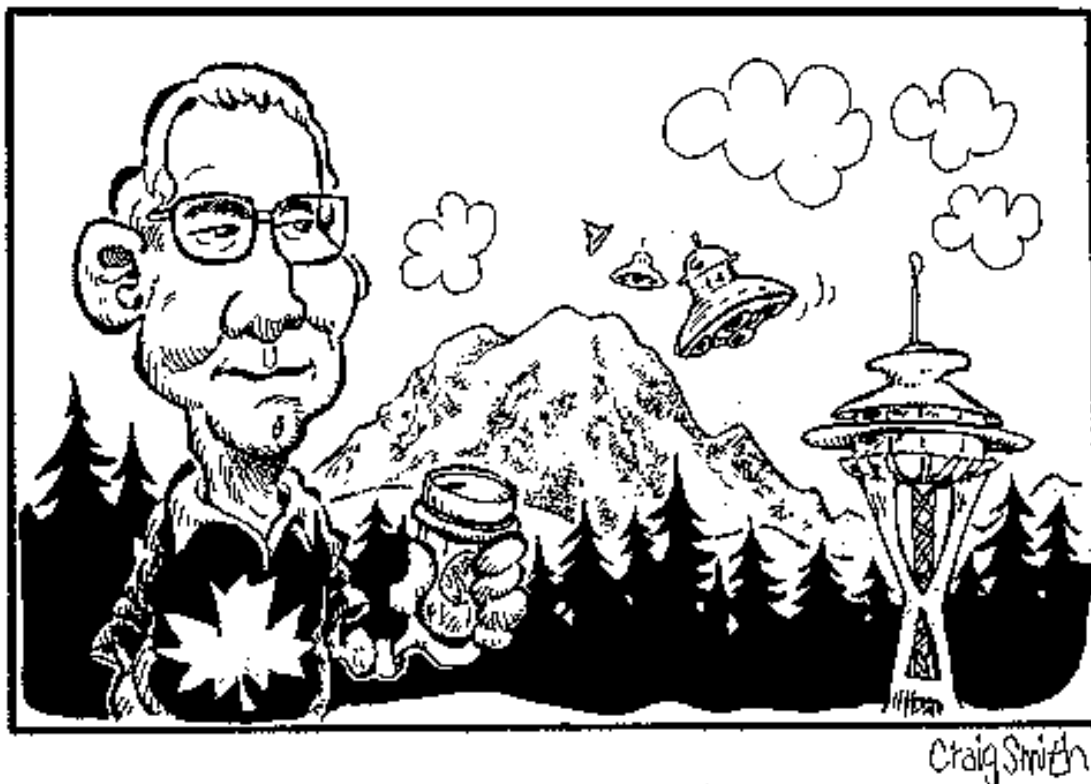


A Trip Report Found in a Plain Manila Envelope

Being a True Account of the Adventures in May 2001
of Murray Moore of Mississauga
Who Traveled to Exotic Vancouver and to Fabulous Seattle



Trip report: page 2

Acknowledgments: page 22

Index: page 23

Colour photo pages: inside and outside of the back cover

A Trip Report Found in a Plain Manila Envelope is Murray Moore's Canadian Unity Fan Fund (CUFF) 2001 trip report. Obligatory explanation for the rest of this paragraph. The Canadian Unity Fan Fund is a (very) loosely-organized SF-fandom non-profit non-organization. The money raised for CUFF and donated to CUFF pays the travel expense and the hotel expense of a Canadian SF fan attending the year's Canadian national SF convention, the Convention. The CUFF delegate after attending the year's Convention becomes the CUFF administrator, treasurer, and chief electoral officer, and remains such until replaced by a successor. The CUFF winner is expected to write and publish a trip report and sell same as a fund-raiser.

A Trip Report Found in a Plain Manila Envelope costs \$5 Canadian or \$5 U.S. U.S. dollar cheques are okay. Send your cheque payable to CUFF, or a post office money order payable to CUFF, to
Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Road, Mississauga, Ontario L4Y 1C8 Canada.
My email address is mmoore@pathcom.com.

May 10, Thursday, Day 7

To begin with the end, on the seventh and last day of my CUFF trip, having deplaned in Mississauga at Pearson International Airport, I telephone home. Our older son, Russell, 15, responds to my voice not with Welcome home! Dad! or Gosh Pater! We all missed you. Mom's been crying every night! but with this news: *Our computer's broken! Buy us a new computer!*

"And came down." That line worked famously for SF writer Samuel R. Delany.

sigh Back in the real world.

Vancouver, British Columbia. To this Central Canadian, living in the City of Mississauga contiguous to the City of Toronto to the east, and thus a short drive (if the Gardiner Expressway isn't busy) from the Centre of Canada™, Vancouver in the southwest corner of B.C. is a far-off city in an exotic landscape.

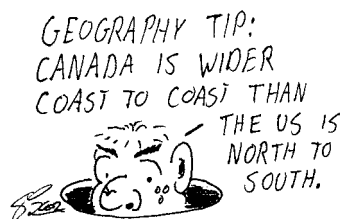
The Wet Coast. The Left Coast. Three time zones difference. Snowless winters. The mighty larch. The Douglas fir. The rest of the Monty Python lumberjack song. (The only lumberjack I know is a fan, Rodney Leighton of RR 3, Tata-magouche, Nova Scotia. And Nova Scotia, being one of the Maritime provinces, is on the east coast of the world's second biggest country.)



Vancouver, home of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association (BCSFA), the oldest and healthiest SF club in Canada.

Vancouver, site of the BCSFA-associated annual VCon. In May 2001, VCon 26 is the host of the 2001 Convention.

And, dear to my fanzine-fan heart, Vancouver and environs (environs including Cumberland on Vancouver Island) residents include talented and true fanzine fans R. Graeme Cameron, Scott "Honcho" Patri, Garth Spencer, and Andrew Murdoch.



An oddity which is not amusing to Canadians is that flying across Canada is more expensive than flying south to perhaps every major U.S. city. I am one of the only double-handful of the attendees from east of the Rocky Mountains attending VCon 26 and Convention 21.

Putting aside the handful of Albertans, in addition to myself, from further afield flew the inevitable John Mansfield of Winnipeg, Manitoba; Canadian SF's power couple, the ubiquitous Robert J. Sawyer and Carolyn Clink (newly recruited residents to the wonders of rural, bucolic Mississauga, I must inform you); and furthest-flying Jean-Louis Trudel of Montreal, Quebec.

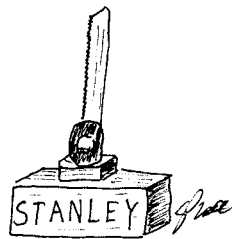
You have to be impressed by a city with a park --Stanley Park-- which created in me the impression of being possibly as large as the Maritime province of Prince Edward Island. And the trees in Stanley Park: the stumps of the dead trees in Stanley Park are thicker and taller than the maples and the white spruce of dear old Ontari-ari-ari-o.

The wettest I become during my sojourn in Vancouver is the late afternoon of the first day, wandering through Stanley Park with the hood of my light jacket covering my head. Hardly another human being is in sight, although I gather that if you penetrate the depths of the park you find some of the city's homeless doing the Vancouver version of squatting. Stanley Park is British Columbia's most popular tourist attraction, drawing eight million visitors a year.

This tip from my niece Amanda, a transplanted Mississaugan, might be useful to you if you find yourself in Vancouver.

Amanda reports, "The great thing about Vancouver is that the immediate mountains are north - so if your sense of direction is as bad as mine, keep that in mind."

On Mar. 14 Amanda types "hope everyone is well... and that you're coping with the snow... i could gloat about the blossoms that have arrived here already... but i'll suffice it to say i'm glad i don't live in the snowbank called ontario."



I return-emailed Amanda, "In today's Globe & Mail, writing in your city, John Gray advises the Rest of Canada, 'We don't have to dress like hand grenades to keep from freezing to death.' Bastard."

And Amanda replies, "well... what all us westerners conveniently leave out of the picture is that, we may not be dressing like hand grenades, but we look an awful lot like a city of ducks... wet quackers- you'll see what i mean when you get here- although by then the wet will have dried and blossomed so you'll only get to experience the quackers of Vancouver."

Amanda advises me to "bring a rain slicker! or at least something waterproof with either a hood or a hat. it's raining these days. a lot. other than that, it's spring weather-warm during the day with an ocean chill at night."

In a Globe & Mail newspaper interview in October 2000, Vancouver native Douglas Coupland, author of Generation X and Microserfs, explained, "I love rain. It could rain every day as far as I'm concerned. People here really like it, it's more on the misty side, a friendly presence. That's why it's uncool to carry an umbrella in Vancouver. It's like an admission that you aren't wearing something water-repellent or fleece. I didn't see my first galosh until I went to Toronto. It was like seeing an ear trumpet for the first time."

