

BCSFA Zine

B.C. Science Fiction Association's Monthly Newsletter

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Masthead

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"Our email list URL: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_scifi_assoc/

BCSFA's events this month

BCSFAzine deadline: Fri. Jan. 13 at FRED. This is the Friday night of Rustycon. I know that, it's just too bad.

Feeding Frenzy: Sat. Jan. 14, 7 p.m. at Nyala Restaurant, 2930 West Fourth Avenue, Vancouver. Ethiopian cuisine! It's very good.

BCSFAzine production: Fri. Jan. 27 - early distribution at FRED. This is the weekend of Last Guest Con. I know that, it's just their bad timing.

Table of Contents

Why Don't We ... (editorial).....	p. 1
Letters.....	p. 3
Members' Birthdays.....	p. 6
Advertising.....	p. 6
Calendar.....	p. 7
News.....	p. 14
Media File (Ray Seredin).....	p. 23
Book Reviews (Donna McMahon).....	p. 25
Movie Review (Ryan Hawe).....	p. 28
Unclassifiable.....	p. 30

Art Credits

Sheryl Birkhead.....	title logo
TaraL.....	Cover
Joe Devoy.....	pp. 4, 5, 20, 21, 22, 25, 28
Felicity Walker.....	pp. 14, 16, 22, 23
Logos from Lynda Williams.....	p. 17

WHY DON'T WE THINK AND TALK ABOUT...

There are some interesting ideas we could think over together. There are also things we could do about them, projects we could build, if we want to expend the effort.

Recent news has focused on issues like avian bird flu, which may be a non-issue, or genetically modified foods, which may be another. I could add things like the famous mad cow disease; this issue may also have blown over. On the one hand we could be researching and talking about these issues, which are scientific issues; or we could be examining and evaluating the way some non-issues get played up in the news, while some real issues – sometimes urgent ones – are obscured.

There is still a lot of misinformation going around about AIDS, for example, which is an immediate problem in Vancouver, not only for downtown drug addicts. There is a lot of ignorance about desertification, loss of topsoil in agricultural heartlands, and decreasing human fertility. We could read up on that as well as anyone.

In the last five or ten years, there have been a number of movies and TV documentaries about unlikely catastrophes like asteroid impacts. I think the emphasis is all wrong: if there are big enough rocks out there, why aren't we exploiting them? Moving them into high earth orbit and *mining* them? Because we are going to need the mineral resources, in a convenient place, when we build an industrial base in space.

Also in the last five or ten years, we have seen another wave of movies and documentaries about climatic disasters. Setting aside the absurd and unlikely ones, there does seem to be a general change in the whole world's climate, and we have persistent evidence that permafrost and Arctic ice are melting. Well, if that means the Northwest Passage will actually be navigable in about ten years, shouldn't Canada *capitalize* on the options for merchant shipping, to and from Asia? Why let the Greenlanders take all the profit? Isn't it mandatory for Arctic residents to protect their environment from rapacious foreigners? (Not to mention rapacious southerners, but that issue is not news.)

Another issue that seems to be only half-thought-through is ecological damage. Am I the only one who suspects that Ecology has degenerated to a popular motherhood issue, and is not understood as a *technical* issue? Am I the only one who doesn't find anything Holy about the "natural" world – any more than there is anything Holy about the artificial world? Am I the only one who thinks, "Well, if we're breaking down 'natural' ecosystems all over Canada, in the Arctic and the Lower Mainland and the latest BC valley opened to lumber companies, why not *design* new ecosystems that support humans industries?" Am I the only one who thinks, "Well, if we're *going* to

fiddle with genomes anyway, why not *design* new ecosystems, and new species adapted to them?"

Is anyone *else* here half-inclined to take up genetic engineering as a basement hobby? (Or rocketry, or robotics, or Tesla coils, or something...)

Incidentally you may have seen what I have seen, in newspaper and broadcast coverage. Some people argue that the corporate news media, in any country, are in effect one Vast Liberal Propaganda Machine. Other people believe they are a Vast *Conservative* Propaganda Machine. To me, the only commitment of newspapers and broadcast media is to publish *popular sensations* – or even to *make up* sensational news – in order to attract attention, and just incidentally draw your eyes to the advertising they carry. What is your response?

Moving on to public-interest issues ... if you have any perspective at all, you realize that terrorism has been around for a long time; there is really nothing new or different about the world, since September 2001. The level of shock, and violence, and atrocity on September 11th was equalled or exceeded, before and since; the only difference is that something so sensational happened in the United States, for a change. Also, as Spider Robinson pointed out – rather sensibly – that if the brains behind the kamikaze attacks of September 11th were in effect terrorist geniuses, they eliminated the threat they represented by committing suicide attacks.

So, we're all vulnerable and we're all on the front lines; this is not news. And just to make life *more* interesting, a Vancouver organization bid for and won the right to hold the 2010 Olympics. Are we best advised to move elsewhere? Maybe that's a good idea anyway, if the GVRD can expect a major earthquake someday. Do we have to wear flak jackets, learn self-defense skills, or shop for biohazard and radiation-sickness kits? Or must we all learn to watch out for suspicious behaviour, and effectively become our own security professionals?

My point, and I do have one, is that we *don't* tackle any of these things, in any SF club or fanzine or category of fandom, of which I am aware. And I desperately want the company of active, interested, intelligent, imaginative minds, who think things through, and who turn up overlooked ideas.

I walked out on the November BCSFA meeting, where I was supposed to demonstrate the conversation game I call a Kaffeeklatsch. I left, not just because Lexie Phaithe was going on and on and on about conventional fandom, and conventional ideas, and would *never* stop. I realized that *this was all I could expect* from the BCSFAns who were present.

So I'm going to have to start my own gang.

Check out the news section for an announcement.

LETTERS

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, penneys@allstream.net, 1760-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, December 16, 2005

It is difficult to find other channels of getting SF&F, mainly because they could be anywhere on the Web, Google notwithstanding, and there are so many of them. Yes, difficult, because there's so much duplication. If only there was a directory of where to find groups, websites and other Internettish SFnal stuff.

((Like there aren't scores of them already.

((The deal with SF Northwest Resources, and FANAC.ORG, and fandom.ca, and I don't know how many others, is that they're all rather partial and incomplete. Then there are cobwebsites like mine.

((The deal with Made in Canada took me a while to understand. Apparently the founder, Don Bassie, mainly covers authors and actors and filmmakers; it covers SF conventions, as you know, but rather as an afterthought. It isn't there to cover fandom.))

Hey, don't look at me, I've been told I volunteer too often, anyway.

The 'slannish' ability of fans to misunderstand each other and assume the worst in what we are supposed to have said or written always amazes me. I do my best to keep it in mind, so that if I wonder what the hell HE meant by that, I will re-read and wait for clarification. This is the main reason why I am not on any listservs any more. Writing for fanzines has taught me patience.

My loc... When it comes to a newsletter, I am leaning to just sticking with my letters of comment, and leaving a channel of national news to a website that all can access. The resumes continue to go out; I seem to never have just the right kind of experience, or I may have too much experience.

You have the right attitude now, Garth, and it takes all of us a certain amount of time to realize that we are in fandom, or anything else in life for that matter, to get out of it what we can. Some of us get out of it what we put into it, some get more or less. We don't know that in our neo days; perhaps we learn it the longer we stay in fandom. Yes, we're getting older, but at least we're also getting wiser.

Just for the record... Yvonne's birthday is right between Fran's and Barb's, the 19th of December. I asked her where she wanted to go for a birthday meal, and she asked me to make a big Italian spaghetti dinner at home. I know what I'll be doing this coming Sunday afternoon (day before her birthday), spending it in the kitchen. My wallet will thank her later.

Convention list... I have a fresh one, ready to go, and will e-mail it to you after I finish this letter.

((Got it, thanks.))

Congratulations to Paul Carpentier and Andi Shechter on their SmofCon scholarships. Andi's been running cons for a long time, and I remember when she lived

in Boston. Used to see her at Worldcons all the time. Dork, geek, nerd... I hate these words, especially when they are applied to any interest anyone immerses themselves into. We fall into the trap the press has laid for us, cubbyholing us to they can try and fail to understand us.

The Adviseements to Speakers is concentrated wisdom that most conventions should relay to their potential panelists, especially No. 4. Too many panelists think the table at the front of the room is a pulpit or fount of wisdom. Your job is to inform and perhaps entertain for an hour. These things have to put in their proper perspective.

