business meeting. The cover is a very nice character sketch by R. J. Bartrop, a study of a hard-faced young man wearing a voluminous cloak, name of 'Nersallan' from the Okal Rel Universe. Convention list, books released list, and a curiously tiny loc column round out the issue.

The 'meat' in the issue is Garth's editorial, which is of immense interest to me since I am President of BCSFA

"There are some not-so-fun things we have to discuss, about carrying on this club and this zine. Fortunately they're not too unpleasant, just perhaps tedious."

I've been advocating necessary changes for some time. Until now no one seemed interested.

"We still send out some copies of BCSFAzine by mail; this can cost us up to \$50 an issue, which is why we've limited the page count and the mail circulation."

The gist of the matter is that, in my opinion, an ensmallled BCSFAzine hardly seems worth the membership price. It severely limits what the editor can do, and what the readers can expect.

"Nearly half the copies are complimentary copies, both to trades and to lifetime members or Big Name Pros. Given that printing costs regularly range from over \$50 to over \$75 an issue, this is another factor that persuades us to consider online-only publication."

I've been advocating an online zine for a while now. Cut out the paper copies entirely. Just go online. I suspect many of our trades are online already anyway. If not, too bad. We can make a few exceptions, such as the Ottawa SF Statement, which is available only on hard copy, print a copy of BCSFAzine for them, and perhaps a very few others, especially for those members with no internet access, but otherwise, online only! We have too few members to afford going on as we have before. Cut costs to the bone! Online only!

[The executive] ... *"have surely discussed the foregoing before. I have been considering another factor: how much newsletter are you getting for your subscription?"*

"I have, frankly, been making efforts to find out what you would like to see in BCSFAzine, but apparently not asking the question right since I don't think I get a response. I mean that we could limit ourselves to news about club events only, or take in the events of any of the clubs in the Lower Mainland, or broaden our view – this is my agenda – to nationwide fandom, and fandom abroad, and the markets and recent publications that would concern writers, and wannabes."

You can't fulfill your agenda with a zine that only goes out to a few members and trades. What's the point of covering nation-wide fandom if it isn't reaching nation-wide fandom? What is the point of covering markets for writers if virtually none of the readers are writers?

Look at WCSFAzine. I don't have to go to the trouble of hardcopy printing. I can set myself a goal of roughly 30 pages and not worry about expenses. Anyone who wants to can check it out thanks to Bill Burns wonderful efanazines.com host site. All I need to do is help word of mouth spread, try to get more and more people hooked on the habit of reading WCSFAzine. Who knows how many people are reading WCSFAzine? I don't. But at least the potential is there.

If you put BCSFAzine online at least the present number of readers would still read it, and possibly more, possibly a lot more. So what's to worry about? Plus BCSFAzine could be expanded, rendering it more interesting and attractive, at no expense. So why not do it?

Some argue 'we can't' put BCSFAzine online, because then 'just anybody' can read it (which is the whole point of putting it online!) and the membership fee for the 'privilege' of reading BCSFAzine would no longer be justified. Fine!! Get rid of the membership fee! Okay, charge a token amount to contribute to general club expenses, but with an online zine we could deduct the prohibitive costs of a hardcopy version and reduce the membership fee accordingly!

And with a sizable online zine you could make it *both* a club zine and a nation-wide news zine. So why not do it? Why not go online?

I have found the experience of producing an online zine tremendously liberating. Not having to worry about spending member's money allows me to concentrate entirely on filling the zine with (hopefully) interesting, amusing or at least useful articles. I recommend this level of freedom to Garth. It's wonderful.

I'm sure other clubs are facing similar problems with their clubzines, and I have chosen to print this in WCSFAzine in the hope of providing some insight for those pondering such matters.

IMPULSE Vol 11, #8, Oct 2007. Faned: Keith Braithwaite. Monthly newsletter of the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA) available for download from < <http://www.monsffa.com/monsffahtml/impulse.html> >

Once again this two page newsletter reflects the robust health of what is possibly Canada's most active Sci-Fi club. At their September meeting author Jo Walton spoke on her books and writing techniques, followed by a club auction that raised \$382 for the club! Plus new and more complicated membership rates: Basic = \$25 per year, Student = \$15 per year, family = \$40 per year, & platinum = \$10 added to any of the above. Platinum get certain perks: a special thank-you gift, the opportunity to purchase club meeting raffle tickets 2-for-1, first crack at film premiere passes, and more? Be interesting for other clubs to wait & see how this turns out for MonSFFA, and perhaps copy if it meets with success.

"The club was in attendance at this year's Con•Cept SF/F convention, which ran over the weekend of October 12-14. Many MonSFFen served the con as concom members, volunteers, or program participants. Feedback suggests that the con was another success with fans, the guest-of-honour line-up proving particularly popular—authors David Weber, Tanya Huff, and Jean-Louis Trudel, and *Star Wars* actor Jeremy Bulloch."

"The Anticipation crew was in attendance to promote the upcoming Montreal Worldcon ... There was a great deal of interest in the event as evidenced by the packed room Saturday afternoon for Anticipation's information session and Q&A. Con•Cept had devoted programming time to Anticipation so that organizers could explain their plans, answer questions, and recruit volunteers. MonSFFA, meanwhile, enjoyed a fruitful weekend selling club memberships, back issues of *Warp*, and DVDs of our popular fan films."

Speaking of which, the MonSFFA website < <http://www.monsffa.com> > is well worth checking out, not least for the downloadable fan films BEAVRA, MOOSE MAN, and THE SIMPLETON'S LIFE

AWARDS

RETRO 1974 ELRON AWARDS

Presented at VCON 3 by David George.

(There were no Elrons at VCON 2 in 1972, and no Elrons or VCON in 1973.)

- 1) Least Promising New Author: Jerry Pournelle.
- 2) A bronze lentil for "Semi-literate Fetishism": John Norman.
- 3) Worst Novel: 'Breakfast of Champions' by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
- 4) Worst Television Production: 'Starlost'.
- 5) Worst Sci-Fi Film: 'Chariot of the Gods' by Eric von Daniken.
- 6) Elron Hall of Fame: Roger Elwood.

Note on #1: This is undoubtedly for his first SF novel 'A SPACESHIP FOR THE KING' (1973), later re-released as 'KING DAVID'S SPACESHIP' (1981) which, like most of his fiction, centres around the idea that civilians are rather stupid and greedy, and that only honour-riden, loyalty-obsessed, superbly intelligent, utterly ruthless, military geniuses are capable of planning, say, an interplanetary government-sponsored and funded day-care program, or whatever. While possibly true, the implication that such leader-types would function efficiently within a hierarchical system of government unhindered by bureaucracy is, of course, purely utopian.

It can be argued that Pournelle's political subtext is rather popular nowadays (in some circles) but appearing as it did at the tail end of the hippie era in a genre generally known for its liberal aspects, the impact of the book was startling, not to say controversial, and immediately rejected by many. Apparently being awarded an Elron failed to humble Pournelle sufficiently to convince him to switch careers....

It should be noted that within the subgenre of military Sci-fi, Pournelle is quite a good writer, and that the later novels co-written with Larry Niven, such as 'THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE' (1974) and 'LUCIFER'S HAMMER' (1977) are great fun to read.

Note on #2: One of the reasons that the Elrons started up again is that, in writing to the VCON 3 concom to express her regrets that she would not be able to attend, Ursula K. LeGuin stated: " *I still think John Norman of Gor should get at least a Bronze Lentil for relentless effort in the cause of semiliterate fetishism.* " This was too good an opportunity (for humour) to miss. Of course the Elrons had to return! John Norman (real name John Frederick Lange) had by this time published 8 of his infamous GOR novels, to eventually conclude in 1988 with 'MAGICIANS OF GOR', the 26th and last of the series.

The GOR series started off with 'TARNSMAN OF GOR' (1966), a reasonable attempt at a Edgar Rice Burroughs pastiche, but quickly devolved into interminable monologues about why women just naturally adore being kidnapped, bound, tortured, etc. At a time when women authors were finally entering the previously male-dominated Sci-Fi literary genre in a meaningful and influential manner, Norman's novels struck many as a truly perverse retrograde step backwards into the realm of 'woman as plaything and property'. That the GOR novel's primary appeal was to young teenage boys was viewed as particularly horrifying.

SCI-FI (traditionally) is meant to prepare and excite young people about the possibilities of the future, not plunge them back into the dark ages. Adults, of course, can do anything they want (within the constraints of current laws), and Goreans

exist who model at least their playtime private lives on Norman's philosophy, but it was the GOR series influence on youngsters that infuriated most critics of the series.

All controversy aside, it became a solid VCON tradition to award John Norman an Elron each and every VCON, and the tradition continues to this day.

Note on #3: Kurt Vonnegut Jr. was noted for his use of irony and black humour, and for his refusal to be considered a genre writer, which bugged many fans. Some of his novels were Sci-Fi, some weren't. SIRENS OF TITAN (1959) was perhaps his best novel, BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS (1973) was widely considered one of his worst, almost to the point of self-parody. I have a suspicion the Secret Masters of the Elrons seized upon this as an opportunity to get back at him for consistently distancing himself from our beloved genre, but I can't prove it.

Note on #4: Local fan Daniel Say wrote (in the SF3 Newsletter Oct 1973) about the ill-fated 1973 Canadian 'STARLOST TV series: "*Television has shot its bolt again with STARLOST, made in Toronto by CTV using a chroma-key-like process of actors shot with one camera and miniature sets shot with another camera and the two images blended together. It's cheap, and it shows along with the poor plotting and acting. Harlan Ellison wrote the first six scripts but has disowned it. Ben Bova is science editor-consultant.*"

Ben Bova's 1975 novel 'THE STARCROSSED', about a 21st century TV ratings war, is said to be a thinly disguised account of the STARLOST fiasco.

I watched the series when it first came out, and boy was I disappointed. I had great hopes it would be Canada's STAR TREK, but it wasn't even as good as LOST IN SPACE. The premise, a multi-generation ship in space for so long that individual habitat modules had evolved separately in terms of life forms and culture, with each episode featuring the same band of intrepid crew members exploring a new module, held vast potential, but was utterly ruined by the geniuses at CTV who rewrote and watered down the scripts submitted by the likes of Ben Bova and Harlan Ellison. It was mind-bogglingly bad, with laughable special effects and curiously flat lighting. I'd like to see it again, if only to confirm my memory of it. Apparently the entire series is available on CD.

Note on #5: 'Chariots of the Gods', the ludicrous 'documentary' based on the 'historical' and very racist drivel (you remember, the author's continuing implication that all ancient human civilizations must have been created by visiting aliens since non-Nordics are too stupid and primitive to come up with anything themselves) spewed by von Daniken, a 'clever' con-artist (and incidentally, runner-up nominee for all the other Elron categories).

I can't remember if they were included in the film, but two classic examples of Von Daniken's research are: A) the Mexican cave his guide pointed out to him (which they did not go in) in which VD later claimed he had seen ancient gold furniture encased in futuristic plastic, hence obviously alien in origin, and B) the ancient pre-Inca rock paintings depicting heart surgery & such (hence obviously alien in origin), which turned out to be the hobby of a South American dentist, who enjoyed selecting small rocks (large pebbles?) and painting them with scenes he copied from photographs in LIFE magazine (to which he subscribed).

Words cannot express my contempt for Erich von Daniken and his credulous, ignorant fans (read some genuine books on history and archaeology you morons!) but he certainly deserves a special 'P.T. Barnum Elron' for being one of the most successful con-artists of all time!

Note on #6: Roger Elwood was noted for the myriad original anthologies he edited (80 in all). At this period his anthologies represented 25% of the SF short story market, and many writers (including probably Ursula K. LeGuin, who had suggested this award in the same letter she had proposed the lentil for Norman) felt that his prohibition of sex or religion themes -- he was a devout Christian -- was unduly restrictive. I bought very few of the anthologies he edited, but I recall I enjoyed them, probably *because* they were old fashioned in theme and content, the sort of Sci-Fi I had grown up with. Still, there's no question his editorial policy left many contemporary writers feeling they had been 'banned' from a major part of the market which was their livelihood.