Look for the memorial to the Japanese and the memorial to Shakespeare. Stanley Park is lousy with statues and memorials which are dwarfed by their surroundings. By reading the words cut into the Japanese-Canadian Memorial I learn that during the First World War, of the 190 Japanese-Canadian volunteers, 54 were killed. Two Japanese-Canadians served their country in the Second World War. These two individuals somehow escaped the internment as enemy aliens of all Canadians of Japanese-origin. Even Japanese-Canadians born in Canada were included in the mass removal at the order of Mackenzie King's Liberals to inland camps. During the Korean War one Japanese-Canadian wore Canada's uniform. Quelle surprise.

The epitaph on the modest Shakespeare memorial, on the main path beside the Vancouver Police Mounted Police stable, announces "He was not of an age/ But for all time."

The 123-year-old park named after a Canadian governor general is larger than New York City's Central Park. I am guessing that the Stanley Cup prize of the National Hockey League is named after the same Stanley.

This description is in Death on a No. 8 Hook, Laurence Gough's second Willows and Parker police detective series novel: "Stanley Park is a thousand acres of mostly untended vegetation. It's shaped like an elephant's head, is situated at the west end of the city, and is surrounded on three sides by the Pacific Ocean." Reading the Jack Willows and Claire Parker series you will absorb much information about Vancouver while being well entertained. The television series equivalent is the excellent *DaVinci's Inquest*. Dominic DaVinci is the Vancouver coroner in the award-winning coroner and cops Canadian Broadcasting Corporation series.

I see few people, four Canada geese, no other birds, and one chipmunk.

Steve Forty can describe another Vancouver landmark to you, and perhaps be your native guide. Steve is the VCon Ambassador for Life. Steve has a terrific dark tan, thanks to his frequent frequenting of clothing-optional Wreck Beach.

According to Steve, when Mississaugans in January are snug in their homes listening to their furnaces running, Wreck Beach habitués adapt to the winter weather by sunbathing in the shelter of large rocks.

Vancouver has micro-climates. Steve lives in Coquitlam on a 500-foot-high hill. He looks down to see snow and rain. Vancouverites still water their lawns in the dry season.

Seattle has its toy monorail. Vancouver has its Skytrain, cars on elevated track that carry people through the greater Vancouver area.

Riding the Skytrain reminds Graeme Cameron of his childhood daydream of being Superman, of flying above the tops of buildings. Mind you, during my ride via Skytrain from the convention hotel in Burnaby to the Vancouver train station to board a Greyhound bus for Seattle, my Skytrain car is filled with school children and I might as well be underground on the Bloor line in Toronto for all of the skyline I see.



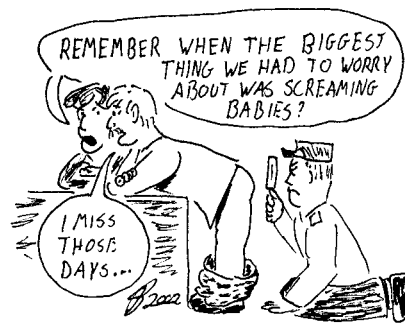
The Skytrain, like an electric train, stops and goes by remote control. Operators in a control room, watching through cameras, I assume, open and close the train doors and make the trains go and stop. Tickets are available in machines. You do not pass through a turnstile. If you get caught by a ticket-checker without a ticket on a train you pay a fine. The Skytrain system is divided into three zones, with different pricing: the farther you travel, the more you pay. Buying a ticket when you are one station from the first station in the next zone must be annoying. Some Skytrain riders resell their tickets.

Travel is wasted on the young. I was a teenager during my previous visit to Vancouver, in the mid-1960s, in tow of my parents. We drove from Ontario through Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, through the Rocky Mountains to British Columbia, and across the Canada-U.S. border as far south as Seattle.

I passed the time during these 1960's family trips in the back seat reading. When I became a driver I took my turn driving. All I remember of British Columbia is a suspension bridge. All I remember of Seattle is the Space Needle.

April 29, Sunday, four days to go

Poking through books, working toward deciding what books to take to read on the airplane. Going on a trip means novelty, and adventure. Going on a trip means displacement, and upset. Why did I think it a good idea to chose a 7 a.m. flight to cross three time zones in five hours to arrive in Vancouver two hours after I left Toronto? I will be sleepy by 7 p.m. Vancouver time. At least I had the wit to leave a day early. More time in Vancouver?! Jean-Luc Godard, or another New Wave film director, supposedly said that he did not leave Paris because he might miss a movie.



For my reading I pick the Michael Swanwick collection Tales of Old Earth; the October-November 1999 50th anniversary issue of The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction; the first Ian Rankin Inspector Rebus mystery Knots and Crosses. My choices on this trip are different in that I am breaking the pattern of choosing a pair of novels. Being a passenger is good because I can read. Watch out: beware of blood clots. *I hope you don't find yourself sitting next to a crying child*, Hope Leibowitz tells me.

I finish reading Carl Hiaasen's fabulous black humour mayhem novel Double Whammy set in Hiaasen's native Florida. I should read more books, because reading makes me happy.

April 30, Monday, three days to go

Looking at myself in the bathroom mirror, at my short hair, I ask myself, Do I have a Doc Savage hairline?

May 2, Wednesday, one more day

The first suicide at Casino Montreal in Montreal. A depressed gambler kills himself in his car in the casino's parking lot. What are the odds of another suicide at Casino Montreal in the next 365 days?

May 3, Thursday, Day One

Roots Airline sign in the airport asks "Can you call it starting over if it's never been done before?" I feel as if I am carrying the National Library in one of my two bags. Because I am a Nice Guy, I agree to Peter Halasz's request to lug books to VCon and get them autographed. My notebook falls out of my jacket passing through the x-ray scanner.

I am off to the city described by Douglas Coupland thusly: "Vancouver is beautiful and charming and all of that, but it's also, arguably, one of the remotest cities in North America not counting, say, Juneau."

Takeoff ~> wheels up. I am reading in "The Very Pulse of the Machine" the line "You are. Creator. Of machine." Not at the moment, I think. Aside: To borrow a phrase from Dale Speirs, the Swanwick collection Tales of Old Earth is well recommended.

I slip the surly bonds of work and mundane life. On this trip I do not have a hassle with Customs, probably because I do not pass through Customs. That woman who gave me a hard time on my return from Boston and Corflu a few weeks earlier could have been my daughter.



I am beginning to realize not only am I middle-aged, but that I look middle-aged: a fact which can cut me some slack when I break the pre-September 11, 2001 rules, i.e. flying to Boston in February to attend Corflu, a convention for fanzine fans, with only a driver's licence as identification. I do not realize I do not have my birth certificate until I check in at the airline counter in the airport. U.S. Customs does not catch my lack of proof of identity: Canadian Customs does, on my return.

The Airbus A320 seeks and stays at 39,000 feet. I accept the pilot's word for this information. I am reminded of a scene in a Peter O'Donnell Modesty Blaise novel in which a character falling from an airplane --Modesty or Willie Garvin-- angled her or his body respectively to move horizontally and survive, so the series could continue, by landing in deep snow. Really deep snow.

Above the Rockies, I think that air travel is both our closest approximation to teleportation and God-like. I ponder the possibility of a meteor or of a space junk strike, or of volcanic eruption.

Early May in Mississauga brought summer weather with spring weather skipped. During the three previous days at work I eat lunch outside at a picnic table. Our lawn is thin and brown, as it will look in July and August. The white grubs eating the roots of the grass are not helping the lawn.

The sky above Vancouver is overcast. The weather is cool and dry. The airport shuttle bus soon is in the city. The bushes and trees and lawns are very green and other colours. Small houses occupy small lots. No buses are seen because of the transit strike.



I don't read carefully Amanda's directions. I walk 90 minutes between the Skytrain station and her apartment, or 70 minutes longer than I need to walk. Lugging Peter's books. During the bus strike.

How far is Adanac Street, I ask fellow pedestrians, twice. *You're going in the right direction but it's still a long distance*, I am told, twice. This is true, because I am walking parallel to Commercial Drive, the street I should be walking. I return to the Skytrain station, orient myself, and find

my way. Hire a taxi? But I'm almost there!

This Adanac family, what country are they from? Adanac turns up in the Yellow Pages (business) but, strangely, not in the White Pages (residential) of Canadian telephone books.

Commercial Drive is not commercial. Commercial Drive is like Toronto's Queen Street West before Queen Street West became trendy. Commercial Drive does not have a single franchise fast food outlet. The reception to an entrepreneur who tried to open a chain fast food restaurant

was sufficiently unfriendly to abort the opening. Commercial Drive is vegetarian and natural food restaurants, ethnic restaurants, and Mom and Pop small businesses.