((I thought the major problem was that our speakers tend to mumble, swallow their voices, or speak to the table or lectern instead of to their audience.))

When you do set up the official CUFF website, it might be an idea to inform Victor Gonzales at Trufen.net about it, especially to revive some interest in the site. Once you need our information, let us know, and we will dig out a photo and fannish resume.

((That note should actually be directed to Brian Davis.))

Fannish get-togethers like FRED and FANS... as of January 2006, the fannish First Thursday gathering moved back to where it first started, the Foxes' Den on Bay St. in the western downtown area. If indeed Keycon, Conadian, Westercon and Torcon 3 have these pots of money, they will need to renew their efforts to inform Canadian fandom the money is here, and how those fans might avail themselves of the money. I am sure there are rules and regs. I seem to recall that one of these groups will be issuing all literary SF conventions in Canada with funding to keep the cons going.

It is late as I write this, so here goes this loc, and I will be e-mailing out my newest convention list to you and Cathy Palmer-Lister in Montreal and Sandi-Marie McLaughlin in Ottawa. I know it's tough for a lot of people this time of year, and I've been there, but we wish you, and all of BCSFA, a happy Christmas and New Year. We all deserve it, and we sure could use it.





BCSFAZINEzine (Felicity Walker), #209-3851 Francis Road, Richmond, British Columbia, V7C 1J6, felicity4711@hotmail.com, Saturday 10 December 2005

Great Argument About It and About-Lloyd Penney: “((I had threatened to publish my negative screed about VCon [...] but I realize what people are prepared to read.))” That sounds interesting.

((More interesting than what I had to say. Honestly, I must be getting tired of science fiction, or at least tired of fandom; VCon in October was as much a waste of my time as the BCSFA meeting in November.))

The Universal Vegetable- Much Ado About FRED: Denny’s [is] Still acceptable. The music is quiet until the night shift begins. The food is better than people assume it will be based on other Denny’s locations. Attendance has been fluctuating—on Friday 2 December 2005, there were only two people; Friday 9 December 2005 there were six.

The Morrissey: As Ryan said, good ambiance, but too loud.

Also Lounge: I accompanied Ryan on this one. It had great mood lighting, but was very expensive—it’s one of those places so expensive that they don’t even use dollars signs or decimals; they’ll say “8¾” when they mean “\$8.75.” I found that the projection screen distracted from conversation. We’d also just missed a live musical performance, which suggests that there are times when the place would be very loud. Ryan’s suggestion of using Also Lounge for special events sounds good, though.

Activity Suggestions: I also suggested a BCSFA public-access show a few years ago.

What Garth Spencer’s Been Doing Recently: I like the idea about the new general guide to SF fandom. I’ll let you know if any suggestions occur to me.

I’m looking forward to *Interesting Times*.

The Jezail Bullet (Media File): I liked the old Cybermen better.

The government census *knows* how many people read or watch SF?!

We also heard from: Randy Barnhart, Greg Slade, Lynda Williams

BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 1: Bill Salmon
 Jan. 2: John Coffey
 Jan. 4: Mike Wolf
 Jan. 5: Garth Spencer
 Jan. 5: June Osborne
 Jan. 6: Eileen Kernaghan
 Jan. 10: Anne Kelly
 Jan. 15: Ed Hutchings
 Jan. 19: J. Stewart Smyth
 Jan. 19: Gary Owens
 Jan. 25: Pat Burrows
 Jan. 25: Gerald Boyko
 Jan. 31: Brandon Sackett

ADVERTISING

F.A.N.S. (Fannish Activity on the North Shore)

Are you an anime, comic, fantasy, gaming, horror, or science fiction fan? If so, you are invited! Come hang out every Friday night from 7:00 p.m. until closing at: Eighties Restaurant, 110 West 14th Street (facing the Civic Plaza West of Lonsdale), North Vancouver

ROYAL SWISS NAVY T-SHIRTS and other paraphernalia may be viewed at: <http://www.cafepress.com/royalsswissnavy> (no dot between royalsswiss and navy)

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BCSFAzine is on sale at **WHITE DWARF BOOKS**, 4368 W. 10th Avenue tel. 604-228-8223 for hours **DRAGONFLY MUSIC** 106 Harrison Village Mall 196 Esplanade (Box 118) Harrison Hot Springs, BC, V0M 1K0 Tel. 604-796-9289

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CALENDAR

January 2006

Jan. 13-15: **Rustycon23** at the Radisson Hotel Seattle Airport, Seattle, WA. Guests: Mike Moscoe, Ruth Thompson, Clan Burnout/Carbon Based Rentals. Theme: Living the Sci-Fi/Fantasy Life. Reservations: Radisson Hotel Seattle Airport, 17001 International Blvd., Seattle, WA 98188, (206) 244-6000, rooms \$89/nite. Memberships: \$50 at the door. For more information, write Rustycon, POBox 27075, Seattle, WA 98165-1475, email rustycon@rustycon.com, or see www.rustycon.com

Jan. 15: deadline for **She's Such a Geek anthology** by Seal Press. Submit 3,000-6,000 words essays in typed, double-spaced, and paginated form with your address, phone number, email address, and a short bio on the last page. Essays will not be returned. Send essays electronically as a Document or Rich Text Format file to Annalee Newitz and Charlie Anders at sheissuchageek@gmail.com.

Jan. 28-29: **Last Guest Con** at the Radisson Hotel Seattle Airport, Seattle, WA. Package (room, membership, banquet): \$122 single, \$160 double. Reservations: Radisson Hotel Seattle Airport, 17001 International Blvd., Seattle, WA 98188, (206) 244-6000. Information: Last Guest Con, c/o SWOC, POBox 5181, Lacey, WA 98509-5181, (360) 456-7441, email mcitrak@comcast.net, or see www.lastguestcon.com.

February 2006

Feb. 3-4: The first annual **Science Fiction Short Film Festival**, co-presented by the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame and the Seattle International Film Festival, will take place in Seattle, WA at the Cinerama Theatre and the JBL Theatre at Experience Music Project.

Feb. 3-5: **WicCon** at the Shilo Inn Suites Hotel Portland Airport, 11707 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220-1075. Featured Guest: Silverstar Red Crow (Red Witch Tradition). Musical Guest: Heather Alexander. Rooms \$99 + tax for single or double occupancy, \$109/3, \$119/4; mention Wiccon when you phone (503) 252-7500. While this is not strictly fandom, its pagan focus is relevant to certain elements of fandom and it is also a northwest convention. Memberships \$40 up to the door, payable to Magickal Winter Weekend, Box 8246, Portland, OR 97207-8246, or see www.wiccon.org

Feb. 16-18 (Thurs -Sat): **Life, the Universe & Everything** at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Writer GoHs: Kevin J. Anderson, Rebecca Moesta; poetry guest, Michael R. Collings; artist, Stephanie Pui-Mun Lau. Venue: 3rd Floor, Wilkinson Student Center, Brigham Young University. An academic symposium on all aspects of science fiction and fantasy: writing, media, worldbuilding (CYOW), art, anime. Academic papers. Art show, charity auction and more. You register at the door, but admission is free. See <http://ltue.org>

Feb. 17-19: **Radcon 4B** at the Red Lion Inn, Pasco, WA. Writer GoHs: Jay Lake, Dean Wesley Smith & Kristine Kathryn Rusch; Artist GoH: Frank Wu, Science GoH: Dr. Thomas Hopp, Editor GoH: Anne Sowards, FanGoH: Dave Hirzel, Special GoH: Heather Alexander. Memberships: \$25 to Feb. 2, \$30 at the door. Write Radcon, PMB #162, 2527 W Kennewick Ave., Kennewick, WA 99336-3126, email chair@radcon.org, or see www.radcon.org.

