

# BCSFAzine #337

Vol. 29 No. 6

June 2001

**BEER**

**HAZARD WARNING:** DANGER: MAY BECOME IRRITABLE & PERVERSE  
ATTEMPT TO DRIVE OR OPERATE HEAVY MACHIN

TARGET ORGANS      BLADDER      B  
                                 STOMACH      KIL

4

4

4

H


HEALTH HAZARD **4**  
4 - IRRITATION  
3 - IRRITATION  
2 - IRRITATION  
1 - IRRITATION  
0 - NONE

FIRE HAZARD **4**  
4 - EXPLODES E  
3 - SPARKS LIT  
2 - FLAME SPREAD  
1 - FLAME SPREAD  
0 - WILL NOT DO


REACTIVITY **4**  
4 - READY TO EXPLODE  
3 - EASILY PROVED  
2 - GETTING BRAVE  
1 - WILD MANAGER  
0 - STABLE

SPECIFIC HAZARD **H**  
1 - COULD LEAD TO  
C - COULD TURN A  
H - HANDOVER LINE


**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED**




PORCELAIN  
THRONE




GAS  
RESPIRATOR



ASPIRIN



BUCKET



DESIGNATED  
DRIVER

## BCSFAzine

the monthly newsletter of  
the B.C. Science Fiction Association

**Contributor's Deadlines** - June 15, July 20, August 17, Sept. 21, Oct. 19. Send, your submissions, comments, locs to **Garth Spencer at P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O., Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1, or e-mail me at hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca.**

### Next Feeding Frenzy:

Saturday, June 9, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. at  
**The Reef**, 4172 Main St., Vancouver --  
"Caribbean cuisine at its best. One of our favorites!"

### Next Video Lecture:

Saturday, June 16th, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. at the H.R. Macmillan Planetarium and Space Centre:  
"Teenagers from Outer Space (and other SF films aimed at teenagers)." Followed at 3:00 p.m. by a BCSFA or other club meeting, or event, if enough people are interested ...?

**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.).

## A VERY SMALL EDITORIAL

This issue I decided to feature T's Norwescon story as another guest editorial, in order to save space. (For the sake of balance I am running Paul Carpentier's 1997 article on security, as well.) Then a whole lot more material came in, basically at the last minute, so I had to expand this issue anyway ...

And I still have leftover material; Greg Cairns' Theory of WAP; materials for a VCon report; and feature articles on things like science fiction languages, popular crank theories, and like that. Any further suggestions or requests for *BCSFAzine* features are entirely welcome!

## BCSFA Membership Rates:

New .....	\$26.00
New Family .....	\$32.00
Renewal .....	\$25.00
Family (2 Votes) .....	\$31.00

Above prices includes subscription to *BCSFAzine*. Make cheques payable to BCSFA (West Coast Science Fiction Association) c/o 86 Warrick Street, Coquitlam, B.C. CANADA V3K 5L4.

*BCSFAzine* is also available by e-mail as an Adobe Acrobat .PDF file. (Please e-mail hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca if you wish to receive the magazine by e-mail.)

## BCSFA Executive

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This month's cover art contributed by John Bartley

*BCSFAzine* (c) June 2001 Volume #29, #6, Issue #337 is the club newsletter published by the B.C. Science Fiction Association, a social organization. For comments, subscriptions suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *BCSFAzine* c/o Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1.

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# PLAIN SPEAKING:

## WHAT ARE CONS FOR?

by Treebyleaf McCurdy

reprinted from her Web page, [www.treebyleaf.com](http://www.treebyleaf.com) (posted at <http://www.treebyleaf.com/Cons-B.html>)

*((D. Riff Millar wrote to the SF Northwest listserv on April 20<sup>th</sup>, after this year's Norwescon:*

*((“My partner, Treebyleaf, my love of seven-plus years, was physically assaulted Saturday night of Norwescon 24. While in the company of three other people. While in the party wing. While not thirty yards from the door of the party I myself was hosting.*

*((“I suppose, all things considered, the assault was mild — a slap, some pushing; ego and alcohol, bluster and bravado. But a physical assault nonetheless.*

*((“The subject line of this post is a quote, the justification used by the woman responsible for the assault for why she had done so. ‘I hit her. It’s a con, people are here to have fun.’”*

*((Since Millar’s post, SF Northwest has featured a discussion thread titled “What cons are for”.))*

We were standing in the first stretch of pure hallway down from the Merchants’ suite, Six and Hardrock and Wendy and I, none of us so gauche as to stand and talk outside of the rooms themselves at oh-god in the morning, when the parties were winding down. Hardrock needed to get home, and we needed to figure out how ... and a group of drunk young fen bubbled out of the mouth of the hallway, and the girl in the lead saw my short dress and slapped me across the thigh as hard as she could.

I don’t know if she’ll remember that the next day, that she genuinely slapped me as hard as she could. Within one context and another, I’ve been hit often enough to know.

I remember Six being on her in a second, but when I try to slow the memories down enough to pry them apart so everything isn’t happening at once in my head just the way it happened in that hall, then I know it was Wendy who reached her first. Wendy’s words, actually, Wendy’s question, quick and scarlet-raged like a dispatched inquisitor, and then the girl’s words back, candid, laughing, shrugging it off, “I hit her. It’s a con, people are here to have fun.

“If you don’t like it, you shouldn’t be here.”

That was when Six reached her. I guess he’d started moving when she said, “I hit her,” I guess there’d been some amorphous suspended moment for the other when they’d heard the sound and seen the motion but couldn’t quite believe it, and only the girl and I knew for sure what

had just happened. The group as a whole had kept hoofing it the whole time with the girl at their head, but Six moves fast and Six moves hard, and it felt like a second from the slap when he stopped her and said, “WHAT did you just do?” Which, as I recall, was the same question Wendy asked. And her answer was the same answer, that this is what cons are for.