I am lucky to be able to buy a hamburger at Fet's Bar and Grille. The reception counter is an old white-enamel gas stove. I am glad the weather is cool because I am sweaty after tramping back and forth along East Broadway before I stepped at last onto Commercial Drive.

Mississauga in contrast came into existence after the Second World War. Its redeeming feature is that I live and work in Mississauga and live less than 15 minutes drive from the west end of the Toronto subway.

Vancouver includes Canada's poorest postal code, the intersection of Hastings and Main. Amanda, who lived in that neighbourhood once upon a time, tells me that tourists from New York City visit Hastings and Main to survey the poorest neighbourhood in Canada, compare it with the best worst of NYC, and snicker at the comparison.

May 4, Friday, Day 2

As I explore the Radisson Hotel Burnaby I hear the announcement that Bradbury is speaking next week. To the Burnaby Rotary Club. Probably not our Bradbury.

I introduce myself to Al "Mr. Science" Betz. Al is VCon's Fan Guest of Honour. I am thinking that he is the cartoonist whose art I see in the VCon progress report, art by an artist with the initials A.B. and I am looking for a local artist to illustrate my trip report. I subsequently determine that the cartoonist with the initials A.B. is Andrew Brechin.

Al tells me *I can't draw a straight line*. But he can make liquid nitrogen ice cream - and he does, the next day. He talks about a 486 computer and open source code and a PC firewall. I listen.

My first sighting of the spoor of Scott Patri is a plastic cup in the fan lounge. The name Honcho is printed on it. Propeller- and robe-wearing Scott informs me *There's dick all in Cumberland*, Cumberland being the village he calls home on Vancouver Island. *I only write when I have something to say*. Scott no longer pubs his ish because of the cost. *I do a lot of stuff on the Internet*.



Obscure Space Programs as Documented by B Movies

Honcho and I are in the audience for R. Graeme Cameron's guided tour of verbal pop-ups through clips from the worst of the previous half-century's SF movies. The panel is Obscure Space Programs as Documented by B Movies.

After a clip from a Japanese movie purporting to describe travel by rocket into space, Graeme announces *I'm never flying with them*.

Graeme tests whether we were paying attention after a clip representing the Italian space program: *You may have noticed that the chairs in which (the space ship crew) are sitting have castor wheels*.

I identified with the Beaver character on the tv sitcom Leave It to Beaver, Graeme says. He dressed the same way I did.

An actress in one of the film clips, a crew member of a space ship being fought over by two male astronauts, begs “Stop please!” Graeme’s comment is *She’s far too polite. She says please.* Chorus of audience members: *She must be Canadian.*

Canadian SF: What distinguishes it?

Before the panel begins, Michael Coney shares, *I looked myself up on the Internet but all I found was scathing reviews of my own stuff.* (In my scribble of his quote scathing looks like soothing, but scathing sounds right.)

Clear in my notes is this admission from Coney as he earlier signed a copy of one of his books for Peter Halasz: *The only thing that I can write fluidly is my signature.*

**CANADIAN
SF**

* Self Conscious Science

A panel discussing the question Does Canadian SF exist? apparently is a perennial Convention panel. *This is the 15th annual Canadian SF panel at these Conventions,* reports panelist Jean-Louis Trudel.

Coney contributes, *I have never been convinced that Canadian SF exists except that we live here. Reviews of my writing have me living in Canada but I always will be a British writer.*

I like to think that we write galactically. That’s all there is to it.

Trudel describes Toronto as a Rick’s Cafe in Casablanca for SF writers. *Toronto SF rules.* No U.S. authors were represented in the Novel category in the 2001 Hugos: two nominees were from Scotland, and two from Toronto. *I have heard good comments about (Toronto resident) Karl Schroeder’s Ventus from French friends.* Trudel adds to the list of Toronto writers the names Terence Green, Peter Watts, and Phyllis Gotlieb.

Canadian SF, general opinion states, begins with A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder by James De Mille, published in 1888.

Gillian Savage mentions Reflection of the Siamese Twin by John Ralston Saul, fiction writer, intellectual heavyweight, and husband of Governor General Adrienne Clarkson. Saul suggests that Canada does not have a monolithic ideology. The forming of Canada was a complex process. Because of the French, Native, and British influences, Canadians decided not to have a singular identity.

Trudel recommends West of January by Albertan Dave Duncan as very Canadian SF depending on the environment, also an Aurora winner. And Robert Sawyer writes about winners who put up with stuff. *In Canadian SF bullets hurt while they bounce off Arnold Schwarzenegger in the Terminator movie. Canadian heroes are flawed and they suffer. Sometimes they win and survive. To endure is heroic.*

Coney adds that American publishers are careful about what they print to avoid offending their readers. Candace Jane Dorsey offers the bleak last-line ending of Guy Gavriel Kay’s Tigana.

Daniela Esparo, a librarian for 10 years, describes the institutional bias toward SF as not being literature. Librarians use as their buying guide catalogues from established publishers and reviews. Canadian SF small press publishers and mass market paperbacks are overlooked. Mass market paperbacks do not last long enough to justify the time and expense of cataloging them.

Guy Gavriel Kay and Sean Russell are published in big trade paperback and hard cover editions. We buy them. We buy everything.

Trudel: *Canadian Sf depends on your criteria. Savage: Both of my short stories have been Canadian SF, very Canadian in content.*

Trudel has written young adult books in which Canadian characters pop up. *Most of my science fiction is set in the far future. I have a lot of characters in a space colony called New Quebec. I have written two books set underneath Montreal.*

Dorsey: *I try to make sure that the worlds I write about reflect the diversity we have in the real world. I admire Samuel R. Delany for not assuming that the far future will be like the 1950s.*

Coney: *I can't look for trends to predict the future. I write for the market. I wrote 12 stories set on the Saanich Peninsula for Ed Ferman: I wrote animal stories for Katherine K. Rusch: I wrote Canadian stories for Tesseracts. You have to be versatile to write for a market.*

Trudel: *That Canadian stories are the flavour of the month is an advantage. I start from a non-commercial position: not Dungeons & Dragons, not Star Wars, not commercial: semi-literary writing that attracts an audience.*

Dorsey: *The S in SF stands for a lot, speculative as well as science. The flirtation with realism in the twentieth century was an anomaly.*

Opening Ceremony

Al Betz declares *I am not a writer*. Al explains that he has lost his sense of humour because of his medical problems.



Candas Jane Dorsey tells this joke. *“Four Sf writers go into a bar. They order drinks. ‘Fifty-two days!’ says the first writer. A second round is ordered. ‘Fifty-two days!’ says the second writer. The bartender asks ‘What is special about 52 days?’ ‘We finished a jigsaw puzzle.’ ‘Yes.’ ‘And it only took us 52 days.’ ‘What’s so special about 52 days?’ ‘On the box it said, Two to four years.’”*

Now would be an appropriate point to explain that Humour in Science Fiction was the VCon 26 theme. VCon 26, also known as 2001: A Space Oddity.

Lynne Abbey, VCon’s first-among-equals guest and a former resident of the U.S. NorthWest now living in Florida, says *I only knew I was writing humor* (U.S. spelling in deference to the GoH) *when I started reading my work aloud and people started laughing.*

The Pacific NorthWest is not as funny as central Florida. The Pacific NorthWest is prettier.

True Stories

Alan Rosenthal talks about getting his job in Seattle, Washington and about the job offer he declined in Sudbury, Ontario.

During a job interview at Microsoft I was asked if I had been in a conflict in any of my previous jobs. I answered, 'There was that incident when I was working at the Post Office. You might have heard about it.' The interviewer cracked up.

I also scored in a Microsoft interview by successfully answering the challenge of telling a person over the telephone who did not understand the concept how to draw a triangle inside a square.

During a tour of a mine in Sudbury, an oldtimer told me about a co-worker whose arm, caught in a conveyor belt, was torn off at the shoulder. The arm was taken to the local hospital and packed in ice, but this accident occurred before re-attaching an arm was possible. But, said the old-timer, 'The watch was still ticking.'

May 5, Saturday, Day 3

One of the dealers at VCon is Charles McKee, the founder of Toronto's Bakka Books, now a Vancouver resident and the owner of McKee Books, doing business on the Internet since 1995. Charlie identifies himself as a pioneer of selling books through the Internet. He plans to add Bakka's history to his web site www.charlesmckeebooks.com.

