



BCSFA *zine*



**THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST
COAST SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION**
Vol. 28 Issue 7 • Number 326
July 2000 \$2.50

Call for Stories

German publisher looking for english stories.

UCon Society

Sweeping changes to club proposed.

E-Publishing

Stylesheets and why you should consider using them.



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Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1J1

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For comments, subscriptions suggestions, and/or submissions, write to:

WCSFA
#110-1855 West 2nd Ave.
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1J1

 **BCSFAzine is also available as a full colour Adobe Acrobat file.**

WCSFAACTIVITIES

Contributor's Deadline - June 16th, July 14th, August 18th, Sept. 15th, Oct. 20th, Dec. 15th. Send, your submissions, comments, loc's to John Wong at 2041 East 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5N 1X9 or E-Mail me at woolf@mac.com

F.R.E.D. - Every Friday

The weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in joining us for an evening of conversation and relaxation, with pool table option. At the Burrard Motor Inn opposite St. Paul's Hospital (Downtown Vancouver) 6 blocks south of Burrard Skytrain Station. 3 blocks west of Granville (where many buses run). #22 Knight/McDonald bus along Burrard. Begins 8:00pm. On the Friday before long weekends, FRED will be at the lounge of Bosman's Hotel. This is two blocks east and a part of a block north of the Burrard Motor Inn (actual address is 1060 Howe St.).

BCSFAzine Pickup/Collation at FRED - The Friday before the first Sunday of the month.

Pick up your issue of BCSFAzine at FRED! Pristine, mint condition copies are available at FRED. Call Steve to let him know you wish to pick up your copy.

WCSFA Executive Meeting. July 8th, 1 pm. Special location this month as the library has the meeting room booked all of July for children's readings. Graeme Cameron's place #110-1855 West 2nd Avenue.

WCSFA Annual Picnic. July 29th, 4pm. 12th annual **Illuminaries**, at Trout Lake (Victoria Drive at 15th Avenue) starting at dusk. Bring sandwiches and something to drink at the picnic dinner. Then stay and follow by the lantern parade around the lake! This unique event even gives you a chance to attend a lantern making workshop (\$5, SW side behind the community center, 2pm to 5pm). You can join the parade and display your own lantern.

WCSFA Executive Meeting. August 12th, 1 pm. Firehall Branch Library 1455 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver. Tenth & Granville.

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Toronto Trek (TT2000) Convention

July 14-16, 2000
Guests Elric Stilwell, Larry Stewart
Hotel: Regal Constellation Hotel 900 Dixon Rd., Toronto, ON M9W 1J7
Memberships:
\$40 for adults,
\$20 for children. at the door,
\$50 for adults, \$25 for children.
Contact: Suite 0116, Box 187,
65 Front Street West,
Toronto, ON M5J 1E6
(416) 410-TCON
tcon@icomm.ca www.comm.ca/tcon/

Con-Version 17 Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention August 11-13, 2000 Calgary, Alberta, Canada Metropolitan Centre, 333 4th Avenue SW Guests: Mike Resnick
GoH, Candas Jane Dorsey CdnGoH,
Julia Lacquement Artist
Guest, Thor Osborn
Science Guest, Michael McAdam
Toastmaster/FanGoH,
Mike Dale

Con-Version is a scifi fantasy literary convention which hosts many author panels, dealers room, art show, hospitality suite, videos, costume contest, dance and more. Visit our website at: <http://www.con-version.ab.ca>

Moscon XXiii August 25 - 27, 2000

University Inn, Moscow, Idaho
Welcome to the MosCon XXII web site!
Author GoH: Frank Robinson
Science GoH: Thor Osborn, Ph.D.
Fan GoH: Tim Hammell
Special Guest: Julia Lacquement

Gatecon 2000 Not just a convention... A Stargate SG-1 Experience! Guest include Teryl Rothery, Don S. Davis, Amanda Tapping, Christopher Judge, Peter Williams and Tony Amendola 22-24 September 2000 Vancouver, Canada
Tickets: Gatecon, PO Box 76108, Colorado Springs, CO 80970-6108 USA
Hotel: Radisson Hotel Burnaby 4331 Dominion Street Vancouver, Canada www.radisson.com

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Check out our web site at WCSFA-On Line:

<http://www3.telus.net/dh2/bcsfa>

Check out our web site for all the information you need to be a local fan.

- Convention Listings • Ask Mr. Science • SF TV Listings •
- VCON Web Pages • Secured Members only area •
- Internet Links • Local Store Listings •

BCSFAZINE

is available to subscribers in Adobe Acrobat format. Check out the zine in it's full colour glory with all the bells and whistles of instant web links and e-mail.

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Science Guest
Dr. Robert Forward



Author Guest
Larry Niven



Art Guest
Julia Lacquement



Special Guest
George Dyson



Fan Guest
Paul Carpentier &
Julie McGalliard

VikingCon17

August 18-20, 2000

Western Washington University

Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.
Viking Union 202 Box V-1 • Bellingham, WA 98225

Memberships

\$20 US / \$25 CDN Until July 15 • \$30 US / \$40 CDN at the door.

Web Page: <http://www.sfnorthwest.org/vikingcon> • E-Mail: vikingcon@sfnorthwest.org

To receive e-mail progress reports, send mail to vikingcon-subscribe@onelist.com

Dear B.C. SF Club,

The reason I'm writing you this letter is two-fold. First, I wanted to tell you something about my newly released Fantasy/Science Fiction novel, *The Apostate*. And second, if that is not enough to generate any interest, I wish to go ahead and offer you a review copy of my book.

