

# BCSFAZINE

Clubzine of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association  
(Issue #550 – October, 2021)



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**Dedicated to The Fellowship of The Greater BCSFA.**

BCSFazine is a Canadian non-profit Science Fiction online PDF Clubzine published by the British Columbia Science Fiction Association twelve times a year.

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For lots of back issues, please go to: < <https://efanzines.com/BCSFA/> >

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**BCSFA SF FEN CONFAB ZOOM MEETINGS** — Every Monday 5:00 PM (PST) to 9:00 PM (PST). All SF Fen welcome.

Contact me at < [the.graeme.bcsfazine@gmail.com](mailto:the.graeme.bcsfazine@gmail.com) > and I'll send you the link.

**FRED DINNER** – (FRED = “Forget Reality! Enjoy Drinking!”) A local Vancouver area meet-up founded circa 1979. Usually held every second Sunday, but currently on hold due to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

**BCSFA PUBLIC GROUP FACEBOOK SITE** – Participate in ongoing discussions and check out photo albums of past VCONs at: < [BCSFA Public Group Discussion](#) >

**BC SF ASSOCIATION WEBSITE** – Download the most recent BCSFazines and peruse assorted texts on BCSFA, WCSFA, and VCON history at: < [BCSFazines and Club History.](#) >

**HELP VCON STAY ALIVE** – Group discussion at: < [Help Keep VCON Alive!](#) >

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### Cover Credit

– Cover Art: *VCON Logo* – by... well, I don't remember. Hopefully someone can tell me. It's simple, but effective. You've got a 1950s-style rocket, which is very retro and pleasing to an old fan's eyes. It speaks volumes about our heritage.

Speaking of volumes, the rocket is taking off from an open-book launch pad, which reminds us all SF fandom originally sprang from the printed page, particularly from the early scientifiction magazines. It also serves as a reminder that VCON has traditionally placed emphasis on SF&F literature. I like this logo.

## **EDITORIAL: THE GOD-EDITOR SPEAKS!**

### IS VCON HAPPENING?

Yes, indeed. But in a schematic form. As Chair Chris Sturges has put it “We are presenting the *idea* of VCON in an effort to keep VCON alive and build from there.”

### CAN YOU PHYSICALLY ATTEND VCON?

There is NO in-person VCON. In fact, the physical location of VCON is a secret. It is being held at a hotel somewhere other than the three hotels at Metrotown that had been under consideration.

Note: Do NOT go to any of the three hotels at Metrotown that had been stated in the past as venues because none of them have anything to do with VCON 2021 anymore. You will NOT be able to enter them as a walk-in attendee. There’s no “there” there. No VCON.

VCON 2021 is now strictly a virtual con. No physical attendees are wanted. The physical con will consist of techs handling the virtual broadcasts and a number of invited participants hosting the virtual events. Since the hotel Covid cap (by law) is only 50 people, uninvited attendees are not welcome as that would bugger up the programming. This is why the location is a secret.

### DOES VIRTUAL VCON 2021 COST ANYTHING?

No. It’s free. Anyone can attend by tuning in. Although, I am under the impression they will welcome supporting memberships as a means of building up funds for the in-person VCON projected for October 2022 (Covid permitting). Plus, I believe they will be offering Dead Dog discounts for VCON 2022.

### CAN I GET A REFUND?

If you have a full membership just go to the website, hit the “Contact us” button and make your request.

### WHAT IF I WANT MY MEMBERSHIP TO CARRY OVER TO 2022?

If you bought a Dead Dog membership at the last VCON in 2018 it is my understanding that it is still good for VCON 2022 if that is your wish. You should use the “Contact us” button at the website to let the convention committee know.

## HOW VCON 2021 WILL WORK

### HOW DO I ATTEND VCON 2021?

Go to the Website at: [VCON Online Home – VCON ONLINE](https://vcononline.ca/home/) ( <https://vcononline.ca/home/> )

### WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?

Friday, October 15 to Sunday, October 17, 2021.

Possibly some programming on Thursday, Oct 14, 2021, but not confirmed.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

There are three cameras and crews available. Two of the cameras will broadcast continuous live programming of panels, lectures and/or demonstrations. As far as I know these will not be interactive the way Zoom Meetings are. They will be more in the nature and style of a live YouTube video. There was some talk of a chat function for people to comment and ask questions. How that will work remains to be seen.

The third camera will not broadcast live, but will possibly record interviews, displays, and whatever to be inserted into the two livestreams later, or possibly broadcast separately. Should be interesting.

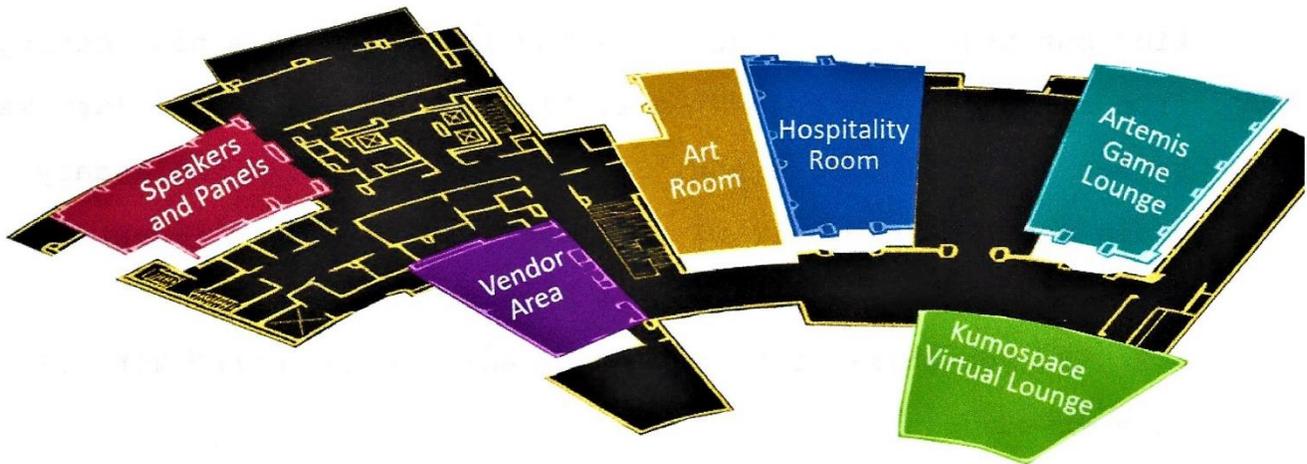
If at all possible, there may be some sort of schedule posted, on a daily basis at least, so that people can tune in to particular program items they would like to watch. However, the programming may be rather ad hoc and shot on the fly depending on who shows up when so there might not be any schedule available at all.

In other words, attendees may wind up simply switching on one VCON 2021 virtual channel and keeping it on continually to find out what is happening as it happens, though hopefully with live announcements as to what will follow next. And, no doubt, switching back and forth with the other live programming channel.

Links will be provided on the web site to enable attendees to view the livestream broadcasts.

Other activities will be taking place as well, though to what extent I do not know. It will all come together to the best of the Convention Committee's efforts at the last moment. I imagine rather frantic activity is currently going on to maximise the original vision. Hopefully it will be fun and nothing but fun, whatever happens. There will be about 50 people putting it on. SOMETHING will happen I'm sure.