She started elaborating on this principle to Six but I didn’t hear much of it because the group was still moving, or trying to move, milling around with some tension now, and I was trying to reach the girl to talk to her myself and to tell her that this was not fun for me, this was not okay — but the seven or eight others in her group were not letting me, and the one with the military haircut and the light eyes that wouldn’t quite focus on me, that one, especially, was not letting me. He was quite vocal about it. Somewhere close in my mind was the knowledge that Six and I needed to follow these people until we could tag someone with headsets, that the group as a whole was too young, too drunk, too large, and too on-edge, that this is how cons lose their hotel contracts.

I called back to Wendy, “Make sure Hardrock gets home safe,” and the one who was blocking me, who was and had been shoving me backwards, his arm, my chest, his arm, my shoulders, his arm, my arm, started saying over and over “Make sure you get home safe. You better make sure you get home safe.”

He was shoving me hard enough to hurt.

He was hitting me hard enough to hurt.

This is when something clicked. The knowledge that I’d been ... assaulted. That I was being assaulted, and taking it, and being threatened, and taking it. The group of seven or eight as a whole wanted to keep moving, or start fighting, and while the group as a whole would have preferred to keep moving, the individual closest to me was looking for a fight, and again, this is how cons lose their hotel contracts.

*continued on page 6*



## LETTERS OF COMMENT

Lloyd Penney <penneys@attcanada.ca> 1706-24 Eva Rd.  
Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2 May 11, 2001

I've got here issue 336 of *BCSFazine*...VCon 26 has come and gone, and from what I have heard, congratulations to all involved who staged the convention. I heard it was a little smaller than VCon 25, but was just as enjoyable, and the Aurora banquet was a good touch, and all were happy, and lots of pointy trophies were handed out. Good job all around, and a pleasant convention/CanVention for all. I hope all those attendees who picked up agree. Some comments on the issue at hand...

Full illustration on the front cover...Garth, I guess you got the problem solved. What was it? I need to experiment with QuarkXPress to learn more about it, and learning another graphics package or two wouldn't hurt. I haven't seen C.L. Healy's artwork in a long time. Didn't even know that C.L. stood for Cora Lee.

*((I did?? Didn't know that. Did you get the online or hardcopy version?? I use PageMaker 6.5 to compose BCSFazine, and export the issue to Adobe Acrobat from there.))*

Sometimes, there's fannish membership in SCA, and sometimes, there isn't. A lot of local fans used to be in SCA, and a few attend the annual Pennsic Wars. While Yvonne aren't involved in SCA to any extent, we at least try to keep up with what's happening through those local SCAdians we do know. In about a month, Yvonne and I will be hosting a mediaeval outdoor banquet for local fans Christina Carr and Martin Hunger, who will be renewing their marriage vows the day after their 10th wedding anniversary. Actually, all the guests will be bringing food for the groaning board, and our job is to make the food as authentic as possible. Via [www.sca.org](http://www.sca.org), we linked to [www.godecooking.com](http://www.godecooking.com), which gave us lots of information about what foods would be at such a feast, and which foods

wouldn't because they were discovered in the New World or after the mediaeval era. We've educated ourselves somewhat, and we hope we'll be able to stage something Chris and Martin would be proud of.

Fannish hoaxes...these happened way back when people had senses of humour. I don't think the fans have such a sense any more. I think any attempt at a hoax these days would make you the target of a flame war / target of gossip / angry letter in print / lawsuit (choose one or all).

I have indeed been using the convention list in *BCSFazine* as a source for the convention list I assemble for the Made in Canada website. Not sure if the latest list is there; must check it out. As for Toronto Trek, the guest list is multiplying, and we may now be assisting with as many as three room parties.

In about two weeks, I'll be going to my high school reunion. I graduated from Grade 13 (remember when we all had that grade?) at Park Street Collegiate Institute in Orillia, Ontario in 1977, and three days later, the family moved to Victoria. I've been in Orillia a couple of times since, but this will be the first time back at my HS alma mater since graduation. It's the school's 40th year of operation, so all past students are welcomed back. What do I expect? The people I want to see will be there, looking just as they did when we hit the books way back then, the jocks will be fat and balding, and the pretty girls who walked with their noses in the air won't be as pretty as they used to be. I'll try to get an article out of this.

Anyway, it's a Friday, and the great outdoors beckons...at least it's not the office. I wish 6/49 would make my dreams come true. Anyway, enough daydreams for the moment. My best to all, and see you next issue.

*Doug Finnerty, 113 Ovens Ave, New Westminster, B.C., V3L 1Z1 (May 15, 2001)*

I would like to apologize for a glitch that showed up at the end of my "2001 Fan Survey" as distributed at VCon 26. It seems that someone's e-mail address somehow got tacked on to the end of that survey. ... Although I do send my *BCSFazine* submissions via the net (thanks to a local internet cafe) I am not set up to receive e-mail as of yet. ... So if any of you were silly enough to actually attempt to e-mail that survey to me, please try again using a more reliable service provider (that is to say an envelope and proper postage).

*We also heard from Harry Warner Jr. (complete loc next issue) and W.A. Salmon, who writes of the Elrons, and the Gor movie being filmed in France: "there's only one thing that can be used: a coffee bean - French Roast."*

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# CONVENTIONS

## JUNE 2001

June 1-3: Enfilade! at the Best Western Executive Inn, Fife, WA. Enfilade! is the largest historical miniature gaming event west of the Mississippi drawing nearly 300 attendees who participate in almost 200 events and connect with historical miniature gamers from throughout the region and beyond. See URL: <http://nhmgs.simplenet.com/conventions.html>

June 1-3: CONCOMCON 8 (the Northwest conrunners' con). ConComCon will be held at the Ferrymans Inn in Centralia, Washington this year: Exit 82 off I-5. Phone: 360-330-2094. Room rates are: 1 person, 1 bed, \$39.00 + tax = \$42.78 per night; 2 people, 1 bed, \$42.00 + tax = \$46.07 per night; 2 people, 2 beds, \$44.00 + tax = \$48.27 per night. Each additional person, \$3.00 per night. Pets and rollaway beds \$5.00 per night. Price includes a free continental breakfast served from 6 to 10 a.m. When people call to reserve a room they should tell the hotel they are with ConComCon and should be in the main building. Convention memberships U.S. \$25 through May 31, 2001, \$30 at the door. 2001 Chair: Bobbie Dufault. Cheques payable to: ConComCon 8, 14616 Ley Rd., Goldbar, WA 98251.