FILTHY PRO NEWS

AUTHOR HAPPENINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

(New information highlighted in violet.)

DON DEBRANDT < <http://www.sfw.org/members/DeBrandt/index.html> >

Don has his 'Cyberjunk' website, which has not been updated in several years. He promised me at VCON 32 he will update soon. But see his website under the name 'Donn Cortez' < <http://www.donnortez.com> > for a complete listing of books, stories, articles & comics under both names.

Don lives in the Lower Mainland area and was (as always) in enthusiastic attendance at VCON 32. His latest books include the mystery 'The Man Burns Tonight' and the CSI MIAMI series volume titled 'Harm For The Holidays: Heart Attack'. Currently he is returning to his roots by working on a Sci-Fi trilogy.

DAVE DUNCAN < <http://www.daveduncan.com> >

Dave lives in Victoria, B.C. His latest books: *'The Alchemist's Apprentice'*, & *'Children of Chaos'* (the latter winning the 'Best Long-Form Work in English' Aurora Award at Convention 27/VCON 32 which he was happy to accept in person from presenter Peter S. Beagle). **"I'm told I got a standing ovation as well, but I was too astonished to notice. My thanks to all those who voted (and possibly stood)."**

***'Alchemist's Apprentice'* is available in trade paperback & will be released by Ace in mass market paperback February 2008.**

Coming in March 2008, *'The Alchemist's Code'* will be released by Ace in trade paperback & *'Mother of Lies'* (presently available in hardcover) will be released by Tor in mass market paperback.

In August 2008 *'Ill Met in the Arena'* will be released by Tor in hardcover.

WILLIAM GIBSON < <http://www.williamgibsonbooks.com> >

Bill lives in Vancouver. Check out his web site for his Q&A interview 'Across the Border to Spook Country'. His latest book: *'Spook Country'*.

MATT HUGHES < <http://www.archonate.com/> >

Matt lives on Vancouver Island. He was one of the presenters at the VCON 32 Aurora Awards ceremony. **His first Henghis Hapthorn 'Majestrum' is now out in trade paperback from Nightshade Books. The second novel in the series, 'The Spiral Labyrinth' is available from Nightshade Books in hardcover.**

The complete Guth Bandar saga is now published as a novel titled 'The Commons' from Robert J. Sawyer Books.

On his website Matt writes: "I had a fine time as Convention Guest of Honour (Canadian spelling) at VCon 32. With his customary panache, Rob Sawyer emceed my launch of *The Commons*, published under his imprint (Robert J. Sawyer Books), at Fitzhenry & Whiteside. To mark the occasion I read the naughty bits from the chapter... which contains several different circumlocutions for "giant, vibrating phallus," to the apparent approval of the assembled crowd. My speech at the Prix Aurora Awards banquet, though lacking in phallic references, was also kindly received."

EILEEN KERNAGHAN < <http://www.lonelycry.ca/ek/> >

Eileen lives in the Lower Mainland area and attended VCON 32. Check out her latest books: *'Winter on the Plain of Ghosts: a Novel of Mohenjo-daro'*, *'The Alchemist's Daughter'*, & *'The Sarsen Witch'* (reissue in October). Her latest Young Adult Novel *'Wild Talent, A Novel of the Supernatural'* is scheduled for 2008 publishing by ThistleDown Press.

CRAWFORD KILIAN < <http://crofsblogs.typepad.com/> >

Continues to teach at Capilano College in North Vancouver. His latest books: *'Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy'* (1998), & *'Writing for the Web'* (1999). See E-address above for his blog. He is currently working on another novel. Both of the books mentioned above are available from Self Counsel Press; < <http://www.self-counsel.com/ca/> >

DONNA MCMAHON < <http://www.donna-mcmahon.com/> >

Lives in Gibsons on the Sunshine Coast and attended VCON 32. She won a 2001 Aurora Award for her book reviews published in Tomorrow SF, BCSFAzine & other publications. Check out her novel *'Dance of Knives'* which is set in Vancouver in the year 2108. The sequel *'Second Childhood'* is pending publication.

NINA MUNTEANU < <http://www.ninamunteanu.com> >

Lives and teaches in Victoria, B.C. You can order her Sci-Fi novel *'Darwin's Paradox'* by Dragon Moon Press from Amazon.ca (release date was November 15, 2007), and her short story *'Virtually Yours'* is to be found in *'The Best of Neo-opsis Science Fiction Magazine'* anthology published by Bundoran Press and unveiled at VCON 32. Check out her website for her other publications and activities.

SPIDER ROBINSON < <http://www.spiderrobinson.com/index2.html> >

Spider lives in the Lower Mainland area. His latest book: *'Variable Star'*, (Tor). **“The hardcover is in its third printing, the reviews have been most gratifying, and an avalanche of reader mail has warmed Spider’s heart.”** The first 8 chapters are posted on the site <http://www.variablestarbook.com/>, and the paperback hit the stands November 27th.

Around the same time, Baen Books published the hardcover, *'The Lighthouse Trilogy'*, a reissue of *'Mindkiller'*, *'Time Pressure'* and *'Lighthouse'*: < <http://www.spiderrobinson.com/books.html> >

“And *'The Stardance Trilogy'*, the omnibus of his collaborations with Jeanne, based on their Hugo- and Nebula-winning novellas (*'Stardance'*, *'Starseed'*, and *'Starmind'* will soon be released as a Blackstone Audiobook.”

And then there’s the exciting Stardance movie project slated to be produced in Imax format by James Sposto. For more information go to: < <http://www.stardancemovie.com> >

Also check out Spoder’s latest podcasts at: < <http://www.spiderrobinson.com/podcast.html> >

Take note that on “July 4 - 6, 2008 at the Vancouver Island Music Festival in Courtney, BC (for more info see: < <http://www.islandmusicfest.com/> >) Spider will be sharing the stage with musician Todd Butler, and comedian/actor Harry Shearer, one of the voice actors on the Simpson’s.”

ROBERT J. SAWYER < <http://www.sfwriter.com/> >

Robert lives in Mississauga, was a program participant at VCON 32, as well as MC for the Aurora Awards. His short story *'Biding Time'* won for 'Best English Language Short Story' Aurora.). **“This is my tenth Aurora Award win (and my fifth in the Aurora's best short-story category). The full text of "Biding Time" is available < [right here as a Word document](#) >....”**

'Biding Time' was in the anthology *'Slipstreams'*, and has just been released in the *'Penguin Book of Crime Stories'* edited by Peter Robinson.

And be sure to check out Robert’s latest book: *'Rollback'*.

ALYX J. SHAW < web site pending >

Lives in Surrey. Her novel *'The Recalling of John Arrowsmith'* (Book One of her trilogy *'A Strange Place in Time'*), is available by mail order from Doppelganger Press: < <http://doppelgangerpress.com> >

It will soon be available in E-book form as of March 2008 from Torquere Press: < http://torquerebooks.com/zencart/index.php?main_page=index >

She just finished a final edit in collaboration with her Torquere Press Editor Larry Clements and the finished MS is now undergoing one last proofreading before being readied for online sale.

Note: 'A Strange Place in Time' is a completed trilogy. Both publishers have contracted to publish the remaining two novels 'The White Palace Awakens' and 'The Merry Executioner Returns' in due course.

LISA SMEDMAN < <http://www.lisamedman/topcities.com/> >

Lives in the Vancouver area and attended VCON 32 as the Gaming GoH. Her latest novels (on the 'Lady Penitent Trilogy': Book 1 *'Sacrifice of the Widow'*, and Book 2 *'Storm of the Dead'*, plus upcoming later this fall, Book 3 *'Ascendancy of the Last'*.

NOTE: Most of these novels are available at **White Dwarf Books**, 3715 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6R 2G5. Phone (604) 228 – 8223. E-address: < whitedwarf@deadwrite.com > Web site < <http://www.deadwrite.com/wd.html> >

MEDIA MADNESS

RETRO FILM REVIEW: WIZARD OF MARS (1964)

((Oh what the heck, for retro films I've decided to reprint a series of film reviews I did years ago for BCSFAzine.))

This is one of the most charmingly inept SF films ever conceived. Written, produced and directed by a single individual (always a bad sign), the best that can be said for this classic gem by David L. Hewitt is that it is well lit and exhibits strong, comic book-like colours. And hey, it has John Carradine as the title character. What more could you ask for?

Well, how about Forrest J. Ackerman as technical adviser?

The film begins aboard MARS PROBE ONE as it orbits Mars. There's Doc, Steve the pilot, wise-acre Charlie, and a non-love interest gal whose name I never did catch, so I'll just call her Gal. The cabin of the spacecraft has large windows on the ceiling, but none facing forward. If they want to see where they're going, they each pull down their own individual

cardboard periscopes, referred to as 'Camera Scopes'. The crew is much given to punching buttons and staring at battery testing metres. Computer tape wheels twitch on the walls. A few lights flash on and off. In short, yee average extremely lowbudget spaceship interior.

Doc tells gal things like: "Be sure to correlate your cameras. We don't want any overlap." He decides to peek through his own scope. "I'm picking up some sort of pulsating light!" he exclaims. Sound effects from FORBIDDEN PLANET fill the air. Naturally they all panic, I guess they've seen that movie too. "Watch out," yells Gal, "there's another one ahead!"

Everybody fiddles with the single control knob on their scopes. Steve gets into the act, "Collision alarm! Emergency procedures, quick!" Evidently their emergency procedure consists of doing nothing. Charlie provides precise information: "Scanners show we're approaching something of monstrous size, and fast!" We see a shot of lightning (in space?) striking the spacecraft. Charlie is the master of his instrumentation, he's got a handle on the threat now: "Whatever it is it keeps changing size, and range. Distance varies from extreme range to zero!" It doesn't seem to occur to him that maybe he shouldn't put much faith in his instrument readings.

Then, for no particular reason, a few sparks fly across the screen. Doc goes to grab a fire extinguisher, accidentally sets it off before he picks it up, but manages to put out the non-existent fire anyway. (One-shot Beaudine would be proud.) Charlie, overacting to beat the band, yells "WE had to go to Mars, WE couldn't go to the moon like everybody else!"

Steve finally decides to do something. "We've got to pull up," he says, "Activate all operable rockets!" "I can't," shrieks Charlie. "They're inoperable! We're going down!" The surface of Mars looms up. Now normally, you'd think the crew would want to strap themselves in to brace for the crash, but not this crew. "In to our pressure suits quick!" shouts Steve. "The hull may rupture on impact!" Well Steve, that's not all that might rupture. Anywho, quick like bunnies they hop through a circular hatch into their changing room. The spaceship crashes, presumably, though we are not shown this. The crew hops back into the cabin.

We now witness a bizarre, pointless discussion, the first of many. "The transmitter works, why don't we send for help?" suggests Gal. Replies Steve, "We blew transmission, we'd have no way of knowing if we'd be heard." "Well, what's to stop us from trying?" "Well, nothing...technically." So why don't they? They don't, that's all. Why didn't the writer simply have the radio smashed all to flinders instead of trying to explain why a working radio wouldn't work? Arrgh! It is to develop an existentialist headache! So they ask Doc. He states "Before making any rash decisions, we should evaluate where we are and what we're going to do," thus neatly passing the ball back to them.

Charlie suggests they search for their jettisoned main stage which contains all their supplies. (Not too bright jettisoning it in the first place, was it Steve?) Gal mentions they have enough food for three weeks. Steve comments their suits will provide oxygen for only four days. Doc turns to the wall and contemplates a map. "We're here, at the edge of the polar cap, near the main canal. (Canal? CANAL?) Three weeks should be more than enough to reach the main stage." Doc! Wake up, Doc! Wake UP! You don't have three weeks! You weren't listening! You got four days only, you dummy!