Feb. 17-20: **Conquest NW**, Seattle Marriott Sea-Tac Airport Hotel, Seattle, WA. Gaming convention. Guests: Nicole Lindroos, Chris Pramas, James Ernest, Pater Adkison. Memberships: US\$40 until January 31, US\$45 at the door. For more information, www.avalonconventions.com/conquestnw/

Feb. 24-26: **Potlatch 15** at the Best Western Executive Inn, Seattle, WA. Emphasis on writing. Reservations: write The Best Western Executive Inn, 200 Taylor Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, Phone: 206-448-9444, Fax: 206-441-7929, Toll Free Reservations: 800-351-9444, <http://www.bwexec-inn.com/>, info@bwexec-inn.com. All rooms are now non-smoking. Potlatch rates are: \$79.00/single or double occupancy; \$99.00/triple or quad plus tax. do not use Best Western's on-line reservation service or national "800 #" to make your hotel reservations....If you have questions about the hotels or need help with a travel-related problem, please email Suzanne Tompkins at hotel@potlatch-sf.org. Memberships: \$45/more at the door. Potlatch 15, c/o S. Tompkins, PO Box 25075, Seattle, WA 98165; or see <http://www.potlatch-sf.org/>.

Feb. 24-26: **Kei-Kon IV: A New Hope**, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC. Anime convention. Admission: \$15, \$13 student. For more information, www.geocities.com/uvicanime/staff4.html.

Feb. 24-26: **Potlatch 15**, Best Western Executive Inn, Seattle, WA. SF literary convention. Book of Honour: "The Avram Davidson Treasury". For more information, www.potlatch-sf.org.

March 2006

March 6: **Portland Comic Book Show** in Portland, Oregon (reportedly Oregon's largest Comic Book Convention. Held twice a year in Portland, Oregon) (GET MORE INFO)

March 10-12: **Trumpeter Salute**, Bonsor Community Complex, Burnaby, BC. Gaming convention. Memberships: \$15, one-day memberships available. For more information, www.trumpeterclub.com.

March 17-19: **Anime Oasis V** at the Boise Airport Holiday Inn in Boise, ID. Room reservations \$69/nite via (208) 343-4900; mention Anime Oasis. Memberships: Adult 3-day, \$25 payable to Jeremy Lopett via PayPal, or before Feb. 11/06 to 3 Harvestview S., Apt. H, Mount Joy, PA 17522.

March 24-26: **Official Stargate SG-1 & Stargate Atlantis Convention**, Hilton Vancouver Metrotown, Burnaby, BC. Media SF convention. Guests: Michael Shanks, Joe Flanigan, Cliff Simon, Martin Gero, Gary Jones, James Bamford. Memberships: US funds, see website. For more information, www.creation.com.

March 24-26: **Gamestorm 8** at the Red Lion at the Quay, Vancouver, WA. GoHs: TBA. Reservations: Red Lion at the Quay, 100 Columbia St., Vancouver, WA 98660; tel (360) 694-8341, rooms \$74 single/double. Memberships \$30 at the door. GameStorm, POBox 764, Portland, OR 97207, email chair@gamestorm.org, or see www.gamestorm.org.

March 24-26: **Sakura-Con 9** at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle, WA. Sakura-Con is the premier Pacific Northwest Anime Convention devoted to East Asian Culture, with a particular focus on Japanese animation (anime), Japanese Comics (manga), and video gaming. Guests TBA. Memberships \$45 to Feb. 28, \$60 at the door. Sakura-Con, 3702 South Fife St., Suite K-2, PMB 78, Tacoma, WA 98409, tel 877-873-3317, email chair@sakuracon.org, or see www.sakuracon.org.

March 31 - Apr. 2: **Ad Astra 2006** in Toronto, ON. Hotel TBA. Author GoH: Terry Brooks and Peter David. Editor GoH: Del Rey Books with Betsy Mitchell. Memberships \$60 to Feb. 28 and at the door. Ad Astra 2006, POBox 7276, Stn. A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X9, email info@ad-astra.org, or see www.ad-astra.org.

March 31: deadline for **Canadian Unity Fan Fund 2006** delegate nominations. Brian Davis in Fredericton is seeking nominees from Western Canada. Prospective nominees must be Canadian citizens, or permanent residents of Canada; submit a written document outlining their fannish history, and their reason(s) for wishing to be the CUFF delegate. The submission must be dated and contain full contact information; Provide signed nomination letters from six Canadian fans; three fans from Eastern Canada and three from Western Canada; Agree to assume the duties and responsibilities of the position of CUFF Administrator. These include, but are not limited to, financial administration, fund raising, and CUFF race and election running; Represent CUFF and their region of Canada by attending the next CanVention (or designated Canadian convention). The successful candidate will travel to Convention 26, which is being hosted by Toronto Trek 20. Please direct any questions to Brian A. Davis, 45 Charm Court, Fredericton, NB E3B 7J6, Email: badavis@rogers.com. An official CUFF website is online as of December 2005, and each previous

delegate/administrator will have their own Web page there. A partial list of past administrators is available at Garth Spencer's previous volunteer website, <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~hrothgar/cuff.htm>. (Brian Davis will work up a better one Real Soon Now.)

April 2006

April 1-2: **4th Annual Emerald City ComicCon** at the Qwest Field Exhibition Center in Seattle, WA. A comics-related convention which drew 6000 in April 2005. Multiple comic artist guests. Hotel is Springhill Suites Seattle by Marriott. Tickets through Ticketmaster, available in 2006. See www.emeraldcitycomiccon.com.

April 1: **Nishikaze II** (a spring anime festival) at the University of Lethbridge (Anderson Hall), Lethbridge, AB. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$2 or non-perishable food donation. See <http://www.nishikaze.org/> for more information.

April 9: **Seattle Game Con v2.1**, Seattle Centre, Seattle, WA. Gaming convention. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information, www.seattlegamecon.com.

April 13-16: **Norwescon 29** at the Doubletree Seattle Airport Hotel. Writer GoH: Lois McMaster Bujold, Artist GoH: Donato Giancola, TM: Robert J. Sawyer, Featured Publisher: DAW Books with Betsy Wollheim & Sheila Gilbert. Theme: "Journeys, Adventures and Quests of Fantastic Fiction." Rooms: 18740 International Blvd., Seattle, WA 98188, (206) 246-8600, rooms \$102 quad occupancy. Memberships TBA. Norwescon 29, POBox 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547, (206) 270-7850, email info@norwescon.org, or see www.norwescon.org.

May 2006

May 5-7: **Corflu 23** in Toronto, ON. The original fanzine fans' convention. Memberships C\$60, US\$50, UK25. Cheques to Colin Hinz at 148 Howland Avenue, Toronto, ON CANADA M5R 3B5. Contacts: Colin Hinz, asfi@eol.ca, (416) 516-8686; Catherine Crockett, crockett@eol.ca, (416) 516-3571.

May 7: **Calgary Comic & Entertainment Expo**, Calgary Stampede Grounds, Calgary, AB. Guests & memberships: TBA. For more information, www.calgaryexpo.com.

May 19-21: **Keycon 23**, Radisson Winnipeg Downtown, Winnipeg, MB. SF convention. Guests: Jacqueline Carey, Ruth Thompson, Barron Vangor Toth. Memberships: \$35. For more information, www.keycon.org.

May 20: **Olympia Comics Festival in Olympia, WA**. Guests: Jessica Abel, Matt Madden, more TBA. See <http://www.olympiacomicsfestival.org>

May 19-21: **Flatland Fantasy Games Convention**, Hotel TBA, Regina, SK. Memberships: TBA. For more information, www.reginagamers.com.

May 19-22: **Cangames 2006**, Rideau Curling Club, Ottawa, ON. Gaming convention. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$25 until April 30, \$30 at the door. For more information, www.cangames.ca.

May 20 & 21: **Otafest 06**, Hotel TBA, Calgary, AB. Anime convention. Guests & memberships: TBA. For more information, www.otafest.com.

May 26: **Calgary Comic & Toy Expo**, McMahon Stadium, Calgary, AB. Guests: Pop Mhan, Norm Breyfogle, Ken Steacy, Cary Nord. Admission: \$5. For more information, www.comicandtoy.com.

May 26-29: **Miscon 20** at Ruby's Inn & Convention Center in Missoula, MT. Writer GoH: Jerry Oltion, Artist GoH: Frank Wu, Special GoH: Dragon Dronet. Reservations: 4825 N. Reserve St., Missoula, MT 59808, (406) 541-7829. CORRECTED RATES: "Rooms this year at MisCon will be \$79 single and \$89 Double and come with the complimentary breakfast buffet as always. You can view Ruby's information at <http://www.miscon.org/Hotel/hotel.html>." (Bob Lovely, Nov. 19/05). Memberships: \$25 to April 31. Miscon, POBox 7721, Missoula, MT 59807, (406) 251-9463, email chair@miscon.org, or see www.miscon.org.