Sunday, June 24 (11am to 5pm): Vancouver Comicon at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Special Guests: To be announced soon. Admission: \$3.00 per person (Free for kids under 14). Call 604-322-6412 or email [lswong@uniserve.com](mailto:lswong@uniserve.com). URL: <http://users.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

JUN 22-29: SEATREK 2001 from Vancouver, B.C.; an Alaska Media Cruise. Info: 13931 SW 108th St, Miami, FL, 33186 800/326-8735.

## JULY 2001

Sunday, July 8 (11am to 4pm): Toy, Model, and Collectables Show at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Admission: \$2.00 per person (Free for kids under 14). Dealers Tables: \$35. Buy, sell, and trade character toys, action figures, Beanie Babies, toy cars, Star Wars, model kits, trading cards, comic books, Barbies, games, and more! call 604-322-6412 or email [lswong@uniserve.com](mailto:lswong@uniserve.com) <http://users.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

Saturday, July 15, 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM and Sunday, July 16, 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM at Grant MacEwan Community College, 10700 - 104 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta. ANIMETHON is an annual festival of Japanese Animation, or anime. There are ten viewing rooms showing the best of the newest Japanese movies and television series as well as some of the classics that made anime so popular to begin with. As well, we have a dealers room where anime-related goods are sold by vendors from across Canada! We also have contests, events such as cosplay or costume play, game shows, improvisational games, lessons on drawing and the Japanese language, and the ever-popular anime rant! On top of this, Animethon is completely free with a donation to the Food Bank! So come on down and join us at Animethon 7 this July! Don't miss it!


*(Now where did I put their Web page URL ... GS)*

July 20-22: Toronto Trek 2001 at the Regal Constellation Hotel, 900 Dixon Road (at Carlingview). Guests so far: Andreas Katsulas ( 'G'Kar' - Babylon 5, 'Tomalak' - Star Trek: TNG); more guests to come. Note: All guest appearances subject to professional commitments. Toronto Trek, Suite 0116, Box 187, 65 Front Street West, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5J 1E6.

July 5 - 8: Westercon 54 in Portland, Oregon. A Portland Westercon. Theme - It's in the other Hotel. Author GoH: Tim Powers. Fan GoH: Mike Glycer. Artist GoH: Frank Lurz. Editor GoH: Terri Windling. At the Doubletree Hotels Jantzen Beach and Columbia River. Write to: Westercon 54, P.O. Box 5901, Portland, OR 97228-5901. URL: <http://www.osfci.org/w2001/>. Phone: (360) 993-2001 email [deaner@pacifier.com](mailto:deaner@pacifier.com)

## AUGUST 2001

AUG 4-6: COMIC BOOK, SCI-FI AND FANTASY CONVENTION in VICTORIA, BC at the Victoria Conference Centre, Science Fiction, TV/Media Convention, \$35 till 4 Jul, \$40 at door. Anime \$2.00 show, Movies \$5.00/show. Actors pass \$30.00 Full Pass \$150.00 till 4 JUL. Media Guests: Pat Tallman (B5) and Marc Alaimo (DS9). Info: [www.victoriacomicon.com](http://www.victoriacomicon.com)



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August 10-12: Con-Version 18 at the Metropolitan Centre and International Hotel in Calgary, AB. GoH: David Drake; ArtGoH: Jean Pierre Normand; Scientist GoH: Dr. Bill Brooks. Membership rates (for those 17 and up) are now \$55 from May 1 - July 31, and \$60 at the door. All pre-reg memberships prior to July 31, will receive a free t-shirt at the con! Family memberships: \$130 (inc. 2 adults and up to 3 children) (available at con, shirts not included) The website address is <http://www.con-version.org>. The new mail address for Con-Version is P.O. Box 20098, Calgary Place RPO, Calgary, AB T2P 4J2. Fax (403)277-4251.

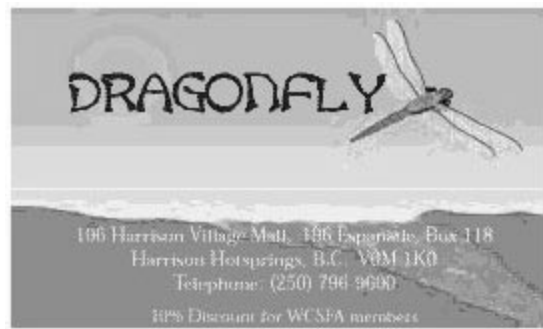
August 17-19: VikingCon 18 at the Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. Guests of Honor: Writer GoH: James P. Hogan (<http://www.jamesphogan.com>); Special GoH: JD Frazer aka 'Illiad' (<http://www.userfriendly.org>); Fan GoH: Jon Singer (<http://www.bazilians.org>); Science GoH: To Be Announced; Art GoH: To Be Announced. Memberships (150 to date): \$32 through July 8, 2001; \$36 at the door. Mailing Address: VikingCon, Viking union box V1, Bellingham, WA 98225-9106. For more information: <http://www.vikingcon.org>. To post a message: [VikingCon@yahoogroups.com](mailto:VikingCon@yahoogroups.com); to subscribe: [VikingCon-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:VikingCon-subscribe@yahoogroups.com); to unsubscribe: [VikingCon-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:VikingCon-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com).