From the audience during a panel during the weekend. First fan: *I can name three people who were on Survivor II. I can't name anyone on the international space station.* Second fan: *Throw someone off the space station!*

Mr. Science Makes Ice Cream

Al Betz explains that you can stick your hand in liquid nitrogen provided a vapour barrier separates your hand from the liquid nitrogen. *Personally I like my skin.*



To make ice cream using liquid nitrogen, Al is wearing oven mitts, a red and white plastic helmet, and a white lab coat with red trim. *According to the Internet a major use of liquid nitrogen is making liquid nitrogen ice cream.* Al has a green and white plastic Little Playmates Deluxe cooler. *There is believed to be a liquid nitrogen volcano on Titan's biggest moon.* Wearing safety glasses, Al makes the ice cream in a very big silver mixing bowl. *I have on occasion hidden a hot dog wiener in a glove finger, put the glove in liquid nitrogen, and then smashed that finger with a hammer. The tricky part is to remember which finger I want to hit.* Al uses liquid nitrogen to shrink a yellow balloon decorated with red poppies. *You can freeze two cans of shaving cream and unpeel the cans. Place the frozen shaving cream in a car and when it warms the shaving cream will fill the car.*

The recipe: 1 liter heavy whipping cream; 1 liter half-and-half; 450 ml. granulated sugar; 3 whole eggs; 75 ml. vanilla extract; flavoring, as desired; 5 liters liquid nitrogen. For the experimental method, contact me.

Prix Aurora Award Banquet and Dinner Theatre

Robert Sawyer, Prix Aurora Awards toastmaster, waxes historical: *The first Aurora was given in 1988 in Halifax to A.E. Van Vogt, the parent of all of us who write SF in this country.* Van Vogt was a prairie native, born in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Snow Queen by long-time VCon attendee Eileen Kernaghan is a popular winner of the Best Long-Form Work in English Aurora, judging by the applause. Her novel is published by Thistledown Press of Saskatchewan. This VCon is her 25th VCon. *I'm very glad I didn't miss this one.*

Meilleur livre en francais winner Jean-Louis Trudel praises his editor *for his audacious decision to publish a collection of short fiction of Young Adult SF.* The collection's name is Demain, les etoiles.

"Surrendering the Blade" by Marcie Tentchoff, entered in the Best Short-Form Work in English category, is the first Aurora-winning poem. It begins "The cry went out from Camelot/That Arthur led his knights to war/Across the water, where a man/ He'd loved was waiting on the shore/ To fight him in his lady's name, And all the kingdoms still allied/ Delivered up their choicest men,/ And all the countryside around/ Sent victuals meant to succor them,/ The lords and peasants all the same." The poem continues for more than 150 lines. Originally published in *The Doom of Camelot*, Green Knight Publishing.

John Campbell Award nominee for Best New Writer, Douglas Smith, wins the Meilleure nouvelle en francais Aurora for "La Danse des esprits," a French translation of a written-in-English story by the Ontario author.

This is one that people will be chatting about in the newsgroups tomorrow, Sawyer predicts. He probably will not set foot in Quebec for five or 10 years. SF authors are notorious for being poor prognosticators. Smith is in Montreal five months later attending the 2001 World Fantasy Con.

The surprises are not over. David Widdicombe, writer of the play *Science Fiction: The Play* which had a limited run in Toronto, wins the Best Work in English (Other) Aurora. *Science Fiction: The Play* is the story of a down-on-his-luck SF writer and an obsessive fan who tracks him down.

Widdicombe was told *You don't have a prayer and Nobody saw your play*, Sawyer tells the audience. (I did, thanks to an email of recommendation broadcast by Sawyer.) Sawyer declared, *He will just plotz when I call him.*

Edo Van Belkom, however, once again a nominee and once again not a winner, will get the news via email from Sawyer. *I will email Edo Van Belkom because it will be safer to email him.*

The voters give the Meilleure ouvrage en francais (Autre) Award to Joel Champetier, editor of the Quebec SF magazine *Solaris*. Smith's Aurora winner was published in *Solaris*.

The Artistic Achievement Aurora is given to Jean-Pierre Normand.

Fan Achievement (Fanzine) goes to Karen Bennett for editing *Voyageur*, the web site of the USS Hudson Bay Star Trek club (www.idic.ca) in Toronto.

BCSFA president and VCon 24 chair R. Graeme Cameron receives the Fan Achievement (Organizational) Aurora. Convention co-ordinator and Prix Aurora Awards administrator Clint Budd describes the voters' choice as long overdue. Graeme received his Aurora on his ninth nomination. Graeme remembers sitting at the Aurora Awards in Toronto during Primedia with writer Edo Van Belkom. Edo asked Graeme "How do you get nominated eight times?" Graeme's answer: "I send a small fanzine to 40 people nation-wide." The Graeme tells his adopted home town crowd, *To get this when I'm just happy to be alive is a tremendous thrill.*

THE SECOND PUREST
FORM OF SELF-
EXPRESSIOIN.



On the subject of publishing a fanzine, Graeme describes publishing a fanzine as *the purest form of self-expression for SF fans*. Describing the mind of an Aurora-winning fanned, Graeme explains *I have a mind like a steel trap. It's built like a sieve but it's a steel trap.*

Peruse Graeme's Canadian Fancyclopedia at <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html>

Fan Achievement (Other) winner Donna McMahon, author of the newly-published Tor hardcover Dance of Knives is recognized for her reviewing. *I started writing reviews during a four and one-half hour round trip commute. I started to reread SF and I was reminded of terrific stuff.* Donna adds, *Reviews are a good thing. If I can spread the news, that's what I want to do.*

Clint Budd describes the Costume Guest of Honour: *Betty Bigelow speaks fluent Klingon and good Arabic but not French.*

At 10 p.m. con attendees have a choice of entertainment: What's up with Godzilla?, and Win Murray Moore's Money: Trivia Challenge.

Win Murray Moore's Money had its debut three months earlier during the annual Toronto SF convention, Ad Astra. The format of Win Murray Moore's Money is strikingly and amazingly similar to the U.S. game show Win Ben Stein's Money.

Win Murray Moore's Money is Robert Sawyer's fault. Also Don Hutchison's fault: Don volunteered the thought that I look like Ben Stein. Don also splashed me with mustard, but that's another story.

During Ad Astra the challenger in the final round wins with three points out of a possible 10. I would have tied with three points if I had blurted out the answer Leslie Neilsen to the question to do with the classic SF movie Forbidden Planet. This second time the questions are less obscure. The proof is the scores: something like seven for me and five for challenger Alan Rosenthal. Proudest I am of answering the question, What is Pamela Lee Anderson's birthday? July 1, 1967.

Fanecdotes

Al Betz recalls an idea that never got off the ground: *Stone Lake is in the middle of Golden Gate Park. People drive their remote control boats on it. I wanted to make a remote control dirigible and drop bombs on the boats.*



Frank Johnson, maker of the Aurora Awards, explained he became the award maker because of a conversation with Robert Runte in a bar in Calgary. The award is a maple leaf of aluminum on a maple base. Look at it from above and you see the shape of the letters S and F.

May 6, Sunday, Day 4

History of Auroras, Conventions, and CUFF

The History of Auroras, Conventions, and CUFF panel attracts an audience of six people, five of whom remain awake.

I quote Garth Spencer, Canfan historian, from the programme book. “The Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy (Aurora) Awards are annual, fan-voted, bilingual awards given in recognition of science fiction and fantasy works by Canadian authors and artists, and in recognition of fan activity by Canadian fans. Since Halcon 3 in 1980, where the first CSFFA Award was presented by Spider Robinson to A. E. Van Vogt for lifetime achievements, a growing number of writers, artists, editors, film and radio professionals, and fans, have been recognized with Aurora Awards.”

Susan Wood of Vancouver was the 1981 winner. Awards for work in French were added in 1985. In 1988 the CUFF delegate, Taral from Toronto, suggested increasing the awards to 10 in number. In 1989 the Auroras were first presented, in Toronto. For more Aurora Awards information, visit this URL: <http://www.sentex.net/~dmullin/aurora/>. For more CUFF information, visit Garth Spencer’s web site: <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~hrothgar/cuff.htm>.

Frank Johnson describes becoming the maker of the Aurora Award sculptures. In conversation with Robert Runte in a bar in Alberta, *Just like that I said I’ll build it. Robert: There’s 10 of them now. Me: Oh. Frank signed the base for 2001. It’s the polish that’s the grind. I don’t know how people do it for a living.*

It sounds like a Certs commercial, Clint Budd says. Pushing his fists together: It’s a pro award: it’s a fan award.