June 2006

June 2-4: **ConComCon 13** at the Cascade Mountain Inn in Cle Elum, WA. The Northwest's conrunner's con. Focus for 2006: "sharing of information". The organizers from the North American SF Convention aka Cascadia Con will share stuff. ACD and handouts will be provided. For rooms, write the Cascade Mountain Inn, 906 E. 1st St., Cle Elum, WA 98922, phone (509) 674-2380, or fax (509) 674-7099. C-cubed room rate is 55 - 75 depending on the room - it would be good to have more room reservations made so that the hotel feels more secure since they are small and not use to professional conferences in this little town. The toll-free number for reservations is 1-888-674-3975. Preregistration: \$25 to May 31, 2006, then \$35, to ConComCon [12?], POBox 1066, Seattle, WA 98111. Contact the Ccubed 13 chairman Bobbie DuFault at Chairman@cascadiacon.org or visit the Ccubed Website at www.swoc.org/ccubed/.

July 2006

July 1-4: **Westercon 59/Conzilla** at the San Diego Marriott Mission Valley in San Diego, CA. GoH: Walter Jon Williams, Artist GoH: Bob Eggleton, FanGoH: Bobbi Armbruster, TM: Kevin J Anderson. Reservations: 8757 Rio San Diego Dr., San Diego, CA 92108, (619) 692-3800, rooms \$139 quad occupancy. Memberships: \$70 to June 15, \$80 at the door. Conzilla, POBox 845, Ramona, CA 92065, email info@conzilla.info, or see www.conzilla.info.

July 7-9: **TT20/Convention 26** at the DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel, Toronto, Ont. Guests include: Amber Benson, played Tara on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; Michael Shanks, plays Dr. Daniel Jackson on *Stargate SG-1* (Sunday Only). MCLarry Stewart. New additions: LEXA DOIG (*Andromeda*, *Stargate SG1* and *The 4400*) and RICHARD HATCH (*Battlestar Galactica*, both versions). TT20 once again hosts the Prix Aurora Awards for contributions to Canadian SF and fandom. Rooms are at the DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel: 655 Dixon Road, Toronto, Ont. You can now call the DoubleTree International Plaza to book your hotel room at: 416-244-1711 or 800-222-8733. Don't forget to mention you are booking for Toronto Trek to get the convention rate of \$129. OR you can book online and use the conference code of TNO. Visit our web page at <http://www.tcon.ca> for links and information. Rates are only guaranteed until June 5, 2006 and while rooms are still available in our room block. Pre-Registration Fee: Adult full weekend, \$60; deadline is May 26, 2006. Notes: All prices are subject to change. Enclose a cheque or money order payable to: Toronto Trek OR if you wish to pay by credit card: (You will be billed in CDN dollars) and send to: TT20 P.O. Box 7097, Station A Toronto, ON M5W 1X7 Contact: Information Line: (416) 410-TCON (8266) E-MAIL: tt-info@tcon.ca WEB: <http://www.tcon.ca>

July 8 & 9: **Animethon 13**, Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, AB. Anime convention. Memberships: Various levels, see website. For more information, www.animethon.org.

August 2006

Aug. 11-13: **Con-Version 22** in Calgary, AB (Hotel & rates TBA). GoHs: David Weber, Larry Niven. Canadian GoH: R. Scott Bakker. FanGoH: John Hertz. Memberships C\$40 to April 1. Write to Calgary SF & Fantasy Society, P.O. Box 20098, Calgary Place RPO, Calgary, AB T2P 4J2; more information at www.con-version.org.

Aug. 18-20: **Anime Evolution**, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC. Anime convention. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information, www.animeevolution.com.

Aug 23-27: **Worldcon 64/LACon IV** at the Hilton Anaheim, Anaheim Marriott and Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Writer GoH: Connie Willis, Artist GoH: James Gurney, FanGoH: Howard Devore, Special Guest: Frankie Thomas. Reservations: (Hilton) 714-750-4321, (Marriott) 714-750-8000, rooms \$99 single/double. Memberships \$175 to July 1. LACon IV, c/o S.C.I.F.I. Inc., POBox 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409; email info@laconiv.org, or see www.laconiv.com.

September 2006

Sept. 22-24: **Foolsap VIII** at the Bellevue Sheraton in Bellevue, WA. GoH: C.J. Cherryh. A flat-paper-stuff convention, featuring artshow, dealers' room,

programming, a banquet at \$26 a head. Room rates TBA, about \$85/night; contact Bellevue Sheraton, 100 112th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004-5817; tel (425) 455-3330; fax (425) 451-2473. Memberships: \$45 to April 1st, \$50 to September 21, \$60 at the door to Foolscap, c/o Little Cat Z, POBox 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461, or via PayPal to treasurer@foolscapcon.org; URL www.foolscapcon.org.

Sept. 22-24: **Rimcon Victoria** "First Annual Science Fiction Convention". Guests: To be announced [Should be confirmed by Nov. 15/05]. To be held at the Holiday Inn, 3020 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC, tel. (250) 382-4400. Discussion panels, Guest autographing sessions, Dealers Hall and Art Show and much more. MEMBERSHIP RATES: Adult Child* (Must be accompanied by an adult); until Dec. 31/05, \$20.00 \$12.00; Jan 06 to May 06 \$25.00 \$15.00; Jun06 to Sep 06 \$30.00 \$18.00; At Door - three days \$35.00 \$20.00; At Door- Day Passes \$20.00 \$12.00; *Children 5 years and under are free when accompanied by an Adult. "Supporting Membership" (?) \$9.00 (upgradeable to Attending at the rate at the time of upgrade); "Friend of RimCon" \$50.00. (Payment by Money Order payable to RimCon Victoria. All funds listed in Canadian dollars). For more information: go on-line at: www.rimconvictoria.org, or inquire by mail to: Registration, RimCon Victoria, PO Box 32108, Victoria, BC V8P 4H0.

October 2006

Oct. ??: **VCon 31** at the Executive Airport Plaza Hotel, Richmond, B.C. GoHs: Writer GoH TBA??; ArtGoH, Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk; FanGoH: Randy McCharles. Chair: Clint Budd. Dealers' Liaison: Greg Slade. MEMBERSHIP RATES?? Registrar: Howard Cherniack, #302- 1330 Graveley Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5L 3A2, tel. (604) 255-0796, email cherns@compuserve.com.

November 2006

Nov. 2-5: **World Fantasy Con 2006** at the Renaissance Hotel at the Arboretum, Austin, TX. GoHs: Glen Cook and Dave Duncan, TM: Bradley Denton, Editor GoH: Glenn Lord, Artist GoHs: John Jude Palencar, Gary Gianni. Reservations: 9721 Arboretum Blvd., Austin, TX 78759, (512) 343-2626. Memberships TBA??. World Fantasy, c/o FACT Inc., POBox 27277, Austin, TX 78755, email wfcinfo@fact.org, or see www.fact.org/wfc2006/

2008

Oct. 30–Nov. 3: **World Fantasy Convention 2008**, Hotel TBA, Calgary, AB. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information...



NEWS

New BCSFA member: Dale McGladdery (signed up Dec. 2, 2005 at FANS)

IAIN BANKS had a letter in *New Scientist*: 'Symbolically, reason has already triumphed in the debate over intelligent design. The faith-based side has shifted from using the term "creationism" to using "intelligent design". So their argument has... evolved.' [GW]

Ansible 221, Dec. 05

The Self Appointed Fannish Elite

"We know something you don't know"

GARTH GOES INDEPENDENT

Garth Spencer proposes to found a new SF club, to be provisionally titled The S.A.F.E. (Self-Appointed Fannish Elite). The primary criterion for selecting S.A.F.E. members is *originality*: coming up with *new* ideas, about science and SF and public-interest issues. Secondary criteria include thinking things through, scepticism, humour, impudence, impertinence, disrespect for authority, disbelief in reality, and a sense of the absurd. Also we pledge no allegiance to political, religious, economic, sports or artistic movements.

S.A.F.E. disavows any affiliation to MENSAs, BCSFAs, The Royal Swiss Navy, or the Legion of Dynamic Discord™.

People can contact Garth about this at P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O., Vancouver, BC CANADA V6B 5B1, tel. (604) 325-7314, email garthspencer@shaw.ca. I hope someone can suggest a better name, to start with.

