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Once upon a time, around 1974 or 75, a circle of high-school friends in Victoria were trying to form an SF club. The founders of SFAV, the SF Association of Victoria, included Stan Hyde and Lynne Fonseca. (They called it NOVA at first; this was changed to "SF Association of Victoria" when the conflict with the upcoming PBS show became apparent.) At this point they were some poker players who sometimes talked SF, and who planned a never-published clubzine. After three meetings, they abandoned Robert's Rules of Order. (Now, I think that set the tone for the next ten years: loose and informal to the point of tone for the shapelessness.)

According to one of Stan's early articles (FTA/Phoenix, Aug. 1983), he and other SFAVians had originally inquired about maybe setting up a branch of BCSFA in Victoria. They met Daniel Say, who told them approximately that BCSFA was bored and boring and why didn't they start up their own group? So they did.

Note: the city of Victoria had less than a quarter-million people, which is important both to understand the relative size of our city's fan groups, and to understand what happens to attempts to do a con here. Greater Victoria had about 170,000 people; the outlying "western communities" added things up to about 225,000. In the 1950's, the population was described as "newlywed or nearly dead". The adolescent and young-adult population has since risen, but it's still true that services to retirees form one of the bases of the local economy (along with government, tourism, the University, and CFB Esquimalt). If "economy" isn't too strong a word, that is.

Another thing to understand is that, while Victoria is the capital of British Columbia, it is slightly isolated by being situated on Vancouver Island. Victoria is 105 km from Vancouver, the big city on the mainland. The ferries take about two hours in transit across the Strait. It makes a pleasant trip. Victoria is also served by Victoria International Airport, in the Sydney area.

Here is what Linda Frum's Guide to Canadian Universities says about UVic:

*When the natives say that the city of Victoria belongs to "the newly wed and the nearly dead," they mean that if you need rip-roarin', fire-breathing, non-stop fun, you had better look elsewhere. The student who has come to college to read poetry under the trees by himself, however, won't find prettier trees anywhere than at the University of Victoria. ...*

*The campus lies on a huge expanse of park, and while its buildings don't add anything to the park's beauty, they don't detract from it much either. And just a few hours from school is an individualistic sportsman's paradise: salmon fishing, mountain climbing, skiing, windsurfing, sailing, canoeing, water-skiing, beaches, swimming, trekking. ...*

-- (Linda Frum, Linda Frum's Guide to Canadian Universities, Key Porter Books, 1987)

Victoria was lousy with bookstores, new and used, but comparatively poor in comic shops. These things may have helped shape the character of local fandom; SFAV was almost exclusively science-fiction-oriented. There were also, presently, a Star Trek club and a daughter group to SFAV at the University of Victoria, UVicSFA.

SFAV in the late 70's was a group of 20, maybe 30 fans, ranging from high-school to college age, who held small, informal meetings (10 to 12 people on the average) in members' homes. They barely had any visible activities until Up the Tubes was published in June and July of 1978 (edited by Stan Hyde, and basically a solo

effort). A piece on Torcon 2 (1973), by Murray Greig, was originally scheduled for Up the Tubes, but later appeared in a Victoria paper. Murray Greig later became a sportswriter.

The zine folded after two issues. For the next ten years, SFAV never topped a total attendance of about 50, and often less. Attendance at meetings usually ran to 6 to 12 people.

By the late 70's, SFAV, its daughter club (UVicSFA) at the University, and the UFCST held summer shopping-mall displays, fall Open Houses, joint dinners and parties and some joint charitable events for a local telethon. Individual activities included SFX amateur films, modelling, writing, drawing, collecting of SF publications; club activities included dances, beach parties, filed trips and picnics, swimming, potluck dinners, and attending SF/F film premieres with the other clubs. Dues were \$8/yr, and gave one a membership card, fanzine subscription, and discounts at some local stores.

One Cat Middlemiss was briefly a member of SFAV, until he had some kind of falling-out with Paul Delaney. Cat started what he called the "United Federation of Canadian Star Trekkers", a year later than SFAV arose, and was president until the day he walked off with much of the UFCST's library and possessions. Bernie Klassen wrote in 1985 that this group was forced to set a lower age limit at 16.

Lloyd Penney adds:

*In August 1977, I moved from Orillia, Ontario to Victoria, and soon saw a notice of a Trek club starting up. This was the United Federation of Canadian Star Trekkers, founded by Cat Middlemiss, Dan Cawsey, and Tony Sine. I was one of their first members, and for a while we had a great time partying, gathering for workshops, working on various projects, and staging mall displays and shows. There were plans to get to at least one V-Con, usually foiled for lack of money. The club suddenly found that Cat and his wife Lois had disappeared, absconding with most of the club's possessions and its treasury, which had several hundred dollars in it. Lois had some medical problems, and Cat was a struggling artist with a slick tongue, so we weren't too surprised to find them and the money gone. The club staggered on anyway. We later discovered that Cat was no artist at all, but was claiming the products of his younger brother as his own. However, those days of finding out about fandom were amongst the happiest of my life. I finally had some friends with a common interest, like Cat, Dan, Tony, Joanne van Heteren, Stephanie Lightbody, Pat Kilner, Paul Delaney, and Lynne Fonseca. Paul was at one time the second-in-command of both the UFCST and SFAV.*

-- (From Opuntia #19, May 1994)

When I joined SFAV, about 1979, the Victoria fan groups seemed to be joined by a sort of collegiality; there may have been no more than 50 or so members in all the clubs together, many members held dual memberships, and several executives, I believe, even served in more than one club at once. Things looked different, and more divisive, to Bernie Klassen.

*When I arrived in town in 1980 (Bernie Klassen later wrote), sheer chance dictated that I got involved with the ST group instead of with SFAV (of which I had no knowledge until some months later). The UFCST numbered something like 25 or 30 members and SFAV was about 10 or 15 higher in population. By this point there was a certain amount of cross-over between the two groups; mostly in the person of Paul Delaney and his wife Lynne Fonseca. Paul had been instrumental in bringing Greg Benford to Victoria, and was probably the most active non-fanzine fan Victoria has ever produced (although Paul was also active in SFAV's From the Ashes and Phoenix). Paul had the ability to coalesce about himself much of the loose fannish energy that was about at the time. In 1980, Paul, Bev Cooke, and a few others rounded UVicSFA, the University of Victoria SF Association. This group was formed mainly in order to gain access to the university facilities, with an eye towards a convention.*

-- (from Klassen, The Central Ganglion, Dec. 1985)

## THE UFCST

Karl Johanson joined the UFCST in 1979, on seeing a Star Trek mall display (advertised on the radio). Thus entered the Johanson Clan, including Karl, his sister Paula, and by extension Bernie Klassen, Bev Cooke and Al Hargreaves. The Johansons were the kind of family who sort of adopt everyone else.

In 1979, when Karl Johanson joined the UFCST, the club had 30 - 50 members (25 - 30 by Bernie Klassen's estimate, as of 1980). Karl writes that he participated in quite a number of UFCST activities with Bernie (e.g. editing Trekkada) and graphic artist Dan Cawsey (e.g. almost finishing a float for the Victoria Day Parade), and the whole "Johanson Clan" that soon formed (e.g., inter alia, the making of Dawn of the Living Socks). The Johanson siblings, their spouses and their friends comprised what became the "Old Guard" in Victoria fandom.

*... in (SFAV's) desperate search to discover what a science fiction club was supposed to do, the fanzine was again suggested as a way of giving the club direction ...*

*By this time, two attempts at clubzines had gone down the tubes, so to speak. In 1978, a group of active fans had joined the club ... among them were Gary Harper, Dixie Sackett, Garth Spencer, David Thomson and Paul Delaney. As well, long-time members of the club, like Lynne Fonseca, Linda Thompson, Geoffrey Edwards, and myself were anxious to do more than just get together for movies, cons, and meetings.*

-- (Stan Hyde, "Up the Tube?", Aug. 1983)

In 1979, the memory of Up the Tubes, plus a summer surge in membership, catalyzed a new zine: From the Ashes, a monthly dittoed newsletter, and FTA was followed in November by Phoenix, a more genzine-style quarterly (also dittoed at the University of Victoria). Gary Harper edited both SFAV zines until the end of 1980; Paul Delaney, the fannish dynamo from Australia, took them over in February 1981. A new four-member executive took over FTA in May, while Dave Thomson edited Phoenix.

Another activity, in 1980, was a telephone/radio interview, arranged with Jack Williamson, Michael Coney (from Sidney, up the Island) Julian Reid, and Joe Haldeman.

After Paul Delaney joined SFAV and the local Star Trek club, SFAV became as active as it ever did, became something more than a social club with an SF focus. Delaney became an important local organizer, the moving force behind the zines, the regular events, and the liaison with the convalescent children at the Queen Alexandra Solarium. He was probably the driving force behind Victoria's two minicons.

Delaney told me in the winter of 84-85 that the executive at this time tried to act as a rudder, more than anything; taking care of business, managing the club account and setting meeting times; and they sought to accomplish the club's functions without overstructuring it. (The UFCST had reacted to the Middlemiss incident by trying to set up a constitution safeguarding against EVERYTHING, which effectively strangled the young club.) SFAV, on the other hand, seemed to go to the opposite extreme.