August 24-26: MosCon XXIII at the University Inn Best Western in Moscow, ID. Author GoH: Jack Chalker. ArtGoH: TBA. Fan Guests of Honour: Tam & Shelly Gordy. Scientist GoH: TBA. Memberships: \$25 to Aug. 21, 2001; \$30 up to the door. See [www.geocities.com/moscow\\_scifi\\_con](http://www.geocities.com/moscow_scifi_con), phone Jon Gustafson at (208) 882-3672 (9 a.m. to 9 p.m.), or write Miscon XXIII, Box 9622, Moscow, ID 83843

Sunday, August 26 (11am to 5pm): Comix & Stories at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. A day of alternative and small-press comics, publishing, artwork & culture. Special Guests (as of 5/5/01): Ralph Alfonso (Ralph), Jason Lutes (Berlin, Jar of Fools), Ariel Bordeaux (Deep Girl), Rick Altergott (Doofus), Smell of Steve, Inc (Smell of Steve), David Lasky (Boom Boom, Urban Hipster), Greg Stump (Urban Hipster, Dwarf Attack), Brad Yung (Stay as you are), Jeanette Ordas (Queen of the Universe), Owen and Terry Plummer (Rubber Popsicle Factory), Randy Wood (Kitties in the Engine), Craig McKenney Admission: \$3.00 per person (Free for kids under 14). Dealers Tables: \$40. Creator/Publisher Tables: \$15/\$30 For information about any of these shows, please call 604-322-6412 or email [lswong@uniserve.com](mailto:lswong@uniserve.com). <http://users.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

## SEPTEMBER 2001

September 15-16: ConSpec 2001 at the Best Western Cedar Park Inn in Edmonton, AB. GoHs: Allen Steele and



Michael Bishop. NOTE: Allen Steele and Michael Bishop will lead a writing workshop on September 13 and 14; seats are limited to 16 people. The \$90 fee will cover both the course and attendance at ConSpec 2001. Rooms: write Best Western Cedar Park Inn, 5116 Calgary Trail North, Edmonton, AB T6H 2H4, or phone (780) 434-7411, and quote #103-176 when booking a room. Memberships: \$45 plus GST until September, \$55 plus GST to the door. Write ConSpec, Box 4727, Edmonton, AB T6E 5G6; email [conspec@canada.com](mailto:conspec@canada.com); or see <http://www.compumart.ab.ca/clear/conspec.htm>.

September 20 - 23: GateCon 2001, "A Gatecon Odyssey"; venue TBA. A benefit convention for Make a Wish Foundation. NOTE: The international group holding Gatecon talks about "tickets" rather than memberships. See <http://www.gatecon.com/home.asp>

September 28 - 30: Foolsap III (a Flat Stuff con) at the Southcenter Best Western in Tukwila, WA. ArtGoHs: Phil and Kaja Foglio. Author GoHs TBA. Banquet \$20 now, \$23 at the door. Memberships \$41 to Sept. 21, 2001; \$45 at the door. Cheques to Little Cat Z in U.S. funds only. Write foolsap III, c/o Little Cat Z, P.O. Box 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461. URL <http://www.alexicom.net/foolsap/index.htm>

## OCTOBER 2001

Oct. 26-28: Conifur Northwest 2001, at the Fife Best Western Executive Inn. Guest of Honor: Malcolm Earle (Max the Black Rabbit). Rates: \$25 until July 1, 2001, \$30 until October 12, 2001, \$35 at the door. Contact: Conifur Northwest, 2406 SW 308th Place, Federal Way, WA 98023, (253) 815-0962 voice, (253) 838-1453 fax, [cfnw-info@conifur.org](mailto:cfnw-info@conifur.org). Also see URL: <http://www.conifur.org/>

October 26-29: InCon 200 at the Spokane Shilo Hotel., Guest of Honor: Jane Fancher, Artist Guest: Mark Ferrari, Attending Pros: C.J. Cherryh and John Dalmás. Rates: \$20 until October 1, 2001, \$25 at the door, Children 11 and under FREE if accompanied by an adult. Contact: Incon 2001, PO Box 9112, Spokane, WA 99209-9112. Also see URL: <http://incon.skywalk.com/>.

# FANZINE REVIEWS

By Ted White

Fanzines are a basic part of science fiction fandom, having been in existence as long as fandom itself – the past 70 years. Fanzines are a reflection of many fans' interest in the printed word and amateur publishing. The publication you are reading this in is a fanzine, but a specialized one. A variety of other fanzines are also available – many of them by request – and this column will cover some of them each issue.

All fanzines are published as a hobby and lose money. Their editors appreciate money to defray their expenses and sometimes list single-copy or subscription prices, but they appreciate even more your written response – a Letter of Comment, or LoC. Feedback – better known in fandom as “egoboo” – is what fanzine publishing is all about.

Check out the fanzines below and broaden your participation in fandom.

::

Each year fans interested in fanzines hold a convention called Corflu. Corflu 18, held in Boston, is only recently over (next year's Corflu will be in Annapolis, Maryland), and, as usual, I was handed a bunch of fanzines. Here are a couple:

::

*NIEKAS* (Ed Meskys at Niekas Publications, RR#2, Box 63, 322 Whittier Hwy., Center Harbor NH 03226-9708; e-mail to edmeskys@worldpath.net; subscriptions: \$19 for four issues, \$37 for eight; also available for trades or contributions)

*Niekas* is a big (64 pages plus covers) photo-offset fanzine. It's “standard” letter-page-sized, but printed on sheets twice that size and “saddle-stapled.” Ed Meskys is the “Editor-in-Chief” with Anne Braude and Todd Frazier his “Associate” and “Assistant” respectively, while Jim Reynolds handles “Design, Typesetting, Layout and Production.” Ed needs these helpers because he has been for several decades too visually impaired to handle all the chores of a large fanzine himself. Ed started *Niekas* in 1962, while he was still sighted – originally for a small apa (amateur publishing association). Within a few issues he picked up Felice Rolfe as his coeditor and his fanzine exploded into a fat genzine which won the Hugo Award for

Best Fanzine in 1967. Felice has left the fanzine, but with the current issue, #46, it's still going strong.