CUFF fund raiser

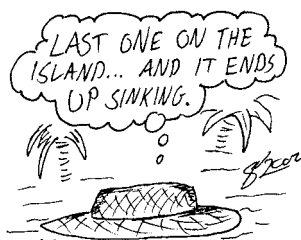
The annual VCon turkey reading to benefit the CUFF Fund organized by Fran Skene raises \$133.20. Fiction, pro and fan, with badly-written descriptions of physical action is read by Fran and by myself. Members of the audience volunteer to do the actions with much exaggeration. Non-participants bid to stop a reading when it stops being amusing. Spectators also bid to continue a reading to discomfit their friends providing the entertainment.

Half of the \$133.20 is raised by John Mansfield. John rises to his feet in the audience and announces he is auctioning for CUFF the opportunity for the high bidders to have their name given to a character in a C.J. Cherryh novel and in a Robert Sawyer novel. *I am offering immortality*

Closing Ceremonies

Lynne Abbey announces that VCon has left a wonderful impression. C.J. Cherryh: *It's been like a real old-fashioned con, which is such a rare thing these days.*

Graeme Cameron amuses with his annual VCon Elron Awards. The Elron motto is, If we honour the best, should we not honour the least? The Russian Space Program is given the first of the series of 2001 Elrons.



Graeme turns the spotlight next to Forrest J. Ackerman. Ackerman invented the phrase sci fi. In 1939 during the first World Science Fiction Convention, Ackerman wore the first fan costume. In the 1950s and the 1960s Ackerman is the spirit of his influential newsstand-distributed magazine, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. In the late 1990s Ackerman was fired from his own magazine by its new publisher. During the subsequent lawsuit, George Lucas, Stephen Spielberg, and Stephen King support Ackerman. Ackerman wins in court. Ackerman, *the real sci fi guy, the first sci fi guy, gets the Real Survivor Elron.*

A U.S. company operating under the corporate name Fandom Inc. with fandom.com as its web site address claimed fandom as a trade mark and sued people with web site names including the word fandom. Fandom Inc. recently had filed for bankruptcy. Graeme declares Fandom Inc. the winner of the 2001 Shove It Up Your Mundane Elron Award: *I am willing to insert it free of charge.*

The last 2001 Elron recipient is author John Norman. Norman is a perennial Elron recipient. Graeme describes Norman writing a letter to Ursula K. LeGuin in which Norman suggests that women are born to be physically abused and chained. Graeme describes Norman as *tame, placid, even quaint* and the *Perry Como of bondage*. Norman receives the Special Hidden Feminist Agenda Elron for his achievement of making the next generation safer for women.

Novel Gor use

Al Betz er Mr. Science suggests this use for Gor novels in the collected Ask Mr. Science!: *Secrets Of The Universe Revealed At Last!*, the special Westercon 44/VCon 19 edition of the collected answers by Mr. Science to questions concerning life and the true nature of the universe, originally published in the pages of BCSFAzine.



“A new use has been found for Gor novels. At a very recent local convention Mr. Science was assigned a room in which the bed was tilted in several directions simultaneously.

“Not wishing to sleep with his feet higher than his head, or in peril of rolling onto the floor, Mr. Science discovered that the judicious placement of three Gor novels, specifically, two copies of Captive of Gor and one of Tribesman of Gor, successfully levelled the bed.

“It is believed that other Gor novels will work equally well.”

May 7, Monday, Day 5

I had created Toronto and Vancouver comparisons for use during VCon but I never shared them during the convention. Here they are:

- * Vancouver and Toronto both have waterfronts. Vancouver has the Pacific Ocean. Toronto has Lake Ontario.
- * Vancouver and Toronto are close to American cities. Vancouver is close to Seattle. Toronto is close to Buffalo.
- * Vancouver has more heroin addicts. Toronto has more (visible, anyway) homeless people.
- * Some Torontonians would consider an exchange of Vancouver's heroin addicts and Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman a better deal for Toronto.

Think of the newsreel in the black and white movies. The progress of the army on-the-march or of the pioneers through the wilderness is represented by a white bar extending across a map, connecting the dots of names given to bits of geography.

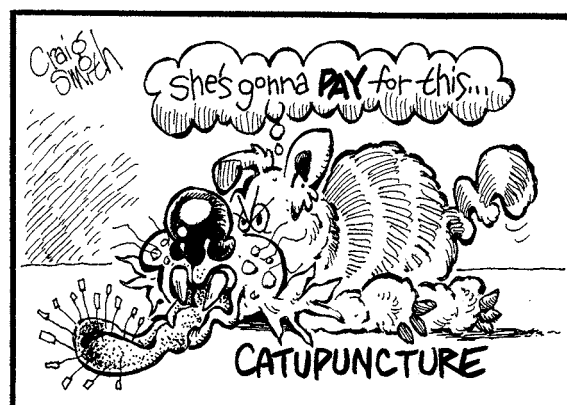
Imagine me on Day 5 in a mostly-empty Greyhound bus departing Vancouver's old train station in late morning. The white line begins in Vancouver on the map of the Pacific Northwest. Vancouver ~> New Westminister ~> Surrey ~> the border ~> Blaine ~> Bellingham ~> Mount Vernon with a cannon in front of a building sporting classical columns ~> Everett ~> Seattle.

My worst moment of the trip occurs between Vancouver and New Westminister. Calm yet worried I repeatedly search through the many pockets of my green jacket. I do not have my blue, spiral-ring notebook with its 26 pages of notes representing Days 1 through 4.

I can visualize my notebook sitting on the window ledge of the McDonald's Restaurant inside the train station. Or is it in my bag, stowed in the belly of the bus? The first opportunity, the next stop, at New Westminister, I retrieve my precious notebook from my bag.

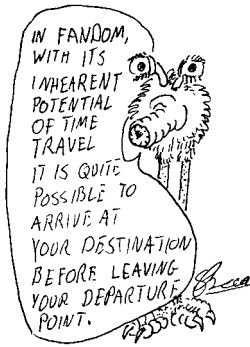
I see logs in a river in British Columbia. I see my third flatbed truck with a load of tree trunks south of Mount Vernon in Washington and my fourth truck hauling dismembered trees near Everett. The bus driver told me the view was the same from either side of the bus. I had picked the left side and so have a view of the snow-capped mountains to the east on this overcast and dry day. The inescapable mountains on Vancouver's north side in contrast were very green.

As the bus moves south on Highway I5, I am reading the 50th anniversary issue of The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction. Theodore Sturgeon in a letter to Judith Merrill types "Mostly you go around like a man with a paper scrotum in a forest fire."



My arrival at Seattle coincides with the sight of a seaplane taking off from Lake Union with the Space Needle beyond it. Seattle: a city without need for air conditioners and a city whose residents have the option of acupuncture to treat their ailing cat pets.

My most embarrassing moment of the trip is arriving in Seattle and realizing that I had given my Seattle co-host Alan Rosenthal to give to my other Seattle co-host Janice Murray the wrong arrival time.



Janice had given up and gone home, where I reached her from the bus station. I had misread my scribbled notes: I gave as my arrival time the departure time of the bus following the bus in which I was riding.

A gathering of SAPS

Janice chauffeurs me to the day's main event, a meet Murray party attended by many of the Seattle members of SAPS (Spectator Amateur Press Society).

Rendezvousing at the 4521 Corliss Ave. N. home of Carol and Wrai Ballard are Mark Manning, Buz and Elinor Busby, Anna Vargo, Wally Weber, and Gord Eklund.

Having read SAPster Don Anderson of Rochester, New York's account of meeting the Seattle SAPsters, and having been a SAPster since the beginning of 2000, I am not surprised upon meeting the Seattle SAPsters in the flesh. I do have to meet Buz to learn how bright-eyed he is.

And Wally indeed is less voluble in person than in print. Wally is the first to /e/s/c/a/p/e/ depart the party.

Anna does read a book for part of her appearance. Mark has less hair and more pounds than the Mark of my imagination.

Mark, elbows against the frame of a doorway into the kitchen: *It is genetically impossible for me to write a less than five page apazine.*

Wally is twigged about the non-appearance of his TAFF trip report, back in nineteen hundred and oughty-ought.

Janice: *The West Wing is really good fantasy. The President loves his wife, dotes on his daughter, resists the Hollywood hierarchy, and is honest.*

Buz: *The alien on (television show) Farscape looks like an ATom (late great British fan Arthur Thomson) cartoon and acts like Jack Williamson's Giles Habbibula character.*

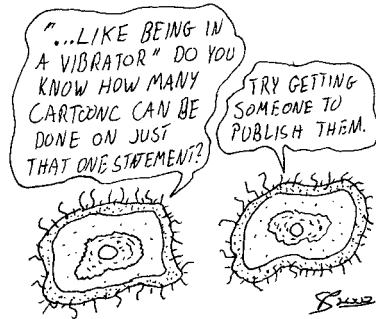
Janice quotes Lise Eisenberg: *There is no food native to Las Vegas except the buffet.* Elinor: *We got Walt Willis on the camel.*

Mark, in the one shot, types: "Inna other room, we were talking about the statue of Lenin, the Troll, the Waiting for the Interurban sculpture, and other totemic items that scream 'FRE-MONT' to Seattlites one and all. Then we got to chatting about bus plunges and mass murderers in Wallingford.