For VCon Dealers (past and present)

Greg Slade writes:

"I am now the Dealer Liaison for VCON 31. Clint Budd promises that this will be the most heavily-promoted VCON yet, and I have my own evil plans for increasing the

traffic in the Dealers' Room. At the moment, the hotel for VCON 31 has not yet been finalised, although the best offer that has been tendered so far is by the Executive Airport in Richmond, where we held VCON 30.

"Wherever we end up, I would like to fill the Dealers' Room with all you wonderful people, and more besides, so that the Dealers' Room becomes so well known as *the* place to get fannish stuff that people will come out to the con just to get into the Dealers' Room. (Well, I can dream, can't I?)

"Specifically, I'd like to try to find somebody who sells stuff like T-shirts, NASA mission patches, caps, and other SF/fantasy/space related apparel. (Why? Because I want to have some fannish stuff to wear to cons and I can't sew a st... I mean, "to add more variety to the Dealers' Room more diverse." Yeah, that's it. That's the ticket...) So if any of you know somebody who deals in that sort of stuff, please put them in touch with me.

"I have a few other evil plans up my sleeve to increase the diversity of product in the Dealers' Room, so if you are planning to deal at VCON 31, please let me know as soon as you can, and give me a précis of the type of goods you plan to bring, so we can put it onto the VCON web site (and so I can try to ensure that no one type of product ends up dominating the room), and also please send me a logo, 120 pixels wide, and preferably somewhere from 30 to 90 pixels high, for use on the web site. (I have software which can import most graphic formats, but if you want me to keep my grubby mitts off your pixels, you should send me something in .jpeg or .gif, because that's what we use on the web site.)

"I'd also like to continue the experiment we started at VCON 29, of having pro-guests sign autographs in the Dealers' Room, only I'd like to have several authors scheduled at a time, so they can keep one another company in between clusters of autograph hounds.

"And finally, this is a one-time mailing. Future Dealers Updates will only be sent to those who indicate some interest in dealing at VCON 31. As guests are confirmed, I will include that news in future Dealers Updates so that those of you who are thinking about coming can make stock decisions.

Greg "Grga" Slade, grga@bluebottle.com, Nov. 26, 2005
VCON 31 Dealer Liaison

((There is still some question whether all the dealers advertising in the VCon 30 book have paid for their ads. -GS))

FESTIVAL OF DELUSIONS?

Is someone putting words in Paul Hellyer's mouth? Or are Paul Hellyer, a former Canadian Defence minister, and a host of other parties entering a delusional belief system?

First my correspondent Taras Wolansky provided the following, and then my correspondent Reptoid added another article, which follows later ... http://news.yahoo.com/s/prweb/20051124/bs_prweb/prweb314382_1



Former Canadian Minister Of Defence Asks Canadian Parliament Asked To Hold Hearings On Relations With Alien "Et" Civilizations

OTTAWA, CANADA (PRWEB) November 24, 2005 – A former Canadian Minister of Defence and Deputy Prime Minister under Pierre Trudeau has joined forces with three Non-governmental organizations to ask the Parliament of Canada to hold public hearings on Exopolitics – relations with "ETs."

By "ETs," Mr. Hellyer and these organizations mean ethical, advanced extraterrestrial civilizations that may now be visiting Earth.

On September 25, 2005, in a startling speech at the University of Toronto that caught the attention of mainstream newspapers and magazines, Paul Hellyer, Canada's Defence Minister from 1963-67 under Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prime Minister Lester Pearson, publicly stated: "UFOs, are as real as the airplanes that fly over your head."

Mr. Hellyer went on to say, "I'm so concerned about what the consequences might be of starting an intergalactic war, that I just think I had to say something." ..."

The foregoing story comes with some information links: Canadian Exopolitics Initiative <http://www.peaceinspace.net>

Click here to send your letter to the Parliament of Canada requesting public "ET" Hearings

http://exopolitics.blogs.com/star_dreams_initiative/2005/10/the_senate_of_c.html

CONTACT NOW: Toronto, Canada: Victor Viggiani, Exopolitics Toronto Symposium Tel: 905-278-5628 <http://www.exopoliticstoronto.com>

Winnipeg, Canada: Randy Kitchur Tel: 204-582-4424

Washington, D.C.: Dr. Steven Greer, The Disclosure Project Tel: (540) 456-8302 (Office) <http://www.disclosureproject.org>

Vancouver, Canada: Alfred Lambremont Webre, JD, Med; ICIS-Institute for Cooperation in Space Tel: 604-733-8134 <http://www.peaceinspace.net>

ICIS Alfred Webre 604-733-8134 E-mail Information

Forwarded by Taras Wolansky, Nov. 28, 2005

From: "ICIS-Institute for Cooperation in Space" <peace@peaceinspace.org> http://exopolitics.blogs.com/exopolitics/2005/12/2006_exopolitic.html

"STEPHEN BAXTER was the first to receive the Oxford University SF Group award for 'best Speculative Fiction novel published in paperback in the preceding academic year'. In fact he was slightly bemused to learn in late November that 'Coalescent' actually won last May, but the person who was supposed to e-mail you at the time and invite you to Oxford never got round to it." That sounds like the OUSFG I remember."

Ansible 221, Dec 05



OKAL REL UNIVERSE NEWS

Book Launch for First Anthology: The book launch for the first Okal Rel Universe anthology, published by Windstorm Creative, was held Dec 7, 2005 in Prince George, at Books and Company. Anthology authors Elizabeth Woods, Amanda da Silva and Sarah Trick read from their selections. Out of town authors Rick Hoggarth and Adam Volk were represented by the editors, Virginia O'Dine and Lynda Williams.

Righteous Anger: Fencer and filmmaker Craig Bowsby completed providing his input on the duelling scenes in Lynda Williams' next novel in the Okal Rel Universe main series published by Edge.

See http://www.okalrel.org/blog/arc/2005_09_01_arc.html

Lynda Williams, Lynda@okalrel.org, November 30, 2005



"ROBERT CONQUEST was one of 14 recipients of the US Presidential Medal of Freedom on 9 November—not for his science fiction, nor for co-editing the *Spectrum* anthologies with Kingsley Amis, nor even for his unbelievably filthy verse sequel to 'Eskimo Nell', but for the detailed expose of Soviet atrocities in *The Great Terror* and other historical works. In genre circles, his most quoted saying must be the *Spectrum* epigraph so often echoed in these pages: 'SF's no good, they bellow till we're deaf. / But this looks good.' – 'Well then, it's not SF.'"

Ansible 221, Dec 05

"BLA -FOO MUMBLE: Irish singer Enya, who has sung in Gaelic and Latin, has rejected those languages for her newest album as not quite eclectic enough. Forget English; that's "a little bit obtrusive", she says. Thus, three tracks on her latest album are sung in Loxian. Not familiar with that tongue? That's because she made it up: it's "a futuristic language from a distant planet," she says. "It seems to choose elements at

random," says Terry Dolan, a professor of English at University College Dublin. 'The resulting "language" has "no form of grammar or word order," Dolan says, which provides "very limited comprehensibility." (London *Times*)...Big deal: Bob Dylan has sung in that sort of language for years.

This Is True, Nov. 27, 2005

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"AS OTHERS SEE US. An *Observer* bioscience article's opening sentence works hard to chill the blood: 'It is a prospect worthy of a science fiction B-movie: male couples, women past the menopause, infertile couples and even celibate clergy producing their own children.' (13 Nov) Presumably the reporters saw a range of Thog-rated sf films that the rest of us missed: *Attack of the Fertiloids*, perhaps, or the epically tacky struggle against alien oppressors in Ed Wood's *Planned Parenthood from Outer Space*.

"Nowadays even Supreme Court nominees attract sf comparisons: 'On the other hand, [Judge] Alito has the disadvantage of following John Roberts, who was just as smart but carried himself like a big man on campus: athletic build, quick humor, and good looks. Compared with Roberts, Alito looks as if he were in town for a *Star Trek* convention.' (Dana Milbank, *Washington Post*, 3 Nov) [MMW]"

Ansible 221, Dec 05

ConComCon 2006 room rates and programming

"C-cubed room rate is \$55 - \$75 depending on the room -it would be good to have more room reservations made so that the hotel feels more secure since they are small and not use to professional conferences in this little town. The number for reservations is 1-888-674-3975 or (509) 674-2380.