## VIRTUAL VCON 2021 SITE MAP



### ACTIVITIES AT VCON 2021 EXPLAINED

With the exception of the Kumospace Virtual Lounge, all of the virtual “rooms” are “currently under construction.” I assume they will be up and running by the time of the convention.

#### SPEAKERS AND PANELS

I am guessing this will be the room where you can find the links to the two livestream broadcasts and possibly 3<sup>rd</sup> camera filmed pieces. Logic would seem to dictate this conclusion. First place to check out in search of such, and if not there, then somewhere else on the site.

#### VENDOR AREA

I was originally under the impression each vendor would have an independent display of goodies with some sort of mechanism in place to enable attendees to purchase whatever they like with, I guess, the merchants mailing the items?

Last I heard vendors might be reduced to a couple of images and a link to their website. I don't even know if any vendors have signed up. None have been listed on the site. I can think of several who expressed interest but I don't know if anything came of their inquiries.

I admit I'm consumed with curiosity to find out what, if anything, will be displayed in this “room.”

## ART ROOM

Again, I know the original plan called for artists displaying images of numerous works, say prints for example, which attendees could order and have delivered. Possibly some would be up for the highest bidder. All depending on what is technically feasible.

I know a number of artists were interested. I don't know if any have been confirmed. I don't know what is going to be on display. Curiosity alone makes me want to enter this "room" as soon as the door is open, so to speak.

For years, under the guidance of Rose Wilson, the VCON art show was always one of the strengths and highlights of the convention. I don't know who is in charge of the art show (or of any of the rooms, frankly) this year, but I suspect it will be minimalist in nature.

Hopefully there will be enough art on display to at least preserve the "idea" of the art show. Next year, planned to be in-person, will see at least a limited return to the glories of old? Hoping to be pleasantly surprised by what the ConCom manages to pull together at the last minute.

## HOSPITALITY ROOM

This is hugely important. Meant to be a central location where attendees can mingle and get to know each other. Also meant to be a recruiting centre for volunteers to join the ConCom so that next year will have the appropriate level of peoplepower to organize and run a full-sized traditional VCON. (Need at least 40 dedicated committee members to accomplish that. This year's committee is under 20 people.) And, in theory, the Dead Dog party will take place here on Sunday, with advance tickets to VCON 2022 being sold at a discount price.

I don't know how this will be done. I don't know what the set-up is. Will people see each other? Be able to talk to each other? Will it be something like a Zoom or a Discord meeting? I assume something suitable is being arranged. I hope so.

## ARTEMIS GAME LOUNGE

This planned to be a "room" where gamers can play games. Simple as that. But what sort of games? Live action and/or interactive games? I know that other virtual conventions have done such, especially virtual game cons, so the wherewithal must exist. I assume the person in charge of this room is on top of that.

I guess, if you're a gamer, you simply enter the "lounge" and see what's available.

## KUMOSPACE VIRTUAL LOUNGE

This is a bit confusing since the four “rooms,” each open to as many as 30 attendees, are labelled “Gaming Room,” “Hospitality Room,” “Hotel Lobby,” and President’s Suite,” which implies some duplication of effort, at least as far as gaming and hospitality go.

On the other hand, these four “rooms” are in place and anyone can access them, even those who do not have a Kumospace account. If you do have an account, you can sign in via Email, Google, or Facebook. Otherwise, as a guest.

Here is what each looks like (only a portion shown).

### KUMOSPACE GAMINGROOM



This is completely blank so I’m guessing game hosts will lead gamers through, I don’t know, games dependant on the position and movement of gamer avatars?

Or perhaps there will be links to actual games of some sort? I am totally ignorant on the subject of suitable games for the Kumospace venue. I assume the person in charge knows what’s what and will provide nifty games.

### KUMOSPACE HOSPITALITY ROOM



A rather pleasant setup involving several open areas surrounded by chairs and couches. Some items, like the juke box, are interactive. It will play music when you click on it.

You enter as a small Avatar with a circle of conversation. The closer someone moves into your circle, the louder their conversation. Alas, this can lead to avatars stacking up on each other in order to hear clearly.



## SUMMING UP VIRTUAL VCON 2021

It is a surprise con. Apart from the fact the two Guests of Honour are Mur Lafferty and Ursula Vernon, no information has been released about who will show up to host and/or participate in programming. For that matter, apart from the fact there will be programming, no information has been released as to what the programming will consist of. Panels, yes, but what sort of panels? What kind of lectures? What type of events? Nobody seems to know.

At best, this VCON will have vibes like a “happening” from the 1960s reminiscent of Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters. A small, dedicated group will meet over a weekend and somehow their collective entity will produce a spur-of-the-moment as-it-happens event to the wonderment of all. Spontaneity and improvisation combined with enthusiasm can be very exciting.

At worst, impossible to guess. If nothing clicks, if nothing sparks, this could be the last VCON. I attended the first VCON in 1971. Attending the last in 2021, fifty years later, has a certain sense of completion to it.

It’s not as if the people involved didn’t attempt to capture the magic of the old days. But Covid, damned Covid. And a hotel labour dispute which is on going. Plus other hotel... uhm, difficulties. Financial problems. Lack of volunteers. Major and minor distractions. It failed to come together. It failed to jell.

And yet, there’s still Chris Sturges and *his* Merry Band of Pranksters. They are determined to have as much fun as possible putting on this weekend happening. As I know from my own experience lecturing and appearing on panels, if I have fun it can be infectious, to the point where the audience starts to have fun whether they want to or not. This may well be the saving grace of virtual VCON 2021. In a sense the ConCom is approaching the weekend as a celebration releasing them from all their worries. Nothing left to do but enjoy themselves and have fun. Might as well. It’ll all be over and done with on the Monday following.

I think attendees should do what I do when I watch a movie for the first time. I lower my expectations as low as possible. That way I enjoy the movie. And if it turns out to be great, all the better. I am confident Mur Lafferty and Ursula Vernon will deliver some choice programming both interesting and entertaining. I am confident local talent can do the same. There may well be some extraordinary surprises beyond expectations. After all, the ConCom has nothing to lose. Why not go for broke, so to speak? I’m assuming that’s their goal and attitude.

VCON 2021 is nothing less than a three-day improv happening. Let your curiosity draw you in. It could be fun, entertaining, weird, even fantastic. All four I hope.

## **KINO CULT STREAMING SERVICE STARTS UP!**

For fans of rare and obscure movies, wonderful news!

Kino Lobar, who've restored so many "Classic" films, began a free streaming service (with ads) on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

They are starting small, with just a few films, but more will be added every month.

So far genres include Golden Age Exploitation, Occult, Science Fiction, '70s & '80s Flashbacks, and films by Mario Bava and Jesse Franco.

So, you get to watch films like "Rawhead Rex," "Black Sunday," "White Zombie," "The Blood Beast Terror," "The Awful Dr. Orloff," "The Devil Bat" and "Marihuna, Weed with Roots in Hell" for free!

Check it out at: <https://www.kinocult.com/app?>

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## **HOW TO WATCH AURORA AWARDS CEREMONY SATURDAY OCT 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2021**

It's almost time to reveal who will be taking home this year's Aurora Awards!

On Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm EDT (4pm Pacific) our host, Can\*Con, will be presenting the Aurora Awards in a virtual ceremony.