"Here we are in Wallingford; the success of stewed fruits is assured!"

“Sure is nice to have a chance to meet Mrrmee, er, Um, Murray Moore, at long last. I mean, with whom else can I mention R. Graeme Cameron & Steve Forty & Fran Skene without eliciting a blank stare?”

Earthquake stories



Wrai: *I was in my recliner. ‘Gee, this is like being in a vibrator.’* Movie tapes began dropping on my shoulders. *‘Gee, this is exciting.’* If I had realized the heavy stuff that could have fallen on me, I would have been more concerned. Buz: *Our junior cat acted slightly between a cheetah and a flying squirrel.* Elinor: *We ran outside to see if the new greenhouse was still standing. It was just like surfing.*

Buz’s suggestion for improvement of the last episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation. In the last episode the spaceship’s warp drive is tearing the fabric of the universe. *They could have decided to stop using the warp drive and begun using the woof drive. They could have knitted it back together.*

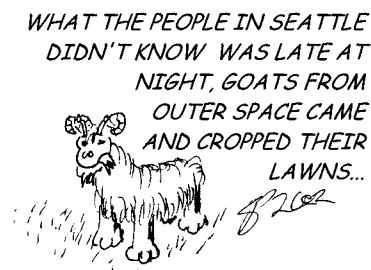
SAPS party hostess Carol Ballard twits me at the conclusion of the one shot produced during my visit, titled SEATTLE SAPS and MOORE/ Special One Shot of May, 2001: “I knew that there would be friends that couldn’t come because of other commitments in particular the need to comply with job requirements, but it has worked out very well. Janice didn’t have any trouble finding the place and we have had a great time talking with her and Murray. Well Murray is so busy taking notes that he isn’t doing much talking. Hey don’t you know you’re supposed to make up the writing, but talk while you’re here!”

May 8, Tuesday, Day 6

I arrived in Seattle late on the Monday afternoon, by bus. I depart early Wednesday morning by train. Janice is my chauffeur on Monday. Alan is my native guide on Tuesday.

Now is a good point to mention the lawn at Chez Murray-Rosenthal. In fact, all of the lawns in Seattle, yea, even in Vancouver.

The Murray (like that name)-Rosenthal lawn reminds me of a golf course putting green in its tightness of weave and its shortness. Everything vegetative is green or, when other than green, its appropriate colour. Lush. The Wet Coast.



What’s my point? Alan claims that a neighbour kid cuts their lawn once a week. The lawn didn’t look any taller when I left than when I arrived. I wish now I had given the lawn closer inspection. I did not observe in my entire time in Seattle a lawn being cut. I did not hear a lawn mower mowing. Investigating this contradiction will be high on my list should I visit Seattle again. Perhaps the explanation is that although rain falls the rain is a dry rain.

I am impressed when Alan tells me that air conditioning is needless in the Seattle climate. During a rare heat wave, people died because they were unable to escape the high temperature.

[[This paragraph typed Aug. 12, 2001. The Shoe Sunday comic strip of same date. “Where are you off to?” “I’m going to Seattle.” “Why?” “Shoe told me to take my request for a raise and put it where the sun don’t shine.” // Globe & Mail, Aug. 10. Headline: A West Coast scorcher. “Go ahead and say it,” writes Christine Clarridge in the Seattle Times. ‘We’re weather wimps. While the rest of the [continent] is suffering a heat wave that’s topping 100 degrees (37.7 Celsius) in some places . . . we’re bracing for our own version of hot - something in the low to mid-eighties. And we’re already complaining.’ ‘This is insufferable,’ said Marvin Gregory of Seattle, who was out running errands, and sweating, in the heat that reached a high ranging from 76 to 82 around Puget Sound [Wednesday] afternoon.” // Globe & Mail, August 11. Headline: Heat emergency may have caused four more deaths (in southern Ontario). “Soaring temperatures claimed the life of Kim Warner, 44, on Monday. The man died of heat stroke while working at a large bakery. . . He had been working in a room that reached 49 degrees (Celsius) and had vomited several times before his death, a union official said.”]]

The street in front of the Murray-Rosenthal house is an attractive snake-track-through-sand shape because it is not a street. The seeming street is a private road that began life as a lane separating the rears of two rows of houses.

Seattle topographically is an up and a down and an around city. Most of my experience of Seattle is from the passenger seat of a car. Thanks to tips during the SAPS party, my experience the day following the party includes a visit to the Fremont section of Seattle to see the troll under the bridge, the statue of Lenin, and the Center of the Universe.

Rootless in Seattle

It is in Fremont that I confirm from two newspapers what by chance I had learned from Alan earlier in the day: the airline on which I expect to return to Toronto from Vancouver no longer exists. From the Roots Air web site: “Roots Air has suspended all of its flights. Regrettably, we have been overcome by a changing industry landscape, which presented a substantial challenge to our planned operations.” Translation: We bailed out.

Alan and I are talking about the cost of flying, Alan explaining that flying across the Pacific to a Far Eastern airport would have been cheaper for himself and Janice than flying east to Logan Airport to attend the 2001 Corflu in Boston.



Me: *I'm flying on the new Canadian airline, Roots Air.*
 Alan: *Are you flying back on Roots Air?* Me: *Yes.* Alan: *No you're not.* Unknown to me, in my vacation from the mundane news during my fannish sojourn, Roots Air has ceased flying between Toronto and Vancouver the day after I arrived in Vancouver. One wit quipped that Roots Air had a shorter life than the Australian installment of the so-called reality television show Survivor. Speaking of Australians, I expect Australians would avoid out of embarrassment flying on an airline named Roots. Root is a synonym for another four-letter word in Australia. Rooting for the home team, well...

My return flight inconvenience is minor. I depart Vancouver for Toronto on an Air Canada aircraft an hour earlier than I was scheduled to depart with Roots Air.

Alas, I am seated in the middle row of one of those seven-seat-wide aircraft --a Boeing 767/200-- a situation comparing unfavourably with my window seat in a new Airbus on the Toronto-Vancouver flight.

I am not a frequent flier but I was impressed that on Roots Air I was offered not only a pillow, not only a blanket, but a hot moist towel to use to wipe my face after the in-flight meal. And I was in economy class.

Alan and I eat on the waterfront at a favourite sea food eatery of Alan's, the Salmon Bay Café. The crab and shrimp omelet (obligatory food reference in a trip report) is more than I can eat. Alan: *I was twice as smart when I was 10. Maybe smarter.*

Trolling in Fremont

The Fremont sightseeing and newspaper-scanning happens on the way back from the day's main event, the Underground Seattle Tour.

Fremont is a former independent municipality that went bankrupt during the Depression and perforce became part of Seattle. Alan describes Fremont as the Berkeley of the Northwest. The troll, of course, is under a freeway bridge. To give you an idea of the troll's size, the Volkswagen in its grip is a real Volkswagen. The VW is filled with cement to prevent homeless people sleeping inside it.

The statue of Lenin in front of a restaurant is an artifact of Communism. It was imported from a former Soviet country --Bulgaria? Romania?-- where larger-than-life-size statues of Lenin are surplus.



Craig Smith

The Centre of the Universe (Alan: *I can get you to the Center of the Universe but we can't jaywalk*) in comparison is conventional: a bunch of signs on a median in the middle of a street pointing in divers directions. Oh yeah, the group of statues of people on another median, Waiting for the Interurban, dressed with clothing and other decorations at the whim of Fremontians. I wish now that I had bought and brought a use-once

disposable camera, but I am lugging enough stuff. Look closely at the second statue from the right.

We park in the Seattle Centre public garage, walk to the monorail, and ride to the Westlake Center, adjacent to Nordstrom's Department Store. We descend to the Seattle version of a subway.



In Seattle, subway transportation is not electric trains but diesel buses that switch to electricity while underground. The buses move through tunnels and load and unload passengers in a huge space. This space impresses me enough to exaggerate that it is wide enough and long enough to encompass a small worldcon.

The perspective for a visitor used to normal subways is wrong because the section used by the buses --a space which should be a deep ditch with three rails at the bottom, decorated with warning signs, and inhabited by the occasional scuttling mouse and scattered pieces of litter--

is a wide dry depression six inches lower than the level on which passengers stand. Committing suicide in the Seattle underground has to be a challenge.