"One update to programming that I am very excited to share is our "Dummies Guide to Publications." I know that none of us are dummies but there are tricks and things to consider for publications that we realized that not everyone knows so Paul Carpentier has agreed to host this panel for us. It will be full of great information for everyone even those who themselves are not in charge of doing publications.

"Another update to programming will be a review of hospitality-howtoworkin-the hotels rules, the con com expectations and budget while still serving some great stuff the con goers will rave about. We will have some recipes to share and other info for all the new hospitality runners to make their lives easier."

Bobbie Dufault, Nov. 16, 2005

In Memorandum [sic], Wendy Jackson Hall

"In the past, Wendy's newsletter *Northwest Animation* has been posted on this ml. I had the opportunity to speak with Wendy on a couple of occasions. Bright, funny, she was enthusiastic regarding the advent of anime crossing the water to this country. Her talent and creativity will be missed.

"Continuing on Wally's post about the passing of Wendy Jackson Hall, the publication Animation World Network has posted a biography of her career. http://news.awn.com/index.php?ltype=top&newsitem_no=15426 I've personally have emailed back and forth with Wendy for a number of years, but alas were never able to meet in person to share our mutual love for animation. She will be missed. Thank you Wendy for giving and showing myself and others the wonders of animation."

From: "Wally Garrett Lindsey" wallysama@yahoo.com
Isaac Alexander to nwconleague, Nov. 22/05

Goth House Newsletter: 18 November 2005

"The 24-hour comic: 7 to 9 pm. <http://www.gothhouse.org/>

"Annotated here: http://www.gothhouse.org/gh_parlour/posts/ghp000008.php
Julie McGalliard, Nov. 18, 2005

Goth House Newsletter: 02 December 2005

"'The Wretched Day' is complete! Huzzah! <http://www.gothhouse.org/>

"The annotations are now done as a commentary track which you can turn off and on at will. Try it! It's fun!

"If you want to start at the beginning, start here:

http://www.gothhouse.org/gh_features/2005/gh050423_0000.php?hour=0&minute=10&comment=

Julie McGalliard, 02 December 2005

Making Maps of Registration?

"Here's a neat little tool on the web. This is a website where you can create your own map with data. Imagine making your own map with your convention database and plugging it into this. Convention planners could then better plan on how to market themselves by where their membership comes from.

"<http://www.frappr.com/>

Isaac Alexander to nwconleague email list, Nov. 24, 2005

AS OTHERS SEE US II.

"The *Wired* events calendar for December sums up the long-running Philcon: 'This sci-fi fantasy extravaganza in Philly offers Filk music singalongs and adults-only role playing. It's enough to make Rod Serling roll in his grave.' [MMW]"

Ansible 221, Dec 05



How Long Has This Been Going On?

So this guy writes to me out of the blue about Canadian gaming writing:

"A few weeks ago I thought it would a great idea to compile a website that listed Canada's contribution to D&D. I am a bit of a D&D collector and particularly enjoy more of the independently published material rather than the TSR stuff. A little while ago, I found a few issues of First Encounter magazine that spurred me on to try and find out what other Canadian made D&D items were out there. I was given your email address from David Malinski who thought you might be able to help me out.

"I know a bit about the First Encounter and Delf people having emailed Eric Hotz. I was wondering if you know anything about the other items or of any items I do not have listed? Any idea where I might be able to find any of the items on list?"

"(Addendum at Nov. 22/05: "First Encounter was billed as being "Canada's Coast to Coast Fantasy & Gaming Magazine" and I am quite amazed that the advertising actually does a very good job of covering coast to coast. The magazine was published by Kelly Villemaire but Eric Hotz did some artwork and wrote some articles, John Frazer was the editor. There were 8 issues released around 1982-1983. I have issues 4-8 that I found lurking around in Hamilton, Ontario.")

"I noticed that you are associated with V-Con as well. Did V-con ever do any gaming or was it mainly Sci Fi oriented? If so do you know what the Tourney modules used were or who wrote them, where I could find them etc?"

"My list so far is as follows:

"BC: *First Encounter Magazine* (Canada's Coast to Coast Fantasy & Gaming Magazine) #1, 2, 3, Annual #1 by Kelly Villemaire,

"Delf Games (Burnaby, BC) *Lair of the Medusa*, 1982 by Kelly Villemaire and John Edwards, artwork was done by Eric Hotz

"RPGameMasters (Burnaby, BC) * *Running the Game* - book * GR1 Guerrilla Base/The Insurrectionist (Sci-Fi Adventure module) by Jeff Mehain * ST1 Keltek: Servant of Stawitchi (Fantasy Adventure module) * ST2? Tower of Stawitchi * In Search of the Emerald Door - British Columbia Festival of Games 1983 Elimination Dungeon

"Ontario: *In Search of the Living Key*, by John Lee. Another tournament adventure, this one was run in the Toronto Games Club's Aug. 15-17, 1980 Dungeons and Dragons Tournament. 15 loose pages.

"Saskatchewan: *The Manor of Lord Alderic of Enroc, Part I* (upper levels) by Kelly Sturch and Dan Hatchen * *The Manor of Lord Alderic of Enroc, Part II* (lower levels) for Wizard's Challenge in Saskatoon, Sask, 1983.

"Other Canada - Fantasy Factory (CAN) Catapult Run (1984)"
Mark Petrick, mdtpetri@cs.uwaterloo.ca, Nov. 22, 05



Finnish Star Trek Parody (with Klingon Subtitles)

"Hi all, here is the link to the Finnish (w/ English subs) Star Trek parody film: <http://www-fi3.starwreck.com/download.php>

"The Klingon subtitles must be added by hand, unfortunately. Here is the link to the Klingon subtitles: http://www-fi3.starwreck.com/media/switp/fansubs/star_wreck_in_the_pirkinning_subtitles_klingon-tlh.srt

"To watch the movie, you MUST have the Xvid codec installed. Here is the link for the Xvid codec: <http://www.xvidmovies.com/codec/>

"Or, you could search for "Koeipi's MegaCodec" which contains every possible video/audio codec (and their respective players) you could ever need. And about two dozen you might need, but didn't know it.

Peter (vurk@earthlink.net) to sfnorthwest, Nov. 22/05

THOG'S MASTERCLASS

Prestidigitation Dept (or, Yoga Exercise #42). `As Morgan sat in another chair beside him, Duncan rolled his head in Morgan's direction and looked at him searchingly, folding his hands and tapping joined forefingers against his cheek as he rested his elbows on the chair arms.' (Katherine Kurtz, *The Bishop's Heir*, 1984) [TMcD]



Christina Carr

Method Acting Dept. `May furrowed her brow. Her pupils jittered side to side, as if her frontal lobes were doing heavy lifting. Her gaze was so intense, it looked like her skull could blow up in a puff of hot steam at any moment. Then her face lit up with a divine epiphany.' (both Greg Vilks, *Golem*, 2005) [PB]

JUST TO BE A GOOF

"US author lauds suicide bombers"

"(19 Nov. 05) One of the greatest living US writers has praised terrorists as "very brave people" and used drug culture slang to describe the "amazing high" suicide bombers must feel before blowing themselves up.

"Kurt Vonnegut, author of the 1969 anti-war classic *Slaughterhouse Five*, made the provocative remarks during an interview in New York for his new book, *Man Without a Country*, a collection of writings critical of US President George W. Bush. Vonnegut, 83, has been a strong opponent of Mr Bush and the US-led war in Iraq, but until now has stopped short of defending terrorism. ...

(c) *The Australian*

David Nason, New York correspondent
Forwarded by Taras Wolansky, Nov. 21, 2005



Where the De Camps' Library Went

"Half-Price Books, the well-known used/remainder chain, has purchased the library of science fiction author L. Sprague de Camp.

"Sprague de Camp and his wife Catherine both passed away in 2000. They had resided in Plano, Texas since 1989. Both were writers and editors, especially in the science fiction field, although he also wrote semi-popular histories of engineering and technology.

"The de Camp library is now on sale (volumes priced individually) at the Half-Price main store on Northwest Highway in Dallas. The collection includes copies of most of de Camp's works, as well as many volumes from the Golden Age of science fiction, including inscribed books from Asimov, Leiber, etc. Also included are numerous volumes (first and early editions) of E.R. Burroughs, Lord Dunsany, and P.G. Wodehouse.