About this time, I had read somewhere that most offices or nonprofit enterprises seem to depend on one overworked person (often a feisty, type A personality woman) to accomplish most things. I had seen this in action at The Martlet, the student paper at UVic. Later, I thought Paul Delaney was the active, overworked person who got things done in SFAV. So much was droite. A gauche, he seemed to take responsibility for all of SFAV's initiatives. Other members then apparently became dependent on him, both to think up activities and carry them out. At any rate, they went along with his proposals.

Although SFAV members were encouraged to participate in activities, generally they didn't. It appeared to me that Paul could not delegate effectively; either that, or else other SFAVians were not really into organized activities ... such as hosting a radio-telephone SF discussion on CJVI, between Jack Williamson, Michael Coney and Joe Haldeman.

## OUR FIRST CON

It was sometime in 1980 or 1981 that UVicSFA (SFAV's daughter club at the University of Victoria) was founded, by Bev Cooke and Wendy Hourston, with at least the encouragement of Paul Delaney. Almost immediately, UVicSFA became involved in Fair-Isle, Victoria's first convention.

Victoria's first one-day minicon was held at the University of Victoria's Student Union Building on March 14, 1981. At that time, this two-story structure had some largish meeting rooms available (since converted to new executive offices). SFAV and UVicSFA held "Fair-Isle" one Sunday, and featured F.M. Busby, Gregory Benford, and Michael Coney, and attracted some 475 people. There was a modest but sufficient program, featuring SF films, games, an SF writing workshop, a huckster's room, a group author's interview, and a trivia quiz.

I have discovered several notecards detailing what these student clubs did to prepare for their one-day con, holding cookie sales and coffee-houses for fundraising; holding mall displays, going to local talk-show hosts and public-access TV for publicity.

The local fan community arranged for Gregory Benford to speak on a phone-in show on a local radio station, the night before Fair-Isle. Unfortunately the phone-in show paired up Benford with a "white witch", forbye, that being Friday the 13th. "The Fair-Isle concom weren't thrilled", Rebecca Reeves writes, "but Dr. Benford actually took it very well, much to his credit."

*Fair-Isle was a success, attracting over 400 members (many of them first-timers to such activities), made a fair profit, and brought together SFAV and the UFCST for the first time to work on a common profit project. The following summer, Paul and Lynne left for Pinawa, Manitoba, and UVicSFA and the UFCST joined forces to produce a second convention.*

-- (Bernie Klassen)

Both clubs made over \$500 each. The reception was generally favourable, with only a few sour notes: the con was held within a few weeks of Rain (Vancouver's relaxicon), and BCSFAzine #94 "condemned" Fair-Isle for not having an alcoholic consuite.

(The BCSFAns somehow hadn't registered the fact that no consuite was advertised, and a number of SFAVians were minors. Rebecca Reeves, among others, wanted to make it clear that minors were welcome and safe in SFAV. The reason why SFAV had to be open to minors, when these members sort of drifted away, never came out in words.)

With the profits from Fair-Isle, SFAV bought a duplicator; a ditto machine, costing \$150. Bernie Klassen has since indicated that he got his first mimeograph, about this time, for about \$90. Rebecca maintained that Xeroxing turned out to be too expensive, and a Gestetner system would have been too messy and too big for storage, and at the time, \$150 was the best price in town for a ditto; so, *"considering the almost non-existent participation in zines on the part of the current SFAV membership ... I think it was for the best."* (in From the

Ashes April '81, and correspondence to EB Klassen, Jan. 1986) The club went along with it, as they did with everything.

Although use of the machine was offered to the other clubs, as far as I knew up until 1985, only I took up SFAV on the offer. In this way I turned out Scuttlebutt, my first perzine, until the Reeves gave up custody of the ditto machine and I sort of inherited it. Bernie Klassen later wrote how the UFCST got a copy of their zine done by ditto and were very unenthused by the results.

Rebecca Reeves wrote later that during her executive's participation in SFAV, *"we had quite an extensive trade network built up with numerous zines across North America. There was even one in Australia ... We did everything possible to encourage this. It was shortly thereafter that those remaining with the club decided they really didn't care for trading ... or for producing a zine, for that matter."* Victoria has never been a great fanpubbing centre, before or since, until the mid-80's when I went crazy.

The UFCST promptly arranged for some forty pages of their fanzine, Trekkada, to be printed in this manner. The Reeves sisters, who did the printing, ended up with an almost terminal case of Twonk's disease. Never again was SFAV to offer such printing services. After viewing the results, never again was the UFCST to ask them to. Sourness filled many mouths.

*Trekkada, the fanzine produced by the UFCST, came out first in '78, and has come out every year or two since. That is perhaps a bit unfair. There have been two years with two issues produced in them. Trekkada was very much in the ST fanfic genre, and never really achieved its full potential as a fanzine though it did often contain some fine in-jokes and satires.*

*Also from the UFCST was a version of FTA called Stardate. In its original conception, it was to be a monthly newsletter for the club, listing upcoming events and such. Under the editorship of David Gordon-MacDonald, it became anything but frequent, and began running a serial, stories, bad puns, worse cartoons, newspaper clippings, and very little in the way of club news. Never very distinguished, Stardate ran seven issues and quietly folded.*

*The only other fanzine around at the time was Garth Spencer's "exterior to frame of reference" humour Scuttlebutt. Also called The Black Marxist Lesbian Quarterly, The Perfect Paper, etc., Scuttlebutt ran news and views mostly of interest to Discordians and conspiracy freaks. Not a bad fanzine, just one that was rather opaque (to non-Discordians and non-conspiracy freaks). Scuttlebutt was simply and cleanly laid out, and for lack of art, Garth discovered the copyright-free illustrations books at the local library. It became interesting to see 18th century woodcuts surrounded by bizarro text or titles.*

*Garth eventually folded Scuttlebutt for lack of response and \$\$, and went on to produce The Central Ganglion along with yours truly and Paula Johanson. TCG was an inter-club newsletter with a revolving editorship which may read better than it actually functioned. The editing worked quite well, even surviving Paula and I moving to Edmonton for a mercifully brief while. But as a zine designed to break down the years of conditioning keeping the clubs in town apart, TCG did not fare so well.*

-- (Bernie Klassen, TCG, Dec. 1985)

In April 1981 the former executive (Gary Harper, Paul Delaney, and Lynne Fonseca) were replaced by a new executive (Rebecca and Barbara Reeves, Kris Snyder, and Dave Thomson), known as the Gang of Four. Largely at Rebecca's insistence, the meetings became more formal, or she tried to make them so. One gathers that it didn't work (then or later).

Some of the best times I had in SFAV, from around this period onwards, were after the meetings, when a gang of us would repair to a glorified hamburger house, and chew the fat. Dixie Sackett, Douglas "Mac" MacInnes, Paul Fryer and Don Carruthers would pile into each other's cars and go to the Lettuce Patch; so would I, trailing a pile of fanzines I brought along to play Show'n'Tell with, trying to carry on a conversation the while.

Although invited, the Reeves sisters never showed up at these gatherings. I think now they missed something.

## A BIT OF CONFUSION

That summer, Rebecca insisted on something which meant changing the name for the next minicon. The 1982 con was to be held by UVicSFA and the UFCST, but not officially by SFAV (although naturally SFAV members were involved). Rebecca got SFAV and UVicSFA to draw up an agreement that the name "Fair-Isle" only be used on cons they both held.

No-one knew a reason for this. Several years later, I learned the reason, Rebecca had been listening to a lawyer. The lawyer, whoever he was, listened to her concerns that SFAV would somehow be held responsible for anything called "Fair-Isle II", and he kept talking about the kinds of things that could go wrong financially and how SFAV executives could be held personally liable for the debts incurred. Rebecca's way of getting SFAV and UVicSFA to sign an agreement would have made sense, if she was overcoming some resistance; but at the meeting, she met none.

*The second convention had some problems in the beginning. First, for lack of anything better, it was being referred to as "Fair-Isle 2". SFAV, who had been asked to participate in the planning and running of this con, but had declined, were a bit milled at the choice of name. "Change the effing name or we'll do Something Nasty to you!" was roughly the way it was put to members of the concom. The members of the concom were shocked, yes, shocked and appalled! at this turn of events. Fair-Isle 2 had only been a name of convenience, and there was, in fact, a sizable segment of the concom agitating to change it. SFAV felt, however, that they had proprietorial (sp?) rights to the name, and that it was only to be applied to conventions jointly sponsored by themselves.*

-- (Bernie Klassen, TCG, Dec. 1985)

Notice that neither the lawyer nor Rebecca thought of ways and means to prevent damaging financial losses. Such as the (normal and conventional) measure of setting up a non-profit society, with the limited-liability protection of a corporation, under the provincial Society Act.

What we had here, I think, was a case of no communication. (As usual.) Merely because it's no-one's particular job to pass on good ideas.

In October Rebecca resigned from the executive, saying she had tried to lead SFAV in a direction in which the members apparently did not want to go i.e., getting more active, and more organized with it. Barbara soon left too. At that point Douglas "Mac" MacInnes became president.