Not to be confused with Underground Seattle. Alan and I next visit the Seattle Mystery Bookshop. Alan sees the on-display-that-day copies of the new novel The Cold Six Thousand by James Ellroy. *Ellroy is the only author whose books I buy immediately in hard cover*, Alan tells me. Our next stop is The Elliott Bay Book Company. I escape with the Arkham House edition of Michael Swanwick's collection Gravity's Angels. Alan, The Cold Six Thousand in hand, sees the new Connie Willis Passage in hard cover. (By the way, Willis fans, Willis, GoH at this year's Ad Astra, shared the news that she plans to write more short fiction.)

Seattle residents have lived in Seattle for x number of years so of course they have taken the Underground Seattle Tour. Just as I, living for nearly all of my 49 years two hours-or-less-driving time from Toronto, have been to the top of the CN Tower, visited Fort York, visited Casa Loma, et cetera. Not. But I have been to Niagara Falls!

Underground Seattle

I already have recommended to other people, Should you find yourself in Seattle for only one day, take the Underground Seattle Tour. The best part is the well-written, honed, and expertly-delivered history of Seattle, influenced by sex, sewage, scandal and a fourth word beginning with s that I don't recall.

Seattle was founded in 1851 on the flat shore beside the water. (Even in the 1850s, with all of the American West from which to choose, Americans knew the value of waterfront property.)

The chosen spot was protected from the ocean below a 200-foot -high cliff. The old growth forest above the settlement when felled and prodded over the cliff edge rolled to the door of the sawmills. The claim is made that the term skid row originated in Seattle, originally skid road, and referring to the slope down which the trees tumbled to the saw mills.

Skid road also was the area where the loggers drank and otherwise amused themselves. This same area contained an unusual number of unmarried women who on the tax rolls identified themselves as seamstresses and accordingly were required to pay a set fee to the local government.

Seattle in its early years was a collection of wooden buildings that had the annoying habit of burning or being washed away by storms. My notes tell me the community was parched by a drought in 1882 and destroyed by fire on June 6, 1889. Eventually the citizens switched to brick as their preferred building material.



Their buildings were now substantial but they still lived inches, not feet, above the water line. Also, the water line rose with the tide. This situation made for a problematic sewage system. Water pressure at high tide could be high enough that flushing a toilet produced a geyser. Only the absent-minded flushed at high tide. I expect a person only once made this mistake.

You might think the residents would move up the slope. Instead, they built a second storey to their buildings, and built a wall the height of the first storey around each building. The space between these individual walls, i.e. the street, was filled to the height of the wall. To enter or leave a building you used a ladder. You climbed down to the now-basement door. You climbed up to the street.

Optimistic gold miners on their way north to the Yukon gold fields left all of their money in Seattle, climbing up and down ladders and examining dry goods in ill-lit rooms. Seattle did very well selling to the would-be mining millionaires the supplies they required in order to be allowed entry into the Yukon.

Eventually the space between each building's outer wall and the building was covered with a sidewalk. Voila: underground Seattle. The first floor is now the basement and the second floor is the first floor at street level.

On the tour you are led on boardwalks through a portion of these large high-ceilinged empty rooms lit by serviceable lighting. Underground Seattle continues up the slope far enough that the ceilings of these empty now-basement former-ground-floor rooms rise to a storey-and-a-half.

Upper stories of a few buildings in this area were still being repaired during my visit, post-earthquake. Underground Seattle was unaffected.



May 9, Wednesday, Day Six

Waiting for the King County Metro express bus at dawn, at the bus stop around the corner from the invisible lane on which Janice and Alan live, I amuse myself by exhaling visible breaths. Out the window of the bus as I move through downtown Seattle, I see a couple in shirt sleeves sitting and drinking at a table on the sidewalk. I am wearing a thin long-sleeved shirt, a T-shirt, and a light jacket. I am not hot.

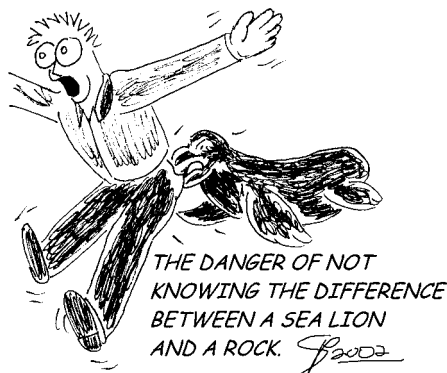


I conclude that Seattleites have adapted to daytime temperatures I considered cool using mind control to lower their body temperature. Perhaps the first Europeans learned this technique from the Snohomish and the Doquamish who had 20,000 years during which to adapt to the local weather. Or perhaps it's the coffee.

My entering the United States occurred without incident. I identified myself as a technical writer going to Seattle to visit friends for a couple of days. My friend is a technical writer at Microsoft. I produced my return Seattle-to-Vancouver Amtrak ticket. Welcome to the U.S.

The Russians walk onto the bus half way between the border and Seattle. I follow the conversation started by a man from Bellingham who describes himself as a gardener and a community college teacher who recently had visited Peru. I learn that the Russians are on their way to the airport to return to Moscow. They are returning from an island after visiting Richard Bach, the author of Jonathan Livingston Seagull. They are dancers who had performed in New York City, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, presumably a dance-work inspired by Jonathan Livingston Seagull.

I recommend travel between Vancouver and Seattle by train rather than bus. The railroad track hugs the coast. The train putters around curves. Back to the white line: Seattle ~> Edmonds ~> Everett ~> Mount Vernon ~> Bellingham. The San Juan Islands to the west, and Puget Sound. The sun shining in a blue sky. North of White Rock, B.C. we passengers are told, *The salmon are spawning, the sea lions are feasting, and the eagles are hunting*. Golden eagles are as common as seagulls. Some of the eagles fly slowly parallel to the slowed train.



Sea lions are announced as present too. A woman behind me excitedly cries, *There's a sea lion*, then amends her announcement, *No, it's a rock*.

She is dazzled seeing the eagles. *I've never seen so many eagles. Mmmm...Mmmm...Mmmm. Gorgeous...gorgeous...gorgeous*. This woman also describes Vancouver to her less talkative companion as a European version of New York City.

Mmmm...Mmmm...Mmmm and *Gorgeous...gorgeous...gorgeous* describe my feeling about my CUFF

trip.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Scott "Honcho" Patri for his art
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Amanda Walker in Vancouver
Janice Murray and Alan Rosenthal in Seattle, and Carol and Wrai Ballard in Seattle

Index



A

Abbey, Lynne 9
 Ackerman, Forrest J. 14
 Andersen, Pamela Lee 12
 Anderson, Don 16
 Artistic Achievement
 Jean-Pierre Normand 11
 ATom (Arthur Thomson) 16
 Aurora winners
 David Widdicombe, Best Work in English
 (Other) 11
 Donna McMahon, Fan Achievement (Other)
 12
 Douglas Smith, Meilleure nouvelle en francais
 11
 Eileen Kernaghan, Best Long-Form Work in
 English 11
 Jean-Louis Trudel, Meilleur livre en francais
 11
 Jean-Pierre Normand, Artistic Achievement 11
 Joel Champetier, Meilleur ouvrage en francais
 (Autre) 11
 Karen Bennett, Fan Achievement (Fanzine) 11
 Marcie Tentchoff, Best Short-Form Work in
 English 11
 R. Graeme Cameron, Fan Achievement (Orga-
 nizational) 12

B

Bach, Richard 22
 Bakka Books 10
 Ballard, Carol 16, 17, 22
 Ballard, Wrai 16, 17, 22
 BCSFA
 see British Columbia Science Fiction Associa-
 tion 2
 Bennett, Karen 11
 Betz, Al 7, 9, 10, 12

Bigelow, Betty 12

Blaise, Modesty 6

Books

A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cyl-
 inder, James De Mille 8
 Captive of Gor, John Norman 14
 Dance of Knives, Donna McMahon 12
 Death on a No. 8 Hook, Laurence Gough 4
 Double Whammy, Carl Hiaasen 5
 Generation X, Douglas Coupland 3
 Gravity's Angels, Michael Swanwick 20
 Jonathan Livingston Seagull, Richard Bach 22
 Knots and Crosses, Ian Rankin 5
 Microserfs, Douglas Coupland 3
 Passage, Connie Willis 20
 Reflection of the Siamese Twin, John Ralston
 Saul 8
 Snow Queen, Eileen Kernaghan 11
 Tales of Old Earth, Michael Swanwick 5
 The Cold Six Thousand, James Ellroy 20
 The Snow Queen 11
 Tigana, Guy Gavriel Kay 8
 Tribesman of Gor, John Norman 14
 Ventus, Karl Schroeder 8
 West of January, Dave Duncan 8
 Bradbury, Ray 7
 Brechin, Andrew 7
 British Columbia Science Fiction Association 2
 Budd, Clint 12, 13
 Busby, Buz 16, 17
 Busby, Elinor 16, 17