But Gal is brighter than Doc. She wonders if it is possible to breathe the Martian atmosphere. Steve has a very weird answer, "No, it's too thin. Not enough to sustain life. But it DOES contain oxygen. If we keep our suit pressure below the outside atmosphere, and crack our helmets, it will allow the outside oxygen to seep in, thus boosting our oxygen supply." See if you can spot the flaw in this proposal. (Forrest J. Ackerman, technical adviser...hmmm.) "Will it work?" asks Gal. Replies Charlie brightly, "Sure it'll work. Why wouldn't it?" Always the optimist, that Charlie.

They grab two rubber rafts and a set of paddles -- no expedition to Mars should be without such -- and head toward the 'canal', which looks like a stagnant pond. "Even though we haven't seen any signs of life," says Doc as they pass through bushes and tufts of grass (yet another SF film where plant life doesn't count!), "we should stay near the shore." Cut to a shot of them sitting in stationary rafts. "How far is it now?" asks Gal. "Pretty near," says Steve, then adds "the current will keep us in midstream." What current? You aren't moving. You aren't paddling. You're stuck, boyo!

The next scene shows everyone asleep, but moving, actually moving, the rafts drifting toward a clutch of dreaded Martian water worms that can most charitably be described as looking like a bunch of toilet paper rolls squashed flat and jointed together to form 'segmented' bodies floating motionless atop the water, with two leaf-like fins projecting from either side of the first roll, possibly the least menacing monsters ever recorded on film. The crew awakes and panics, striking out with the paddles, though one suspects not to kill the critter so much as to impart a bit of movement to them in a failed effort to render them more credible as a threat. These 'monsters' can best be termed hilarious.

Next they find themselves within a cave. Comments Steve, "We've been here five hours now and there's no sign of a way out." This is not surprising, as the rafts are floating dead still in a pool barely large enough to hold them. There's not the slightest movement. The crew make gestures of paddling in an absolutely futile gesture to convince the viewer they're being whipped along white-water style when it's perfectly obvious they haven't budged an inch. I've heard of suspending disbelief, but this is ridiculous! Finally Steve tells everyone the water is so hot the rafts might explode, so they'd better get out and walk. So they do.

How do you pass time in a cave? Hold pointless conversations of course! Like these: Gal: "Wonder how far this goes?" Steve: "I don't know but we'll soon find out."Or....Charlie: "Whatcha looking at, Doc?" Doc: "This rock formation, there's something familiar about it." Charlie: "Oh, come on, Doc. A rock's a rock. Let's go."Or....Gal: "Steve, you don't suppose this doubles back the way we came, do you?" Steve: "I don't know, it sure sounds like it." Gal: "Oh, I hope not, then we'd be really stuck."Or....Charlie: "No sense in doubling back. Steve: "We didn't. Look! Daylight!" Gal: "It must be

outside."Dialogue like this sort of does something to you, doesn't it? Like churn your stomach into tight little knots? With brain to match?

But alas, there's more earth-shattering suspense to endure. Having crawled out of the interminable caves, they must inch along the cliff-face above the valley of fire (whose volcanic effects consist largely of smoke pots, roman candles, and revolving wheels of out-of-focus red plastic in front of the camera lens. Always nice to see in-camera sfx, eh?) More than ever one becomes aware that Hewitt's conception of dialogue is to state the obvious as redundantly as possible. Example: Steve: "Does that look like a cave to you?" Charlie: "Uhuh, sure looks like it."Or....Gal: "Do you suppose something's happened? Oh, there he is. He's waving at us. He wants us to come."Or....Doc: "I almost wish this weren't the right direction." Steve: "May as well go as far as we can." Doc: "What is it?" Steve: "It must lead outside."

Well, thankfully, they do emerge amid Martian sand dunes. Just to inspire us with hope something might happen, Steve's voice-over narration intones "In the west, more than a day's journey, we can see what appears to be a weird, pulsating dome of light." However, they've been ignoring this, instead following a weak signal on Charlie's direction finder. It stops working. They're about to run out of oxygen. They discuss futility. They get mad. Suddenly the finder is working again, indicating the main stage is just over the next dune. "Talk about timing!" crows Charlie. Yes, someone should talk to Hewitt about timing.

Alas, the gizmo on the other side of the road turns out to be an automatic probe, a "time-corroded relic from an earlier chapter of the exploration of Mars." Charlie falls all to pieces. "It's so funny, so ironically funny," he gibbers. "We sent it here two years ago to find out if we could live on Mars. We have to travel millions of miles to find it just to prove we can't survive!" Naturally, he pulls out his rifle and shoots it. The bullet breaks a fuel line, the hissing of the escaping gas reminding them oxygen is part of it's fuel (the oxidizer anyway). Why, there's enough to last for days! Their mood improves. "Gee, I feel sort of silly..." says Charlie.

What happens next? The title is THE WIZARD OF MARS. I'll give you a hint. They're off to see the Wizard?..... Yes! You guessed it! They find a YELLOW BRICK ROAD buried beneath the sand! (Though oddly, it runs up and down the slopes of the dunes, instead of level beneath them. This suggests it is extremely recent, rather than ancient as Doc claims.) Doc: "Some form of intelligence was at work here." Charlie: "Somebody built this? Who?" Steve: "There's life here!" Doc: "This is more of an archaeological discovery than life itself!"..... Hmmmm, Doc sounds a little off the wall to me.

"Where does it lead to? That's what I want to know!" says Gal. They look up and see a small castle which looks exactly like the sort of thing you'd expect to see in one of those plastic bubbles you shake to get the 'snow' flying. Amazingly enough, that's more or less what the city turns out to be! Huh? Well, you see, within the city is a glass ball which contains the city....er, well, there's also a whole bunch of columns containing little old men with big ears and giant, glowing brains, who make use of multiple exposure photography to meld together into a talking head known as John Carradine....er, played by John Carradine, who delivers a 15 minute speech containing every SF cliché known to man, at the end of which he tells the crew the Martians have come back to life so they can die (once and for all I guess, as opposed to those temporary, inconvenient millennia long deaths), but first the crew has to get time flowing again by sticking the city-within-the-ball-within-the-city into a giant pendulum, and then they have to run like hell to get out of the city before it disappears so they can disappear and reappear within their spaceship in orbit with four days growth of beard (cept for Gal, natch) only to hear from Earth control they've been out of touch for two minutes already. Which of course, explains everything. God, I like a film where everything is tied neatly together at the finish, don't you?

UPCOMING NIFTY FILM PROJECTS:

Tim Burton has signed a deal with Disney to make two films: a live-action motion-capture version of **ALICE IN WONDERLAND**, and a full length stop-motion remake of his early film-short **FRANKENWEENIE**.

Casting is complete for **HARRY POTTER & THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE**. Newcomers Jim Broadbent will play Potions Professor Horace Slughorn and Helen McCrory will play Narcissa Malfoy, mother to Draco Malfoy.

DANTE 01 is the solo debut of Marc Caro (co-creator of THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN). It's about a prison spaceship where every prisoner & jailor face "a unique Sci-Fi nightmare vision".

UNHOLY NIGHT is an Icelandic (!) short film about a group of teens in a remote rehab centre who find out the Icelandic legend of giant evil Yule men is terrifyingly true: "And if he saw meat he deftly sent his hook down for his favourite meal."

EYEBORGS is about Homeland Security surveillance robots going berserk and attacking the entire human race. Great fun! Danny Trejo plays the anti-robot hero swatting them off like flies.

NEGATIVE HAPPY, CHAINSAW EDGE is a Japanese film featuring a giant fellow with a chainsaw for a hand, yet it's a hugely popular teenage romance movie?

A sequel to Disney's innovative **TRON** (one of the first movies to feature computer animation back in 1982) is apparently being planned, with Jeff Bridges set to reprise his character.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE WEIRD is a Korean 'Spaghetti' Western directed by Park Chan Wook. Korean Director Ryoo is doing a martial arts zombie film, and Bong Joon Ho is doing some sort of huge Sci-Fi epic.

FEAR (S) OF THE DARK is an animated anthology of scary stories originally drawn by a bunch of talented French comic artists. Faithful to their individual style and apparently quite stunning.

THE TALE OF HOW is an animated film from Britain about seagulls at war with giant octopi. What could possibly be better? Created by the 'Blackheart Gang' of five UK animators.

[REC] is a Spanish horror film about firefighters battling zombies. Barely released and an American remake is already being planned. The original is said to be quite powerful.

RABI PAPP is a Japanese live-action film about a man-sized bunny rabbit married to a human and striving to raise his decidedly mixed-race children on his meager income as a low-ranked 'Salaryman'. Satire? Horror? Pathos? Just plain weird?

LA ANTENA is an Argentinean film, shot in B&W and German Expressionist style, about an evil madman called Dr. TV who has stolen the voices of every citizen and only needs the voice of a particular singer to complete his collection.

Ridley Scott is up to something with **STONES**, as in menhirs and what not. Seems someone or something is going around destroying prehistoric monuments. Stonehenge is the key.

Yet another **POLTERGEIST** film is planned to begin production once the writer's strike is over. Once again Hollywood leads the world in originality.

A REVIEW: BEOWULF

Foiled yah! No, this is not a review of the film scripted by Neil Gaiman and Roger Avery, but a review of the epic poem scripted by an unknown 8th century Anglo-Saxon Christian bard on the exploits of a 6th century Swedish hero in pagan Denmark.

So who the heck was Beowulf anyway? The only known historical figure by that name was a Danish king two generations earlier. On the other hand, the epic states that 'its' Beowulf was the nephew of the Geatish (Swedish) King Hygelac, a genuine historical figure. So there exists the bare possibility that the legendary Beowulf was based on a real person.

As for Hrothgar, King of the Danes, not only did he – a grandson of the historical Beowulf – actually exist but “the site of his palace Heorot has been identified with the village of Leire on the island of Seeland in Denmark.” How cool is that!

And poor monstrous Grendel? A kind of hobgoblin descended from the biblical Cain, the first murderer. His very existence a punishment because of what his ancestor did, no wonder Grendel resents the sound of the roistering, riotous Danes at play in Heorot, no wonder he drops in and gobbles them up. If he can't have fun, nobody can. This puts a damper on things... for twelve long years.

Hrothgar himself states: *“Often and often, over their cups, a party of pot-valiant men has sworn to stay behind in Heorot to fight Grendel with their swords. But the next morning at daybreak this hall would be stained with carnage, the benches wet with blood, and I would have so many loyal followers the fewer...”*

It's not surprising that his remaining followers take to *“sleeping-quarters further off, or for a bed in the out-buildings.”*

Soon *“sorrowful ballads spread the news to all quarters that Grendel... was waging year after year a murderous and interminable feud with Hrothgar.”* Beowulf listens in to one such song and, evidently bored out of his mind, gathers a mighty host of fourteen ~~idiots~~ warriors and sails to Denmark to rescue Hrothgar (and earn the reward he's offering).

Upon meeting the king, Beowulf indulges in a little boasting: *“The best and wisest among my countrymen urged me to visit you because they knew of my vast strength. They were eyewitnesses when... I emerged from a fight in which I destroyed an entire family of giants – capturing five of them – besides killing, by night, a number of sea monsters... I propose to dispense with any kind of sword or shield.. I shall fight the fiend with my bare hands...”*

Perhaps concluding a lunatic has as good a chance as any, Hrothgar graciously gives his consent for Beowulf to try.

What better way to prepare for an ambush than to get stinking drunk? *“...those bold fighting men took their seats. A servant who carried an ornamented ale-cup poured out the sparkling beer...”* Soon all except Beowulf are boozed asleep.