Rebecca wrote Bernie later that one of the reasons why she segregated herself from SFAV was the rampant misinformation that flies around. I still don't think she communicated effectively with SFAV ... but neither did SFAV with her.

## FTA/PHOENIX

Due to cost considerations (and a poverty of contributions), SFAV's fanzines were consolidated into a bimonthly in Jan. 1982. First Kris Snyder, then Mac edited FTA/Phoenix. After some hesitation I elected to edit FTA from July onwards.

By mid-1982, one person was acting as club librarian, SFAV Information Officer, clubzine editor, SFAV's representative to an inter-club coordinating committee, and contributor to a short-lived inter-club newsletter. That was me. I also developed plans for a fanzine list, a faneditor's guide, a collection of Victoria fanwriting, even a fandom guide based on our trade information. It is helpful to know that at the time I was unemployed, out of university, and discovering that Victoria did not have a lot of job openings. This overactivity was compensation.

Trying to make fanac compensate for mundane frustrations did not work. It was one thing to edit my own zine, where I could please myself. But I felt that I could not just please myself when it came to the clubzine; I was responsible to the club. And I could not get more than a few SFAVians to contribute, and none to give directions for the zine. I kept getting "You can do what you want", which wasn't a meaningful response, to me. More seriously, I kept asking Kris Snyder, acting secretary/treasurer, for a budget, for a dollar figure as to what SFAV could afford to spend. She kept saying we weren't spending money on anything else, which wasn't an answer and she was the most responsible exec. around.

I had gotten the impression, from reading SFAV's fanzine library, that all fans were actifans, only too ready to express an opinion. I had an idea that clubs were, by definition, meant to promote activities, and that the club members wanted to make a fanzine together, that that was the whole point. What we had here was just another case of no communication.

## OUR SECOND CON

On February 27, 1982, UVicSFA and the UFCST held Imagine at the University, which meant that most SFAVians also worked on it and attended. It was a small success, again, featuring (among other things) the preview of a local amateur movie: Dawn of the Living Socks. (I'm not making this up; ask Robert Runte, or write Karl Johanson for a tape.)

There were only two little bitty problems. The announced ProGoH, Jack Williamson, had to cancel (Canada Post and the U.S. Mail refused to get his ticket to him in good time). The second problem was that this minicon was held on the same weekend as Rain 4. Robert Runte, the FanGoH, noted that only two out-of-town fans attended. In consequence, Victoria and Vancouver fans agreed that their subsequent cons would definitely be held some weeks apart.

Other than that, though, it seemed like Victorians could hope to build a reputation for good, small cons. Imagine attracted about 375 people, and also made a profit for the clubs. Robert Runte talked about Victoria maybe working up to a "full-scale regional" convention. There was even talk of Victorians holding a V-Con some day.

To this end, the Vancouver Island SF Convention Steering Committee was mooted at a SFAV meeting in April 1982. The object of this inter-club group was to carry forward documentary experience on local conventions, from one to the next, to prevent stupid mistakes and, well, to authorize the cons put on by the

represented clubs. When VISFCSC was finally constituted, the representatives were Garth Spencer (SFAV), Bernie Klassen (UFCST), and Bev Cooke (UVicSFA).

Then came the Constellation Affair.

## **SO MUCH LARGER THAN LIFE**

The short version of this story goes like this: in early 1982, some local mediafen we hardly knew appeared, announcing that they were going to hold a "real" media convention in Victoria, meaning at least 1500 attending, ten Guests of Honour, two hotels, shuttle flights from out of the country, supporting memberships, etc., etc. It appeared to the local clubs they had nothing like adequate capital or experience. Victoria hotels (and fans) could not (and cannot) support conventions with four-figure attendances.

The Constellation Con committee not only kept blowing their credibility by promising too much, and not only kept alienating local fen, but also managed to acquire a kleptomaniac for a treasurer. My friends, I mean, The local fans (and fans as far away as Moscow, Idaho) who heard of Constellation Con '83 kept saying "cut back, cut down, get real". Subsequently, my friends, I mean, the local fans were harassed.

The following spends far too much space agonizing over what was, really, a collision between two kinds of naivete. As it was explained to me much later, TV and movies make some accomplishments look far too easy, and a certain type of mind takes as gospel whatever surface image is marketed, then insists they must aim for a really big-deal objective. My friends knew they could only build on the resources they had; but they didn't know (well, I didn't know) how to make sense of the Constellation addicition to the grandiose.

## **THE CONSTELLATION AFFAIR (In Detail)**

UVicSFA included among other members an FRP gamer, Nicholas Conder; other members were sort of aware of his sister, Cary Bucar, a Star Wars fan, and Dave Olden (a UFCST member). All three went to the 1981 Worldcon in Chicago. They were overheard saying at a Hallowe'en party, "Gee that was great; we ought to do something just like it here!"

Just after Imagine, Paula Johanson got a phone call from Cary. She said, approximately, "Hi, I've been phoning some hotels and writing some pros and it looks like I've set up the con for 1983, can I get you to contact the clubs for me to help with fundraising and planning?"

The clubs were already planning their own 1983 convention, Concept. February, it appeared, was the only time window open to them. Cary's Constellation Con committee appeared to have no conrunning experience and no capital. The clubs' reception was cool.

In April, Ian Fleury presented the plans for "Constellation Con '83", a.k.a. "VictoriaCon One", at a UFCST meeting. Dave Olden gave a presentation at a SFAV meeting. They claimed that Constellation would be a three-day con, Feb. 18-21, 1983, occupying two hotels with 1500 attendees, featuring eight Guests of Honour, eight "special guests", and multi-track programming. Dave claimed that Jerry Pournelle and Damon Knight were confirmed.

Cary sent about a letter, in April 1982, saying: *"IT IS COMPLETELY AND REALISTICALLY POSSIBLE TO PRESENT MORE THAN ONE S.F. ORIENTED CONVENTION IN THE SAME CITY EVERY YEAR. As*



*long as all those involved at both ends come to a common agreement to aid both causes through advertising and joint ventures."* The letter claimed *"all immediate hotel facilities have been finalized."* The letter also said all committee decisions had been finalized, and invited the clubs to participate with volunteer effort and money.

Bev Cooke took this to mean that no input on programming would be accepted from the clubs, only gofering and more money for GoHs.

At one point Karl Johanson presented the Constellation committee members with figures indicating that the maximum potential draw for a Victoria SF con would be 700 people, tops, at the best of times. Neither the planners, nor the clubs, could afford the costs incurred if the project did not pay for itself. The date given was only a week before Rain 5. Robert Runte later speculated that American convention fans (practically the only fans Constellation advertised to) would rationally go for the more established con.

UVicSFA disseminated a letter in spring 1982 throughout Canada, politely denying any involvement in Constellation by any clubs or club members in Victoria. This was as close as we got to the stage of countervailing factsheets flying in opposite directions, in Victoria. Constellation leaders afterwards complained that they never got to see the letter, which wasn't written to them in the first place. David Gordon-MacDonald, the UFCST's newsletter editor, went to a lot of trouble to fend off a former neighbour and current member of Constellation, who wanted a copy of the letter, or copies of club minutes which David's club weren't giving him, not being sure of his allegiance. (No, this isn't a Moskowitz article. People really were thinking this way.)

Robert Runte wrote in NCF 6 that the UVicSFA disclaimer was perhaps the worst publicity that Constellation could have received. Paula Johanson remarked in Atrazine, her one-shot, that Linda Ross-Mansfield still had a perfect right to reprint parts of it in Northern Lights, her attempt at a national SF newszine. Still, when Constellationoids got wind of it, they thought they were being sabotaged.

The June 1982 FTA/Phoenix carried a loc from SFAV's president, "Mac" MacInnes, castigating local fans for fanfeuding, especially about Constellation. He began by pointing out the weaknesses in Constellation's program. *"From the start, some of us were against it," he went on, myself included. I still am, as a matter of fact. The reasons are: Victoria is not a major city; there is limited access; there is insufficient manpower; there is improper transportation; it's too big to start with; the timing conflicts with another con; and the list goes on."*

Then Mac turned around and complained that opponents of the program were descending to personalities, rather than sticking to the con's weaknesses. He thus ruled out of consideration the fact that the con's weaknesses stemmed from the personalities involved. He also ended by saying he would attend and assist should Constellation work out.

I was already little impressed with Mac's performance as a president.

## **THE FAMOUS TESSERACTS SAGA (Part I)**

I'm glad now that reality intruded on this paranoid hothouse atmosphere. I heard that Press Porcepic, a small publisher in Victoria, was looking for addresses of Canadian SF writers, more specifically, the editor Gerry Truscott was looking. Because I tended to accumulate information anyway and was inclined to meet needs if I perceived them, I offered what I had. This turned into sort of an ongoing acquaintance with Truscott and Porcepic.