This 80,000 word, 194-page trade paperback is published by Hollis Books and distributed by Ingram on BN.com as well as Amazon.com. While regarded in the fanatsy/sci-fi genre, it has all the trappings of mainstream occultism. However, the supernatural element is subtle, and downplayed enough so as not to be campy. The story is not about Satan, but about three people who are brought together for a purpose they do not understand. The reader is taken along for a ride of mystery and discovery, terror and wonder as the three protagonists come face to face with the evil that is growing in Caldera, New Mexico and looking to expand beyond its borders.

As an author who is just starting out my first interest with this book is in volume sales, so that my future novels may have an even better life expectancy. That is the reason why I am willing to forward an advance copy of *The Apostate* to you at my own expense, provided it is something that you feel your readers would find of interest. I would love to hear back from you and hope you will consider *The Apostate* in your future references. Please include mailing address if interested.

Sincerely,

Paul Lonardo

26 Angell Road North, Providence, RI 02904
Tel: 401-353-6778 • e-mail: manchild4@aol.com

Dear John/Ken:

Hello! I'm sorry we didn't get a chance to meet at VCon 25... Yvonne and I had a great time there. I picked up a printed copy of BCSFAzine 325 in the fanzine lounge, and I thought that not only would I write up a loc, but also a quick trip report. I've got time on my side, Mick Jagger notwithstanding, so here goes.

First, a loc on issue 325... a great cover! And right now, I'm seeing this as black and white... I know you sent me the.pdf version, and I should check it out to see what colours there are in it.

Dr. Media's got some names mixed up... the copy of his article says that Jonathan Rhys-Meyers could play the Master, and Stephen Fry the Doctor. The caption of the article reverses the names of the actors who

could play the Master and Doctor respectively. Which is right? I believe the copy has it right, but the caption casts some doubts.

The articles you produce on publication design have given me a refresher, one I could have used in school and probably afterwards. An idea... once all the articles you plan to produce have been printed, all together they can form a valuable fanzine-oriented article collection that should be available in paper and on the Web. Might make some extra money for the club, too...

A little bit to add to Palle's Movie Mania... two 1999 movies I enjoyed were *What Dreams May Come* and *The Bicentennial Man*. Both starred Robin Williams, and both did poorly at the box office. WDMC became a rental fairly fast, and I have a pro duplicate of the movie. For *Bicentennial Man*, I made some inquiries about it at a knowledgeable video store in the hopes of obtaining a pro duplicate... it has not yet been released to video, and rumours are

Hello! I have a great deal of Star Trek memorabilia that I wish to sell and I thought your association would be a good place to start. Here is a list that I hope you can pass on to your members.

- Over 100 Star Trek books all in mint condition.
- Several comics and calanders.
- Complete collection of the animated series on video.
- Various pictures, posters, and stand-ups of which some are signed.
- A Mr. Spock plate and a Mr. Data plate.
- A 25th anniversary jacket.

You may contact me at 708-9665.
Thank you,

Michael Hoffmann

float-
ing about that say that they may re-release the movie later this year, and try a theatre run again after a possible re-edit.

Garth Spencer informed me that Sherry Neufeld is indeed the 2000 CUFF winner, and that she will be going to this year's CanVention at Toronto Trek 2000 next month. I hope there's been enough cash in the fund. Yvonne and I have written our trip report, but are still hoping to produce it in fanzine form, and offer it for sale. We wanted our good friend Joe Mayhew to illustrate it, but as some of you know through rassf and some listservs, Joe is in hospital with the aftereffects of a stroke. I may have to make a hard decision, and ask another artist to illustrate our trip report for us.

And now, for a trip report... (John, edit and use as you see fit. I admit I got pretty wordy here, but I wanted to relay all our experiences from the weekend.)

Early this year, we received an e-mail from Graeme Cameron, asking us if we would consider being the FanGoHs at VCon 25... I must admit that once we discovered that the con was on the same weekend as a big local fannish party in Toronto, we had thought to turn it down! But, that was only for a second... this party is an annual event, and we can go next year, but a trip to VCon is once in a lifetime, especially for someone so far away. I hadn't been to Vancouver in about 20 years, and for Yvonne, it was closer to 30. And we'd be going out with Robert Sawyer and Carolyn Clink, so we'd have some fun. Yeah, let's go to Vancouver, and have some fun, and put faces to those people we only know as names. Once again, thank you, Graeme, for inviting us and allowing us to have some fun with Vancouver fandom.

As time went on, we found out the panels we'd be doing, we found out when we'd be leaving, we got our tickets, and we got time off work. Where I work, they don't quite understand why I need holiday time off to go to a convention, so the boss is reluctant to let me go. But, I insisted,

so on Thursday, May 25, we drove to Terminal 2 (we double checked in advance, just in case, because of the Air Canada/Canadian Airlines merger mess), checked our luggage (we asked for protective luggage tubs, got them, and then had our bags thrown down the chute same as any luggage), met up with Rob and Carolyn, and got on our 767 for Vancouver.