“Then the raging fiend, with horrible fire-lit eyes, stepped quickly upon the tessellated floor... snatched up a sleeping man. He tore him apart in an instant, crunched the body, drank blood from its veins, and gulped it down in great bites until he had wholly swallowed the dead man, even the hands and feet.” The last remark I think is calculated to show how truly tough Grendel was, being capable of eating even a human foot, no mean feat in that unwashed era!

Meanwhile Beowulf has been watching all this, no doubt with some interest, but doesn't actually attempt to do anything till Grendel selects him as his next victim. *Then “he stood upright and gripped Grendel so tightly that the talons cracked to bursting... The fiend suffered excruciating pain. An enormous wound became visible in his shoulder; his sinews snapped, and tendons burst.”*

Presumably there was quite a bit of staggering around, the one gripped firmly in the other's grasp, *for “they say that where the two antagonists fought, bench after bench inlaid with gold was uprooted from the floor..”* but this is an attempt to make what was essentially a wrestling move seem more dramatic than it actually was. I suspect the filmmakers had the same problem. After 12 years of terror, this final battle with Grendel is a bit anticlimactic, a bit of a letdown. Though the arm being wrenched off as Grendel literally tears himself away is grim. And you thought modern movies invented gore. Hah!

As for poor Grendel, *“the doomed fugitive's blood-spoor led to a lake of water-demons, boiling with blood, its terrible waters laced with hot gore. Grendel had hidden himself there, mortally wounded. Cut off from happiness, he later gave up his pagan ghost in this fen refuge, where hell received him.”*

Grendel's mother is rather put out by this, and visits Heorot that night after everyone attending the victory celebrations had drunk themselves unconscious. But, being a woman (sort of), *when "Grendel's mother burst in, the terror she inspired was less – just as the fighting strength of a woman is not so great as an armed man... once discovered she was in a hurry to be off and save her skin. She hastily seized one of the chieftains and made for the fens..."*

Again I suspect the filmmakers had to punch this up a little, since a frightened somewhat timid mommy-fiend would make Beowulf appear a bit of a bully. In fact, the whole relationship between Beowulf and Grendel's mom has been invented by Gaiman and Avery. There is nothing, and I mean *nothing* sexy about her in the epic, nor do they converse at all, let alone attempt to seduce one another.

All that happens is "*the ravening she-beast*" seizes Beowulf with her talons (after he spent half the day swimming to the lake bottom, it must have been *very* deep...) and drags him off to her underwater lair. There she tries to bite and claw her way through his armour, but he finds an ancient sword laying about and slices through her spine. End of story.

Except that the epic continues with the next fifty years of Beowulf's life, wherein he gets to be King of Sweden, defeats the Franks (frequently) and eventually is forced to defend the kingdom from a rampaging dragon (no relation to Grendel, merely a dragon – or "worm" -- pissed off because someone stole its treasure). The Dragon dies. Beowulf dies. The real end of story.

It should be noted that British monasteries contained numerous works of Anglo-Saxon literature, but after Henry the Eighth ordered the destruction and looting of all the monasteries in his kingdom the monastic libraries were burned. Only four manuscripts, out of many thousands, survive today, one of them being 'Beowulf'. It was not available to scholars for study until 1786, and many of these early scholars, to their great disappointment, thought Beowulf was a poor sort of epic, rather disjointed and pointless.

It was the great J.R.R. Tolkien, in his essay "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" who pointed out that Beowulf "is a man, and that for him and many is sufficient for tragedy... Beowulf is on the side of the gods, but in the Northern mythology the gods, though on the right side, are not on the winning side."

Or, to put it another way, you have to imagine 8th century audiences laughing and giggling all the way through the singing of the tale. They already knew the story. They already knew that rescuing Hrothgar was pointless, because soon a relative of his would slay all his children and burn Heorot to the ground as part of a blood feud that went on for decades and ripped Denmark apart. There are many in-joke references and foreshadowing's of this in the poem, hilarious and clever to the listener's ears.

And as for Beowulf himself, the audience probably near killed themselves laughing over the scene described where Beowulf and his followers are riding back from Grendel's death lake and one of Beowulf's followers flatters him to the skies, comparing him to the legendary dragon-slayer Sigemund (also known as Siguthr, Sigurd, and in the medieval German epic Nibelungenlied: Siegfried). Because everybody listening knows Sigemund died as a consequence of his victory over the dragon, and this too will be Beowulf's fate. So ironic praise indeed. Hilarious.

To most kids in high school studying Beowulf (if indeed they still teach it – they did in my day) the poem is mostly boring, except for the bloody bits. But to the 8th century audience, it was rollicking good fun, full of ironic, foreshadowing in-jokes fit to bust your gut, depending on how much you had had to drink.

The only 'serious' message of the poem to contemporary audiences is that ultimately nothing is worthwhile, everything decays, everybody dies, everything is destroyed. The one thing that will outlive you is fame. Therefore fame is the only thing worth pursuing. Nothing else matters.

Interesting enough, this was exactly the attitude of the Homeric Greeks. Both Achilles and Beowulf were motivated by exactly the same desire, a passionate lust for fame. Weird, eh?

And yes, truly and genuinely weird. For the concept of 'weird' is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'wierd', as in the line from the ancient poem wherein a poet muses on Roman ruins somewhere in Britain: "*well-wrought this wall: Wierds broke it...*", meaning evil spirits of fate, a concept in turn derived from the early Germanic word 'weorthan', meaning your unexpected fate as opposed to what you hoped would happen to you, or to use the modern expression, "shit happens".

Nothing interested an old Anglo-Saxon/Germanic/Norse audience more than the 'weird' aspect of a hero's tale. I strongly suspect this has been left out of the film, but not having seen it, I can't say. Given they've injected sex-interest into the story I have my doubts about the overall authenticity of the mood of the piece. On the other hand, if in addition to striking and gory visuals (such as the original tale possessed) they've put in a healthy dose of battle/death/fate-humour, then the film will have been pleasingly faithful to the Beowulf epic.

I say again, weird, eh?

(Sources: 'Beowulf' & 'The Earliest English Poems', both published by Penguin Classics.)

"Are there not still fungi in the forests of Vermont?"

ODD BITS

RETRO CLASSICS TRIVIA: WILL THE FUTURE BE AS WEIRD AS THE PAST?

THE USE OF RUINS:

I find ruins fascinating. To this day I am a sucker for Sci-Fi movies, art and literature featuring either alien ruins or ruins of a collapsed human society. My earliest influences in this regard are probably the red stone Martian ruins in the Tom Corbett Space Cadet Viewmaster reel set from the 1950s, and the ruins of 'N'Yark' (New York City) in the 'Mighty Samson' comic books of the early 1960s where 'stone age' humans eke out a living in a post-holocaust world crowded with dangerous mutants. Great fun!

Very recently, Thursday November 1st, 2007 to be exact, "a 6.5-metre section of Rome's ancient Aurelian Wall collapsed near the capital's central train station after days of heavy rain". This got me thinking. What CAUSES ruins in the first place? And how can the process of 'ruination' be utilized by Sci-Fi writers?

First answer: **weather**, obviously. Rain seeping into rock, brick & concrete and weakening the load-bearing strength of the material. Frost heaving. Erosion from wind. Lightning strikes, such as that which set fire to the woodwork in the Coliseum's upper story on August 23rd, 217 A.D. Or massive floods (to which Rome has always been prone). Ktp.

Second answer: **earthquakes**. For example, a 1360s earthquake caused the whole western outer shell of the Coliseum to collapse into a massive 'hill' of stone and concrete rubble.

Third answer: **vegetation**. To use the Coliseum again, its ruins were once famous for 430 species of plants not found anywhere else in Italy (plants presumably grown from seeds somehow carried in by animals imported for the beast fights). These plants were removed in 1871, and the very ruins 'scraped and shaven clean' in order to prevent root growth from prying the stones apart.

Fourth answer: **fire**. The Roman Forum alone was repeatedly devastated by major fires, most notably in A.D. 65 (Nero), A.D. 80 (Titus), A.D. 191 (Commodus) & A.D. 283 (Carinus), every time bringing about hugely expensive reconstruction efforts.

Fifth answer: **barbarians**. I always wondered about this. Why waste time and effort levering massive buildings apart when there's pillaging to be done? And why set fire to anything (risking the fire spreading throughout the entire city) before you can be sure everything portable has been thoroughly looted? Fact is, the 5th century barbarian incursions hardly touched the physical infrastructure of Rome. Later medieval assaults were far more damaging.

Sixth answer: **greed**. In many ways, living in Rome for many centuries was a form of lottery. If you could purchase or be granted the right to dig in any given spot, you might find something worth selling, be it jewellery, sculpture, metal objects or whatever. Everyone from noblemen to elderly widows tried their hand at this, sometimes with spectacularly profitable results.

For example, in May of 1721 an intact bathroom was discovered in Domitian's palace. An emperor's bathroom for sure. It was 21 metres long and 12 metres wide, and featured walls covered in mosaic work and bas reliefs, a ceiling divided into panels of fresco painting and gilded stucco figures, a colonnade of porphyry shafts along three walls, "while on the fourth side five lion heads of gilt bronze threw jets of water into a marble basin. Each fountain was flanked by ten columns... with capitals and bases of gilt bronze." Before the month was finished the room was stripped to bare brick, the entirety of its decorations having been broken up and sold.

All the same, the above agents of destruction seem scarcely adequate to explain why are there so few ruins in Rome, and next to nothing in the way of intact ancient buildings. We know from 4th century writings that Rome contained "46,602 tenement-houses, 1,790 palaces, not to speak of a thousand public buildings like thermae, temples, basilicas, theatres, amphitheatres, circuses, porticoes, etc.... hardly the ten thousandth portion of this mass of buildings has escaped destruction."

Say what? The palace of Septimius Severus towered 70 metres above the arena of the Circus Maximus; the Temple of the Sun 80 metres above the Campus Martius; the palace of Caligula 90 metres above the pool in the palace of the Vestal Virgins. Granted, all three were built on hills, but at least half of the quoted heights consisted of solid, massive buildings covering many acres in area. So why, at best, do only foundations remain? And where are the hundreds of equally gigantic buildings? What happened to them?

So now we come to the most destructive agent of all:

The seventh answer: **recycling**. Most of the monuments of Rome were largely intact right up till the 15th century. Then, as the Renaissance got under way and Rome began to boom, virtually everything was destroyed, or rather, torn down and reused. In effect, recycled.

The hill of crumbled Coliseum I mentioned? It required 15 generations of stone cutters and lime-burners to exhaust it. Anything made of marble, be it pavement, building blocks, or perfectly preserved statues? Reworked for use in 'new' buildings, or hurled into the lime-kilns to ultimately wind up as plaster and stucco for walls and ceilings. The enormous Temple of Venus and Roma? Licensed by the Vatican for use as a quarry in 1450 A.D. The palace of the Vestal Virgins? Licensed for destruction in 1499. The Temple of Vesta itself? Still intact in the year 1489, destroyed right down to the

concrete foundations by 1549 A.D. (The modern 'ruin' is a 1930's reconstruction.) And one final example, the 450,000 pounds of ancient bronze girders used to hold up the roof of the portico to Hadrian's Pantheon? Removed in 1625 to be cast into 80 cannon, ironically enough, for Hadrian's tomb, which had already been converted into a fortress even before the fall of the Roman Empire.

So now you know where all the marble and plaster to be found in Rome's churches, cathedrals, the Vatican itself, and the Renaissance palaces came from. Ancient Rome was dismantled to build 'modern' Rome. If the ancient structures had been preserved (I wish!), few of the 'modern' monuments would ever have been constructed, as the cost of importing the materials required would have been prohibitive.

Destroying the work of the ancients must have seemed like a modern, progressive and cost-effective means to 'beautify' Rome at the time, not to mention profitable for all concerned. Those who opposed it, and there were some, were considered hideously backward, behind the times, and even selfish for daring to criticise obviously useful 'improvements' to a derelict urban centre. Rome was up and coming. Things to build! Things to destroy! Don't stand in the way of progress! Sigh...