*At the time when Tesseracts was being proposed, says Gerry Truscott, outside of the 20 Canadian writers known to him, he didn't know to whom to send requests for submissions. With the help of Judith Merrill, he was*

*able to receive 300 submissions. Communication had improved by Tesseracts2 and 400 submissions were received. 500 are expected for Tesseracts 3.*

-- (Steve Pikov, on "History and Renaissance in Canadian SF" panel at Banffcon 89)

I don't know why Truscott remembered Judith Merrill and not myself, unless it developed that my address list was useless. (That's entirely possible.) As it was, I carried some advertising for Tesseracts in my fanzine Maple Leaf Rag, and MLR and I were mentioned in the credits in the back of the book.

## **PARANOIA CITY**

Over the fall and winter of 1982 and 1983, life got more and more paranoid for everybody. Dan Cawsey had an ink-bomb thrown through the window of his apartment. Paula Johanson got harassing phone calls. At one point, names were added to the Constellation membership list which belonged to people like myself, Dan Cawsey, Karl and Paula Johanson, and Bernie Klassen, who had not bought memberships and didn't want to. Apparently someone just lifted names wholesale from an old Fandom Directory. Who were they trying to kid, I wondered? (Apart from themselves, that is.)

The treasurer of Constellation Con '83, who shall remain nameless, set up computerized lists of who was to do what; computerized accounts that mysteriously failed to hold money when the concomm tried to write cheques; and other computerized files, most of which no concommers had access to.

Myles Bos and Laurie Bridgman (two local neos who had been roped into Constellation before meeting the SF clubs in Victoria) went to NonCon, and met Robert Runte and Paul Delaney. (Paul had married Lynne Fonseca and moved to work at a nuclear power plant in Manitoba.) The story goes that the two trufen grabbed these innocents, stuffed them into a closet at NonCon, interrogated them and briefed them on the absolute need to a) trim down Constellation and b) make peace with the clubs or their con was sunk.

At the end of October '82 I was invited, quite out of the blue, to attend the first official general meeting of the concomm. They said they wanted an observer from one of the SF clubs in town. At the Jaycee Hall met about 20 people, giving different section reports when called to order. I discovered on reading my notes the next day that Cary had warped my mind into buying her line again. My questions about finances had not been answered; Cary had professed not to know, as I put it, what the flap was about.

When I met Bernie and Paula the next day, at the University, Paula said, "You were snowed, Garth." Not hard to do.

After meeting Myles and Laurie, Robert Runte charitably sent Constellation a draft of a critical article slated for publication in New Canadian Fandom:

*No con in North America has ever paid for more than four guests, and standard practice is for one ProGoH, one FanGoH, and occasionally a Toastmaster if the con can afford it. A few cons have been able to afford extra guests by accumulating funds over the course of several years of successful conventions, and others attract extra guests (unpaid) by building up a solid reputation as great cons.*

-- (Robert Runte, New Canadian Fandom 6, dated Jan. '83 but distributed in May '83)

Robert said the concomm was in desperate trouble; was doing everything in its power to defeat its purpose; and he recommended they drop the Empress, all the paid guests but the GoH, scale down to maybe 400 people,

and achieve reconciliation with the clubs. Robert did think Constellation had done one or two things right, publicity flyers were good, when they came out, and a few concommers went to see other cons in action.

The concom read this piece and promptly spazzed out. They called an emergency meeting in November, to which I, Karl Johanson and Dan Cawsey were invited. We got to read Robert's article. After the Constellation committee's optimism, Robert's criticism was a tremendously sobering experience. Several members of the concom simply refused to give it credence. Dan Cawsey and Myles Bos talked about patching things up, working out a labour trade.

A conference call with Robert Runte was arranged for the next day. I don't remember all that was said, only the fact that I was taken in again by the Constellationoids' sincerity. Robert re-emphasized his recommendations. As I heard later, the treasurer went back to the concom and said We've gotten Robert straightened out and everything's okay now.

It took a while, but the members grew suspicious of the treasurer's shenanigans and eventually broke their way into those files. By the winter of 1982 Constellation Con fell into struggling factions. Several members later fled the sinking ship, including Myles Bos, Laurie Bridgman, J.D. Waryk and Michael MacAleese.

Instead of dropping the Empress, the concom (or one faction, anyway) indicated that they dropped the Harbour Towers, kept the whole guest list, kept talking 1000 (then 800, then 400) people. This was still more than the Empress was prepared for. They did not achieve reconciliation with the clubs.

At a SFAV meeting on January 23, 1983, Dan Cawsey announced that Concept had been folded. As time wore on, he explained, Concept became more and more something to hold in spite of Constellation, to show them. Many Concept concommers were drained by the fighting with Them.

At the same meeting, J.D. Waryk gave a verbal and quite positive report, saying Constellation was only booking the Empress and expected 800 attendees. Two days later J.D. phoned me to say the con had folded; due to the treasurer's making private deals, the Empress asked for more money for block-booking from Constellation, up front, than they held.

About this time different Constellation factions were holding meetings in each other's absence, throwing out the last week's executive and electing their own. As I later pieced it together, one faction were repeatedly trying to get a booking at the UVic Student Union Building, first under their own name, then through UVicSFA, then through the campus NDP club if you please. The local NDP MLA's secretary became implicated in the last attempt (and was reamed out for it by the MLA).

On Feb. 4, Monday Magazine (the entertainment weekly) announced that a one-day "Constellation Con" would be held at the UVic Student Union Building. I buttonholed the Alma Mater Society Vice-President, in charge of bookings; he said that the AMS had turned down the Constellation people; they weren't enthused about holding a commercial event on the premises. I then went to Monday Magazine and told the secretary (Rebecca Reeves) the foregoing.

On Feb. 18, Monday Magazine ran the story that the AMS had cancelled the booking ... and the con was now to be held at the Jaycee Hall. Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm were still listed as GoHs.

On February 20th, 1983, Constellation was held as a one-day event in the Jaycee Hall on Quadra Street (which might hold 200 people, tops, if you forced them in with a shoehorn). Memberships were still \$25 each, but the special-guest list and programming were almost eliminated. Hearsay reports indicate maybe 100 people

were present (including 30 concom members). Vonda MacIntyre was said to be there. So was Mac. So was the Constellation core group.

Bernie and Paula, who had been in Alberta for a while, had just returned to Victoria. Paula reports riding by the hall that day and seeing some very disappointed-looking teenagers coming out.

I thought all the while that nobody was out to get Constellation; they just insisted on shooting themselves in the foot (and discrediting all SF fans in Victoria in the process). Bernie Klassen has a different take on what happened:

*Constellation (not the Worldcon, but our own disaster) brought out the worst in many of us. In others, it was already on the surface. The message to us was clear: You don't know dick about fandom, conventions, and how to organize a `good' event. After putting on two reasonably successful conventions, after producing fanzines, and organizing clubs, we (the locals, the Old Guard before it was named, etc.) got a trifle pissed. When we were told that we could be gophers if we wanted, we were angered. So when we saw that this was probably going to be the disaster to end all disasters, and the good will and recognition that had built up in the community was about to be destroyed, well, we reacted like a mongoose confronted by the biggest damn cobra you ever saw: stay out of the way that you don't get crushed by the sheer weight of the thing, and fight tooth and nail when the opportunity presents itself.*

*When it was mentioned that 95% of the attendees would be from out of the country, we smiled. But when talk was of a sizable contingent from overseas, the scope of potential disaster became apparent. There was wishful thinking about phone taps, "just to know what's being said!", but the closest that could be achieved was to call up the telephone company and say "Hi! I was wondering if you could tell me what I owe on my phone bill? My number is ... " Sleazoid? You bet! Worthwhile? Not really, except to be able to smugly giggle "do you know what their phone bill is up to?", and being smug with a certain foreknowledge of doom seems to be, in retrospect at least, what this was all about.*

*Or being invited to sit in on a conference call to Robert Runte after his piece on the fiasco-in-the-making in New Canadian Fandom, and agreeing, hooking the phone through the stereo system and inviting several other people to sit in (and then taping the call for future reference, though it has now been destroyed). Or talking to the manager of the hotel that the concom had booked and not really saying anything, but the manager being nervous enough afterwards to find a reason to back out of the deal.*

*You wonder why the Conconcom was paranoid? They had reason to be. There were people out to get them. Although in 99% of the cases where the older fans were blamed for having done something nasty, it was the committee's own foul-up or their ability to convince people that they were insane that did them in.*

*It should be noted, however, that this wasn't all one-sided. Hard-core comic-collector Dan Cawsey had his apartment and collection paint-bombed on one occasion. The carpet was a write-off, but the paint only splashed the bagged comics. The cops never nabbed the villain, although Dan did, when the culprit bragged (unknowingly) to Dan's cousin when the two were here at work. Victoria is a small city, and has a very effective jungle telegraph.*

*But the year of Constellation almost destroyed Victoria fandom. The Old Guard felt (for the most part) that everyone should be bitter and angry, should ostracize the Constellation group. SFAV was split three ways on the issue: those who were neutral, those who disliked the Constellation people for any number of reasons (I want to get so-and-so into bed, and s/he is actively anti-Concon, etc.), and those who thought that the idea of Concon was lousy. The UFCST was much simpler. As a rule, they were solidly anti-Concon. Not because they disliked the idea of Concon, but there were some feelings of betrayal and of loyalty to the betrayed. ...*

-- (Bernie Klassen, TCG, Dec. 1985)

By this time, the clubs were exhausted, both from trying to disassociate themselves from the Constellation mediots, and from fending off actual attacks. Concept had folded. UVicSFA folded soon. Most of the Old Guard dropped out of the clubs.