The time zones always play with your head; a flight from Toronto to Vancouver takes between 4 to 4.5 hours, depend-

on head winds, yet it seems you arrive at your destination only an hour or two after you leave, according to your adjusted watch. In early afternoon in Vancouver, it was early evening for us, so that's why we looked so tired most of our visit... we did the Timewarp, and we lost. Our luggage was close to being the last off the plane, and once we collected it, Yvonne and I and Rob and Carolyn found Nico Iormetti and Alan Ferguson waiting for us. (I found I'd squashed my sunglasses a bit during the trip... not that I really needed them... it was sunny the day we arrived and the day we left.) After some creative packing of the vehicles, we crossed the city for the Days Inn Surrey Centre. We arrived, got to our rooms, cleaned up, put on some clean clothes and headed back downstairs for dinner, and another trip across to Vancouver proper for dinner at Marcello's, an

Italian restaurant recommended by Nico, the con's Roman treasurer. How could we resist? For me, a gourmet pizza and the best tiramasu I've ever had. And this was just Thursday night!

Friday morning, we decided to go exploring, and with the SkyTrain station just up the street, it was easy to do. We bought a \$3 pass to go to the other end, and off we went. The Sky Bridge across the Fraser is amazing, taking curves at high speed was fun...this commuter line is half subway, half roller coaster. We took the train all the way to Gastown, and we were doing the usual touristy things for an hour or so, and then we took the train back to Surrey Centre station, and did a little shopping at the mall up the street from the hotel...some drinking water, tacky shirts and repairs to my squashed sunglasses.

I won't go much into programming details, because you were all there, I hope...the Friday of the con, we were on three hours of panels, one on fanzines, our interview hour with Rob Sawyer and the future of fandom in the new century (we all have some hopes, but we got way off topic), and then, it was time for opening ceremonies! We all gathered to see Spider and Jeanne and Rob and Carolyn, plus art GoH Robert Kalthoff and Master of Toast Al Betz. It was great to run into old friends like Randy Barnhart and Barb Corbett, fans formerly of Mississauga and now living in Prince Rupert. There was only one party outside of the con suite, but what a party that was. The Vikingcon folks from Bellingham staged parties on both Friday and Saturday night, and they rocked... Viking-con chair Jacqueline Passey tended bar both nights, handing out mixed drinks for all. David Cutbirth provided the music, and Con Hiebner, on his return to VCon after 8 years, provided the homemade chocolates. If this is the kind of party they stage regularly, Vikingcon must be a great con.

The fanzine lounge on the sixth floor was a comfortable place, and many of my panels took place there. It was great to see some of the old fanzines Graeme and Garth had on display there. Saturday was spent either doing panels in the fanzine lounge or at our bid table...more on that later. Saturday night in the penthouse boardroom had Spider Robinson's Beatles jam...now there was a joyful noise. We really enjoyed our evening, and it was a shame we had to wind it up to let the filkers in. We missed our last panel on Sunday because we were so tired from the time change, I screwed up what time we were to be there. It's tough to have to shift your personal time frame four hours forward, and then four hours back when you go home.

The con suite was a good place to gather,

with lots of good food to nibble on, and lots of good drink, soft and hard. The S'Harrien did a great job. The dealers' room was better stocked than the convention expected, and the art show was a pretty sight. My compliments to the committee for their hard work and the good results that came from it.

All weekend long, what little spare time we had was spent at our table for the Toronto in 2003 World con bid. We sold 15 pre-supports to bring our numbers past 1500. There's still time to help out our bid... \$20.03 to P.O. Box 3, Station A, Toronto,

Dear John and the readers of the BCSFazine,

The new edition (325) is very interesting, especially the part about E-Publishing. I am in this business since 1989, but the theories and history of printing etc. I found enlightening in many regards. One uses the stuff every day but doesn't know where it came from and why some things are the way they are.

Aside from the praise for your zine I have another thing to tell you. I am currently involved in the publishing of electronic books (e-books) as an editor. The company that is doing this wants to publish English language books too if it can get some. I have already prepared a science fiction novel and a story collection by a Belgian author in English that will be the first to appear at the website. (My own five novels have been published there too, but only in German.) The writers will even get some money from the sales, but don't expect much, prices are only about 2 to 3 Euro.

So my question to you over there is: Are there authors among you who would like to see their books published electronically? For more information contact me at editor@wilkomueller.de

Greetings to you from Germany,

Wilko Mueller.
<http://www.wilkomueller.de>

ON M5W 1A2.

After packing up our stuff and the bid table, we had to say our goodbyes and head for the airport. Nico and Cynthia (sorry, Cynthia, I never got your last name) drove us out to the terminal, and we pulled up behind two tour buses. This was not a good sign...and when we got in to the departures area, most of the people from the buses were in line in front of us. Even though we got to the airport an hour before our flight, getting through this interminable lineup and the \$10 airport improvement tax barrier (another lineup), and another lineup at the gate to fix seating problems meant that we were ten minutes late leaving. We were just getting settled in our seats as the plane was taxiing out onto the tarmac. Four and a half hours later, we were gathering our luggage at the carousel, getting our car back from the Park'n'Fly, and struggling home in the wee hours of Monday morning. Work was definitely not easy that day.

Sunday was spent packing, selling pre-supports and flying, which is no way to spend your 17th wedding anniversary! But we did, and our thanks to the committee for the Belgian chocolates. They were delicious, and yes,

they survived the trip home...but not for much longer after that...yum!

To finish up, Yvonne and I had a great time visiting with all of you in Surrey, and again, we thank Graeme and the committee for thinking of us and bringing us out to party with you. As Jacqueline Passey said on the BCSFA listserv, "It was just the best con ever." I can't argue with her, and if there wasn't so much geography between here and there, we'd love to join you next year. Once again, many thanks.

And that's all for now. Take care, all, and see you next issue.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney.

Dear John

It seems like only last week when I wrote my previous loc on BCSFazine. As a matter of fact, it was. But this one involves your may issue.