For full information about the ceremony and who the presenters are, go to: <http://can-con.org/> and look at the **Upcoming Events** items in the menu.

The ceremony will be accessible via their YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/CANCONSF/featured>.

There will also be a post-event celebration party in the Can\*Con Lounge, but you will need a Can\*Con account. It's free. If you don't already have an account, you will need to get one in advance. Their signup page is: <https://cancon.org/account/>. Please do this early and not just before the ceremony since your account will need to be verified.

Thanks for reading!

Your CSFFA Board of Directors

## AURORA AWARDS PROGRAM AND NOMINEES

### Opening Prayer and Land Acknowledgement

*Monique Manatch, Knowledge Keeper, member of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake*

### Welcome to “Ottawa”!

*Marie Bilodeau and Derek Künksen, co-chairs of Can\*Con*

### Pin Ceremony

*Kevin Hearne*

### Keynote Address

*Silvia Moreno-Garcia*

### CSFFA Hall of Fame Inductions

*Presented by Clint Budd*

### BEST FAN RELATED WORK

*Presented by Brandon Crilly*

- **ephemera reading series**, KT Bryski & Jen R. Albert
- **AugurCon**, Kerry C. Byrne & Terese Mason Pierre
- **2020 Aurora Awards Ceremony**, Mark Leslie Lefebvre & Liz Anderson
- **When Words Collide**, Randy McCharles, chair
- **Speculating Canada**, Derek Newman-Stille

### BEST FAN WRITING AND PUBLICATIONS

*Presented by Annette Mocek*

- **BCSFazine** #538-547, R. Graeme Cameron, ed.
- **Clubhouse**, R. Graeme Cameron (*Amazing Stories*)
- **Polar Borealis** #13-16, R. Graeme Cameron, ed.
- **Travelling TARDIS**, Jennifer Desmarais (JenEric Designs)
- **Young People Read Old SFF**, James Davis Nicoll, ed.
- **Random Musings**, Robert J. Sawyer (*BCSFazine* #539-547)

### BEST VISUAL PRESENTATION

*Presented by Waubgeshig Rice*

- **Don't Text Back**

- **Murdoch Mysteries**, Season 13, Episodes 10-18
- **Trickster**, Episodes 1-6
- **The Umbrella Academy**
- **Wynonna Earp**, Season 4, Episodes 1-6

## **BEST ARTIST**

*Presented by [Lana Kamarić](#)*

- Lorna Antoniazzi, covers for **Augur** #3.1 and 3.2
- Samantha M. Beiko, cover for **Flights of the Marigold**
- Swati Chavda, art, maps, and covers for multiple publications
- Dan O’Driscoll, cover for **Corona Burning**
- Maia Kondla-Wolf, cover for **Prairie Gothic**

## **BEST POEM/SONG**

*Presented by [Sienna Tristen](#)*

- **Masquerade**, Colleen Anderson (*On Spec* #115)
- **The Death of the Gods**, Leah Bobet (*Uncanny* 1-2/20)
- **he scores**, Beth Cato & Rhonda Parrish (*Star\*Line* Spring ’20)
- **Back Story**, David Clink (*Strange Horizons* 9/20)
- **Electra**, Y.M. Pang (*Arsenika* Winter ’20)
- **Arachnoid Cyst**, Dominik Parisien (*This* 3-4/20)
- **Hamilton Harbour**, Lynne Sargent (**A Refuge of Tales**)
- **Nidhog**, Jo Walton (**The Book of Dragons**)

## **BEST RELATED WORK**

*Presented by [Liz Westbrook-Trenholm](#)*

- **PodCastle**, Jen R. Albert & Cherae Clark, eds., host Setsu Uzumé & producer Peter Adrian Behravesh
- **Augur** #3.1 and 3.2, Kerry C. Byrne, Alexander De Pompa & Lawrence Stewen, eds.
- **Prairie Gothic**, Stacey Kondla, ed. (Prairie Soul)
- **Disfigured: On Fairy Tales, Disability, and Making Space**, Amanda Leduc (Coach House)
- **Swashbuckling Cats: Nine Lives on the Seven Seas**, Rhonda Parrish, ed. (Tyche)
- **On Spec**, Diane L. Walton, ed.

## BEST GRAPHIC NOVEL/COMIC

Presented by [Suyi Davies Okungbowa](#)

- **Gothic Tales of Haunted Futures**, S.M. Beiko, ed. (Renegade Arts)
- **Krampus is My Boyfriend!**, S.M. Beiko (<https://www.sambeiko.com/>)
- **Crash and Burn**, Kate Larking & Finn Lucullan (Astres)
- **It Never Rains**, Kari Maaren (<http://itneVERRAINScomic.com/>)
- **Goblins**, Ellipsis Hana Stephens (<https://www.goblinscomic.org/>)
- **Northwest Resistance**, Katherena Vermette, illustrated by Scott B. Henderson (Highwater)

## BEST SHORT STORY

Presented by [Kate Heartfield](#)

- **The Bone-Stag Walks**, KT Bryski (*Lightspeed* 8/20)
- **Night Folk**, Barb Galler-Smith (*Galaxy's Edge* 11/20)
- **All Cats Go to Valhalla**, Chadwick Ginther (**Swashbuckling Cats**)
- **Breathe**, Calvin D. Jim (**Prairie Gothic**)
- **So You Want to Be a Honey-pot**, Kelly Robson (*Uncanny* 3-4/20)
- **Grass Gods**, Elizabeth Whitton (**Prairie Gothic**)

## BEST NOVELLETTE/NOVELLA

Presented by [Premee Mohamed](#)

- **The Immolation of Kev Magee**, L.X. Beckett (*Clarkesworld* 8/20)
- **An Important Failure**, Rebecca Campbell (*Clarkesworld* 8/20)
- **Tool Use by the Humans of Danzhai County**, Derek Künsken (*Asimov's* 7-8/20)
- **How Quini the Squid Misplaced His Klobučar**, Rich Larson (*Tor.com* 1/15/20)
- **Go Fish**, Ian Rogers (*Tor.com* 4/15/20)
- **To Sail the Black**, A.C. Wise (*Clarkesworld* 11/20)

## BEST YA NOVEL

Presented by [Nathan Burgoine](#)

- **The Gryphon's Lair**, Kelley Armstrong (Puffin Canada)
- **Return to Atlantis**, J.M. Dover (Evil Alter Ego)\*
- **Flights of Marigold**, Susan Forest (Laksa)
- **Hollow**, Rhonda Parrish (Tyche)
- **Wall of Wishes**, Suzy Vadori (Old Vines)

## **BEST NOVEL**

Presented by *Amal El-Mohtar*

- **A Stitch in Time**, Kelley Armstrong (KLA Fricke)
- **A Connecticut Gumshoe in King Arthur's Court**, Randy McCharles (Tyche)
- **Beneath the Rising**, Premee Mohamed (Solaris)
- **Mexican Gothic**, Silvia Moreno-Garcia (Del Rey)
- **The Oppenheimer Alternative**, Robert J. Sawyer (Red Deer)

## **Closing prayer and Thank you**

*Monique Manatch, Knowledge Keeper, member of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake*

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## **WILLIAM GIBSON ON "JOHNNY MNEMONIC"**

By R. Graeme Cameron

Note: The following article I printed in Issue #269 of BCSFAzine in October 1995. It was my last issue as "God-Editor" in a run which began with issue #193 in June of 1989. After a 31-year hiatus I started up again as God-Editor of BCSFAzine with issue #538 in March of 2020.