So, taking all of the above into account, one can imagine numerous Sci-Fi scenarios:

- human colonists dismantling alien ruins in search of useful building materials,
- systematic looting of alien ruins for items which can be sold to wealthy tourists,
- colonists fancifully 'restoring' alien ruins in an effort to attract more tourists,
- archaeologists being run 'off-planet' for opposing the exploitation & destruction of alien ruins,
- poverty stricken humanity blowing up surviving Earth cities in order to attract alien tourists, and so on.

The point is, any story or novel involving ancient, alien artefact-laden ruins should take into account the extreme likelihood they will be exploited in some fashion or another.

Frederik Pohl certainly did this with his HEECHEE novels: *Gateway* (1977), *Beyond the Blue Event horizon* (1980), *Heechee Rendezvous* (1984), *The Annals Of The Heechee* (1987) and *The Gateway Trip* (1990).

No doubt there are many more examples.

Info source: '*The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome*' by Rodolfo Lanciani, published 1897 A.D.

RETRO CLASSICS TRIVIA ADDENDA: NEW RUIN DISCOVERED!

On Tuesday Nov 20th Italian archaeologists announced they had discovered the Lupercal, the cave in the Palatine hill long revered by the Romans as the sight where Romulus and Remus, the two brothers who founded Rome, were suckled by the she-wolf who took care of them after they were abandoned as infants. It is located 52 feet below the surface of the hill in the vicinity of the house of Augustus and some prehistoric village remains (where the Romans had 'preserved' the hut of Romulus) more or less where the ancient authors said it was.

Archaeologists lowered cameras through a hole they dug, revealing a rubble-filled partially-collapsed domed chamber whose almost intact dome is inlaid with coloured marble and seashells, just as described by the ancients. Presumably originally just a cave, it had been 'enhanced', especially by the Emperor Augustus, for cult/political reasons. From this room young men (including on several occasions the teenage Mark Anthony) ran semi-naked through the streets around the Palatine lashing women with strips of goat skin. Women so struck would be rendered fertile and pregnant (which, come to think of it, tended to happen *any* time Mark Anthony ran amok...).

According to Lanciani, the Lupercal was first discovered in the first half of the sixteenth century, and one of those who saw it at the time was Ulisse Aldovrandi, who wrote "There was a temple of Neptune (of Faun Lupercus) [the Lupercal] built by the Arcadians near the Circus Maximus, and I believe it to be the same chapel discovered lately under the cliffs of the Palatine, near S. Anastasia, all encrusted with marine shells." It is in that area the archeologists will search for the entrance to the tunnel which leads to the actual chamber.

Undoubtedly, having been discovered circa 450-500 years ago, the Lupercal was probably looted of all of its contents (if any) before being abandoned again, but you never know, there might be something intriguing underneath the rubble... like maybe the graffiti: "Marcus Antonius erat hic!" (*Mark Anthony was here!*)... maybe

DANGEROUS SPACEPROBE ALERT!

Okay, I'm a bit short on details. Saw a couple of items in the paper about the what-ever-the-heck-it's-called world-wide astronomer's-watching-for-killer-asteroids program issuing a warning about a small asteroid approaching the Earth on a possible collision course. Someone thought the trajectory looked familiar and did some number crunching, and realized it was in fact a well-known spaceprobe thingie returning to the vicinity of Earth for yet another gravity-assist-whip-around to boost its speed toward its eventual target, whatever that is.

So, what's my point? The media jumped on the story as yet another stupid-scientist-wasting-public-money scandal. But gosh dang it, the asteroid watch program actually *WORKED!* They spotted something as *SMALL* as a space probe quite some distance away and *CORRECTLY* calculated how close it was likely to approach our personal spaceship Earth! Don't you find that reassuring? I do!....Stupid media....

LOCAL CLUBS:

B.C. BROWNCOATS:

The B.C. Browncoats, founded April 2004, are fans of Firefly and Serenity, created by Joss Whedon. 300 members.

“Every Thursday from 8-10 PM we meet in the Canadian Browncoat’s Chat Room. New members are always welcome, so please come and join us for a chat!” Simply register at < <http://p201.ezboard.com/bccanadianbrowncoats2932> >

December 15 @ 11:30 AM – BC Browncoats Christmas Party, H.R. Macmillan Space Centre, 1100 Chestnut St., Vancouver. Details to be decided, but mark the date.

See < <http://www.browncoats.ca/> > website for details & info, or The Vancouver Firefly/Serenity Meetup Group (Vancouver) at < <http://firefly.meetup.com/12/> > “Grab a drink, pull up a chair and join us online! It’s free...and it’s FUN!”

B.C.S.F.A. – THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION:

Founded 29th January, 1970. Currently offers for its \$26 membership fee: a monthly social gathering at the home of the Treasurer, a ‘Feeding Frenzy’ get together at a different restaurant every month (currently on hold till the new year), a book discussion held on a monthly basis at the ‘Our Town Café’, a monthly ‘Royal Swiss Navy Disorganization meeting’ at the home of BCFAzine editor Garth Spencer where random topics are picked out of a hat and hotly debated, and of course, 12 issues of BCSFAzine. For details, such as time & locations, check out the BCSFA Club website listed below.

NOTE: BCSFA BOOK DISCUSSION IN VANCOUVER: Thursday December 13 @ 7pm at the "Our Town" café, 245 East Broadway, Vancouver. “This month, we’re discussing two books, both by Arthur C. Clark: ‘Against the Fall of Night’ & ‘City and the Stars’. Read one, read the other, or read both.”

NOTE: BCSFA BOOK DISCUSSION IN NORTH VANCOUVER: Wednesday December 12 @ 7pm at the "Waves Coffee", 107 West First St, North Vancouver. This month, we’re discussing ‘The Black Cloud’ by Fred Hoyle.

BCSFA SPONSORED WEB SITES:

BCSFA CLUB WEB SITE: < <http://www.bcsfa.net> >

BCSFA YAHOO DISCUSSION GROUP: < http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_scifi_assoc/ >

CANADIAN FANCYCLOPEDIA: < <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html> >

B.I.F.F. MEETINGS (Burrard Inlet Fan Fellowship) – Every Friday (except long weekends & VCON weekend) @ 6:30 PM till closing time (officially 9:00 pm). A weekly social meeting for SF fans, founded June 11th, 2005. Held at The Eighties Restaurant, 110 West 14th Street (at Lonsdale) in North Vancouver.

“There are no rules (beyond the fact that the restaurant asks that anybody who comes orders some food, but as you can get something reasonable to eat for very little if funds are tight), and there are no membership fees or dues (although sometimes we ask for donations to cover some expenses), and nobody is in charge (things just sort of happen.)”

As an example of a BIFF event (now past), consider: “For the third time, BIFF celebrated the last Friday before Hallowe'en with a Costumed Hallowe'en Party, complete with prizes. Eighteen BIFFenes were on hand as heard the results of the latest writing challenge, with stories from Mike and Val on the subject of "Urban Legends on the North Shore."

And another event now past: “Coming up this Friday, for our eighth stop in the Fannish World Tour, we're touching down in Germany to see Metropolis, Fritz Lang's 1927 silent film which is now considered a landmark of the SF genre.” (The restaurant allows BIFF to show movies on a wide screen.)

Every BIFF event typically has a theme, be it a particular film, panel discussion, guest speaker, chosen topic, etc. To find out what is currently planned for the near future (usually on relatively short notice), please check the BIFF web site at: < <http://biff.realityfree.ca/> >

Friday, December 14th: “Twill be the fortnight before Christmas, if you're lonely don't sniff, not a creature will be stirring, because we'll all be at BIFF. Yes, it's BIFF's third annual Christmas party, and we'll be celebrating with, among other things, a Chinese gift exchange. To take part, bring a wrapped gift with some kind of science fiction, fantasy, comic, anime, or gaming tie-in, costing \$5.00 or less. We will draw names out of a hat, and as each person's name is drawn, that person will have a choice between taking a wrapped gift off the pile, or "stealing" a gift from somebody else.”

FANCOUVER: VANCOUVER SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY MEETUP – Vancouver, B.C. Founded Sept 21, 2005. 118 Members. “Meet fellow Sci-fi/Fantasy Fans near you! Come to a local Sci-fi/Fantasy Meetup to have fun talking science fiction and fantasy in literature, media, gaming and art. Who knows, maybe we'll hit a convention too!”

For details & info: < <http://scifi.meetup.com/278/> >

F.R.E.D. MEETINGS – **Every Friday @ 8:00 PM.** F.R.E.D. stands for “F*** Reality, Everybody Drink”, a weekly social meeting for SF fans, founded May 3rd, 1979. Currently held at Boston Pizza, 1333 West Broadway @ Hemlock (2 blocks East of Granville), Vancouver. Note: currently checking for ‘back-up’ location, so likely to be ‘split’ between 2 locations every now and then.

For info see < <http://www.facebook.com/group.php> > or contact Ryan Hawe, Keeper of the FRED, at

< luxdoprime@yahoo.com >

MONSTER ATTACK TEAM CANADA

“This group is mostly for members to keep up with the latest events and happening for the club. MONSTER ATTACK is situated in British Columbia's Lower Mainland, and while anyone is welcome to join to stay up with club events, the primary interest will be to members and those thinking of coming to a Monster Attack - Canada event in Vancouver B.C. or the Lower Mainland. At the same time, we want to answer as many questions as we can for people interested in SF, FANTASY, ANIME, and MONSTER modeling - and encourage people to use the site to pose questions about kit building. Think of this as an online clubhouse as well as an info site - and PLEASE ASK AWAY!”

For details & info: < <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MonsterAttackTeamCanada/?yguid=8788> >

MONSTER FIGHTERS ONLINE CLUB (of Monster Attack Team Canada)

“This Group is for anyone who wants to talk Science fiction and Fantasy films, Figure Garage kits, Monster toys, DVDs, up-coming films, and just plain cool stuff! PLEASE: this is a place to have FUN!!! It's about the love of the hobby, not about flaming someone who feels differently than you do. Please try to express your opinions in a way that is respectful of others' opinions. Let's talk monsters!”

Every month a MOTM (Monster of the month) topic is chosen. “Monster of the Month is designed to inspire Monster Fighters to study their enemies. Sometime during November watch the MOTM . . . then post comments, reviews, thoughts, or pictures to the clubhouse.” The MOTM is announced at the beginning of each month. November's was MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (1961), Oct: IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA (1956), Sept: ATRAGON (1963), etc. “We're still hungry for info on models, toys, pictures and other cool stuff devoted to those monsters. Scan the web, search the world, and deliver the results of your searches back here!”

For details & info:< <http://movies.groups.yahoo.com/group/MonsterFighters> >

USS MAJESTIC NCC-78601 (REGION 10 STARFLEET)

This Star Trek vessel is the flagship for Region 10 Starfleet (see non-local clubs), and is based in Victoria, B.C. About 18 members listed.

“Like many ships, our crew is diverse and has a variety of interests, but for us on board USS Majestic our major activities include social events such as watching movies, hiking, games and short story writing.”

Recently began publishing a monthly newsletter titled ‘Majestic Mews’ available online.

For details & info: < <http://www.uss-majestic.org/> >

This section to be expanded as time and research permits.

NON-LOCAL CANADIAN CLUBS:

FREDERICTON SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY:

“Along with our official meetings, members of the group congregate on Monday Nights for a gathering at Tingley's Traditions/Quiznos on Dundonald Street, Fredericton, NB. The times vary, especially during the summer months, but generally anytime after 8:00pm until closing at 10:00pm.”

“The FSFS also helps in the volunteering at [Communicon](http://www.celtic-dragon.ca/fsfswebsitemain.html), which is a local gaming convention held the last weekend in January. Though it is a separate entity from the FSFS, it is run by two of the club members and many of the club participate in one facet or another.”