Garth's observations on conspiracy theory seem quite reasonable and I imagine most of us feel somewhat the same way when we indulge in the disagreeable pastime of thinking about such a thing. The only thing I might add would be a reference of one almost forgotten conspiracy theory of fairly

recent years; it claimed that all of us were being manipulated by television and the movies to buy certain things and believe particular things via subliminal images appearing on the tube or the screen too briefly for our concious

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mind to absorb them. Nobody seems to worry about that any more. I never believed in it because the very nature of television transmission makes it impossible for any image to vary from the regular succession makes it impossible for any image to vary from the regular succession of frames per second, and VCRs that can advance the image frame by frame would have long ago detected anything secret. I believe moving picture projectors still utilize shutters that rotate several times for each frame change but I can't see how subliminal frames visible for only one shutter rotation could be inserted into the film without causing obvious distortions in the soundtrack.

The Cavalcade review tells me it's a book I might want to read. But I don't think many people in Hagerstown would respond to the invita-

tion the beams had extended to the people of Earth. They would want to know if there was plenty of parking spaces available where they were going, if alcoholic beverages were readily available where they were going, if alcoholic beverages were readily available, and if they would need to pay higher property taxes during their travels.

I'm afraid my eyes don't cooperate with the people who try to control them by the way they make up magazine pages. I don't read many magazines nowadays and the only one that follows the cluttered makeup system explained in this issue is TV Guide. When I look at one of its pages, I ignore all the urgings of the placings of type and illustrations and simply look at the top of the left side of the page and read whatever is there to the end if it interests me, then I look at anything that might be below this item at the

bottom of the page or the right side, depending on whether there are two or three columns and I read straight down the page until I get bored or am at the bottom, left to right. I ignore the art until I've finished reading the text, when I may glance at captions. In practice, TV Guide contains nowadays too much about teen-aged actresses who look like whores and modern "music" which turns out to be nothing of the sort but rock for me to read most of its slick portion. My newspaper reading habits are much the same, except that I usually inspect the right side of the front page first, since that is traditionally the place where the most important item is placed. Otherwise it's top to bottom, left to right.

Yrs., &c.,

Harry Warner, Jr.



Clint Budd

A NEW VCON SOCIETY

First of all I want to recognize that some of the people this is addressed to are neither members of WCSFA, BCSFA or the S'Harien Club (and maybe some of you are members of all three) but what I thought you all had in common is a fondness for VCon.

I've been thinking about this for some time and I've spent a fair amount of time talking to and taking suggestions from Palle Hoffstein (WCSFA Vice-President) and Chris Sturges (of the S'Harien Club and bid Co-Chair for VCon 26) AND, of course, Donna McMahon; and this is what we've come up with.

It's not intended to be THE LAST WORD. It's a starting point for discussion. I'll be handing out flyers about this at VCon this weekend so, please, disagree with me (or agree with me—I can take that) but let's talk about it. P.S. I have a revised copy of the POLICIES & PROCEDURES as they would apply to the new organization available by email* (and one battered paper copy).

A NEW VCON SOCIETY

THE MAIN IDEA...is to breathe some new life and new ideas (and bring new people) into the registered society that sponsors, promotes & oversees V-Con (the West Coast Science Fiction Association or WCSFA).

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

- Rename WCSFA the Vcon Society to reflect what the organization does.
- Remove the social club (BCSFA) from under WCSFA and let it run as a separate organization (as it originally did).
- Broaden the membership of the Vcon Society to include all current members of BCSFA, and all current members of the S'Harien Club (at no cost to those club members; There will be NO membership fee for membership in the Vcon Society). Both clubs remain independent. Anyone who doesn't want to be a member of the Vcon Society can have their name removed from the membership list.
- And we don't have to stop there. Membership can be extended to other individuals or groups who want to see V-Con be a great convention! We could start with all full members of any VCon (who wouldn't otherwise be members, of course)

WHAT'S IN IT FOR BCSFANS?

BCSFans can concentrate on club concerns and activities. BCSFans gain support for their favorite SF Convention: V-Con.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE S'HARIENS?

S'Hariens are already involved in running VCons but aren't voting members of WCSFA. This way they get a voice in the organization that runs V-Con without compromising the club's independence. S'Hariens get the advantages of having a registered nonprofit society to hold events, apply for grants, etc.

WHAT WOULD THE VCON SOCIETY DO?

1. Actively promote, advertise, RECRUIT and solicit for the VCon Convention and take financial/legal responsibility for it.
2. Oversee and assist the VCon Convention Committee in putting on a V-Con
3. Be in charge of Hotel booking & Liaison for the V-Con Convention.
4. Assist with VCon Convention Publicity
5. Investigate potential big-draw guests.

WHAT IS WCSFA?

WCSFA is a registered nonprofit society under the Societies Act of B.C. It:

- * provides legal protection to Vcon Convention Committee members (so that they cannot be personally sued in case of a catastrophic loss or serious legal problem).
- * owns the registered trademark "Vcon".
- * approves bids for Vcon, then checks at regular intervals to see that the convention committee is doing a reasonable and responsible job.
- * provides continuity from year to year and keeps contact with experienced conrunners who are not on the current convention committee.
- * makes policy decisions as requested by members and resolves disputes or complaints about Vcon.
- * maintains a contingency fund.
- * if the members wish, may sponsor other events or bids for other conventions such as Westercon.
- * can apply for grants or sign any kind of legal contract that requires a registered society.