Bill Burns to Timebinders email list, Nov. 13, 2005



Remember that foolish "V" miniseries?

MEDIA FILE

Media File, January 2006: "All Quiet on the Media Front"

Yes, it's Christmas-time in the media world, and with the networks showing dancing snowmen, there's not much going on until the Monday after deadline. So bear with me.

Two of the new American sci-fi series are history. The ABC remake of *Night Stalker* bit the dust in mid-November in its Thursday-night suicide time-slot and has been replaced with movies until the New Year. CBS's *Threshold* didn't do much better (despite glowing reviews) in its Tuesday-night time-slot and has been replaced with the reality series *The Amazing Race: Family Edition* for the foreseeable future. The other shows are doing a bit better. However, it's too early in the season to see if they'll be around for next year.

As for everything else, the mundanes are taking it over. If Global once again pre-empt a sci-fi series for a Billy Graham crusade (they've been doing this since 1970), I'll stand in front of him (or his son, who has taken over by the time you read this), jump up and down three times, roll a head of cabbage, and giggle.

Space isn't doing much better. OK, I admit "World Vision" is a great tax write-off to fill a time-slot on the very low-rated Christmas transmission day. However, the last thing even a die-hard mundane wants to see is a starving child in the arms of Megan

Fellows (who replaced William Shatner, and is now getting to be about the size of him) when they've just eaten a holiday meal that could have fed the whole village she's standing in. So I say, since Christmas Day shows will never get ratings you want (unless the whole country becomes entirely non-Christian), why not put on something for the few sci-fi fans who live here at Christmas? What I'm saying is talk to someone like West-Jet Airlines and then bring back the "Killer B" movie festival for Christmas and Boxing Day, and don't forget to start it with *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at 11:00 PM (Eastern), Christmas Eve.

Over in the UK, a *Doctor Who* special aired as part of the "Children in Need" night on BBC1 on 18 November 2005, starring the Tenth Doctor (David Tennant) and his companion Rose Tyler (Billie Piper) in a mini-adventure. Canadian series fans don't have to worry about missing it because it airs part of the "Christmas Invasion" episode that will air on the CBC on 26 December 2005. It's very likely that the other mini-adventure, titled "Attack of the Graske," will air after "Christmas Invasion" on CBC Digital (Please tape it for me, Steve 40!) that will introduce a brand-new villain to the *Doctor Who* universe.

The *Doctor Who* episode written by actor and series fan Stephen Fry may be moved to season three due to large production costs. The story dealt with "an historical figure who isn't all that they seem..." It sounds quite good and if it's moved to season three I'm sure it'll be worth the wait.

The BBC has released information on the *Doctor Who* spin-off series *Torchwood*. Series producer Russell T. Davies (who also makes *Doctor Who*) said "it will be a dark, clever, wild, sexy, British, crime/sci-fi, paranoid, thriller, cop show with a sense of humor - *The X-Files* meets *This Life*." Still no word if the CBC will pick up the new series yet. However, it won't be hitting the air in Britain until October, so we got lots of time to wait.

Sorry about going not going on that rant I told you about last issue. Maybe you can read it this time next year.

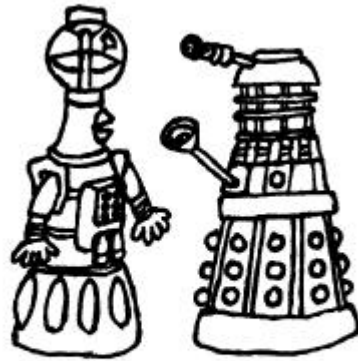
(update, Dec. 9, 2005)

It looks like classic *Doctor Who* will start airing on BBC America on Monday, Oct. 2, 2006, with a new series starting on Saturday, Oct. 7, 2005.

ABC has pulled the plug on the remake as of November 17. The series has been getting very low ratings against CBS's *CSI*, NBC's *The Apprentice* and Fox's *OC*, dipping in its last week to just under 4 million viewers with 1.4/3 million in the 18-49 age group.

ABC will replace the November 17 episode with an extended *Primetime Live*, while holiday specials will fill the rest of the dates until the New Year.

Ray Seredin, BCSFA list, Nov. 15, 2005



So what kind of benefits
do you guys get?

BOOK REVIEWS

by Donna McMahon

Perfect Circle, Sean Stewart (Small Beer Press, 04)

Going Postal, Terry Pratchett (Corgi, 04)

Touched By Venom, Janine Cross (Roc, Nov/05)

Perfect Circle, Sean Stewart (Small Beer Press, 04)

I have been remiss in not previously reviewing *Perfect Circle*, the most recent novel by peripatetic (Edmonton-Vancouver-California-Texas) writer Sean Stewart. This has nothing to do with the quality of the book and everything to do with it having slid underneath a stack of detritus in my office, only to be rediscovered months later. (New Year's resolution: clean office.) Nonetheless, it's worth a very late review, since this is a hell of a book.

Perfect Circle was nominated for the World Fantasy Award and the Nebula. Everybody who reviewed it loved it, from Locus to the Washington Post. It features a contemporary setting, stylish prose, and deep issues that, if they aren't important to America, ought to be. So why hasn't it sold a gazillion copies? Damn if I know.

At first glance, people might be excused for thinking that William Kennedy's nickname, "Dead," refers to his dead end life or deadbeat habits. He's divorced, sweltering in a scummy Houston apartment, failing to pay child support, and has just been fired from his latest McJob for giving extreme attitude to an obnoxious customer. He can't get over his ex-wife and he can't get his life together.

Under these circumstances, the fact that he can see dead people is a decidedly minor inconvenience. That is, until a dead girl leads him into a near fatal encounter with her murderer and Kennedy's odd ability becomes news. Now everybody in town who doesn't think he's crazy wants to hire him to find ghosts, and Kennedy is afraid it will ruin what's left of his life.

Perfect Circle is about lots of things. It's about gender roles and class in a vividly drawn modern Texas. It's about ownership—of people, money and guns—and about pride, guilt and rage. It's a searing snapshot of "normal" life in a working class suburb of America where the dead people seem a lot more functional than the living ones.

It's also a good story, with a funny, likeable protagonist who we find ourselves rooting for despite his blatant flaws. Finally, pop culture mavens will get a kick out of the contemporary music references (all of which were lost on me, but what the heck).

This is a real rarity—an intelligent, sensitive and entertaining novel about what it means to be male. I think it will speak most strongly to men, but it should appeal to many readers, mainstream as well as genre.

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Going Postal, Terry Pratchett (Corgi, 04)

I haven't read many of Terry Pratchett's books, so I came to *Going Postal* without any background on Discworld and its inhabitants, and I'm pleased to say that I didn't need it. This novel stands perfectly well on its own as the tale of a con man given a choice between hanging from his neck until dead or running the utterly moribund post office of Ankh-Morpork.

Death is about the only incentive that could get Moist von Lipwig (or anybody else) to consider the job of postmaster. To begin with, the monumental post office building is crammed with guano-encrusted letters that haven't been delivered since the postal service collapsed decades before. In the meantime, modern technology has bypassed them. The "clacks", run by the Grand Trunk Semaphore Company, can deliver a message far faster than any horse could possibly run with a bag of mail.

Oh, and then there's the fate of the last few post masters who all met with swift and fatal accidents in the bowels of the building. Fortunately, von Lipwig's former career as a con artist has polished his skills in areas such as thinking on his feet, convincing people to believe the improbable, and evading retribution—all abilities he will need in abundance.

The correct word for a novel like this is "romp." It's an amusing read with eccentric characters and a plot that gathers momentum as von Lipwig keeps impulsively raising the stakes. The quirky setting is fun, too, along with the ironic wordplay.

Pratchett is able to sustain his over-the-top joke right to the end by making von Lipwig a charming character, reluctantly sliding towards redemption. This is a good rainy day book for pretty much anybody.

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Touched By Venom, Janine Cross (Tor, Nov/05)

There is one enormous advantage in being an occasional and usually unpaid book reviewer. I don't have to review books I don't like or don't think have any merit. I don't

even have to read them –I can just sample a few chapters and then toss them on the discard heap, rather than wasting a precious fraction of my life wading through something I can't stand. Regular paid reviewers don't have that choice, so it's no wonder they tend to become cantankerous.