Dave Gordon-MacDonald summed it up pretty well:

*The most damaging effect of Constellation Con was its effect on local fen. The most active and highly visible, the ones who had been involved in two previous minicons, were subject to harassment ... Such were the feelings of anger, bitterness, fatigue, and in the odd case, personal betrayal, that gafia claimed the active fans in Victoria almost without exception during 1982.*

-- (David Gordon-MacDonald, June 1985)

Why (I kept asking, for at least the next year and a half) was the convention concept so ... grandiose? Why didn't the concom seem to respect their limitations? About ten years later a Star Trek makeup/costume artist pointed out this was naive; a kind of "oh-this-is-easy" fairytale often sold by TV and movies. Funny, nobody else seemed to be brainwashed this way, as far as I knew. But ten years later, it was pretty common. At the time, I could only infer that the Constellation organizers knew nothing else but grandiose. They had no other models.

Jon Gustafson of Moscow, Idaho, wrote me later:

*I had a couple of opportunities to talk to some of the concom of (Constellation), with the intention of offering my aid ... the net result was that I was ignored ... Other people, I know, also approached the concom with the honest desire to help, and were equally ignored or rebuffed. The concom of Constellation seemed to feel that any effort to offer assistance was in reality an effort to take over the con. They didn't seem to understand. I think, myself, that they took offers of assistance to imply that they were screwing up ... What they failed to realize is that fandom is interconnected and their success or failure would reflect on other Northwest cons ...*

The story is simply that nothing like this had happened before in Victoria, and nothing like it had cropped up before in our fannish correspondence. Similar events, however, have shown up before and since.

## **THE REALITY PRINCIPLE**

Let's go back to SFAV, and May of 1982.

I had thought that organized fandom in general, SFAV, for example, was about doing activities. I didn't notice that Paul Delaney was doing or trying to do everything in SFAV, and practically nobody (outside of a small circle) was initiating anything. Due to reading too many fanzines, I had acquired the notion that fans were, by definition, actifans, only too self-assertive, I was seeing a concentration of their product.

When I talked to SFAV about FTA/Phoenix, when I asked for contributions, I asked them as a group; also, I wasn't specific, I was general. I asked, "what do you want to contribute?" Nofic, responses resulted. I was told repeatedly that SFAVians would accept whatever I served up.

When Bernie and I started The Central Ganglion in May, trying to start inter-club communications and expose SFAV and other clubs to each other's fanac, we assumed that fans would participate, put stuff in, take it out. TCG folded in 1983, after Bernie and Paula returned from Alberta.

In the October '82 FTA/Phoenix, I decided that maybe SFAVians just had a horror of rules, of over-organization. I did, after all, keep saying "Let's get organized here." I editorialized about hitting a happy medium between under-organization (like SFAV's) and over-organization (like UFCST's). I ran the entire constitution of VISFCSC, the Vancouver Island SF Con Steering Committee. I ran Bernie's article criticizing the small size, lack of recruiting effort, of local clubs. As he saw it, our fan community was remarkably small, even for Victoria, but generated a respectable quantity of fanac. He saw a clear and present danger that this small group would shrink and disappear due to attrition and exhaustion; he urged an ongoing, not sporadic, recruitment effort to sustain our activity.

No-one responded, as far as I know.

FTA/Phoenix disappeared in Dec. 1983, for two reasons. For one thing, I felt someone else ought to have a chance at it (I expected, if you please, that I would be accused of hogging the thing). For another, as Kris Snyder blithely informed me, I had exhausted SFAV's clubs funds by Dec. '83 on FTA. The next editor had to wait until the club funds were built up again. I expected to catch hell for exhausting the treasury, even though I had tried to limit my expenditures. But oddly, no-one minded (or cared). Frankly, I expected to be blamed, when they hadn't told me how much to spend.

I had expected to play faned, with a dynamic, creative team. I found everybody ... just disappearing, going limp on me.

One of the few SFAV meetings I attended after handing over my several offices was in Jan. 8, 1984. I dragged in a complaint that I had received no editorial direction. To judge from the minutes, the members thought "SFAV money is for FTA/Phoenix, you'll be told if we decide otherwise," "The fanzine is what the contributors make of it," "The rest is the editor's initiative". The SFAV members felt that stuff went without saying, and didn't want to set it down on paper where I needed such a statement.

The president added that he kept hearing three things from members, "We want to remain a social club," "Why don't we talk about SF books/films/stuff anymore?," "Why are we always talking about business?" I decided I had had enough.

Other fanzines had replaced TCG in Garth's life by this time anyway. The short-lived Enter the Lists, and the still extant The World According to Garth. When he edited and produced FTA/Phoenix, Garth became quite proficient at ditto reproduction, and he has carried that knowledge into his present publications. It is not unusual to see three and four colours on a single page; headings, borders, illustrations, and text each different from the other.

In 1983, Garth began publishing The Maple Leaf Rag, the Canadian national newszine. MLR (or the Rag) grew quickly into a cleanly produced (after BeFlatte/Mike Hall took over the printing), well-laid-out fanzine. There is a definite Western Canada bias, but this is more due to a low level of eastern response than an inherent bigotry. The Rag is filling a distinct niche in Canadian fandom, even if this need was perhaps more perceived in the mid-seventies than the mid-eighties.

*The only other fanzines that have come out in Victoria are What I.F.S. and World of I.F.S. (clubzines of the Imaginative Fiction Society, the reborn University club).*

-- (Bernie Klassen, TCG, Dec. 1985)

I did the sensible thing, I guess, by picking up my marble and going home. Where I continued to put out fanzines: mainly, The World According to Garth, and The Maple Leaf Rag.

## **VERY FAMOUS SOMEWHERE**

The Maple Leaf Rag was dedicated to truth, justice, and (I dreamed) helping fans avoid any more Constellation Affairs. Seriously! Half the reason for MLR was to show anyone remotely like the Constellation chair that there is a fandom to talk to, in Canada. The other half was to discover and report Canadian fanac, and what fans do that maintains their fan activities. (Read: yes, there are so too some policies and procedures you have to observe, in order to make things like cons work.)

Somehow, though, I found myself and my zine ... co-opted. That's the best way I can put it. The preceding paragraph states what I was really intent on doing. What I ended up doing, though, was serving the Canadian-identity agenda, as it emerged in SF fandom. There are a number of reasons, I guess, such as my market news column, the occasional news by/for/about Canadian SF pros and publishers, and my dogged insistence on finding out what happened to the CSFFA awards and CUFF.

## **THE FAMOUS TESSERACTS SAGA (Part II)**

Press Porcepic announced in 1984 its plans to publish Tesseracts, an anthology of Canadian SF. Editor Gerry Truscott wrote Maple Leaf Rag in February, saying the great thing was seeing so much submitted by new writers.

Hey, Kids, Let's Put On a Worldcon!

After 1983 or 84, the Old Guard (still putting out personalzines) started up the great Worldcon '89 at Myles' House campaign. Myles Bos, the innocent butt of this joke, has a family with a house and a goat farm in Sidney, near the Victoria International Airport. So alienated had we become to big cons that we decided to bid for a Worldcon to be held in Myles' house.

The Old Guard, under names like "Bill Froog", "Monika Bandersnatch" and "Robert Gunderson", kept sending MLR releases on new Mylescon promotions, fictitious "Potato Joe" action/adventure movies, and other send-ups of mass-marketing ploys. My favourites were either Potato Joe Mows the Lawn (with tie-in products like a pop-up book), or George Cosmatos' Maple Leaf Rag The Movie, "with the legendary shoot-out between rival fan clubs as the dramatic first issues hit the city streets." I'm not sure what to make of Myles' guest editorial in MLR 22, signed with my name.

Some more of the flavour of this send-up can be conveyed with a few quotes from Mylescon releases:

*Current plans call for Worldcon '89 at Myles' House to include a trip to the rock quarry, a showing of Dawn of the Living Socks, and Myles' little sister Lumpy giving a tour through her Duran Duran museum ... Lloyd Penney is going to be the ProGoH, and even despite that, a splendid time is guaranteed for all.*

Karl Johanson and John Herbert also produced things like "Cheap Breakfast Cereal Reviews" and "From Pop Tarts to Managua: an interview with Milton the Toaster" (appearing in Neology), and may or may not have been the mysterious "Bob Johnson" of letter column fame.

Mylescon became an international hoax bid and went over rather well. At least, it got 9 whole votes at the '89 site selection in 1986. (Look it up in back issues of File 770.) In consequence, every con in the world that year was declared part of Mylescon, and the whole site a nuclear-free zone.

My recollection on the start of this thing is hazy. I think Bernie and Karl were talking one day and Bernie came up with the idea of Worldcon in Sooke. At a later discussion (probably around a table at Mac's with Karl, Steph, Bernie, Paula, Jono, Dan, and Myles), I think I came up with the notion of Worldcon at Myles's House in 1989 (though don't quote me on that, I'm not 100% on the origin).