*Niekas* is a type of fanzine which is called “sercon” these days. That means it approaches SF from a serious, sometimes academic, point of view. This issue highlights “An Address by Our Technology Guest of Honor,” by Dr. Raymond Kurzweil, a keynote address to the fourth US/Canada [blind] Technology Seminar, reprinted from *Braille Monitor*. There are seven columns (in addition to Ed's editorial), notable among them Diana L. Paxson's “Patterns: Sharing a World with Marion Zimmer Bradley” and Ray Nelson's “On Liking Clark Ashton Smith.” This issue is a special “Strange Sports Stories” issue, with eight contributions to “The Sports Section.” In addition there are two “Extremely Short Science-Fiction Stories,” several works of poetry, a section of book reviews by a variety of writers, and what amounts to two letter columns, the first arranged by topics under discussion. The art and visual presentation of *Niekas* is looser and more “fannish” than one might expect in a fanzine of its nature; *Niekas* is not an imitation professional magazine. It will be appealing to a broad range of fans, including those mostly unfamiliar with fanzines.

::

*AZTEC BLUE* (Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Rd., Mississauga, ON L4Y 1C8 Canada; e-mail to mmoore@pathcom.com; available for trade, contributions, letters of comment and single-issue requests)

*Aztec Blue* #3 lies at the opposite end of the fanzine spectrum from *Niekas*. It runs 22 pages and is warm and informal, half of its pages taken up with the letter column. The remainder of the material is Murray's editorial, which

*continued on page 10*

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*continued from page 1*

I disengaged. Called loudly for Security. Saw Six disengage — don't know whether I said something to him or he saw me move back or if he just knew. Six and I are like that. Last person to disengage was the member of their group who'd been blocking Wendy and Hardrock, just talking to them, and calmly talking to them, but blocking them all the same.

All I caught of his closing argument was the sentiment that this is what cons are for.

My pack and theirs separated, safe, theirs gone in an instant, and I'm running back to the Deva room and first person I grab is Bill, golden, steadfast Bill. I said I needed Security and he said Hotel or Con and I said either and he dialled the front desk for me and handed me the phone and I couldn't think what to say, my hands shaking so badly, and I just said, "Sorry," and let the phone go and went back out with Wendy and Hardrock and Six on my tail, looking for headsets.

It's ironic, really, how often over the years I've heard the argument that headsets make Security look too intimidating, that they add a whole unnecessary air of authoritarianism to our happy atmosphere, the odd concom complaints that they're just too expensive to bother with, the occasional horror-story of some Security head pulling money from his pocket to get his people outfitted with the radios that they need, that we all need them to have. A headset is safety-net, and communication, and identification all in one, a vocation as much as a tool. We needed to talk to a headset, because we needed to talk to the Con itself.

I was first to spot headsets, attached to a curly head close to the elevator, and ran to catch up. During the day you'll sometimes snag up on someone who can't carry the headsets, lacks the judgement and dedication to speak for the con; but the Security still up and roving at 2:00 a.m. are devoted and competent. He heard our story and delivered us up to his office itself, where his supervisor heard our story — our story, my story, there were soft interjections from my friends: Six saying he wasn't sure he could describe people, and Wendy's voice following his, calm and steel-certain as any of Heinlein's witnesses: "I can." I identified Six as "my boyfriend," as gross a simplification as I've ever made in my life, and it was there that Six learned about the man who'd been shoving me around in the hallway, and I saw that knowledge crunch into him a little like a car wreck.

The Security supervisor heard everything we had to say and wrote up as much as he could and then brought us next door to an empty room with a lot of comfortable chairs and delivered us and his notes up to the cop, and we went through it all again.

Mostly, people were letting me talk, because I was the one who'd been hit.

It was hardest for me when the cop asked what I wanted done, if they found them. I was already so scared

that he'd take one look at my dress and shut his ears, or accuse me of bringing it on myself, doubly scared that when he learned I was not interested in pressing charges, he'd just dismiss the whole thing and be frustrated with us for wasting his time, and I found myself saying the same words I'd said to Hardrock out in the hall, when I was trying to apologize and explain and he didn't need me to, found myself telling the officer like I'd told Hardrock that this wasn't personal, this was about the con. I think I said something like, "The hotel wouldn't be happy about this." The cop was very professional, whatever I said, kept nodding gently, assured me that if he could he'd let them know that I could have pressed charges, that what they'd done was not legal and not acceptable here ... I think I said, shyly, and half-hesitant, that I wanted them scared a little, and I think he nodded. He warned us all not to confront them directly if we saw them again, and then he shook our hands and let us out the door where Six lingered a moment to thank him.

Back to the Merchants of Deva, past my friends and teammates breaking down and cleaning up, back to where sweet Riff sat behind his DJ table in happy ignorance that I had to destroy with a few short sentences. It was like watching a car crash again. There were more people who needed to be told, who got the same stripped-down facts, no more reports and not enough information for anyone to go out and form a posse. Wendy crashed directly, Six and I walked Hardrock out to his van — no question, now, about whether he was awake enough to drive — and Hardrock let me know that I'd done well in his eyes, that he was proud of me. Bless his heart, that meant so much. And then, when all that needed to be done was done, I crawled into the giant tub in the Deva suite and went home to water. I knew people might need in and out from breakdown, but it didn't matter to me. I felt so deeply that I was safe in that room, surrounded by the sounds of the people I've worked with for years still working on into the early hours of the morning. I knew very sincerely in that moment that there was not a soul in the Merchants who would not fight for me, care for me, Matt, Jamie, Aaron, Anvil, Martin, Karyn, Bill, even Jay, whom I've known for a few years less and had not even seen at the con yet. I was in a place where I had no fear of their eyes or condemnation, and no concept at all of being "intruded on" by them, by Family.