C

Cameron, R. Graeme 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 14, 17
 Canadian Unity Fan Fund
 , explained 1
 Canvention, explained 1
 Champetier, Joel 11
 Cherryh, C. J. 13

Clarkson, Adrienne 8
 Clink, Carolyn 2, 22
 Como, Perry 14
 Coney, Michael 8, 9
 Coquitlam 4
 Corflu 6
 Coupland, Douglas 3
 Cumberland, dick all to do in
 see Patri, Scott "Honcho" 7

D

Delany, Samuel R. 2, 9
 Demain, les etoiles
 Meilleur livre en francais 11
 Dorsey, Candace Jane 8, 9
 Duncan, Dave 8
 Dungeons & Dragons 9

E

Eisenberg, Lise 16
 Eklund, Gord 16
 Ellroy, James 20
 Elron Awards 14
 Real Survivor Elron 14
 Russian Space Program 14
 Shove It Up Your Mundane Elron Award 14
 Special Hidden Feminist Agenda Elron 14
 Esparro, Daniela 9

F

Famous Monsters of Filmland 14
 Fandom Inc. 14
 Ferman, Ed 9
 Forbidden Planet 12
 Forty, Steve 4, 17

G

Garvin, Willie 6
 Godard, Jean-Luc 5
 Gotlieb, Phyllis 8
 Gough, Laurence 4
 Green, Terence 8

H

Habbibula, Giles 16
 Halasz, Peter 5, 6, 8
 Hiaasen, Carl 5
 Hutchison, Don 12

J

Johnson, Frank 13

K

Kay, Guy Gavriel 8, 9
 Kernaghan, Eileen 11
 King, Mackenzie 3
 King, Stephen 14

L

La Danse des esprits
 Meilleure nouvelle en francais 11
 Las Vegas 16
 Lastman, Mel 15
 LeGuin, Ursula K. 14
 Leibowitz, Hope 5
 Leighton, Rodney 2
 liquid nitrogen ice cream, making 10
 Lucas, George 14

M

Manning, Mark 16
 Mansfield, John 2, 13
 McKee Books 10
 McKee, Charles 10
 McMahan, Donna 12
 Merril, Judith 15
 Moore, Russell 2
 Murdoch, Andrew 2
 Murray, Janice 15, 16, 17, 21, 22

N

Neilsen, Leslie 12
 Norman, John 14
 Normand, Jean-Pierre 11

O

O'Donnell, Peter 6

P

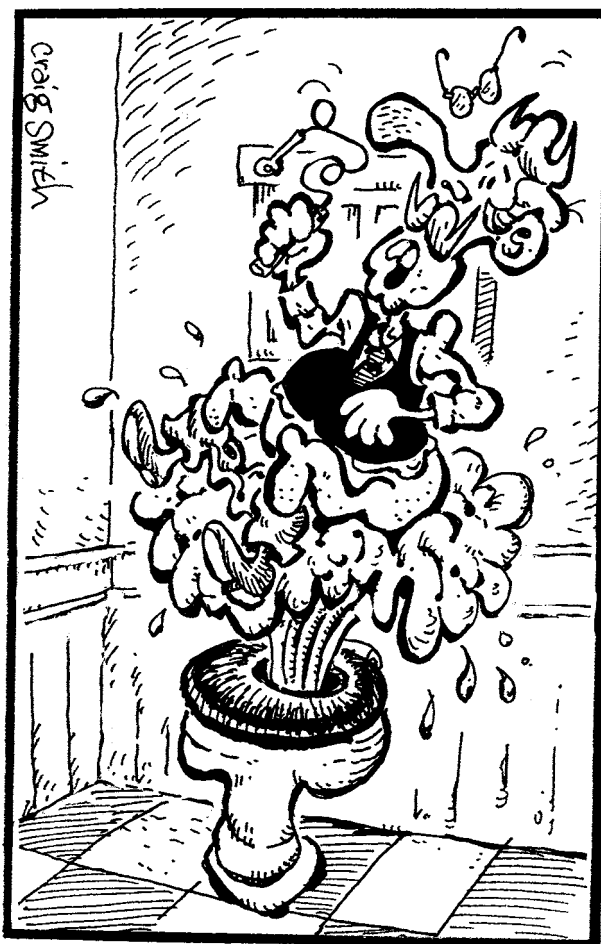
Parker, Claire
 see Vancouver
 Death on a No. 8 Hook 4
 Patri, Scott "Honcho" 2, 7, 22

R

R. Graeme Cameron
 Fan Achievement (Organizational) 12
 Rankin, Ian 5
 Robinson, Spider 13
 Rosenthal, Alan 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22
 Runte, Robert 13
 Rusch, Katherine K. 9
 Russell, Sean 9

S

SAPS (Spectator Amateur Press Society) 16
 Saul, John Ralston 8
 Savage, Doc 5
 Savage, Gillian 8, 9
 Sawyer, Robert J. 2, 8, 11, 12, 13
 Schroeder, Karl 8
 Schwarzenegger, Arnold 8
 Science Fiction The Play
 Best Work in English (Other) 11
 Seattle
 Center of the Universe 18, 19
 earthquake stories 17
 Elliott Bay Book Company 20
 Fremont 16, 18
 the Berkeley of the Northwest 19
 history 20
 Lake Union 15
 lawns 17
 Lenin statue 16, 18, 19
 Microsoft 10, 22
 monorail 19
 Nordstrom's Department Store 19
 Salmon Bay Café 19
 Seattle Mystery Bookshop 20



Space Needle 15
 subway 20
 Troll sculpture 16, 18, 19
 Underground Seattle Tour 19, 20
 Waiting for the Interurban sculpture 16, 19
 Wallingford 16
 Westlake Center 19
 SF magazines
 Fantasy & Science Fiction 15
 50th anniversary issue 5
 Solaris 11
 Tesseract 9
 Skene, Fran 13, 17
 Skytrain 4
 Smith, Craig 22
 Smith, Douglas 11
 Snow Queen, The
 Best Long-Form Work in English 11
 Solaris
 Meilleure ouvrage en francais (Autre) 11
 Speirs, Dale 5
 Spencer, Garth 2, 13

Spielberg, Stephen 14
 Star Wars, the movie 9
 Sturgeon, Theodore 15
 Sudbury, Ontario 10
 Surrendering the Blade
 Best Short-Form Work in English 11
 Swanwick, Michael 5, 20

T

Taral 13
 Television
 Farscape 16
 Leave It to Beaver 8
 Star Trek The Next Generation 17
 Survivor 18
 Survivor II 10
 West Wing, The 16
 Tentchoff, Marcie 11
 Thomson, Arthur 16
 Trudel, Jean-Louis 2, 8, 9, 11
 true stories 10

U

URL
 Canadian Fancyclopedia 12
 Charles McKee books 10
 CUFF 13
 Prix Aurora Awards 13
 USS Hudson Bay Star Trek club 11

V

Van Belkom, Edo 11, 12
 Van Vogt, A. E. 11
 Vancouver
 Adanac Street 6
 and Toronto, comparison 14
 Commercial Drive 6
 DaVinci, Dominic 4
 DaVinci's Inquest 4
 Death on a No. 8 Hook, Lawrence Gough 4
 East Broadway 7
 Fet's Bar and Grille 7
 Skytrain 4, 6
 Stanley Park 2

Japanese-Canadian Memorial 3
 Shakespeare, memorial to 3
 Wreck Beach 4
 Vargo, Anna 16
 VCon 26
 Fan GoH Al Betz 7
 hotel
 Radisson Hotel Burnaby 7
 Mr. Science Makes Ice Cream 10
 Opening Ceremony 9
 panels
 Canadian SF What distinguishes it? 8
 Obscure Space Programs as Documented
 by B Movies 7
 The History of Auroras, Conventions, and
 CUFF 13
 praised by
 C. J. Cherryh 14
 Lynne Abbey 14
 Prix Aurora Award Banquet and Dinner The-
 atre 11
 theme
 2001 A Space Oddity 9
 Humour in Science Fiction 9
 Vogt, A. E. van 13
 Voyageur
 Fan Achievement (Fanzine) 11

W

Waite, Michael 22
 Walker, Amanda 6, 22
 Watts, Peter 8
 Weber, Wally 16
 Widdicombe, David 11
 Williamson, Jack 16
 Willis, Connie 20
 Willis, Walt 16
 Willows, Jack
 See Vancouver
 Death on a No. 8 Hook 4
 Win Murray Moore's Money 12
 Wood, Susan 13
 World Science Fiction Convention, first 14