*Evelyn Beheshti Hildebrandt, long time BCSFAn and wife of author Don H. DeBrandt, died of AIDS on March 13, 1995. Just over two months later, on May 27, 1995, the club and other friends of Evelyn put on a minicon called "Science Fiction Saturday." It was chaired by Donna McMahon, and was designed to be both a memorial to Evelyn and a fundraiser for the Positive Women's Network, a cause which Evelyn had done much work for.*

*There were many readings and talks by local authors, including Spider and Jeanne Robinson, Eileen Kernaghan, Mary Choo, Don DeBrandt, Dale Sproule, Allan DiFiore, Frank Garcia—and William Gibson.*

*Bill had been just another fan and member of the club back in the mid 1970s, contributing art and articles to the newsletter, and had known Evelyn from her early days in the club. That he would cut short his world-wide publicity tour for his movie JOHNNY MNEMONIC with its premiere in Toronto on the Friday and fly home the very next day to attend the benefit honouring her memory is incredibly good of him.*

Here follows my notes on A READING BY WILLIAM GIBSON and AN HOUR WITH WILLIAM GIBSON.

**Saturday, May 27, 1995. Century Plaza Hotel at Burrard and Comox in downtown Vancouver. Hotel Ballroom. 1:00 p.m.**

William Gibson sweeps into the room and strides toward the stage, slightly hunched over, books and papers clutched in his hands, his face a mask of fatigue. He sags into the chair provided and spreads his papers on the table. He looks up at the audience from behind his wide glasses.

“I’m not human,” he says. “I’m just a skin sack of fatigue poisons.”

“I’ve been on the road for three weeks flogging my movie.”

“It opened to incredibly vicious mainstream reviews. Do you know what’s that like? It’s like watching a bunch of well-dressed strangers kick your dog to death for no good reason... but the core group seems to like it.”

He pauses to look around the room. “You know, this is a cool hotel to hold a sci-fi con in. Just a hint. If you ever have another VCON, I will come.” As it turns out, we are having another VCON, and Bill IS coming! Back on track!

Bill holds up a hardcover book. “Called THE MAGNETIC DOG SISTERS, subtitled WILLIAM GIBSON’S BEST CYBERPUNK STORIES, it contains bilingual text, half English, half Japanese. It’s a high school textbook in Japan. Has a nifty glossary in the back to explain the text to students, things like ‘Triple Blind Algerian Comsat.’ I like it.”

I guess this is Bill’s way of suggesting the Japanese are more hip than their Canadian educational counterparts.

“I’m going to read JOHNNY MNEMONIC to you. Haven’t read it in ten years. This will be the last time I read it aloud. I’ll provide on-going annotation as I read.”

He begins. I keep my shotgun microphone trained on him. He continues in his wonderfully slow West Virginian drawl, his long, translucent hand resting on the book as his hypnotic voice fills the room.

Every few sentences he raises his head and makes a comment, things like:

“If you ever want to see NEUROMANCER made into a movie, you better rush out and see JOHNNY MNEMONIC this weekend. Got to impress these guys, the backers.”

“JOHNNY is basically made by Sony, which no one ever seems to notice.”

*...the Magnetic Dog Sisters... They'd been lovers for years and were bad news in a tussle. I was never quite sure which one had originally been male... "They left the sisters in the movie. That's amazing."*

*...Ralfi wasn't alone here. Eighty kilos of blond California beef perched alertly in the chair next to his... "And this written by a man who just worked with Dolph Lundgren. He's human, just bigger than human."*

*..."Please," he said, "let's work this out like businessmen."... "The actor who played Ralfi is German. He couldn't pronounce 'businessmen,' so we changed the line in the movie to read 'like gentlemen.'"*

*...passes laterally through Ralfi's skull... slicing the pear-shaped torso... tumbled apart in a pink cloud of fluids... "And they think the movie is violent? The story reads like David Cronenberg on Angel Dust. As it is the British Columbia censor took out a sublime version of the Ralfi slicing/dicing scene."*

*...The concrete walls were overlaid with graffiti, years of them twisting into a single metascrawl of rage and frustration... "This is like New York in the 1970s. There's no graffiti there now. Maybe in LA..."*

*...by now the Yakusa would be settling over the city's data banks... It's impossible to move, to live, to operate at any level without leaving traces, bits, seemingly meaningless fragments of personal information. Fragments that can be retrieved, amplified... "Critics agree this paragraph marks the birth of cyberspace, this is where it all began, my kind of cyberspace anyway."*

He stops reading, rifles through the remaining pages. "You guys have been very patient, but this thing is longer than I remembered. I'll jump forward a bit, to where Molly rents this thing called 'the Killing Floor.'"

Bill reads through to the end. Closes the book. "No questions now. I'm tired. I just flew in from Toronto. I'm going to rest a bit. I'll be back at three. Then you can ask me questions for an hour. See you then."

He rises and glides from the room.

**Saturday, May 27, 1995. Century Plaza Hotel at Burrard and Comox in downtown Vancouver. Hotel Ballroom. 3:00 p.m.**

"Welcome to William Gibson unplugged. I'm suffering from severe synaptic seepage, so don't ask me to repeat the questions. It's all I can do to come up with

answers. I can only respond. Those in the back will just have to imagine the questions.”

“The Ghost Lady in JOHNNY MNEMONIC? In a test version the audience hated the fact she turned out to be his mother. So we just showed some super 8 footage to hint at it. But it’s present in the actual screenplay.”

“When is my next book due? ‘Due,’ what a horrible word. A couple of months from now.”

“In the original story we never do find out what’s stored in Johnny’s head. Made it a little hard to turn it into a feature film. NAS is an AIDS-like motif.”

“To convert a short story into a screenplay is easier than squishing a novel down into a screenplay. Best way is just to write a film.”

“How much control did I have over the film? All things considered, a screenplay is a process. Not like a novel. A screenplay is a random process dictated by human perversity. Any film, no matter how bad, is a kind of miracle. In miniature like a history of a world war, very complex, and out of control, an example of chaos theory.”

“Most movies are made cheap, fast, and out of control.”

“AGRIPPA? A eulogy to my father, a piece of experimental art, a surrealist jest. It’s out on the internet, in cyberspace forever.”

“THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE? Steve Jackson games has the roleplaying rights. Nothing so far. But keeps the cyberpunk elf buggers from ripping it off.”

“Would I go through the Hollywood meat grinder again? Now I know what I’d be getting in for. The experience is like encapsulating a war, it’s huge, goes on for years, involves lots and lots of people, freaks you out. You spend a lot of time sitting around feeling uncomfortable.”

“I’m not a good writer but I’m a terrific revisionist.”

“I describe contemporary society, not the future. My moment of Epiphany, the influence of Ballard in the 1960s, was ‘the Earth is an alien planet.’”

“I perceive our world at the end of the twentieth century as being something like a psychedelic fever dream. People ask me, ‘how can you write about such a grim future?’ Don’t these people watch CNN? My future is now. I’m just trying to make people more aware.”

“I didn’t go on America Online because I didn’t want America online with me.”

“I like the idea of the internet, but what I am like is solitary. I get plenty of faxes and phone calls, so the idea of getting inundated with yet more gets me agoraphobic. I would rather write. I put in nine to five in front of my word processor.”