The original idea was just to do a silly flyer to take to Norwescon as a spoof of Worldcon bids that promise you the world, and the best of fannish activities. Naturally, we promised just the opposite: goats and tents. Anything fannish that Mylescon was offering was meant to be an afterthought. The inspiration for this madness was a piece of farm property that Myles's family owned up the Saanich Peninsula near the airport. They had a goat.

The problem with our silly bid was that everyone loved it and wanted to attend. With each progress report we did (four in all), the thing just snowballed like crazy. We literally got letters from every continent on the planet. We have no idea how these people heard of us. We never once asked for money, and yet cheques kept arriving (except for Lloyd's). If we had pursued this, we could have retired rich men in 1989! Groups around Canada and the U.S. copied our flyers, made their own buttons, held their own bid parties, and spread the word. We had no choice but to look into the cost of renting a tent and borrowing farm animals.

Mylescon fizzled out for a number of reasons, one being that Myles got religion and was, I think, increasingly uncomfortable with the notion of his being a fannish icon.

*The result of it all was 8 votes when the 1989 Worldcon site was chosen. Lloyd Penney tells us that many American BNFs he's talked to cite Mylescon as one of the best spoof bids ever. We obviously touched a nerve somewhere (probably the funny bone).*

-- (John Herbert, February 1993)

By 1984 many of the Victoria actifen opted out of the clubs, and reduced their fanac. Bernie put out zines sporadically, and his apahacking became more and more erratic. Paula had twins and eventually became more and more interested in SF writing. Dan pursued his graphic art; in recent years he dropped that for studies in criminology. Karl Johanson and Stephanie Lightbody got married. Bev Cooke and Al Hargreaves married and more or less gafiated.

*Oh, others do become involved from time to time, contributing, or going so far as to put out a one-shot, or a couple of apazines. But fanzines fans are few and far between.*

-- (Bernie Klassen)

## **VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL CARTOON FESTIVAL (I)**

The first Victoria International Cartoon Festival was held April 5-8, 1984 at the Empress Hotel. (Remember the Empress Hotel?) Guests were Sergio Aragonies (Groo the Wanderer), Dave Sim (Cerebus the Aardvark), Mike Grell, et al. Proceeds went to the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organizations. Organizers included Allen Cocola (of the accounting firm Cocola and Cheung), and one Kathleen Gallagher. A release sent to Maple Leaf Rag predicted 7,000 attending.



A new crowd was filtering into the clubs. SFAV was basically an entirely new group; only Paul Gerber (pres. after 1984) and J.D. Waryk had any knowledge of fan activity before, or elsewhere. UVicSFA had folded; David Gordon-MacDonald, one of the Clan's peripheral members, had set up the IFS (Imaginative Fiction Society) in its place, in Oct. 1983. The UFCST was silent.

I have a five-page "president's report" from The Imaginative Fiction Society, dated Dec. 1, 1984, describing various club activities: a film festival, a Clubs Day display table, sales of T-shirts and Bjo Trimble's *On The Good Ship Enterprise*, affiliation with the Dr. Who Information Network, a joint Hallowe'en party with SFAV. Some of the members at the time were Carla Luna, Jeff Taylor (a graphic artist) and Dave Moncrieff.

Eventually Paul, David and J.D. Waryk banded together to hold open houses called Alternate Realities Days.

## **ALTERNATE REALITIES DAY (1)**

The first Alternate Realities Day was held May 4, 1984 at the James Bay Community Centre. 300 people showed up, paying \$1 admission a head.

I got a few surprises. Turns out that AR Days were sponsored by a confederal group, the Alternate Realities Society, incorporating over a dozen new and used clubs. J.D. Waryk, one of the refugees from the Constellation committee, first joined SFAV, then formed his own Cygnus Science Society, then the AR Society. Both ARS and Cygnus were very promotion-minded, like J.D.; and both had a fairly clear intention of someday mounting a real con, using the glorified open houses as a training ground. For a while, it seemed as if ARS incorporated both VISFCSC and a new convention steering committee in its table of organization. Also, one Terry Wyatt, who set up a "shuttle" (chapter) called the U.S.S. Resolution, knew only of the Starfleet organization.

David Gordon-MacDonald submitted a writeup to MLR 18 on the ARS, describing their biweekly meetings of 10 or 11 people in the university's Student Union Building. Their plans included everything from swap meets and picnics on up to getting a club house. *"A couple of times, I noted drily, "members have claimed to be doing things in cooperation with me that I didn't know about."*

As David put it:

*What we wanted was a co-ordinating body so that all the clubs could take part in certain events working in the most efficient manner possible. The secondary purpose was for the meetings of representatives to serve as a clearinghouse of information on what every club was doing, allowing conflicts to be averted, and the return of that information through each club rep.*

*... In order to make it easier to stage Open Houses and Cons, we decided to make the A.R.S. an actual registered society under the B.C. Society Act. This automatically forestalls a host of legal, financial and taxation worries ...*

*Naturally, an activity which any group of fen have in mind when they want to plan large-scale fanac is a con. ... However, before jumping in headlong we decided to get in a little practice. If we were to sponsor a con, it would be in late summer, 1986, at the earliest. In the intervening time, we have planned several smaller events, such as large open-house or SF fairs.*

-- (David Gordon-MacDonald, June 1985)

Bernie wrote:

*[T]he paper principles look[ed] good (or at least right in tune with modern fandom-at-large), to provide an umbrella group for all the different local organizations involved with sf, fantasy, RPGs, and the like. The present membership includes the local SCA shire, the SFAV, revived IFS (under David Gordon-MacDonald), the Tesla society, and such groups as the Bardic Union (a poet's workshop and joint-admiration society), garners such as the Brotherhood of the Scarlet Rogue and the University Strategy and Tactics club, the Univ. Medieval club, and the like. The principal occupation of the ARSe, from what anyone outside of the executive can see, is to raise money. If it can be done while publicizing the member groups, fine. To this end, the ARSe has held two Alternate Realities Days. Both have been pretend-cons based on the talents of the member groups to raise \$\$\$. Both have failed. The first through bad bar practices (losing between \$100 and \$200), the second through a money-losing dance that drew a maximum 35 people on an estimated 125. Even with their tentative links to fandom through the SFAV and IFS, this group is most definitely not fanish. Perhaps it is because their drive towards excessive organization is not counterbalanced by a drive towards anarchy. Or that their bad management of events is not balanced by sheer enthusiasm and blind luck. Or perhaps that the only visible drive behind the ARSe is the acquisition of bucks (with no fannishly grandiose plans on how to spend it, other than paying members of the executive). Whatever the reason, the flavour's wrong, and the smell's gone off.*  
-- (Bernie Klassen, TCG, Dec. 1985)

## **THE U.S.S. RESOLUTION (Version 1)**

Andrew Murdoch writes:

*1985 saw the formation of the U.S.S. Resolution, Victoria's second Star Trek fan club. (The first was the United Federation of Canadian Star Trekkers, which folded in the early eighties.) The club had actually existed for several months beforehand, as a "shuttle" club of the U.S.S. Kestral, based in Vancouver. Terry Wyatt, now living in Washington [state], was the founder and first president of the club. Within three years of its formation, the Resolution was the largest Star Trek fan club in Canada, with over two hundred members.*

*The name "Resolution" was chosen for the club as it was the name of the flagship of British explorer Capt. James Cook, who was the first to explore Vancouver Island and the we(s)t coast before sailing to Tahiti.*

*In 1989, Resolution Vice-President Veronica Hipsey assumed the presidency. She remained President until November, 1991, when she resigned/gaftiated. Colin Scheidl, then Vice-President, is the current President of the Resolution. I, Andrew C. Murdoch, am the current Vice-President, and Marty Moser (who is also a member of the Science Fiction Association of Victoria) is Second Vice-President.*

*Since the club's formation, the Resolution has been the parent club to two other Star Trek fan clubs: The Vancouver-based U.S.S. S'Harien and Nanaimo's U.S.S. Malaspina.*

*The Resolution currently has approximately 60 members. Its quarterly fanzine, Atavachron, has won several awards from Atlanta-based Starfleet for its art and content. (However, the Resolution ceased to be a Starfleet-affiliated chapter in 1990.) The Resolution holds monthly meetings, an annual general meeting/anniversary/picnic/competition every September. (Veronica Hipsey's Jello-Suck, which has competitors try to suck dry a cup of jell-o through a straw, is now a traditional event, and one which Veronica herself will not soon forget when competitors slimed her with the lime-green dessert at the September, 1988 bash.)*

*Recently, events have also been planned as joint ventures between the Resolution and the Science Fiction Association of Victoria (SFAV). Above all, the U.S.S. Resolution is renowned across the local convention circuit for the traditional room party hosted at every V-Con. In addition to the usual loud music and non-stop dancing,*

*the Resolution serves up its deadly Spock's Blood, a green, glowing, steaming, utterly intoxicating punch. (Resolution member Paul Vander Heiden frequently recalls the Resolution party at V-Con 18, in 1990, where he woke up at 7 a.m. and met people going back to their rooms from the Resolution's party.*

-- (Andrew C. Murdoch, March 1993)

Since writing that missive, Andrew has become president of the Resolution.