For details & info see < <http://www.celtic-dragon.ca/fsfswebsitemain.html> >

K.I.D.C. – KLINGON IMPERIAL DIPLOMATIC CORPS:

“World's largest & most popular Klingon cultural website... dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Klingon culture and society here on Earth. On this award-winning website, you will find over 225 pages of Klingon data; info on the KIDC, Klingon rituals, ceremonies and traditions, intergalactic cuisine, Klingon fashion and costuming, ships and weaponry; as well as popular discussion forums, numerous Klingon-related mailing lists, and more...”

“The KIDC is an independent and neutral Klingon organization that does not get involved in intra-club political disputes or disagreements. We believe that a Klingon is a Klingon, no matter what organization, club or group they belong to or are affiliated with. We hope to serve as a central resource of Klingon cultural information to all Klingons, regardless of their background.”

“Our headquarters is the *Klingon Imperial Embassy*, based in the Montreal Sector of Canada... The KIDC has many different departments and sections; one of which you will be assigned based on your qualifications and your career preference. Each of our members chooses a Klingon name and puts together a character or persona that fits plausibly within the generally accepted view of the Klingon Empire within the period of The Grand Alliance.”

“Depending on your location on the globe, there are many different ways of participating in the club. We highly encourage interaction between member’s characters both through role-playing and through real-life communications via regular snail mail, e-mail and participation in our many Klingon related mailing lists as well as our [Klingon Imperial Forums](#). Members can also become involved in Klingon cultural research, assisting with website maintenance, recruiting and promotion, organizing display tables at conventions, club fund-raising, and organizing or assisting in charitable events.”

For details & info: < <http://www.klingon.org> >

MARITIME SCIENCE FICTION MODELERS:

“The Maritime Science Fiction Modelers consists of about 20 model builders who enjoy the realm of Science Fiction model subjects. We now have members in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario.”

“Formed in 1993 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the group gathers once a month to discuss the sci-fi modeling world, talk about new science fiction movies and television, and swap model building techniques. At our meetings, we are able to work on our latest model, or we can show off our most recent modeling triumph.”

“Many members of the group are involved in promoting the model building hobby, and we have had models in several model contests, museum exhibits, science fiction conventions, local television and movie theatre lobbies.”

“It wasn’t until 2002 that we finally put a website together so that more than just the Maritime provinces of eastern Canada could see what we were up to. Enjoy your visit!”

For details & info see: < <http://msfm.seryan.com/> >

MonSFFA – THE MONTREAL SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY ASSOCIATION:

“MonSFFA a club for fans of the science fiction and fantasy genres. We are your connection to the SF/F community, local, national and international. We have been active since 1987. Our areas of interest span the full spectrum of the SF/F universe: literature, movies, television, comics, gaming, art, animation, scale-model building, costuming, memorabilia collecting, film/video production and more!”

MonSFFA is probably the most active SF club in Canada, with a healthy membership base, event-packed club activity, the monthly newsletter IMPULSE (available for download) and a quarterly clubzine WARP (members only download, or discretion of editor). Their website is well worth checking out for the downloadable fan films BEAVRA, MOOSE MAN, and THE SIMPLETON’S LIFE.

For details & info: < <http://www.monsffa.com/> >

OSFA – THE OTTAWA SCIENCE SOCIETY:

“The Ottawa Science Fiction Society is an organization of fans of science fiction, fantasy and other speculative fiction in its various forms, whether in prose novels or comics, television or motion pictures, hardcopy or software. OSFS is the oldest operating science fiction club in Ottawa: Founded in 1977 and incorporated in 1979.”

“Our regular monthly meetings are usually held at the Dalhousie Community Centre at 775 Somerset St. W. at 2 PM on the last Sunday of each month, except during summer hiatus.”

“Our regular newsletter, the OSFS Statement, is published monthly. OSFS members receive hardcopies by mail.”

For details & info: < <http://osfs.ncf.ca/> >

SFL - SCIENCE FICTION LONDON:

“Science Fiction London (SFL) evolved out of an earlier club called Star Trek Ontario, founded in 1980 by a group of Star Trek fans. Science Fiction London (SFL) is a group of science fiction enthusiasts living in and around London, Ontario, Canada. We meet monthly in London to discuss science fiction. We also get together occasionally for social events like movie days and barbecues.”

“To get the most out of the meetings, you should read the book that we will be discussing prior to the meeting, assuming that the topic is a book. The schedule of upcoming meetings can be found in the [Meeting Topics](#) section of this Website. Please note that if the topic is a film, the meeting will include a showing of the film prior to the discussion so you won’t need to prepare ahead of time. If the topic is a theme, there may or may not be reading that you should do before you attend the meeting; in that case, the details will be displayed in the [Meeting Topics](#) page.”

“Our meetings take place at the Central Branch of the London Public Library at 251 Dundas Street between Wellington and Clarence Streets. Meetings about books will be held in the Tonda Room. Meetings about films will take place in the Stevenson and Hunt Room, which is beside the Tonda Room. Both rooms are on the first floor of the Central Branch.”

For details & info: < <http://sfl.london.on.ca/> >

STARFLEET REGION 10:

“Starfleet was founded by Star Trek enthusiasts in 1974 and has become an international fan organization whose members (4000 +) are united the world over in their appreciation of Star Trek. Hundreds of chapters worldwide link members into local fandom as well as the international organization.”

“Region 10 encompasses the geopolitical areas of Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Yukon.

Includes Starships: USS Majestic (Victoria, B.C.), USS SOL (Alaska), & USS Bondar (?).

For details & info: < <http://www.10thfleet.org/> >

CANADIAN SCI-FI FACEBOOK SITES:

CANADIAN FANDOM:

You guessed it! A Canada-wide Facebook devoted to Sci-Fi fans, actors, artists, authors, concon, costumers, panelists, sfx people, fan writers, zine editors and all kinds other imaginative people. 140 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=3198365242> >

CANADIAN UNITY FAN FUND (CUFF):

A discussion group for fen who want to promote CUFF, the Cdn fan fund which sends an Eastern fan to a Western con/Convention (Aurora Awards) & West to East in alternating years for sake of Cdn fannish unity. 10 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6119342503> >

F.R.E.D. (FORGET REALITY ENJOY DRINKING):

This is a Facebook for a Vancouver centred social club which has been meeting weekly at local watering holes since 1979. Sci-Fi orientated. (See also F.R.E.D. under Local Clubs.) 56 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2351668529> >

MONTREAL FANDOM:

“A celebration and gathering of all past and present members of Montreal Fandom, as well as their many friends throughout the world.” 36 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=3433145295> >

OTTAWA FANDOM:

A Facebook for Ottawa fans & anyone interested in keeping in touch with them. 27 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=3254325206> >

VANCOUVER FANDOM:

A Facebook for Vancouver & Lower Mainland fans & all those interested in knowing them. 31 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2399759573> >

VCON:

A Facebook for concon, attendees, & fans of VCON, Canada’s longest-running ongoing Sci-Fi Convention (founded 1971). Held annually Vancouver/Lower Mainland area. (Next VCON will be #33 in October 2008.) 96 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2315972840> >

CANADIAN SCI-FI WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

CANADIAN FANCYCLOPEDIA:

This is a ‘work in progress’ project I’ve been working on for more than a decade. Essentially my working notes for an A to Z ‘Incompleat Guide to the History of Twentieth Century Canadian Science Fiction Fandom’. It is my intention to list and describe every Canadian Sci-Fi fanzine, club & organization since the 1930s as well as explain and detail fannish slang, custom, lore and legend. Granted, most of the traditions which form the underlying infrastructure of ‘fandom’ originated in the United States and Great Britain, but I include as much Canadian material as possible as I stumble across it in my research. For example, only Canadian zines are described. Don’t have the time or space to detail foreign zines. So yes, a world-wide Fancyclopedia, but focused on Canadian fannish history.

NOTE: Sometimes people visiting my site, instead of finding the latest A-Z version, hit upon an earlier version that is merely A-C. Don’t know why. Solution is simple. Click on ‘C’ to get the page dealing with ‘C’ subjects. At the top of the page where it says “Go to [E](#) or back to [Main Page](#)”, click on ‘E’ and it will take you to the ‘E’ page and also magically jump to the latest A-Z version so that you can now jump to any page. Weird. So rest assured, the Canadian Fancyclopedia is *NOT* stuck in limbo but is in fact updated on a quasi-regular basis. On the Main Page just click on ‘Info on Updates’ for a list of the latest addition.

< <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html> >

CANADIAN SF -- THE CANADIAN SPECULATIVE FICTION FORUM:

"Fans, publishers, and authors of Canadian SF are welcome to join the discussion of speculative fiction. Log on and chat about science fiction, fantasy, alternate history, or any combination of the genres that make up the varied landscape of speculative fiction in Canada."

- Know of a convention, reading, or other event? [Post it on our coming events board.](#)
- Have you just published or discovered a new [science fiction](#) or [fantasy](#) story? Announce it [here!](#)
- Want to discuss Canadian [science fiction](#) or [fantasy](#)?
- Chat about [science fiction](#) and [fantasy](#) literature for children.
- Or [click here](#) for an overview of forum topics.

For details & info: < <http://www.pippin.ca/cgi-bin/YaBB/SF/> >

FANDOM.CA:

"Before Fandom.ca was a website, it was a protest. In 2000, a company calling themselves Fandom, Inc. attempted to register a trademark on the word "fandom". Their application was denied, as "fandom" was a word in common usage since its first appearance in Webster's Dictionary in 1903. Despite not actually having a trademark, Fandom, Inc. began legal proceedings against a fan who owned another website... The fraudulent legal exploits of Fandom, Inc. caused Science Fiction fans all over the world to begin registering domain names with the word "fandom" in them to keep those domain names out of unscrupulous corporate hands. Seeing such a need, I registered Fandom.ca with the [Canadian Internet Registration Authority.](#)"

"Then, in February 2002, the development started, and here is the result. Like all good websites, it's a work in continual progress. I hope to make it part information resource, and part weblog. In either of these areas, if there is some information I have missed, that should be known to all fandom, please feel free to [contact me](#) with links to information of interest. With help from fandom at large, this will hopefully become one of the better fannish resources available."

Andrew C. Murdoch

< <http://www.fandom.ca/> >

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Sources < <http://www.locusmag.com/Conventions.html> > & < <http://www.sfnorthwest.org/northwestcons.html#cons> >

SMOFCON 25 – (Dec 7 – 9, 2007) at the Hilton Boston Logan Airport, One Hotel Drive, Boston, Massachusetts, USA 02128. Tel: 1-617-568-6700. Fax: 1-617-568-6800. "A convention for science fiction convention-runners who do this for fun. we'll have a program emphasis on marketing, public relations, and advertising - topics relevant to all con-runners. We'll have lots of other programming, comfortable hospitality, and the gastronomic delights of Boston within easy reach." Note: Airport Hilton Smofcon room block is sold out! Rooms outside the block are \$159 a night. Pre-registration and at-the-door membership rate is \$70 US.

For Hotel info and Smofcon online registration see:< <http://www.noreascon.org/smofcon/index.html> > To contact Smofcon 25 write < smofcon25@mcfi.org >, or MCFI, P.O. Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701, or fax: 617-776-3243. See < <http://www.smofcon.org> > for general & historical info on Smofcon.

RUSTYCON 25 – (Jan 11 – 13, 2008) at the Holiday Inn SeaTac Airport, 17338 International Boulevard, Seattle, WA 98188 USA. Phone: 206-248-1000 (front desk). To book room by phone call 1-888-465-4329. For info on hotel & booking room online see < <http://www.holiday-inn.com/sea-intlapt> > Enter R25 in 'Group Booking Code' to get special rate (\$107.00 US a night). General interest Sci-Fi convention with Author Guest of Honour Elizabeth Ann Scarborough, Artist GoH Frank Wu, and Fan GoH (collectively) the Elan Empire, a fannish organization as old as Rustycon itself: < www.elanempire.com >. Current membership rate \$40.00 US.