It was Six who needed the door locked, while I washed the make-up from his face and chest; Six, my guardian, my servant, my faithful beast. He needed the sanctity of being alone with me and trusting me to no one but himself, and he needed his own wounds tended, the great wounds of not being able to kill them all for me, not being able to keep me safe always or even to hear and see everything that happens to and within me. Only Riff's presence was endured, and even Riff, only briefly.

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# BOOK REVIEWS

by Donna McMahon

Just three things before my reviews. First, I apologize for falling behind. I try to write a column a month but I'm slipping. (This was going to be the April column and it's May 13. \*sigh\*). I'll try to do better but both reading and writing time is tight and I might have to go bimonthly for a while.

Second, I'd like to thank everyone who voted for me for the 2001 Aurora Awards. It was a surprise and a delight to actually win one for this column (in the fan writing category). The clever and attractive Frank Johnson trophy will grace our home, although Clint has declined to build a mantelpiece for it.

Finally, my own book is out at last. If you come across any reviews of "Dance of Knives" I'd like to hear about them. You can also check out the web site we \*finally\* got up at: <http://members.home.net/mcmahon/>

*MARTIAN RACE*, Gregory Benford (Warner Aspect, Dec/99)

*TAILS YOU LOSE*, Lisa Smedman (Roc, Feb/01)

*HEART OF GOLD*, Sharon Shinn (Ace, Apr/00)

After a spate of tubby, turgid, tedious tomes about Mars, here at last comes a science fiction book about Mars that's actually a novel! Unlike four other recent books I could name, *Martian Race*, has a plot, characters, and action. Wow, what a concept!

Julia grew up dreaming of being an astronaut. She made the Space Program but NASA funding was cut, so she signed on for a risky new mission financed out of the private pockets of John Axelrod, an eccentric billionaire who thinks he can send a mission to Mars and make it pay.

The novel opens on Mars, near the end of the astronauts' one-year stay on the planet. So far the mission has been a success. But due to damage from a rough landing, it looks like they may not be able to lift off again. And still worse, in order to save money, the launch of an automated back-up vehicle was cancelled.

A competing Chinese mission is on its way to Mars, but can they rescue any of the four Americans? Will they even try? With time running out, tension between the team members rises, and even the discovery of lifeforms on the desiccated planet fails to raise morale for crew members facing the possibility of abandonment and death.

The first half of this book has a lot of flashing back and forth as Benford tells the earlier story of getting the Mars mission off the ground, and also recounts the team's early experiences on Mars. There are a number of plot threads here – all of them interesting and suspenseful.

This novel is both entertaining and informative, with plenty of carefully researched information (from details of

NASA bureaucracy to Mars science) for the technophiles and lots of characters and plot for everyone else. Benford occasionally lapses into "as you know Bob" conversations, but he keeps things moving well enough that the reader can forgive him. And I enjoyed some of his less scientific details – especially the astronauts' stoic embarrassment over a barrage of product placements, including Mars bars and name-brand outdoor clothing.

This is not the best SF novel I've read lately, but it's easily the best Mars novel to come out in a decade.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the signs of a successful novel is that it stands alone, regardless of whether the reader has read prequels, or – in the case of media and gaming tie-ins – is familiar with the universe it's set in. On that basis, *Tails You Lose*, the latest Lisa Smedman title in the Shadowrun series, is a winner – a book that is readable by anybody, regardless of their interest or disinterest in gaming.

*Tails You Lose* follows the story of Alma, a security "counterextractions" specialist who is a loyal employee of Pacific Cybernetics (PCI), and the parallel story of her nemesis, Night Owl, a shadowrunner working in the Vancouver underground.

As the book opens, shadowrunners (probably hired by another corporation) have kidnapped PCI's top researcher. When Alma tries to intercept them, things go terribly wrong. The researcher is dead and, even worse, PCI suspects Alma of complicity in his kidnapping. She must track down the shadowrunners who did this, and fast, before the beta-test REM chip in her brain malfunctions or is detonated by PCI.

The setting of the Shadowrun books is North America of the 2060's, after magic was "awakened" and many humans were transformed into elves, orcs, dwarves, and other mythical creatures. It's an odd mix of cyberpunk, Tolkien and North American native mythology, but Smedman melds the elements surprisingly well, in part because of her nice tech details and her deft feel for pop culture. For instance:

"The bouncer was a Caucasian troll whose curving ram's-head horns brushed the top of the doorway she stood in. Her iron-gray hair was buzzed short. Both of her lower tusks were capped with gold and the fingernails on her massive hands were also gilded. She wore jeans, cowboy boots with built-in spurs, and a long-sleeved black T-shirt with the words "MAGIC BOX" down each arm; the letters kept changing colour and emitted a haze of fizzing sparks."

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## ON SF CONVENTION SECURITY

by Paul Carpentier (December 1997)

“Excuse me”, a hand pushes Julie McGalliard, my wife. “I don’t care how much you want to be with your friends. I can’t allow you to block the path.”

I look around. We are in a big open space, not a path. We are not blocking anything, and absolutely no one is trying to get through even if we were. We are watching Andrew Brechin, dressed as Baby Cthulhu, getting his picture taken by many after a great show at the 1997 Orycon masquerade.

Julie leaves in disgust. I figure out what has happened, and that the person who spoke to her is wearing a radio headset. Ahhh. Convention Security. Fulfilling convention security duty: to make the attendees more comfortable. Right. Immediately after this, he stops two people dressed as Klingons to chat with them. They are blocking a doorway. And many people are trying to get through.

Well, I snapped. At him, yes. I spoke about how moronic radio headsets are, about how convention security causes security problems, about how his hypocrisy revealed that his interest was an authoritarian power trip, and not in the convention’s interest; and I may have thrown in something about his genital size, just in case the rational arguments were over his head.

Convention security has never been for my convenience, nor have I seen evidence that they secure things. I think it is a live-action RPG, like the Camarilla might have. The difference is, the Camarilla are not acting like spokespeople for the convention. Other RPGs do not affect my enjoyment of the convention. Other gamers do not

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At some point Six said the name Pete Horvath, and I said, “Who?”