“My future? I’ve been in a very intense work stage. The movie is the hardest job I’ve ever had. My next book will be difficult. I need time to chill out. I’m lazy by nature, the very opposite of a workaholic.”

“No, I don’t work from an outline, it kills it for me. Astute readers will notice this. One of the yucky things about writing screenplays is you have to work to an outline.”

“On THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE Bruce Sterling and myself would fax each other draft bits to critique.”

“What is incredibly valuable and very special is to read the material aloud to an audience that understands the genre.”

“THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE on film? There’s a Polish director interested. The BBC has the rights. Sterling said it would be like UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS on PCP if they produced it. My personal preference for director would be Terry Gilliam.”

“Why wasn’t Molly Millions in JOHNNY MNEMONIC? I softened her down to Jane, who is kind of like Molly when Molly was young. You see, Molly is part of the NEUROMANCER franchise, so I couldn’t keep her in JM, which is a different package.”

“JOHNNY MNEMONIC was low budget to start with, but we got more money as we went along. The story is set in the 2050s, but the film is closer to the era of VIRTUAL LIGHT. Saved money that way.”

“Why split the effects work? 1/3<sup>rd</sup> by a Canadian company in Toronto, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> by Image Works, and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> by Gibson’s Cowboys. This was all determined by a tax shelter agreement.”

“The three distinct looks to cyberspace was deliberate. We’d basically just lock the guys in the basement and tell them to come up with something.”

(Question from the audience: How do you write? Do you just imagine nifty little scenes and staple them together?)

“That sounds frighteningly accurate.”

“Since the merciful advance of computers I don’t do drafts, just revisions. I donated papers to the UBC library for a tax break. Turns out they don’t like printout. The only MS that proved valuable was the typewritten one for NEUROMANCER.”

“My favourite author? In the past five years there are three I particularly like, not influences exactly, but authors I respect. Corbett McCarthy, whose novels work better than Faulkner, rivals ULYSSES. Then Ian Sinclair, he’s just amazing. Writes like a cross between Charles Dickens and Hunter S. Thompson. And my favourite non-fiction book is LOW LIFE by Luke Saute, a look at life on New York in the 1890s. Weird stuff, like suicide clubs for prostitutes. Incredible stuff.”

“I didn’t invent the concept of Cyberspace, just coined the most convenient buzzword. It’s now in the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, sadly without attribution however.”

“I first offered JOHNNY MNEMONIC free to a fanzine. They rejected it.”

“Harlan Ellison? Interesting writer, his biggest influence on the genre was via DANGEROUS VISIONS.”

“I didn’t start getting published till my late twenties. Most of the early SF writers got started in their late teens.”

“Some ideas I’ve had I’ve removed from my fiction because I was afraid it might give some people ideas, a certain type of truck bomb for example. We writers all have that responsibility to a degree.”

“Science Fiction writers don’t do a very good job of predicting. The most we extrapolated for TV was the video phone, nothing more. But where SF does have a fine tradition is in the matter of the cautionary tale. SF is always really about the period it was written. I decided to make this more overt in my writings. NEUROMANCER is really a kind of failure of Reaganomics, a world without a middleclass, suffering through terminal Capitalism.”

“As we speak there are people throughout the world living in a raw dystopia. Things really can’t get much worse. Being part of the middle class in Vancouver is okay, though.”

“In my books I am trying to inhabit the real world, the terrible world, with humans, with people who stubbornly, even stupidly, insist on remaining human.”

“You know, I’ve been answering questions for so long on this publicity tour that I

readily slip into automatic mode, as if there's a synaptic tapeworm loop in my head. Getting tired. Not sure I'm making sense any more. No more questions please."

"Final note, you could say my career began at VCON."

*God-Ed notes: Bill moved to Vancouver in 1972. His first VCON was VCON 4 in 1975. He had been gaffiated for ten years, but the con revived his interest in fan writing. Before the end of 1975 he joined BCSFA. During this period he was also attending UBC and experimenting with fiction. His first published short story, FRAGMENTS OF A HOLOGRAM ROSE, appeared in UNEARTH in 1977. He graduated from UBC in 1978. NEUROMANCER was published in 1984. Once a fan, he was now "a filthy pro," which is an affectionate fan-slang term for one of our own who made it by virtue of talent and imagination. Way to go, Bill!*

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## FANNISH NEWS

By Garth Spencer

### Lorna Diane Toolis Passes On

OCTOBER 6, 1952 – AUGUST 11, 2021



Lorna Diane Toolis, age 68, the former head of the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Spec Fic in Toronto, Ontario, passed away on Wednesday, August 11, 2021.

Candas Jane Dorsey wrote: "Today Lorna Toolis, our dear and brilliant friend and stalwart of the Canadian speculative literature writing and reading community, died suddenly and quietly at home in

Toronto. Our hearts go out to her soulmate and life partner Michael Skeet, her family, her friends and colleagues near and far."

(Candas Jane Dorsey, Facebook, August 11, 2021)  
(Picture from [dignity.memorial.com/obituaries/](https://dignity.memorial.com/obituaries/))

## **Looking for a website administrator**

“The CSFFA is looking for a new volunteer website administrator for 2022 to maintain and redevelop the [prixaurorawards.ca](http://prixaurorawards.ca) website. If you know what "The Formidable WordPress plugin has a conflict with the Divi template" means and how to solve it, if you speak fluent PHP, if you're comfortable providing close technical support to the Aurora Awards website, then you're an ideal candidate! The focus for 2022 will be to simplify the site, make it more user-friendly and improve the way it looks. If those sound like fun challenges, please contact [aurorawardswebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:aurorawardswebmaster@gmail.com) for more details.

## **Summary of the 2021 AGM**

“CSFFA’s (Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Association) 2021 AGM saw approval of CAN\*CON as the 2023 host of the Aurora Awards.

Also, VCON chair Chris Sturges announced that VCON will bid in 2022 to be the 2024 Aurora Awards host.

When Words Collide, Calgary, is the 2022 host. Aurora Awards tradition is that the host convention is a convention east of the Manitoba/Ontario border one year and, the following year, a convention west of the Ontario/Manitoba border.

Tyler Goodier represented CAN\*CON 2021, this year’s Aurora Awards host, during the AGM. In-person CAN\*CON is not happening this October. The Aurora Awards ceremony platform is to be chosen, a platform with safety and accessibility as a priority. CAN\*CON 2021 basically will be the Aurora Awards. Format of the online ceremony will follow selection of the platform.

Twenty-five CSFFA members voted on motions prior to the June 27, 2021 AGM. All of the motions were approved.

Four members of the board of CSFFA talked about their respective role as board members.

Thanks for reading! Please go vote!"

(CSFFA Board of Directors, August 15, 2021)

## **Neffy Awards**

Back on June 25, 2021, the president of the N3F wrote:

“Under modern conditions, it should not be surprising that mundane-world politics rears its ugly head in fandom. For this issue, we have a reasonably solid policy. Political opinions of reviewers are off-limits here, not to be discussed. Political opinions seen within books, because there is politics within books, are fair game, but comparisons with real-world politics are in general not suitable. The review discusses the book, not the author, so discussions of the author’s politics ‘You should dislike this book because the author is not a monarchist’ are not suitable for publication here. The last rule must be somewhat flexible; note the recent review of a book by Rebecca Roanhorse, in which the book and aspects of the author’s life were inseparable.