** As this proposal is for a fundamental change to the WCSFA constitution, I have made the decision to publish the document in its entirety. This way, anyone who does not have e-mail can be as up to date on the topic as everybody else.*

Cradle of Saturn, James P. Hogan (Baen 1999)*
The Tower and the Hive, Anne McCaffrey (Ace, 1999)*

Rainbow Mars, Larry Niven, (Tor 1999)*
A Sharpness on the Neck, Fred Saberhagen, (Tor 1996)**

* available to the unwary at VPL.

** deservedly remaindered by Chapters

The incessant early summer monsoon in Vancouver provided an opportunity (albeit a reluctant one) for catching up on reading. So it was with increasing surliness that your already weather-challenged reviewer encountered not one, not two, but FOUR books which proved once again that a Big Name writer can sell DRECK and get paid for it. So herewith I abandon my intention to review only good books. Let me tell you about four stinkers.

•••

In reverse order of dreadfulness, the best of a bad lot is **Cradle of Saturn** by James P. "The World Would Be A Better Place If Engineers Ran It" Hogan. Dedicated hard SF readers who want ALL the scientific details and can stomach Hogan's Technocratic / Libertarian rants will probably enjoy this story based on the catastrophist theories of Immanuel Velikovsky.

There is no question that Hogan has improved considerably since his first novel INHERIT THE STARS won him a following among case-hardened SF fans. His writing is much more polished and his characterization has improved. Still, the engineers are men, and women are "girls" (even when they're scientists) in Hogan's near-future United States where disaster is on the horizon because short-sighted politicians and self-serving scientists won't stand up and tell The Truth.

Landen Keene, a middle-aged engineer, works for an independent company designing a practical, nuclear-powered space vessel for use in orbit and beyond. Keene, and other right-thinking scientists, believe that Earth needs to follow the example of a visionary space colony near Saturn and spread out to the stars quickly, so mankind's fate does not rest solely on Earth. Established scientists scoff until a giant white-hot protoplanet launches from Jupiter's surface, putting Earth in immediate peril.

Much as I like to complain about excessive exposition, I found Hogan's account of Velikovsky's theories quite interesting. In fact, what wore me out (other than Hogan's usual polemics) was the seemingly endless journey in the second half of the book, in which Keene tries to reach his launch site in Mexico by travelling across America as it is being destroyed by meteorites and tidal waves. I guess I've read far too many asteroid bombardment / apocalypse novels lately. After the first few dozen pages of carnage I just wanted to get on with the plot.

Some people will enjoy **Cradle of Saturn**. I much preferred Hogan's novel BUG PARK, in which he used nanotech and back yard insects to create a clever, entertaining take on Jurassic Park. This book rates four long sighs.

•••

Evidently running short on ideas for another bestseller, Larry Niven disinterred some stories he wrote thirty years ago and knocked off a novel-length sequel. Lucky us.

Rainbow Mars is based on "The Flight of the Horse" and four other short stories about Hanville Svetz, a time-traveller who is sent into the past to capture specimens of animals that have become extinct on a grossly polluted, overcrowded future Earth. The running gag in these tales is that the time machine sends him into a fantasy (or alternate) past. Svetz goes looking for a whale and comes back with Moby Dick. He goes looking for a horse and captures a unicorn. And none of the characters in the story get the joke because they don't know the difference.

Now Svetz is looking for Martians, so he and two female companions are sent back to Mars' past, where he immediately encounters a wild array of Martians from stories by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert Heinlein and H.G. Wells, among others. He also discovers that Mars is being desiccated by a hangtree - a gigantic living spacehook that shoots seeds and tendrils down from orbit and then grows, sucking up the planet's water in the process. And naturally the hangtree's next destination is Earth.

Lame and shallow are words I'd apply to this book. People who've never read any of the old Mars stories will find this long in-joke pointlessly bewildering. I just found it pointless. Niven writes well and his comicbook characters get off a few good lines, but fundamentally this novel is a waste of time. (Even Niven's few hard-edged comments about the human cost of megaprojects are wasted, as they're completely out of sync with the mood of the book.)

On the bright side, I didn't have to read as much as I feared. The last 110 pages are taken up with a reprint of the original time travel stories. Clint says they're better. I'd already had enough.

•••

The fourth book in a series, **The Tower and the Hive** will only interest die-hard Anne McCaffrey devotees who read the previous three installments and are so caught up in her soapy saga that they don't care how bad this sequel is.

In this novel McCaffrey commits almost every cardinal sin I can think of. There are too many characters, and they are almost indistinguishable from one another. Most of the characters not only don't move the plot, they don't do much of anything at all (somewhat understandable, actually, given that the book wanders about with precious little structure or direction). Long chatty scenes occur for no particular reason. Most of what action there is, takes place offstage. Characters discuss a terrible problem, then a few chapters later a character pops up and announces that the terrible problem has been solved! Gosh!

I could also go on at length about some of the unpleasant undercurrents in this book. For example, in McCaffrey's society, people are tested for

their telepathic ability and rated from T1 to T10. These ratings determine what jobs individuals can take, how other people treat them, and who they marry. Gee, doesn't that sound like a fun society? "Hi, this is Donna. She's a B-minus. Assign her a go-nowhere job, and don't let her marry your son."

I'm not going to bother with a plot synopsis. Anybody who would read this turkey already knows what the series is about; the rest of you can STAY AWAY.

•••

Finally, Fred Saberhagen's 1996 installment in his Dracula series, **A Sharpness on the Neck**, is so bad that I'm surprised it was published at all, and I'm sorry I wasted \$4 on the remaindered hardcover.