Register online at < http://www.rustycon.com/membership_services/online_registration/ >

POTLATCH 17 – (Feb 29 – Mar 2, 2008) at the Hotel Deca, Seattle, Washington. Definition: "a small, discussion-oriented, literary SF convention held regularly in Seattle, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Portland. Reservations: \$119.00/single or double occupancy; \$134.00/triple; and \$149.00/quad, plus tax. *Rates include parking and continental breakfast daily.* HOTEL DECA, 4507 Brooklyn Avenue NE, Seattle, Washington 98105; Phone: 206-634-2000; Fax: 206-545-2103; Toll Free Reservations: 800-899-0251; reservations@hoteldeca.com. To Register on-line, go to the Hotel Deca reservations page ("Book a Room") and enter the dates you are booking and our Group/Event Code: 00034491. See < <http://www.hoteldeca.com/> >. General memberships: \$50 (through December 31, 2007); Student memberships: \$35 (with valid student ID at the door); Ages 6-18: \$20; Supporting: \$20. Potlatch 17, c/o Suzanne Tompkins, PO Box 25075, Seattle, WA 98165. Website: <http://www.potlatch-sf.org/> Kate Schaefer, chair@potlatch-sf.org

NORWESCON 31 – (March 20 – 23, 2008) at the < [DoubleTree Hotel Seattle Airport](#) >, 18740 International Blvd, Seatac, Washington. Tel: 1-206-246-8600 (to reserve a room). Click here to make a < [reservation online](#) > Fax: 1-206-

431-8687. Flat Norwescon room rate of \$105.00 per night for up to four (4) people. These rates are available for up to 3 days before and after the convention. A daily charge of \$10.00 for a 5th additional person. Five (5) people maximum per room. Parties are allowed only in the party wing (Wing 5b). If you're planning on hosting a party, request a room in the party wing when making your room reservation. Convention theme: "Bell, Book and Dragon". Host convention for annual P.K. Dick Award. Writer GoH: Dan Simmons, Artist GoH: Ciruelo, Special Guest: Naomi Novik. Memberships \$50 US till December 31st, 2007. < [Online registration](#) > is now available (PayPal) or < [Registration via postal mail](#) > (Check or Money Order - U.S. Funds Only). For info such as party rules, programming, other guests, check out the Norwescon 31 home page at < <http://www.norwescon.org/default.htm> >

CORFLU SILVER / CORFLU 25 – (**April 25-28, 2008**) Plaza Hotel, One Main Street, Las Vegas NV 89101. Membership Rates: \$60 US / £35 UK attending. Hotel info: < <http://plazahotelcasino.com> > Make checks payable to Joyce Katz and mail them to Joyce Katz 909 Eugene Cernan St. Las Vegas, NV, 89145, USA You can also register through [PayPal](#) by sending the appropriate amount to < JoyceWorley1@cox.net > please follow up with an email to confirm. More info at < <http://www.corflu.org> >

KEYCON 25 – (**May 16 – 19, 2008**) at Radisson Skyview, 288 Portage Ave, Winnipeg MB. All rooms are \$86.00 per night, plus applicable taxes, and are available at that rate from May 14 to May 21, 2008 Call the hotel at (204)-956-0410. Mention Keycon to get the special rate!! Registration: Before Dec31st 2007 = \$45 Cdn. Then \$55 Cdn till April 30th. At the door TBA. Child 5 to 12 years \$35 Cdn. Mail in < [Registration Form](#) > and mail to: Keycon, PO Box 3178, Winnipeg MB R3C 4E6. Money orders and cheques accepted. Please make payable to: Keycon Mail in registrations accepted until April 30/2008 (by post-mark). Author Goh's Eric Flint & Jane Yolen, Artist GoH: David Mattingly, Gaming GoH: Jamie Chambers & parody/filking GoH: Luke Ski. For more info see: < <http://www.keycon.org/> >

DENVENTION / WORLDCON 66 -- (**Aug 6 – 10, 2008**) at the Colorado Convention Center, Denver, Colorado. (It's gigantic! 6 exhibit halls total 584,000 sq ft, 62 meeting rooms total 100,00 sq ft, 2 ballrooms total 85,000 sq ft, one 5,000 seat theatre! You'll need a GPS thingie to find your way around!) Entire Mark Adam's Hotel designated for party suites. 250 room block contracted for the Hyatt Hotel which adjoins the Convention Centre. PR2, hotel information and Hugo nomination ballots will be available no later than January 2008. Author GoH: Lois McMaster Bujold, Artist GoH: Rick Sternbach, Fan GoH: Tom Whitmore; Ghost of Honour: Robert Heinlein; Toast Master Will McCarthy. Current membership rates (good till Dec 31st, 2007) are Attending: \$175 US, Supporting: \$40 US, Child: \$45 US. For online membership: < http://www.denvention3.org/wcdb/member_main.php > or for mail in form go to < [membership form](#) > For more info see website < <http://www.denvention3.org/> >.

ANIME EVOLUTION -- (**Aug 22-24, 2008**) at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby B.C. "Vancouver's Japanese Animation Convention And Asian Cultural festival" with amv room & contest, cosplay & cosplay contest, industry guests, industry panels, live concerts, video rooms, art gallery, karaoke, video games, dealers room, charity auction, game tournaments, and more! For info: < www.animeevolution.com >

VCON 33 -- (**Oct 3-5, 2008**) Vancouver, BC. Canada's oldest ongoing Sci-Fi convention (VCON 1 was held in 1971). Author GoH: Patrick Rothfuss (author of 'Name of the Wind'), Artist GoH: Lisa Snellings-Clark. Current pre-registration membership price: \$45 Cdn. Make out cheques to 'VCON' and mail to VCON, c/o Box 78069, Grandview RPO, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V5N 5W1. 85 members pre-registered so far. Details re hotel, rates, dates, more GoHs, etc to be announced. If you'd like to helpVCON 33 write: < vconchair@gmail.com > For updated info: < www.vcon.ca >

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION 2008 -- (**Oct 30 - Nov 2, 2008**) at the Hyatt Regency Calgary Hotel, 700 Centre Street SE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 5P6. Tel: (403) 717-1234. Fax: (403) 537-4444. Web site: < <http://www.calgary.hyatt.com> > Room Rate: CDN \$165 Single/Double Please mention "World Fantasy Convention" to receive the convention group rate and to properly credit our event. The group code that you want to use is WFCC or G-WFCC. This will give you the preferred rate of \$165.00/night. This rate expires October 1, 2008. Author GoH's David Morell & Barbara Hambly. Publisher GoH: Tom Doherty. Artist GoH: Todd Lockwood. Toastmaster: Tad Williams. Current Membership rate: \$125 US or CDN. Supporting: \$35 US or Cdn. Register on-line (via Pay Pal) at < <http://www.worldfantasy2008.org/ro.html> >, or to register by mail, go to < <http://www.worldfantasy2008.org/reg.html> > & choose appropriate form. For more Info check the convention website: < www.worldfantasy2008.org/ >.

ANTICIPATION / WORLDCON 67 -- (**Aug 6-10, 2009**) Hotel: Palais des congrès de Montreal. GoH: Neil Gaiman. Invitee d'honneur: Elisabeth Vonarburg. Fan GoH: Taral Wayne. Editor GoH: David Hartwell. Publisher GoH: Tom Doherty. MC: Julie Czerneda. Contact address: Anticipation, C.P. 105, Succursale NDG, Montreal, QC, Canada H4A 3P4. For info: < info@anticipationsf.ca > or < www.anticipationsf.ca >

OOK, OOK, SLOBBER, DROOL!

Note: because of privacy laws and concerns I've decided to adopt the policy of not printing loccer's snailmail addresses, phone numbers or e-mail addresses. This goes against fannish tradition – fans first found each other through addresses printed in the letters columns of professional magazines back in the 1930s – but, oh well...changing times...sigh...

From: JOHN PURCELL, November 2nd, 2007

You are right, Graeme. I really don't know what to make of this issue's cover. However, I do admire the creativity behind it, and one can see the eventual destiny of the artist. It's a good thing you've settled on writing.

((I'm quite good at drawing lively stick figures. Unfortunately I never progressed beyond that point. I do possess a couple of worthy artistic efforts I created in high school art class, but their quality was purely an act of spontaneous, random manifestation; nothing at all to do with 'talent' and never to be replicated.))

All kidding aside, I am quite surprised that you still had this in your possession after so many years. Did you continue your artistic endeavours, or did you shift gears once you figured out that art wasn't your *forte*? Just wondering.

((I have a couple of envelopes of 'art' I did when very young. They were sent to my grandparents, then returned to my mother from their estate after they passed away, and years later she gave them back to me as a birthday gift. I was very pleased and quite amazed to discover I could remember drawing some of them.))

((For example, during a rare visit from my grandmother (who lived hundreds of miles away) she, my mother and I went for a walk in a forested park. I very proudly set up an easel on a trail and sketched the autumn colours in crayon. The result was bloody awful. My grandmother treasured it for the rest of her life. Now, whenever I look at it, I can remember the walk as if it happened last week rather than approximately 45 years ago.))

((On the other hand, I'm told every time my grandfather opened a package of my latest drawings, which typically included tank battles, crashing spaceships, aerial dogfights, and vignettes of stick figures running through the tunnels of hell pursued by stick figure demons, his first comment invariably was "What's wrong with this boy?"))

((Still in my possession, and having been preserved the same way, are a few penciled short stories dating from early grade school which include rather unique accounts of scenes like German sailors cavorting on the deck of the Bismark in a swimming pool filled with the blood of British sailors..... All together now: "What's wrong with this boy?"))

((I'm much better now....really...))

The zine keeps growing by leaps and bounds. That is a very good sign, and the continuing Canadian fan history articles are a lot of fun to read. One name that leaped out at me was Frank Denton, a Seattle fan that I corresponded with for quite a few years. He used to produce a fanzine back in the 70s, and I forget the name of it offhand. If I think of it, or at least look it up on the Internet, I will let you know. (Just did so: *The Rogue Raven*. He has a blog that goes by the same name.)

((The BCSFA/WCSFA fanzine archive has 20 copies of The Rogue Raven, the earliest dating from the late 1970s, the last from 1997. Believe Frank Denton did at least 50 issues in all. A very enjoyable perzine. We used to receive it in trade for BCSFAzine.))

Funny how Ursula LeGuin rolled with the punches when those press folks showed up. Sounds like she handled the situation like a pro. A classy lady, her. Someday it would be a very cool thing to meet her. So I look forward to the next installment of V-Con 1; it sounds so far like it was a rousing success.

((It was, and as far as I'm aware, it was also the first Sci-Fi convention on the West coast of Canada, and only the 5th Canada-wide, predated by Torcon 1 in 1948, Toronto Triple Fan Fairs in 1968 & 1970, and the Alberta SF Society Open House in 1971. Also predates most North West American cons, as per example: VCON 1 – (1971) compared to: Norwescon 1 - (1978), Moscon 1 - (1979), Orycon 1 - (1979), Vikingcon 1 - (1980), & Rustycon 1 - (1984). VCON is Canada's oldest ongoing Sci-Fi convention.))

In case you haven't noticed yet, I support Chris Garcia for TAFF - as does James Bacon and a few others - so as the voting deadline nears, get your votes in, folks! Lots of good people to choose from, for sure, but Garcia is my choice due to his energy, love of fanzines and cons, and because he is a very fun person to be with. Let's ship him overseas!

((I share your description of Frank Garcia, my impression based so far purely on perusing his own zines and reading what other fans say about him. He seems an ideal candidate. I assume you also want him eventually shipped back to the US? Or were you contemplating making him the first fannish exile by consensus?))