### **THE FAMOUS TESSERACTS SAGA (Part III)**

Press Porcepic submitted to me a series of notes on the Tesseracts anthology, which appeared in Maple Leaf Rag 18 (October 1985). Tesseracts was launched officially on Oct. 23rd at Toronto's Harbourfront (actually, a reading night for Tesseracts authors).

### **THE VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL CARTOON FESTIVAL (II)**

The Second Victoria International Cartoon Festival was announced for April 11-13, 1986 at the Empress Hotel and Crystal Gardens.

-- (Maple Leaf Rag March 1986)

### **FOREIGN ENTANGLEMENTS**

By October 1985, Maple Leaf Rag and I were involved with V-Con 14/Convention 6. First I found myself volunteering to assist with Casper ballot distribution in 1985/1986. Then, I found myself nominated, which required me to step down as distributor.

At V-Con 14/Convention 6, I found myself winning one of the three CSFFAs awarded in 1986, for my editing of The Maple Leaf Rag, and "his dedication to Canadian fandom". The room sort of receded all around me and I ended up stammering flowery thanks in rusty high-school French.

It was gratifying to see my research work bearing some results. The 1987 Convention was chosen at the first Convention Business Meeting, almost immediately following the banquet and awards presentation. Mike Wallis of Toronto entered the only bid, for Ad Astra (Toronto). The meeting was attended by Fran Skene and William C.S.A.A. Lowe (Vancouver), Mike Wallis (Toronto), Lexie Pakulak and Steve Pikov (Calgary), Con Hiebner (Vancouver), and Arthur Turner (Calgary), as well as myself. Fran Skene opened the meeting by remarking that early Westercon business meetings were about this size, but grew as interest spread. Mike Wallis's bid for Convention 7 passed unanimously. Wallis immediately announced that his Convention intended to revive CUFF, the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, and Wallis proposed that the CUFF winner each year should come to the Convention. People were taking care of business for a change.

In later years, I tended to see the CSFFAs as waste motion, neither sufficiently promoted, nor given for more reason than that voters had heard of the nominees. But getting the award was quite an experience at the time.

For one thing, the struggle to get any information at all and accomplish some reporting was getting too much. In fact, one sign of this was when I threw a conniption fit in Mike Wallis' face at V-Con 14; I honestly felt if I was putting as much effort into playing reporter as I did, people owed it to me to contribute information and read each others' contributions attentively, and Ad Astra concom members were letting me down.

### **ALTERNATE REALITIES DAY (3)**

Alternate Realities Day 3 took place in a wing of UVic's Elliott Building (Sciences) on June 7, 1986. This drew 200 people, and was again (as reported in MLR) in the nature of a joint open house. The occupied part of the Elliott Building was then (still is, as far as I know) a long one-story building in the nature of a central hall, with a stairway in the middle leading down to basement labs, and classrooms off each side of the hall. This offered plenty of space for mall-display type tables, room-space exhibits, and a video room. Organizers Mike Collins and Lorna Peltarri, I noticed, were referred to as "chairperson" and "co-chair" respectively.

*By this point MLR was becoming far more a burden than a delight. I found myself in a number of squabbles. For instance, in several places, such as BCAPA, I voiced criticisms of the lack of communication I received from the Ad Astra 7/Convention 7 conglom. Lloyd Penney responded to my open letter to the committee, saying that my comments were uninformed, misinformed and unfair, I didn't know what was going on, and where was my right to criticize, as I hadn't attended? (Since I was far from the only non-attending supporter attempting to vote in the Caspers, and furthermore I was trying to get the word out through MLR, I thought Lloyd's case was without merit.) Also, there was a squabble with a pro writer in Quebec (Rene Gagnon), who seemed to feel that I was consistently misrepresenting him (MLRs 23, 24/25) and Imagine writers were consistently being overlooked by the CSFFAs, things, as I pointed out, I simply wasn't responsible for, and he and his colleagues should have rectified.*

-- (Maple Leaf Rag ##23-28, - Mar. 1987)

In the fall of 1987 I folded Maple Leaf Rag and moved to Vancouver. My newszine was followed by Michael Skeet's zine, MLR.

### **LOOSE THREADS**

Other things were going on in Victoria in the late 1980s. According to the early 1987 FTA/Phoenix, SFAV had no meetings in the Christmas season of 1987, and few showed up at the January and February 1988 meetings. Still, "a refreshing lack of concern is expressed about this state of affairs in the pages of this zine," Michael reported. Tami Hayes was president, and had published 2 issues of FTA in 1987. Michael reported in issue 3 and 4 (1988) that SFAV was alive and well, still publishing, and using print and broadcast advertisements to increase membership. (SFAV has since disappeared, as far as I can tell.) The Resolution's fifth open house, in Nanaimo on February 7th, drew 12 new members.

Janet Reedman, the travelling editor of The Silver Apple Branch, was also mentioned in MLR.

Comic artist Paul Young, featured in my MLR, announced a comic and animation magazine, Animangl (3217 Shelley St., Victoria, B.C. V8P 4A6). The Resolution held an open house on Feb. 5th, 1988 in Nanaimo, drawing 250 visitors. 12 or so new members were recruited. Another open house was planned for October, again in Nanaimo.

-- (MLR 3, Jan/Feb. 1988)

### **THE FAMOUS TESSERACTS SAGA (Part IV)**

After Tesseracts, Press Porcepic's first SF anthology, MLR's lettercolumn discussed the Tesseracts2 book release. Press Porcepic announced that a third Tesseracts anthology was planned, and started a new SF imprint,

Tesseract Books. The first book release, Elisabeth Vonarburg's *The Silent City* (translated by Jane Brierley), became a mass-marketed title in the States, through a Chicago distributor.

-- (MLR 5/6)

## THE U.S.S. RESOLUTION (Version 2)

John Herbert writes of the U.S.S. Resolution:

*I joined the Resolution in early 1988. At the time, it was Canada's largest ST club, something like 150-200 members. Soon, I was to become embroiled in the joys of club politics.*

*The captain was Terry Wyatt and Terry held all the strings in the club ... Terry ran the show, which was probably okay while the club was small, but by the time I joined, the club was three years old and a large, growing concern. And people in the club wanted more responsibility, and more say in how the club was run, but Terry refused to relinquish any control to the exec., which now had become populated by many interested members (myself included).*

*The exec. soon discovered, for instance, that Terry (who also doubled as club Treasurer) had no idea what the financial assets of the club were. The exec. forced a Treasurer on Terry, and she finally got into the books was appalled at what she found. There were no records of any income. There were few, if any, receipts for expenses, and many expenses were for expenditures not approved, or even known about, by the exec. Because Terry was a one-man show, many areas in the club suffered. Terry also tripled as membership secretary, yet he could not provide a membership list. When, after repeated demands from the exec., a list was provided, it was wildly inaccurate (the 150+ membership we were supposed to have was only half that). The exec. was resolved to get rid of him: he had never been opposed in club elections but the election in 1989 was to be different. The exec. united behind the candidacy of Susan Wright, a former Trek club exec. from Australia. Terry saw the writing on the wall, and did not seek re-election and Susan became club President in September, 1989. (I became zine editor.)*

*The eighteen months of politics to give Terry the heave-ho was bad for the club. The exec. was focused for so long on Terry, and then on rebuilding the club, that the actual operation of the club suffered. A new constitution was planned, new membership kits, etc. but attendance and membership continued dropping. Susan resigned soon after taking command because she and her husband were moving back to Australia. Veronica Hipsey assumed the awesome mantle of responsibility. And there was still Terry. He hadn't, as he claimed, returned all club property in his possession and so once again the exec. found itself mired in another battle with Terry (compounded by I-Con troubles). ...*

-- (John Herbert, February 1993)

MLR 10 had several things to report of Victoria in 1989. Michael Skeet mentioned Atavachron, the U.S.S. Resolution's clubzine/fictionzine, then edited by Terry Wyatt. Michael also mentioned two 1988 issues of FTA/Phoenix, edited by Tami Hayes, 17 two-column pages with fiction.

-- (MLR 10, March 1989)

Michael also published news that the third Tesseracts anthology was open to submissions.

-- (MLR 11, April 1989)

John Herbert resigned from the Resolution in spring 1991. Veronica Hipsey resigned later in the same year, and was replaced as editor by Colin Schiedl, the club's president at the time. At last report, David Gordon-MacDonald edited the Resolution publication.

## I-CON

A short-lived convention, I-Con, was held in Victoria in August 1990 and again in October 1991.