Saberhagen started his Dracula series with the clever and funny novel THE DRACULA TAPE, in which Dracula tells HIS version of the classic Bram Stoker story. Saberhagen's subsequent Dracula installments were not as good, but generally provided an entertaining read. In particular, his historical sequences were well researched and wryly amusing.

But **A Sharpness on the Neck**, which mostly takes place during the Reign of Terror in Paris in 1794, is hardly even a novel. It's more like the notes for a novel—a heavily padded mishmash of writerly musings, historical fact, and downright silliness hung on an extraordinarily thin, predictable plot. Characters receive little or no attention. And for the few interesting observations Saberhagen makes about the French Revolution, you're better off to read a good history. At all costs, AVOID this book.

•••

Well, it's hard to believe that my reading could be more depressing than the weather, but it was. It's no wonder so many mainstream readers are turned off by science fiction. I can just see someone thinking "why don't I try some of this SciFi" and then picking a recent title by a well known author, only to drop it in disgust, deciding if that's a sample of the genre's best writers, SF is crap.

Grrrr! OK, I've taken out my hostilities. Next month look forward to better things!

Comments? Questions? Rebuttals?
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During the recent VCON 26, I visited the fanzine room and checked out the other fanzines available today. I took a critical look at all the zines on display and could only conclude that editors today are still not taking advantage of some of the more basic features available to them on their computers or the programs that they use to put the zine together.

Formatting Text

Input

There are many ways of getting words into your computer for your fanzine, the most common method being the use of the keyboard to type the text in. For many of the editors of the fanzines out there this is the primary form of getting your writing onto the page.

For editors of fanzines which accept submissions, you will receive the text in one of two forms, electronic and hard copy. The electronic version will arrive on a disk or as e-mail. Unless you give your writers specific formatting instructions and control codes, you may run into some troubles with these files. Getting an MS Word document means that you may lose any formatting when you import it into a layout program. Every word processing program will have its own set of format codes in its files so it is important to know the limitations of the program you are using. For the most part, ASCII, .txt, and .rtf files are fairly universal but higher end programs will be able to import most file types, though not always with the formatting intact. E-mail on the other hand needs to be cleaned of all extra carriage returns and special characters.

For hard copy, you can type it in, or if you have a scanner, you can use Optical Character Recognition programs to convert the scanned image into text. These programs can be very accurate depending on the quality of the original document and the resolution of your scanner, but be sure to check it over for errors.

Setting up a page:

When you are setting up the margins of your zine, you must take into consideration the method by which you will be reproducing the final product. Get to know the limits of your own printer. Most laser printers, like photocopyers, have a quarter inch margin around the four edges of the paper. Inkjets also have a half inch margin along the bottom of the page.

If you are considering binding the document, leave enough space in the gutter for the binding method so that it does not interfere with your content.

If you are producing a document for electronic distribution remember that there are people out there who will insist on printing out electronic files so you must maintain a margin of some kind around the page.

If you are considering a folded booklet, keep in mind that in thick documents, creeping becomes a factor. Creeping is that happens to the page as it gets closer and closer to the centre of the book. The outside margins are pushed farther and farther outwards. If you plan to trim off the excess, then that margin has to account for the creepage.

Finally, if you are making use of columns, make sure that the column space is wide enough so that the reader recognizes it easily.

Stylesheets

Have you ever had one of those documents where you suddenly needed to change the size of the font of all the body text or had to change the headings so that everything was in capital letters only? It meant that you had to go through the entire document looking for these elements changing them one cluster at a time. Don't you wish there was an easier way?

Well, there is. One of the most helpful tools available to an editor using a page lay-

Bindery

When you are putting together a multi-page document, you need to decide on how you are going to be presenting the final product. There are many options available to you varying in complexity and costs. Each one has its advantages, disadvantages, and special applications.

The corner stapled booklet is the easiest and fastest of all the methods of bindery to produce. It's simplicity and low cost make it a favorite among fanzine editors. On the downside, it looks cheap and are only suitable for short documents with less than twenty pages. Any more, and staples tend to act like spoons at an esp fair.

For longer documents, there are a variety of options available to choose from. Three hole paper can be used and later put into a ringed binder or folder. Wire Coil, Vello, Cerlox, and other methods of bindery can be found at many photocopy stores and can be applied to documents having one eighth an inch to two inches in thickness. Each of these methods require that a margin be made on the left side to allow holes to be punched into the paper.

Wire coil requires the most holes to be punched and are done using a specialized machine. However, it is the one which will survive continued use the most without interfering with the document lying open flat.

Cerlox binding makes fewer holes in the paper, but uses wide comb with plastic tabs to lock the pages together. The edges of this comb tend to cut into the paper over time but has the advantage of allowing pages to be taken out and added later on.

Vello bindery makes the fewest holes of these three professional methods but hinders your ability to open the document and lay it flat on the table. It involves a plastic bar with spokes being pushed through its partner bar with holes in it, the pages sandwiched between them. The excess length of the spokes are cut and then melted so as to weld it to the top bar. This method is not very popular because it adds significant thickness to the document and the binding can not be reused when pages are added.

Most magazine use a method called the saddle stitch. This method is so called because the document is folded in half and laid on a saddle so as to allow the stapler to bind the spine of the publication. Many hard cover books also use this method of binding, using a thread instead of a staple as a means of keeping the pages together. The pages are set up on a larger sheet of paper so that with a specific set of folds and by trimming three of the sides, the pages are in the correct order and already folded in the middle. This set of pages is called a signature and usually contains sixteen pages. These signatures are then stacked either opened flat and on top of each other (like a magazine) and stapled down the middle, or closed and placed side by side (like many hard cover books.) and stitched with thread onto a hard spine.