“Didn’t you know?” he said. “The cop who took your report? That’s Pete Horvath. He’s a fan, he’s a member of the con.”

I’d had weak moments, shaking, sometimes crying, ever since we’d finished up the whole business of reporting, but this was when I lost control, my head crashing against my knees, fetal and sobbing in the draining water. “I didn’t know,” I said, and Six said, “Don’t you remember him nodding when you were talking about how this isn’t good for the con, it isn’t what we’re here for?”

“I thought he was just being a good interviewer.” I said. “I didn’t know he understood.”

I didn’t know that he was ... “one of us.” And I can’t explain, can’t begin to explain the difference that makes to me, except to say that that difference, and that moment of realization, and folding,

That is what cons are for.

### UPDATE FOR FICTONS EIGHT

*Fictons Eight* is still accepting works of short fiction from BCSFA members. Word limit is 7,500 words. Remember to type double-spaced using black ink on white paper. Do not use stories from other people’s creations or gaming systems (like Star Wars, Star Trek or D&D). The deadline is still July 1, 2001. Send all submissions to the following address.

FICTONS EIGHT  
c/o Doug Finnerty  
113 Ovens Ave  
New Westminster, B.C., Canada  
V3L 1Z1

believe they can tell me what to do, unless I am in their game. I resent that attending an SF convention means that I am an NPC in the security volunteers’ game.

At VCon 19 (we won’t mention that con’s other name) I was running Operations for Larry Baker Friday night. One of my first moves was to take the security volunteers’ radios away. They were playing, and I believe making a less secure environment. We did have a major security issue, when “Creepy Peter” decided to threaten suicide from one of the higher floors in Gage Towers. And no, security did not respond to this at all (it wouldn’t have been enough fun). I sent con vice-chair Darryl Huber to take care of it, which he did nicely, and without the aid of security. (Imagine an on-site volunteer dealing with a real issue! Would this situation have been reported to the police, or would a radio or badge have been waved around?)

I am not enthused about convention security. I began to have this view during VikingCon 9 (1988), when the camouflaged security was putting people on edge, including convention guests, who had been assigned “body guards” - not by the convention, but by the security force. At VCon 20, I remember Shane Conley, running security, telling me to do or not do something; though he wasn’t wearing a uniform, he also wasn’t wearing a convention badge. (The complain I made to the con office was that I thought security was there in order to check for badges and that it was ridiculous that security couldn’t be bothered to wear con badges.)

I continued my anti-security volunteer stance through several conventions where security was “invisible”. No radios, no special badges, no volunteer organization with “ranks” - simply trustworthy people walking the site, reporting concerns to the con office, vandalism to the facility, and legal problems to the police. It may not be as fun, but it sure is less annoying to the rule-abiding attendees. And I swear, there are fewer security issues when security is invisible this way.

# BABYLON 5

by Dennis Kristos

“That Was Then...”

For several months through the Usenet and elsewhere, there have been signs and portents of something stirring in the Babylon 5 universe. Beginning with a brief late November account of rumours about a possible new TV movie on the horizon, there had been other rumblings, Jerry Doyle's proposed B5 revival among them. The source of the TV movie report was none other than “Babylon 5”/”Crusade” actor Tracy Scoggins guesting at a UK convention. I didn't pay much attention to it for several reasons. First, the report was second-hand at most and certainly unconfirmed by any other source. Second, it had the appearance of being something akin to an actor's wishful thinking about where her next job was going to come from. Last, (and more to the point) Joe Straczynski, in his extensive 4 part IGN/ Filmforce interview of September stated, that since the end of Babylon 5's run and TNT's abortive cancellation of “Crusade”, there had been no less than half a dozen unsuccessful attempts to revive Babylon 5 in some form or another. To all intents and purposes, it appeared as though JMS had moved on, with several projects both ongoing and new, in various stages of development. Around mid-December, a post from the Great Maker telling B5 fans he would soon have a couple of announcements of interest to them, peaked my interest. I had speculated since he was multitasking comics, a radio-drama series, the pilot script for the “Jeremiah” TV project and the script for his “Rising Stars” movie, that at best, it might mean a deal had been cut for new B5 short stories and/or novels. At the end of the day, these and some gaming options were the only venues left for that well-respected mythology to continue.

Toward the end of January, that notion was disabused. The first of several posts beginning with JMS' confirmation of statements made by Bonnie Hammer (Sci-Fi Channel executive in charge of programming and station General Manager) during an interview with the TV critic from *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (online version) came down. The Sci-Fi Channel representative was in discussions with Warner Bros. and both “Babylon 5” exec producers, Doug Netter and Straczynski about a possible future TV movie or spin-off series or both and negotiations were underway for the station to acquire the existing 13 episodes of “Crusade”. In addition, JMS revealed that he'd contacted the creative department heads and technical crew from “Babylon 5” and “Crusade” checking on their availability should these negotiations progress from the realm of possibility to the realm of reality. The catalyst for all this discussion? Sci-Fi's investment in widescreen copies of Babylon 5 reruns, on the air in Hammer's words, “. . .for the gazzillionth time . . .” paid off handsomely -they were

doing impressive ratings and demographics. The station also had record setting successes with their 3 part “Dune” miniseries, the first season of “The Invisible Man” and new seasons of “Farscape” and “Lexx” among others. In a bidding war for a comprehensive 3 year rights package for the three contemporary Star Trek series however, Sci-Fi were bested by TNN (the former Nashville country music station now revamped as The National Network), by a \$20 million margin. Viacom kept Trek in the family (so to speak) and Sci-Fi, it seemed, had largesse in search of programming. It also seemed logical some of it might go in JMS' direction.