And remember, opinions of characters may not be opinions of the author. The hero of the book may be the last High Priest of Huitzilopochtli, thrust by magic into the 21st century and desperately trying to stage an authentic god-feeding ceremony before the sun goes out, but that does not mean that the author is plotting to cut out your heart."

Apparently this was about George Phillies approaching some Sad Puppies, among other fan groups, to participate in the upcoming Neffy Awards. George doubled down when this was decried, saying effectively that any fan was as good as any other fan with regards to participating in the awards.

This raises an interesting question : are Sad Puppies capable of learning and growing up?

(Garth Spencer, August 7, 2021)

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## UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

By Garth Spencer

### October

Oct. 15-17; **Virtual VCON 2021** at an undisclosed hotel, with Author GoH Ursula Vernon and Alumni Author Mur Lafferty contributing to livestream broadcasts. Invited participants only due to 50 person cap.

For more information see [www.vcon.ca](http://www.vcon.ca).

Oct. 29-31: **Spocon** at the Historic Davenport Hotel in Spokane, WA, USA. Contact [info@spocon.org](mailto:info@spocon.org) or go to <https://spocon.org/>.

## November

Nov. 13-15: **Orycon 42** at the Red Lion Hotel Jantzen Beach in Portland, OR, USA.  
For more information see <https://42.orycon.org/>.

## 2022

Mar. 18-20, 2022: **Corflu 39 - Pangloss** at the Best Western+ Sands Hotel (1755 Davie Street Vancouver, British Columbia V6G 1W5 Canada). The one, the original, fannish fanzine fans' convention!

“We want to shake things up with our program. It shall be faannish of course, and still centered around fanzines, but without quite so much Reminiscing About What We Did 50 Years Ago, and absolutely no ‘Dear, Ghod Haven’t We Gone Over This Ground Enough Already?’ if we can possibly help it. »

BOOK YOUR ROOMS NOW! “The Best Western+ Sands is located smack in the middle of Vancouver’s West End, one of the liveliest and most appealing quarters of the city. Its front door lies steps away from the beach at English Bay, and the neighborhood offers a variety of pubs, restaurants fancy, plain, or ethnic, and general amenities. The convention rate is available March 12-23, 2022 (though we only have guaranteed rooms March 16-23, so again, if you can, book early).

### Hotel Room nightly rates:

Double Queen room (single/double occupancy): \$105 CAD per room, per night

Double Queen room (triple occupancy): \$120 CAD per room, per night

Double Queen room (quadruple occupancy): \$135 CAD per room, per night

King room with balcony (single/double occupancy): \$120 CAD per room, per night  
(Quoted room rates do NOT include taxes and fees, but for hotels in the West End these are fantastically reasonable.)

“The room block confirmation number is 4087. Guests may reserve on the convention’s secured web link or call 1-604-682-1831 or email [sands@bwsands.com](mailto:sands@bwsands.com).

“Corflu Hotel secured booking link:

[https://www.bestwestern.com/en\\_US/book/hotel-rooms.62025.html?groupId=N45ZU1Y9](https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.62025.html?groupId=N45ZU1Y9)

### Corflu Pangloss Membership

Note: Rate rise anticipated circa mid-October. Possibly on the 15th.

“Attending Member

Canada	US	Eurozone	UK
\$75	\$60	€50	£45

Supporting Member (Always)

\$32	\$25	€21	£18
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“US dollar denominated checks should be made payable to Hal O’Brien

Mail to: Corflu 39 c/o Suzanne Tompkins  
PO Box 25075  
Seattle, WA 98165  
USA  
OR

PayPal to: [hal.obrien@gmail.com](mailto:hal.obrien@gmail.com)

(Please be sure to use the Friends & Family option if paying from the US – apparently this won’t work if you’re in Canada. Apparently people don’t have friends or family in other countries in PayPal Land.)

(from the Corflu Pangloss Progress Report #1)

**More Conventions**

(from Northwest Convention League at August 24, 2021)

Oct 15-17 2021 VCON - Vancouver, BC, Canada

Oct 16 2021 Lake City Comicon - Coeur d'Alene, ID

Oct 29-31 2021 SpoCon - Spokane, WA

Oct 29-31 2021 Dragonflight - Bellevue, WA

Oct 30-31 2021 King Con - Renton, WA

Nov 05-07 2021 Kumoricon - Portland, OR

Nov 12-14 2021 OryCon - Portland, OR

Nov 13-14 2021 GeekGirlCon - Seattle, WA

Nov 18-21 2021 Anthro Northwest - Seattle, WA

Nov 26-28 2021 LosCon/Westercon - Los Angeles, CA

Dec 02-05 2021 Emerald City ComiCon - Seattle, WA

Dec 15-19 2021 DisCon (WorldCon) – DC  
Jan 07-09 2022 OrcaCon – Bellevue, WA  
Jan 07-09 2022 VanHoover Pony Expo - Vancouver, BC  
Jan 28-30 2022 Conflikt - Seattle, WA  
Feb 05 2022 NerdFaire Con - Lynnwood, WA  
Feb 12-19 2022 NWSFS Cruise to Mexico  
Feb 18-20 2022 RadCon - Pasco, WA  
March 10-13 2022 Bricks Cascade at **Oregon Convention Center** - Portland, OR  
Mar 24-27 2022 GameStorm - Portland, OR  
Mar 25-27 2022 Capital City Comic Con - Victoria, BC  
Apr 14-17 2022 Norwescon - SeaTac, WA  
Apr 15-17 2022 Sakura-Con - Seattle, WA  
Apr 29-May 01 2022 Sagefencon - Richland, WA  
May 26-29 2022 Star Wars Celebration - Anaheim, CA  
Jun 25 2022 Vancouver Retro Gaming Expo - Vancouver, BC  
July 01-04 2022 Westercon - Tonopah, Nevada  
Aug 05-07 2022 Britcon - Bellevue, WA  
Aug 12-14 2022 Everfree Northwest - Bellevue, WA  
Sept 01-05 2022 Gatecon - Vancouver, BC

The following are conventions which have happened in the past, no current info is available on them.

Jan TBD 2022 Wizard World - Portland, OR  
Jan TBD 2022 CascadeCon - Bellingham, WA  
Jan TBD 2022 Stumptown Game Summit - Portland, OR  
Feb TBD 2022 BazerCon - Centralia, WA  
Feb TBD 2022 Kick Off the Cons - Renton, WA  
Feb TBD 2022 Foolscap - Seattle, WA  
Mar TBD 2022 NanoCon - Longview, WA  
Mar TBD 2022 Terminal City Tabletop Convention - Vancouver, BC  
Mar TBD 2022 Washington State Toy Show - Puyallup, WA  
Apr TBD 2022 Chibi Chibi Con - Olympia, WA  
May TBD 2022 Leavenworth Game-Con - Leavenworth, WA  
May TBD 2022 Enfilade! - Olympia, WA