Pocket Books use a method called Perfect Binding. This is where the pages are glued on one side giving it a flat spine. A similar method using a thermal tape can be found on some photocopyers. However, the tape is of a specific width, and with thin documents, you will see a lot of tape along the one side, getting in the way of your cover page. This method is best for documents of one inch to one and a half inch in thickness. You can easily create a perfect bound book using simple white glue, a cover, and your document. The process takes time and the cover needs to be scored (grooved where the folds are), but the final results can make the item easier to sell. I suggest you experiment with different types of glue to find one that has the necessary elasticity and hardness to keep the pages in without cracking everytime you open it up.

out or word processing program is the stylesheets. This feature allows the editor to assign "styles" to blocks of text. Each style can be given specific attributes that not only covers the typeface style and size, but also includes paragraph controls such as indentation, leading, paragraph spacing, tabs, and rules. You will find that there will be several pre-defined styles available for you to choose from, or you can customize them for your needs. Each style can be renamed, or new styles can be created. This magazine, for example, uses no less than nine different styles from author bylines to different levels of subheadings.

The major advantage of using stylesheets is the ease in which universal changes can be made to a common element. Once assigned, the editor only needs to change the stylesheet settings to make changes to every text block assigned that style name. Instead of highlighting one headline at a time and converting the letters to capitals, I just go into the stylesheet controls and make the change to the headline setting once. The stylesheets use the same controls you would use to change your highlighted text. Once you have finished making the changes to the headline stylesheet you will find that every element tagged as a headline will have changed too. Instead of applying the changes to several blocks of text individually, you only need to do it once to the stylesheet. This feature will help you maintain a consistency throughout document. You can see how much of a time saving feature this can be for long or complicated documents.

Another feature of the stylesheets is the ability to transfer them from document to document. By using the same set of stylesheets from zine to zine you will be able to maintain a consistent look from issue to issue. Some of the more common style elements include: headlines, subheads levels, body text, and captions. You can easily copy a stylesheet, rename it, and apply subtle changes to them. For example, I use two different body text styles. I have a regular style, and a first paragraph style where the first line is not indented. I also have two to three different levels of subheads which I can achieve easily by assigning different font sizes to each level.

Using stylesheets, you can control every aspect of the text you are formatting. There are character controls which allow you to chose a typeface, size it, apply a style, (roman, italic,

bold etc.), and even control the tracking values. You can also apply the leading values here allowing you to control the spacing between lines of text in the same paragraph.

There are controls that apply to the paragraph. You can adjust the indentation of the first line, or even an entire side of a text block, left or right. For example, this paragraph has a first line indent of a quarter inch. A first paragraph, one which follows a headline or subhead, does not have an indentation. Hanging indents will have a left indent of a quarter inch, and a first line indent of a negative quarter of an inch.

Tab settings is one of the most under used features available to fanzine editors today. Most editors still use multiple tab keys to space a table or listing. What they do not realize is that the tab spacing is customizable just like a typewriter. There is even a repeat feature which will space a series of tabs according to the spacing of the last tab assigned. Now, instead of tabbing three times to get to the position you want, you just hit the tab key once. Other features of the tab settings include alignment and leaders. You can have a tab which puts the text to the left of it, to the right of it, centre the text to the tab, or even align with the decimal point. In lists or forms, you

may need to have an underscore, or a dotted line giving a visual aid to lead the eye to the next item. Such leaders can be applied to the tab, so that when you hit the tab key, the series of dots, underscores, or whatever character you

chose is automatically added for you. To make a break in the leader, apply another tab without a leader to create a space, and another tab with a leader at the end where you want it to end.

Sometimes it is desirable to have preset distances between elements on a page. You want to have a half inch space between a headline and a subhead, or you may want to have a half space between paragraphs. You can set these in the paragraph spacing controls. Add space to the bottom or

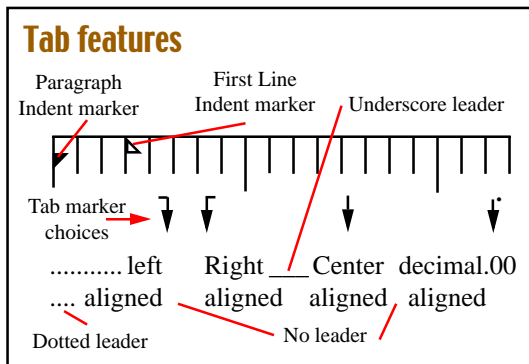
the paragraph, the top, or both. Check with your program to see if the values you set are cumulative or whichever is greater. Some programs will add the value of the bottom of the top paragraph to the top of the next paragraph, while other programs will apply the greater of the two values. In most cases, the top value is ignored if it sits on the top of a column, and vice-versa for the bottom of the column.


In some of the higher end programs, you can set the controls for paragraph widows and orphans. A widow is the first three or fewer lines of a paragraph at the bottom of the column which is continued onto the next column or page. An orphan, on the other hand are the last three or fewer lines that are continued from the previous column or page. You can set the tolerance (minimum number of allowable lines) for widows and orphans, and the program will reformat the column in such a way as to eliminate the widows and orphans by adjusting the tracking, or by adding lines so that the paragraph will start on the next column. Widows and orphans make reading more difficult especially if it involves breaking up a word between two columns.