You'll recall Hammer promised fans in her online chat of last July that if “Babylon 5” did well on their air, they would seriously look into the “Crusade” question when the time was right. But was it a “Crusade” revival Sci-Fi had under consideration or was it something else? By early February, the “Crusade” rights were sealed and by Valentine's Day, SFC's official press release and premiere run airdates were out ...No new episodes for now, but one small victory nevertheless. As well, Straczynski had a Valentine's Day card of his own announcing the deal for one unspecified project had been locked down, that a second unspecified project with money already on the table, was in heavy negotiations and a surprise third project was coming up fast. He confirmed rumours Warner Home Video finally had “Babylon 5” DVDs in the offing (this summer) and he informed us of a deal he'd completed with Wildstorm for a new, one shot 95-100 page “Babylon 5” graphic novel, carefully avoiding disclosure of details concerning any of the TV deals. >From this fan's perspective, at first, I thought he (Joe is somewhat superstitious) was afraid of jinxing these projects by speaking too early. In the meantime, former Babylon 5 lead Bruce Boxleitner inadvertently adding fuel to the fire, told *Eon* magazine he thought a B5 revival wasn't likely to happen. When this statement was brought to Joe's attention by a fan, he commented politely telling Boxleitner in no uncertain terms and regardless of his respect for him as an actor, to mind his own business. Cut to early March when JMS in response to another fan's inquiry about these long-delayed announcements, issues the most frustrating (for him and us) of all his posts. He could reveal no more than two of his projects were ‘Go’ orders – that one in fact, was in hand since January. Both were awaiting press releases from their respective studios and JMS, caught in the middle of this dilemma, couldn't breach studio protocol. It seemed as though Sci-Fi Channel in one case and the still unnamed other studio partner in the other, took a page out of Paul Masson Winery's book and served no news before its time. And so, we waited for two more weeks...

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opens the issue, and the conclusion of John Berry's report on a 1988 trip to Albania, the first two parts of which appeared in issues 1 and 2. Murray knows how to make his fanzine look good. Grant Canfield's cover, a drawing of a "man with a bionic backhoe for an arm," is brilliantly conceived and rendered in a style not unlike that of French comics artist Moebius. Grant's back cover drawing, a study of a "light fixture at the bridge over the Truckee River, downtown Reno, Nevada," reminds us that his day gig is as an architect. Between the covers, *Aztec Blue* is neatly but informally presented and is an excellent example of an unpretentious fanzine that deserves your attention.

More reviews next issue.

—Ted White

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Vancouver readers will also enjoy the local settings, and the familiar melange of Asian and Western cultures.

After reading the first two chapters, I thought I knew where *Tails You Lose* was going, and I wasn't sure I wanted to go along, in part because Alma is a protagonist who is very difficult to warm to. However the quick pace of this book kept me reading and Smedman surprised me by adding twists of both plot and character, building to a satisfying climax.

*Heart of Gold* is one of those aggravating "science fiction" novels that really isn't science fiction. Although I firmly believe that SF is at its best when doing social satire, I like my social satire to have at least a perfunctory framework of science underlying it.

And in *Heart of Gold*, Sharon Shinn doesn't even bother. What planet is it set on? Why is one race blue skinned and the other gold skinned? What do you get if they interbreed – stripes? No answers. This is just a simplified satire of human society and politics, along the lines of Orwell's "Animal Farm."

Nolan Adelpho, an indigo man, is breaking his society's gender barriers by pursuing a career in the city as a medical researcher. Of course his family is simply indulging him for a few years – everyone knows he will marry the blue-skinned girl he's been betrothed to since age 14, and go back to the countryside to pursue his true calling as a husband.

But life in the city, rubbing shoulders with gulden men and women, has broadened Nolan's horizons and he is no longer certain that marriage is all he wants. When racial tensions explode and Nolan discovers that the lab he works for may be involved in a genocidal plot, Nolan is suddenly

forced to decide where his loyalties lie.

The other protagonist in this book is Kittrini Candachi, a high caste indigo woman who was raised among the gold-skinned race. Although repulsed the brutal way that Gulden men treat women in their patriarchal society, she has roots and friends there, and cannot feel truly at home in either land.

I stuck with this book to the end because Shinn is a good writer and succeeded in getting me interested in her characters. Their problems are realistic and their struggles to overcome their own prejudices are convincingly portrayed. And the inevitable romance between the two is well written.

However, I wouldn't call this a ground-breaking book. For one thing, it suffers from the sheltered viewpoint of polite upper-class people who can spend long hours agonizing over ethics because they aren't cleaning other people's toilets, worrying about money, or getting beaten up by the police. Further, many details of her plot and background are much too contrived and don't stand up to any examination.

Still, it's an entertaining book, and it has something to say about the pressures that society puts on individuals, and the slow "trickle down" rate of social change.

Comments? Questions? Rebuttals?

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*Enfin*, during my sons' Spring Break from school, an incoming and unconfirmed report from the UK -specifically, the Starfury convention, arrived. ". . . New "Babylon 5" TV movie for Sci-Fi Channel later in 2001 budgeted at \$3.8 million ...to be shot in \*Vancouver\* in 6 to 8 weeks ...working title: "Rangers"...None of the original cast signed yet. . . ". Other convention participants verified the information adding that the source was present at the con, was connected to the project and was sworn to secrecy. Short, sweet and to the point, it was too detailed not to be true. Official news of "Babylon 5: The Legend of the Rangers" from the Sci-Fi Channel followed in short order, but the best was yet to come from JMS the telefilm will likely act as pilot for a new series. Quite unlike TNT's attempt to distance "Crusade" from its antecedent, the script, titled "To Live and Die in Starlight", prominently features a well-loved character from the original show (a wise move on Sci-Fi Channel's part, I'd say). The movie written by JMS, set 3 years after the events of the penultimate B5 5th season episode "Objects at Rest", will follow the exploits of The Rangers, the Interstellar Alliance's masters of martial arts and space warfare. The core of the telefilm's premise is the Anla' shok's mission to assist the reconstruction efforts and restore order to hundreds of civilizations devastated by The Shadow War.

*(more to come next issue)*