May TBD 2022 Fandom PDX - Portland, OR  
May TBD 2022 BrickCan - Richmond BC  
May TBD 2022 Burning Cat - Portland, OR  
May TBD 2022 Furlandia - Portland, OR  
May TBD 2022 Paizocon - Seattle, WA  
May TBD 2022 Pulicon - Puyallup, WA  
May TBD 2022 Renton City Retro - Renton, WA  
Jun TBD 2022 Evergreen Tabletop Expo - Redmond, WA  
Jun TBD 2022 Washington State Summer Con - Puyallup, WA  
Jun TBD 2022 All's Faire - Thurston County, WA  
Jun TBD 2022 Brass Screw Confederacy - Pt. Townsend, WA  
Jun TBD 2022 ConComCon - SeaTac, WA  
Jun TBD 2022 Fairyblossom Festival - Pe Ell, WA  
Jun TBD 2022 NW Pinball and Arcade Show - Tacoma, WA  
Jun TBD 2022 Salem Comic Con - Salem, OR  
Jul TBD 2022 MosCon Revival - Moscow, ID  
Jul TBD 2022 ReaderFest - Tacoma, WA  
Jul TBD 2022 SpokAnthro - Spokane WA  
Aug TBD 2022 KuroNekoCon - Spokane, WA  
Aug TBD 2022 Portland Retro Game Fest - Portland, OR  
Oct TBD 2022 Bellingham ComiCon - Bellingham, WA  
Oct TBD 2022 SHUX - Vancouver, BC  
Oct TBD 2022 Washington State Toy Show - Puyallup, WA  
Nov TBD 2022 BurlyCon - Seattle, WA  
Nov TBD 2022 GeekCraft Expo - Seattle, WA  
Nov TBD 2022 Short Run Comix & Arts Festival - Seattle, WA

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**OOK! OOK! SLOBBER! DROOL!**

(Letters of Comment)

**Note:** Annoying comments by God-Editor *[ are in brackets ]* immediately after introduction of topic in question. This, a feeble attempt to create the illusion of a conversation in a fanzine lounge or a hospitality suite in the interests of conviviality.

From: **Felicity Walker** – (August 8, 2021)

Letter of Comment on *BCSFazine* #549

“Table of Contents”: My article is missing from the TOC! (It probably arrived after the rest of the zine was already done—I remember sending it a long time after the previous **BCSFazine** was published.)

*[ Sorry about that. I do my best to proofread, but at some point I always say “to heck with it. I’ve delayed long enough!” and rush to publication. ]*

“Editorial: The God-Editor Speaks! ”: Having a “no politics, no religion” rule should take care of most of the problem. It doesn’t seem like the attendees need to be told to avoid comments that are racist or sexist. Coincidentally I was just reading about **Fahrenheit 451** and its adaptations. The more I read, the more I became disappointed in Ray Bradbury. Originally **Fahrenheit 451** was Bradbury’s reaction to Nazi book-burnings and McCarthyism. But by the 1990s he’d gotten more conservative and said it was about “political correctness,” complaining that “the black groups want to control our thinking” and “the homosexual groups don’t want you to criticize them.” If he were alive today his head would explode. He’d simultaneously have to cope with the fascism of Trump, **and** the respect that minorities are finally getting. So much for the sentimental, humanist Bradbury of **The Martian Chronicles**. As Chief Joseph said, treat others the way you want to be treated. Or if that’s too difficult, go back to your magician’s toy shop and try to imagine it.

*[ Actually, the attendees DO need to be told to avoid comments that are racist and sexist, simply because they often don’t notice their comments might be construed as such by others and, if confronted, deny it.*

*Since history inspires and underlies much SF, the conversation often strays into the political arena. If it is just among personal acquaintances, I let it slide. But if newcomers are present I usually crack down because I don’t want to offend anyone or leave them with the impression that all we do is argue. The conversation is supposed to be a celebration of our beloved genre. As it is, a number of people have permanently quit attending. Seems I haven’t cracked down enough.*

*As for Bradbury he was sentimental and humanist in the context of his time. Fairly easy to contrast liberalism against fascism back then. I haven’t seen the later opinions you refer to, but I suspect his problem, if any, had to do with how liberalism /progressive thinking has expanded and grown more complex. The Gay rights movement, for instance, only became a public force after Stonewall. I don’t think he turned anti-black or anti-gay so much as he became befuddled by how different the “new” liberalism was from what it had been. The world evolved and changed, and I*

*suspect he was not able to accept this. You grow up taking for granted certain things are “normal,” and it is a shock in your old age to discover that what you always thought was normal in society is now considered quaint or irrelevant. He got old. The world never gets old. It’s always changing. He couldn’t adapt. That’s how I see it. ]*

“Correctable Books Are Here!: By Spider Robinson”: Well, OK, as long as you don’t get all George Lucas on us and start “correcting” things in ways that ruin them. :-)

“Retro Book Review: **Martians, Go Home**—by Fredric Brown”: “...abusive, aggravating, annoying, brash, brutal, cantankerous, caustic, churlish, detestable, discourteous, execrable, fiendish, flippant, fresh, galling, hateful, hostile, ill-tempered, insolent, impudent, jabbering, jeering, knavish killjoys...leering, loathsome, malevolent, malignant, nasty, nauseating, objectionable, peevish, perverse, quarrelsome, rude, sarcastic, splenetic, treacherous, truculent, uncivil, ungracious, waspish, xenophobic, yapping, and zealous”: Sounds less like a vignette and more like a thesaurus! The little guy on the cover looks like a cross between Wallace Shawn and Daniel Benzali... and some arugula.

I **do** have the 1989 film adaptation in my collection. The trailer says “Every alien... is a comedian!” Technically this is only true of the Martians played by Barry Sobel, Bobby Slayton, Rob Schneider, Bruce Baum, and Gary Mule Deer. I was semi-relieved that the trailer was not speaking literally because at the time I was wondering if anyone had already done the premise of a planet inhabited by alien comics. (Not that I’ll ever get around to actually writing anything like that, but it’s nice to know it’s still possible.) The cast is so chock full of other beloved character actors (including Ronny Cox, Timothy Stack, Gerritt Graham, Roy Brocksmith, Troy Evans, Brian George, Jeff Doucette, Lee Arenberg, and Wallace Langham) that I had to check the movie out.

“The Light-Hearted Vituperator and Jolly Reviler: Streaming Science Fiction and Fantasy: A Digital Adventure: By Stan G. Hyde”: “Both the God-Editor and I are great collectors of physical media—and I doubt that will ever end...” Not for me either. I’ll always want a permanent local copy of something I like. Like Stan says, YouTube is a surprisingly good source of obscure movies, often watchable guilt-free since the company that owned the content no longer exists, and there is no possible way to purchase the movie. (There are many movies for which I would have been happy to pay for a physical copy, except that that’s not a thing they let you do any more.) In some cases, the owners of the content give it away free on YouTube. Troma uploaded several of its old movies to YouTube. As with all things in the streams and in the cloud, just be sure to get them while you have the chance; they may not be there later.

“Million Word Year Blog: Animation: **Dealing with Death**: By Michael Bertrand”: “...to cram ‘the classics’ down anyone’s throat and thus inculcate in them the same fierce negative reaction to the idea of reading for pleasure that people have towards eating vegetables, and for the same damned reason.” Or at the very least, a fierce negative reaction to the type of reading they’ve had forced on them. It wasn’t until university that I discovered there was such a thing as enjoyable Canadian literature. Everything we’d been forced to read up until then had been so old as to guarantee it would not speak to us, although there was also a weird emphasis on depressing post-apocalyptic stories at every school I ever attended. Every so often I think of a passage from the **Saturday Night Live** sketch “Farewell, Mr. Bunting”: “Poetry should not be fun. It should be oppressive and the reader should hate it. Poems are from a hundred years ago. They were written by a bunch of dead men to punish children.” I don’t know who wrote that sketch, but hats off to them for some sharp writing!