At any rate that's my theory about the scathing Kirkus review of *Touched By Venom* from North Vancouver writer Janine Cross. Kirkus trashed the book as "wretched drivel", which is a harsh condemnation for a first novel. Now, I don't usually read other reviews, let alone quote them, but when I heard about this I became intrigued because something seemed to have hit a particularly sore spot with the Kirkus reviewer (and others).

Touched By Venom is certainly unusual. This saga of a girl brought up in poverty in a society that worships dragons, is a bit like the Dragon Riders of Pern set amid the untouchables in the rankest slums of Calcutta.

At the start of the book, Zarq Darquel is nine, and doesn't understand why her mother is an outcast, or her beautiful sister is sold into sexual slavery, or why it's such a bad thing to be a half-breed Djimbi. Nonetheless, when her mother flees the pottery clan, she discovers that life can be much, much worse. First they live in the Zone of the Dead with people who tend corpses, then they join the Dragon Convent of Tieron, where a small group of desperately poor women care for old dragons. There she is drawn into the rites and taboos surrounding highly addictive dragon venom, and begins dreaming of revolution.

On the plus side, I thought this book was reasonably well written. The story keeps moving, and the setting is exceptionally vivid. Cross has obviously spent considerable time and thought mapping out the hierarchies in her society, and the way in which they all ultimately hinge on dragon worship. This is one macabre world, too, steaming and pustulating with life and death. There's a fair bit of the other kind of steaminess as well –and whether it's erotic or icky is simply a matter of taste. Personally, I didn't have a problem with the "bestiality" (does it count if the beast is purely fantasy?) though it's pretty clear that some reviewers did.

Nobody will accuse this Fantasy writer of romanticizing subsistence living. It's all there –leeches, bugs, malnutrition, vomiting, exhaustion, mud and misery. Unfortunately what's not there is the other side. These people seem largely devoid of companionship, humour, fun, and kindness. I'd argue that it makes them less than realistic. It certainly makes them less than compelling to read about.

This is an unremittingly grim story in which the protagonist, unfortunately, does not move the plot. Since she's only a child for the first two thirds of the novel, this is understandable, but the result is a narrative in which one terrible thing happens to her, then another worse one, then another still worse one, etc.

Moreover, I never developed any empathy for young Zarq. I didn't find her an appealing or very interesting person, nor even all that realistic. And having persevered to the end, I discovered that the book is anything but a stand-alone novel. It might as well conclude with the words "to be continued."

None of this explains the level of vitriol in the reviews, however. So I'll point out some things that struck me about *Touched By Venom*.

First, while there is certainly a great deal of violence in this book, it's not the sort of violence that is generally found in Fantasy novels. Apparently it's OK to write about

disembowelments with swords and wars that kill thousands of people, but readers are not ready for more mundane and realistic sorts of brutality—the circumcision of the female protagonist stands out in particular. Lots of Fantasy novels feature women who are beaten, raped and sold into slavery and poor people who are exploited or starved, but not with this level of detail. Nor can I remember any other protagonist who is consistently so powerless for an entire novel. It makes a disturbing and very uncomfortable read.

There's a blatant feminist message here, too, in the suffering of the women in this misogynistic society, and it's trowelled on thick, but, hey, Margaret Atwood did it in *A Handmaid's Tale* and that was applauded as literature. So I began wondering if there wasn't a bit of a double standard here. Men have written plenty of SF/F novels featuring graphic violence and heavy-handed political messages without seeming to arouse this kind of criticism from reviewers. Is this a shoe on foot thing? And are we all so accustomed to certain sexist tropes in the genre that we don't even notice any more?

I find it hard to guess how this novel will sell. It's certainly generating lots of controversy in blog land, which is probably helpful. But readers who pick it up at a store on the basis of a cover and title that suggest a bodice-ripping dragon fantasy, are liable to be shocked and disappointed.

Still, I was impressed by the worldbuilding, and Cross's attempt to portray poor and exploited characters in an unusually vivid way while dealing with real human themes. Trivial, exploitive entertainment like a *Gor* novel is drivel. *Touched By Venom* is a flawed first novel.



MOVIE REVIEW

(*Serenity*)

By Ryan Hawe

So here's how it was.

Used to be, the same guy who decided to turn modern dark fantasy on its ear with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* then decided to tell a Western-type story against a space backdrop. Now, such had been tried before, but mostly in the superficial sense of cowboy hats and desert shootouts. Our man Joss, he went into the roots of the frontier-

fiction phenomenon, and gave viewers a Han Solo type (yes, a strong man written by the Joss) who was on the losing side of a civil war, and the oddball crew of a ramshackle freighter as it plies the fringe worlds trying to stay out of trouble—official or otherwise. There were cows and bordellos, true, but also fancy balls, urbanized worlds, and a Sino-American colonization effort that led to a merged language of sorts by 2510. Or at least, an English that had much Mandarin swearing in it.

Then Fox Broadcasting got a hold of it, and even though this 'verse of Joss' had legalized prostitution (and a courtesan as a core cast member), they just didn't know what to do with the show. Most infamously, they broadcast the second episode (a simple train job) first and the pilot last. Only 10 of the thirteen episodes were ever shown. And so it might have gone the way of a lot of "too smart for the networks" television, but a funny thing happened.

The older *Trek* fans, those who remember when their saga wasn't even 79 cans of syndication, will know what I'm talking about. The few, the proud, the fen, they would not let this show simply die alone. They rallied, they organized, they gained converts with each group-party viewing. Then came the DVD release, and Joss served up some good fixings on that one (including the missing episodes and a folksong that needs no explanation). The sales on that were strong enough to convince the Powers that Be at MCA Universal to give Joss a shot at resolving some plot threads in a movie. Not a big-budget movie, as science fiction films tend to go, but as we've learned in the past few years, it's not so much the money as what you do with it.

And that's where I come in, to tell you all about how that turned out.

Both true fans and new viewers alike should be fairly well pleased by this little film, there's a nice beginning flashback to events before the series pilot which help to set everyone straight as to how we got here, and a job-that-doesn't-go-according-to-the-gorram-plan to give the fans some action and the new folk some insight into who these people are and what they do. When Capt. Malcolm Reynolds and his crew barely escape from the Reavers (cannibalistic space raiding-types who combine the worst features of Uruks and the Sabbat vamps), ship's doctor and reluctant passenger Simon decides he's had enough, and he's going to take his sister River off *Serenity*. Couldn't have picked a worse time for it, though, as the Alliance has once again set its sights on getting River contained again, and this time they've sent an Operative of perfect skill and perfect belief out to see it done.

Before it's all through, our band of folks-out-to-make-a-living will find themselves up against all the might of the Alliance, as well a fleet of Reavers that stand between them and a lost planet that may hold the key to unlocking River's gifts.

Oh, and sad to say, the Shepard dies. I kind of had a feeling about that one, as Ron Glass hadn't appeared in much promotional material for the film. I'm more surprised that one of the core crew also doesn't make it through the movie, and no, I'm not telling you whom.

Something some of us Joss fans were curious about also gets an answer here: Reavers don't turn to dust when you kill them. That said, watching River plow through a bunch of them still made me think "Slayer genes", anyway.

That's really my one niggle about this film (well, that and the fact that Inara doesn't have as much to do as she did in the series). Joss is a good writer, a third-generation scriptwriter, who's made his mark by taking various genres and playing

with their conventions. I can see, though, why some of his detractors feel that he's developed his own clic hé, the "One girl in all the world" with super-strength and skill. So it was with Buffy Summers, so it is with River Tam. It probably doesn't help his case that he also has inherited a few strong female characters in other projects (Ellen Ripley in *Alien: Resurrection*, soon *Wonder Woman*), though it's too soon to say Joss is set in his ways. And he has a strong man in Malcolm. Deeply wounded though he may have been for all the series and a good chunk of the film, when the lights go out, he doesn't back down from doing what's right. In the end, "River the Reaver Slayer", as much as it may feel to fans of the Joss like we've seen all this. All in all, if you haven't seen this film, you're missing out on a good yarn. It's a simple tale, but not a formulaic one, and it's powerfully told.

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- __ You are a member. __ You are a non-member.
- __ You've got the beat. __ You've got the groove.
- __ You know why the caged bird sings.
- __ What, you're *complaining*? __ I want to **bear your children!**
- __ You're so fannish, it's scary! __ You're a mean motor-scooter and a rowdy Roto-Rooter! **Yow!**