Hyphenation can also be controlled using the paragraph controls. You can set the minimum of characters needed before and after an hyphen, or just let it do so automatically using the dictionary's predefined values. One useful feature is the sequential setting which allows you to restrict the number of sequential hyphens along the edge of a column. Having too many hyphens on top of each other can be distracting to the reader.

These are the basics of handling and formatting text. Make use of the features available to you as you learn them when it is appropriate. Limit the number of stylesheets you use and use them on every issue to keep the zine looking consistent. There are many features available to you on the computer that will speed up the process of putting together a zine. All you have to do is apply them.

Next month: More on page formatting.





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DR. WHO BRIEF

Seventeen Days Of Confusion:

The greatest news to be heard by "WhoFans" in a long while broke on the WEB over the "Victoria Day" weekend. The news was "The Doctor" is returning in a major motion picture in the summer of 2003. The film will be a co-produced with the BBC, Hollywood Mutual Films and Buena Vistas Films (AKA Disney) and will cost \$115,000,000.00 US.

Soon, the rumors started to fly. Who will produce it? Who will directed it? Who will be "The Doctor"? I fell for one of these "rumors" and flew off the handle on May 30, when a posting said that Tom Selleck will play "The Doctor" and I suggested we should send tons of "Hate Mail" to the BBC. I felt that "Dr. Who" was going to Hell in a bucket, and wasn't enjoying the ride.

Then the same day it hit me. "Ask my friend who's relative used write of the series. His family owns the rights to his 'creations' and have great contact with the BBC via their lawyer in London. He should know what's really going on with 'The Doctor.'"

I quickly E mailed him and over the next few days he gave me these facts.

- 1) The BBC, Hollywood Mutual Films and Buena Vistas Films had only one face to face meeting about the "Dr. Who" project. (The three bids made last year went to seven to ten meetings before they fell apart.) The next face to face meetings with all parties will take place in London on June 12. Hopefully a timetable on future meetings will be drawn up then. The BBC said they will take their time on this deal and it could take as long as a year before we know anything concrete.
- 2) The BBC will have full creative control over any "Dr. Who" project. The actors to take on the roles of "The Doctor" or "The Master" will both be British. The director will also be British, while the producers could be from anywhere, as long as they have a serious working knowledge of the project. The rumor of Tom Selleck being "The Doctor" was just that. The BBC tracked it down to a small WEB site in Scotland. Because the talks on the project have just started, it's very unlikely we'll know who will be Who any time soon.
- 3) Buena Vistas Films is acting only as a project's financial backer, providing half of whatever it cost and its main distributor. They will have nothing to do with its production or content.
- 4) "Dr. Who" project could end up as following:

- A) A feature film for summer 2003.
 - B) TV series for mid-season 2002-2203 airing on a Disney owned or co-owned cable station or network in the US.
 - C) A feature film with a TV series to follow.
- 5) The BBC pointed out that a "Dr. Who" project can't be done without an big American studio's financial backing, because the production quality would be inferior to American products.
 - 6) Disney co-owned "Hollywood Video" will start to market BBC's "Classic Dr. Who" videos, starting with the Tom Baker episodes in October. (Note: Deal for Canada is in the works). With funding cuts and downsizing at the once huge "Dr. Who" stronghold of PBS, the video chain and "BBC America" will be Americans only source to the "TARDIS" by fall 2001.

Then BIG NEWS broke. After two weeks of nonstop hounding by the British press and series fans, BBC officials spent a weekend in a conference call marathon with their American partners and on Monday, June 5 it was made known.

There will be a "Dr. Who" feature film called (What else.) "Doctor Who: The Movie" and that two Tom Baker era veterans have been approached to produce and direct it.

The actor to take the part of "The Doctor" will be:

- 1) (As we already know.) Be British.
- 2) Established.
- 3) Have a wide range of acting skills.

They also hope that the movie will bring a new characterization to "The Doctor" and define the role for future projects.

So everything looked great. The "WhoFans" where intensely happy with the news, while British tabloids had a field day with headlines like "Who's going to be Who?" on the front pages of their' entertainment sections.

Then the dream ran into a gigantic wall, called the "Board of Directors of Buena Vistas Films". Although, the BBC and the Hollywood Mutual people making the announcement said "Pending approval from Buena Vistas" more than once, gave no official release date and gave most there the impression that it's "A work in progress".

Many series fans and the press took it as "It's going happen and soon.". So did Buena Vistas, who thought that they where being rushed too fast into the feature film concept.

Buena Vistas called an emergency meeting with the BBC and Hollywood Mutual in Los Angeles on June 7 and voted in favor of holding back any production on the "Dr. Who" project for one year, knowing that pumping money into something most Americans never heard of is not a good idea. The year will give them all a good idea how the "Classic" series is fairing on "BBC America" and how the series' home video rentals/sales are doing in North America, before going on. In the mean time the meetings on the project will continue, as they all try to keep a tighter seal around the "TARDIS"s door.

As you already know, this was the plan that the partners had before the BIG NEWS story got out of hand.

I admit "WhoFans" in Britain and the press, did pressure BBC and Hollywood Mutual into making the announcement too soon. Today in Britain, "Dr. Who" is like "Star Trek" before the first movie, so any positive news on it was bound to get out of hand. What the partners should have done was to wait another week, have that meeting and then made the announcement. It could have saved the optimism of millions of series fans. Still, we have the confidence that this new partnership could work. That somehow, someday we could be seeing either a feature film or new TV series that will bring millions of new people into the fascinating universe of "The Doctor", while keeping true to the "Classic" series.

Specials thanks to my friend (Who prefers to remain anonymous.) for helping me with this article.

Be seeing you.

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