*[ I didn’t derive my love of literature from the books I had to read in high school. It was the books I was reading on my own at home in my high school years that opened the wonderful world of literature for me. Self-study is the key. ]*

“Another Editorial: On Turning 70”: Your “reduced” workload is more than many of us do during our best years!

*[ It is what happens when you concentrate on things you enjoy doing! ]*

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From: **Lloyd Penney** – (August 12, 2021)

Dear BCSFAns:

Thank you for BCSFAzine 549, and the iconic Freas on the cover. It’s been a very busy day, so a letter of comment can be squeezed in there. I have a lot to catch up on anyway. Congrats to Danielle Stephens!

From what I read, VCON is going at its own pace. I think the days of the big SF convention (that isn’t a massive mediacon) is done. Hope I’m wrong. We finally gave Ad Astra a few bucks so they can run again next year... I hope they make it work. Sorry I haven’t made it to the Monday Zoom in a while. It’s writing and editing and making costume jewelry, plus lots of responsibilities at home. There’s a lot of apathy around these days, mostly because we have had to stay home so much. I hope we can overcome this pandemic soon, or the apathy will overtake us all, and we won’t have to go out because nothing is happening.

*[ Being an introvert who enjoys staying at home working on projects, the pandemic has had virtually no impact on my personal life or wellbeing. Besides, solitude is a writer's best friend. Socializing is break time. Fun when it happens, but not my purpose in life. I am quite content on my own. Got lots to do. ]*

I wonder if the Hubble Space Telescope sent out the Blue Screen of Death when it stopped functioning? Sounds like someone unplugged it, and plugged it back in again. Or uploaded a new OS...

Greetings to Spider Robinson. You have been through far too much. And, you are greatly missed by so many. My sincere wishes for some happiness.

My letter... I am not sure if Dan Cawsey might like BCSFA in its minimal format. Dan's on Facebook, so tell him I sent you. I have indeed been trying to get myself a good editorial gig. I have had about half a dozen Zoom interviews since I wrote this letter, but I do have some on-call work. I work on call for a magazine in the east end called The Edge, A Leader's Magazine, which bills itself as a multicultural business magazine. I have spent some days in their office (!), proofreading the upcoming issue, and also proofing some articles for a new e-magazine they are working on. The pay cheque was nice to get, and another is in the mail.

The rains are threatening, so it might be a good idea to shut down the computer to make sure it doesn't get deep-fried. I am having trouble keeping my eyes open, so I will wind it up, and go relax for the rest of the evening. I think I am entitled. Take care, and see you with the next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

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From: **Garth Spencer** – (August 20, 2021)

Dear Graeme,

I don't seem to have the last edition of *BCSFazine* in my digital files! Or several issues before that!

Question: Is it about time to discuss another *Fictons* anthology? I realize that the last proposed *Fictons* died of attrition, but I suspect that if some really interested party offered to act as editor – such as myself – it can actually appear in print. I hope my previous anthologies/collections, *Confabulation* and *Boring Mundane Stories*, would serve as recommendations. (They are posted on my website, <https://www2.vcn.bc.ca/~garth2>.)

*[ Bit of a conundrum here. Fictons was the product of the BCSFA writers workshop where members were willing to contribute their stories for free. I think the workshop carried on but is no longer associated with BCSFA. What are the chances of you successfully soliciting MS from writers at large without offering payment?*

*Of course, you could do an anthology on your own and offer a set-rate payment (no royalties), a practice which is quite standard in the industry. The problem being you don't have any money to pay contributors. So, that's out of the question, I think.*

*In short, the context behind Fictons no longer exists. There's nothing to stop you from attempting an anthology on your own, calling it Fictons and publishing it in the name of BCSFA—I could even post it on the BCSFA website—but how will you get writers to contribute if you can't pay them? Or cover any costs? BCSFA has no money to spend on any project, as far as I'm aware. You could try a GoFundMe, or Kickstarter, or advance subscriptions, but would anybody respond? These are things you need to work out before you dare go ahead. ]*

Why have we never had a Mad Science division? Or is actually doing science, or at least building stuff, a minority interest? Has anybody besides Ed Hutchings pursued astronomy? Could we start our own amateur space program? Is it too late to enter a jet-powered hot tub in the Bathtub Race?

Yours, Garth

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From: **Danny Sichel** – (September 4, 2021)

At Worldcon 2009, I heard someone say that in fandom, it's considered polite to correct each other, because better information is always a good thing.

So, from the October 2020 BCSFAzine (which I'm skimming to make my last-minute Aurora decisions):

you wrote:

“But in 1956 Pohl is claiming things like ‘A philologist named George Schwidetsky believes he has found traces of chimpanzee loan-words in ancient Chinese (“ngak”), in a South African Bushman dialect (a tongue click), and even in modern German! (The German word “geck,” derived from Chimpanzee “gack.”)’

Oh, doubleplus COME ON now! I frankly don't believe a word of it. I think Pohl is making this up. Granted, “geck” or “gecken” actually translates as something like “to

cackle” but I doubt it comes from the Chimpanzees. Can’t find any Philologist named Schwidetzky via google either. I call shenanigans!”

and I found:

Georg Schwidetzky, author of the 1932 book "Do You Speak Chimpanzee?", available used on Amazon for \$90.

A brief article about him by Stephen R. Anderson of Yale (published in *Historiographia Linguistica* Vol. 46:3 (2019) ► pp. 57–72

“In 1930s Germany, Georg Schwidetzky (1875–1952) produced several works attempting to derive modern human languages by reconstruction from the vocalizations of non-human primates. This work was suppressed by other biologists under the Third Reich, not just because both the biology and the linguistics were ridiculously bad, but because Schwidetzky’s views on the origin of races were in conflict with Nazi ideology. While almost comically wrong-headed, there are nonetheless a few parallels between this project and some modern thought about the evolution of language. On the one hand, Schwidetzky stressed the need to think about the evolution of human language in terms of the biological evolution of our species, a branch of *Naturwissenschaft*, and not a purely humanistic activity, *Geisteswissenschaft*, as opinion among German linguists of the time saw it. Indeed, he was probably the first to characterize his agenda as the development of *Biolinguistik*. On the other hand, his attempt to maintain continuity between human language and the communicative vocalizations of non-humans fails to take into account the unique, species-specific character of human language.”

Just so you know.

*[ It’s possible Frederic Pohl took Schwidetzky seriously, but I doubt it. I mean, Christ-on-a-stick, even the Nazis thought Georg was an idiot. It’s not “almost comically wrong-headed,” it IS ludicrous and stupid. I think Pohl utilised his theories as a crank-of-the-month club justification for the premise of the novel in a rather rambunctious “pulp era” display of nonsense-science that sounds kinda cool so why not use it? A lot of science fiction, at least back in the day, treated scientific reality in such a cavalier fashion. The end result? Entertainment. Never let the truth stand in the way of a fun story.*

*Anyway, many thanks for providing the info. Proof that Pohl’s search for inspiration was widespread indeed. ]*

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