Ah, me. Lots of other information herein, but I really have no comments to make. Even so, I enjoyed reading the issue, and I do hope you can keep this schedule going. I had no idea that Western Canada has so much fanac going on. I guess I really shouldn't be so surprised given that science fiction and fantasy are such popular entities in the commercial markets nowadays. No matter what, keep the zine coming.

((Trouble is, some local fans have no idea about the extent of Western fanac either. Hence the purpose of this online zine. So far I retain my enthusiasm. For example, I'm writing this November 2nd, have already filled 12 pages of this December issue, and am already working on the January issue. It's a fun hobby!))

All the best, John Purcell

((Thank you for loccing!))

From: DAVE HAREN, November 11th, 2007.

I've been mulling this and other SF zines for a few days.

((I'm sorry to hear that. Hope it didn't hurt much....))

I shall reserve comment on the others except to note that I may have skipped someone in my mad rush to prove that I'm a fan (short for fanatic) and enthusiastic (used to mean crazy) for Science Fiction writing but I'm sure I'll be able to offend them later (not on purpose).

((Sci-Fi faneds love to be offended. It makes for good copy.))

Ah. The Elron awards were superb. It's a pity they were unable to tag one on Keelty Australian Super cop for his pronouncement in the press that the worst danger to law enforcement came from "cloned criminal cyborgs".

((Well, technically he's correct, but only if he's talking about AUSTRALIAN cloned criminal cyborgs. Here in Canada "cloned happy-happy-joy-joy judge cyborgs" appear to be the worst threat to enforcement of the laws.))

The article on John Brunner raised my respect for him as a real person. I'd almost be willing to bet that the strain of trying to actually make a difference in the real world was what made him hard to get along with. You see the same phenomena among advocates of the Communist/Socialist theories who lose their sense of humor and sense of proportion as they get older.

((Let's see, Lenin never had a sense of humour, but that probably had something to do with the Tsarist government executing his brother. As for Stalin, he was a regular laugh riot, as per example the time he was walking down a corridor in the Kremlin with his Foreign Minister Molotov. A guard stood in front of each doorway. With a grin on his face Stalin delivered a non-stop whispered monologue into Molotov's no-doubt quivering ears: "Maybe this guard will shoot us dead after we walk past.. no... guess not... must be the next one who is the assassin..." Quite the kidder, Stalin.))

Any one who wants to run Brunner down needs to write something better than 'Stand on Zanzibar' first.

((I have found, based on very limited personal experience, that people out to save the world often have very little patience with people, as opposed to 'the people'. However, I'm not certain this applies to him, because I don't know how serious he was about saving the world so much as just writing about it. All I know is, I don't care what he was 'actually' like as a person, I enjoy his writings.))

The Slan/fan verse is a "meme" of the worst kind, I only heard it once somewhere and have been haunted every since then.

((I've had a very similar experience with the theme of the 'Howdy Doody Show' (don't ask)...))

Project Gutenberg seems to have slipped past your local educators but I notified a couple of your youthful anarch band who are starting to spread the word. It has been adding SF from the good old days as it falls into the public domain. I was really happy to see Fritz Leiber's "Creature from Cleveland Depths" show up there. With the coming explosion in AI and the proliferation of Blackberry, iphone, and other gadgets we may get to be in this story sooner than we think.

((I can't imagine reading a book with an iphone, but then my eyes aren't any younger than the rest of me.))

< WWW.gutenberg.org > will get anybody there. A quick search will turn up work by Leiber, Randall Garret, Mack Reynolds and Lafferty. The Science Fiction CD can be downloaded if you have a CD burner. Best is the DVD download which puts 17000+ books on your shelf if you can burn a DVD.

((I recommend -- after a quick perusal -- on the SF Precursor page the Roman author Lucian of Samosata's 'TRIPS TO THE MOON', and from the regular SF list Carey Rockwell's 'TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET' series and Garrett P. Serviss's 'COLUMBUS OF SPACE' and 'EDISON'S CONQUEST OF MARS'.))

The reason I get excited about stuff like this is because I wanted to be the future not just read about it. Now I am in the future but it's not over yet. What's coming next will be even more amazing than the current crop of writers can comprehend.

((That's what I'm afraid of...))

We plan to conquer the universe. The Universe in peoples heads. The Universe in sub-atomics and bend it to our will. The very stuff of life itself and its creation. We are going to create companion and complementary intelligences. We're also going to clean up the mess humans have made of the ecosystem.

((Oh, well, all this is perfectly all right with me. You're almost as ambitious as the Ghod-editor!))

You can choose to be part of the process as a writer of SF or scurry back to "literature" where you belong.

Fortunately the Camerons as the sensible part of the clan will moderate these radical ideas...<GRIN>

((Only to the extent of substituting "I" for "WE", and reserving 50% of all taxation for my personal use. Apart from that we are in complete accord.))

Warm Regards, Dave Haren

From LLOYD PENNEY, November 24, 2007

I hope I'm in time for a loc possibly getting into WCSFAzine 4. Not sure what to say about all of this, except that I hope there will be a complete report on the past VCon soon.

((Stating this issue, soon all will be revealed....))

Is Chris Carr still involved? I haven't heard much from her lately, except something about auditions. I hope she's found something substantial in Hollywood NorthWest.

((She's the Executive Producer of the BC Renaissance Festival and as such participated in VCON 32 programming. I believe both she and her husband Martin are currently hard at work in Hollywood North – which is all over the map locally. There's even a giant unmarked movie studio in the industrial district where I work...))

Good prelim report, and breaking even is always good. Making a few bucks would be better, and there's probably room for other goodies that might make extra money. Ad Astra has always done well at tastings, and even at an extra ticket, perhaps \$10 for a space in a special tasting where special foods or drinks are brought in for a sample, a few dollars can be made there.

((We think we made a profit, or at least broke even, or maybe suffered a small loss... final report not yet complete. But whatever the result, we carried off VCON 32 without touching the 'seed' money from VCON 31, and we now have 85 pre-reg memberships added to that 'nest egg', so VCON 33 is off to a sound financial start.))

I wish I could have gotten to the Convention Business Meeting... I have sent my proposal to Anticipation for a potential fanzine lounge. I enjoyed the one we held in Winnipeg, and we'd like to do it again in Montréal. I have some doubt we will even get a room, but we'll see what we can do. If nothing else, I expect that Yvonne will be on committee working finance or space and science programming... or both. Fanzines seem a thing of the past to so many people.

((READING is a thing of the past to so many people.... Truthfully, I think the potential is there for the usual number of suspects, or converts, but the fan base is so gigantic these days that pro-fanzine publicity has to be forcibly injected into the maelstrom with industrial strength publicity pumps before there's any hope of piquing the interest of nascent fanzine enthusiasts....))

Chris Garcia has won TAFF, to no one's surprise except possibly his own. He got the majority of the votes as announced by Bridget Bradshaw, and now Chris shall be released upon an unsuspecting British Eastercon, bwa-ha-ha!

((I predict that not since WWII has there been an American 'invasion' of Britain to equal it. I sense fannish legends in the making: the Garciapocalypse is nigh!))

We need to nominate fanzines and fanned for the Auroras in the next few years! Unfortunately, there are few fanzines being published in Canada outside those that clubs produce for their members and friends. Look in the chart with numbers for nominations for Fan-Publication... 48 in 2005, 99 in 2006, 14 in 2007? We're falling down on the job here!

((If memory serves – without taking any time to do any research this close to deadline – Andrew Murdoch succeeded in getting clubzines separated from the fanzine category (and placed under organizational ?) so that individual perzines would stand a chance of winning. Not much point if few are being produced, and those that do exist are not widely read. I think limited edition printzines hardly stand a chance. Going online is the solution, but only if vigorously self-promoted. And even then, it's hard to get your readership actively involved. Although, Chris Garcia in the recent 'Corset' issue of his 'The Drink Tank' (#150), profusely illustrated with photos of women in corsets, may have hit upon a useful motivational technique. And if Faneds could find a way of transmitting complimentary beer over the internet with every online issue I think a booming fanzine renaissance would be guaranteed!))

You mention Brad Haiste! Brad lives or lived around these parts, and I used to sell him dealers' tables at Ad Astra. I can't remember if Brad lived in London or St. Thomas. It's possibly that Brad still takes tables at Toronto Trek/Polaris.

((I believe he still lives in St. Thomas.))

[Re your comments on my last loc]:

...I think dealing with the CUFF politics is sufficient for me when it comes to fan funds. I don't want to say no [to TAFF] outright, though, because if I can learn more about running TAFF, I'll have a better idea of what I might be getting myself into.

...Yvonne and I are going to the Diageo Christmas party... I don't drink, and Yvonne can't because of food allergies. However, as the marketing arm for those famous alcoholic brands, there are usually lots of promotional goodies.

...Anticipation... I have submitted my proposal for the fanzine lounge, but the response was lukewarm. I have, at least, let them know that I'd like to do it, and that I have plans of what I'd like to see there.

...The movie I shot was fun; I let my beard grow for a week, picked out some clothes to make me look like a university professor, put on a big bowtie, and sat in an overstuffed chair and delivered my lines. It was in a private home in the northern part of Oakville. I don't know when it will be available for showing or previewing on YouTube, but I'll let everyone know as soon as I find out.

(('...clothes to make me look like a university professor'? May I recommend purple velvet bellbottoms and an orange paisley jacket?...oops, sorry, flashing back to my hippie days in the 'summer of love'. I looked a treat, I did.))

Off it goes before deadline, hurray! Probably won't happen again, but I can dream... Take care, and I guess there will be one more issue before Christmas?

((Yep! This one! Now that I've got your loc! Just as in the Harry Warner Jr. times, no zine is legit unless it contains a loc from Lloyd Penney!))

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

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ISSUE #5 WILL BE POSTED AT EFANZINES.COM SOMETIME AROUND JANUARY 1ST

AFTERWORDS *by the Ghod-Editor*

Let’s see, continuing in my editorial mood of congratulating myself for the wonderful job I’m doing for all three of our readers, I’ve basically settled upon a policy of randomly choosing a Canadian fanzine from the WCSFA/BCSFA archive and reviewing it while utilizing its cover for the cover of WCSFAzine. This solves the problem of trying to acquire suitable cover art (a problem hideously revealed last issue!) and furthers my intention to promote the history of Canadian fanzines (among all the other aspects of Canadian fandom I’m trying to push).

What about fillos for the interior pages? After all, some people have complained about the text-only nature of this on-line zine. My first impulse is to argue this zine is a printzine for readers that just happens to be hosted on-line in PDF form, and is not actually a web site designed for visual entertainment, but I do admit that fan art is a good way of breaking up the text and is often a worthy and wonderful fannish entity in itself. I mean, just look at Derek Carter’s work on the cover! However, there is the slight detail that I haven’t received any submitted fan art as yet.... Which makes it difficult to showcase it.

(Well, I did receive a wonderful piece by Taral Wayne spoofing the recent Ultra-man Hugos, but I couldn’t figure out hoe to downsize it – did I mention I’m useless re computer geekness? I’m sort of the computer anti-geek – but you can see this magnificent and uncannily realistic work as the cover of Arnie Katz’s #101 of VEGAS FANDOM WEEKLY posted at < <http://www.efanzines.cm> > .)

What I would like, because of my single column format, are fillers wider than they are tall, rectangular in other words, suitable for placing without leaving too much white space. Prefer Sci-Fi whimsy, but love anything Sci-Fi retro (old fashioned) and general SF/F okay too. Anything that will stir that ‘ole sensa wonda’! Or anything ‘fannish’.

And others want to know: what’s with the single column format? ... Well, books get away with it. I’m not trying to be a newspaper.... But mainly, single column allows me to plug material in quickly, to revise quickly, to do everything quickly. None of that nit-pickingly maddening fiddly stuff that comes with juggling multi-columns. If I’m to get each ish out at all I have to streamline the mechanics of the process as much as possible. It’s not that I’m lazy (though I am) but rather that I only have so much time to devote to this publication. Can’t allow anything to slow me down. Cheers all!