*The first I-Con was held August 3-5, 1990 at the new Ramada Inn. Author GoH was Michael Coney; Artist GoH was Donna Barr (The Desert Peach); TM was Nichelle Nichols. This first-time con featured multi-track programming, 24-hour gaming, an artshow, a dealers' room, two 24-hour video tracks, a Diplomatic Reception and two dances. Memberships were \$30 up to the door. Dave New, the editor of the well-produced V-Con 18 program book, was unimpressed that fall when I-Con's program book was formatted almost exactly like his, in some cases, pages or at least logos were direct steals.*

-- (BCSFAzine ##205 & 206, June & July 1990)

As I've been able to piece it together:

*I guess in early 1990, Terry [Wyatt], almost an outcast from the club, decided to try and put on a con in Victoria. The first group of people who gathered to join the Concom were mostly Resolution people (myself included) but many felt Terry was up to his old tricks and quickly departed. I remember Dave G-M worried that it might turn into another Constellation and Victoria fen had better wash their hands of Terry and I-Con pretty damn quick. It did turn out better than that, but future I-Cons haven't been able to pay for I-Con 1 yet.*

-- (John Herbert, February 1993)

In some ways the planning for I-Con reminded John uncomfortably of Constellation.

*When I briefly served on the I-Con 1 concom, way back when, I suggested Robert Charles Wilson for our GoH. He met all the qualifications for a perfect guest for a Canadian con as far as I was concerned: he was (still is) a great writer, he lived in Canada (Nanaimo at the time), and would probably come cheap! The problem was that I was the only concom member who had ever heard of him, so it was not to be. (Also, the conchair [Terry Wyatt] insisted the con needed a "name" media guest; they don't come cheap.)*

-- (John Herbert, Under the Ozone Hole #2, Nov. 1992)

I wrote in BCAPA:

*I-Con itself was an "eh-eh" sort of con. Let's say it was a fair first start. Victoria may, like Calgary, not have a lot of the hotels that would be optimum for a con, with the necessary function space, yet within a reasonable budget. I noticed more some other things, like a) how crowded and hot and airless the Ramada Inn got that weekend, with that crowd; b) how unhelpful the hotel night staff was (I was supposed to be able to crash in the Westercon suite; I only pulled in about 1:00 a.m. Friday night; the Westercon chair told me specifically there would be a room key with my name attached waiting at the hotel desk and the [night] staff knew nothing about it. Obviously I survived, but equally obviously there was a lack of communication between staff); c) the con was, perhaps understandably, a bit out of town centre (hey, I missed seeing my favourite haunts); d) like Conversion, the hotel started folding its tents and stealing away in midafternoon, there was no Dead Gnome Party, as advertised, and after sitting up with a deliriously sick friend, I needed the party.*

*It may or may not have been relevant that I-Con was held on the Canadian, not American, long weekend in August. Next year it's being held in September (same weekend as In-Con in Spokane).*

-- (Garth Spencer, BCAPA, ca. 1990)

*I was wrong. I-Con 2 was held October 1991 in a different hotel ... the Harbour Towers. (Remember the Harbour Towers?) This is rather a high-toned, classy hotel in the well-heeled James Bay area of Victoria. GoHs were Spider and Jeanne Robinson; ArtGoH was William R. Warren Jr.; FanGoH was Lita Smith-Gharet. Memberships were again \$30 up to the door.*

*-- (BCSFazine #218, July 1991)*

While this was an excellent site for a convention, I kept wondering whether an SF convention was good enough for the hotel, in the eyes of the Harbour Tower staff.

Apparently it was. I-Con 3 was held over from October 1992 to October 1993, due to revenue at I-Con 2 falling short of expenses; but I was told the Harbour Towers was willing to wait for their business. Then (as one zen faulkes phoned me, in late '92), I-Con was finally cancelled. Andrew Murdoch tells me this was due to lack of advance memberships.

One of the few institutions for SF or comics fans in Victoria was Island Fantasy, the longest running comic store (for 15 years) in Victoria. Island Fantasy went bankrupt early in 1994, and the last of its stock was auctioned off in February.

*-- (Under the Ozone Hole #7, March 1994)*

## **THIS IS NOW**

Andrew Murdoch described Victoria fandom in early '93:

*The four major (and, to the best of my knowledge, only) clubs in Victoria are the Resolution, the Science Fiction Association of Victoria (SFAV), the Japanimation Club of Victoria (JAC), and the Shire of Seagirt, the local chapter of the Society for Creative Anachronism.*

*The JAC is, obviously, an anime appreciation club which gathers once a month at Camosun College to take a look at the latest videos available and discuss their favourites ...*

*As you well know, SFAV is a purely social club (as opposed to a club that produces things like a fanzine). All club funds are directed towards parties, trips (like picnics to Saltspring Island), and the like. ... A large number of SFAV members are also members of the Resolution, and so there are lots of joint events. Bowling tournaments happen routinely between clubs (Resolution usually triumphs), and recently there was a well-attended dinner at a local motel where we rented a 100-inch projector TV and viewed several episodes of "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine". SFAV is attributed (sic) with bringing the weekly ritual of FRED ... to Victoria from Vancouver's BCSFA. ...*

*At present, there are only two independent fanzines I know of. The largest is Under the Ozone Hole, edited by John Herbert (former editor of Atavachron) and Karl Johanson. UTOH recently won the 1993 Aurora Award for best fanzine (after two published issues, surely a record), which they attribute to having the sent the zine to people such as Robert Runte.*

*... The other is Dimension, edited by Don McCaskill, which is primarily aimed at being a forum for all the clubs and fans in Victoria. ...*

*... Being a member of SFAV, I can relate to some of the tales. The one that stood out was about going to the Lettuce Patch restaurant after the meetings. You might like to know that the Lettuce Patch is still a fixture in SFAV. Every Tuesday night, SFAVians (along with Resolution members and miscellaneous fen) gather in the*

*Lettuce Patch for TED (Tuesday Evening Delirium), have dinner, and go to a cheap movie. I'm not so sure that it still fits the description of "Glorified Hamburger House", but it is still a place of fannish pilgrimage.*

-- (Andrew Murdoch, ca. March '93)

There are at least two other small SF clubs on Vancouver Island, the U.S.S. Wyvern and the U.S.S. Malaspina, in Comox and Nanaimo respectively. (A small Comox Valley SF group has either folded, or my correspondent Scott Patri stepped down as clubzine editor after an altercation; he has been publishing his own fanzine since mid-94.)

Several older Victoria fans have paired off (like Paul Delaney and Lynne Fonseca; Stan and Katie Hyde; Bernie Klassen and Paula Johanson, Karl Johanson and Stephanie Lightbody; or Veronica [ne Hipsey] Vander Heiden). Some have moved out of town (e.g. Dixie Mueller [formerly Sackett], Wendy Hourston, Craig Yuill, Garth Spencer, AnnDel O'Brien, or Stan and Katie Hyde); some are still around, like Dave, Karl and John. I wish I knew Dan Cawsey's whereabouts.

Lloyd Penney moved to Toronto sometime before my own period in Victoria fandom, and has since gained recognition for a good deal of work in some Toronto fanzines (e.g. Torus) and conventions (Millennium, Toronto Trek and Ad Astra).

Paul and Lynne [Delaney] live out here now, and Paul's worked with me on past Ad Astras. They have two kids, and live in Beeton, Ontario, north of Toronto.

-- (Opuntia #19, May 1994)

Karl and John's Under the Ozone Hole is Canada's current fan newszine, published on a semi-quarterly basis. This has received two Aurora awards, one at ConAdian, the third Canadian Worldcon, in Winnipeg in 1993.

Andrew Murdoch became president of his club in July 1993. Atavachron was still being published, as of 1993, edited by Alistair Craig. He started his own fanzine, ZX, in 1993.

A Michael DeWolfe and friends started a small SF magazine in Victoria, Legends, which was profiled in a 1993 Gila Queen's Guide to Markets. The latest word (in Scavenger's Newsletter 126, for August 1994) is that the magazine has folded, but Legends Publications carries on, now proposing to publish SF and fantasy on computer disk.

A new convention was announced in summer of 1994. Pacificon 95 is scheduled for Sept. 1-3, 1995 in Victoria, featuring an actor GoH: John De Lancie ("Q" on ST:TNG). Of course when I heard that, little alarm bells went off in my head ... probably I was overreacting. The chair, I was told, was Don McCaskill.

Porcepic has relocated, still in Victoria, and is now Beach Holme Press. Their Tesseract's SF imprint, perhaps the only semi-regular line of Canadian SF and fantasy published by a Canadian author, was bought in 1994 by the Books Collective, a consortium of Canadian SF writers and fans based in Edmonton including Gerry Truscott, Cath Jackel, Robert Runte, Candace Jane Dorsey, Michael Skeet and other well-known names.

Some fans have become frequently published authors, including Sally McBride, Dale Sproule, and Paula Johanson (who continues to write SF reviews for Alberta and Victoria papers).

After the second ConText in Edmonton (1991), Canadian SF writers formed SWAC (now SF Canada) and started publishing Communique (a newsletter and market report). Since 1993 this has been co-edited by Aaron



Humphrey in Edmonton and Dale Sproule in Victoria. In 1994 Aaron Humphrey dropped out; in the summer of 1994 Dale Sproule and Sally McBride announced Transversions, a new SF magazine.

[Update: as of early 1996 /Communique/ was handed over to Derryl Murphy of Edmonton. /Under the Ozone Hole is more of a fannish humour genzine, rather than a newszine. No other fanzines and no more conventions have appeared in Victoria.]