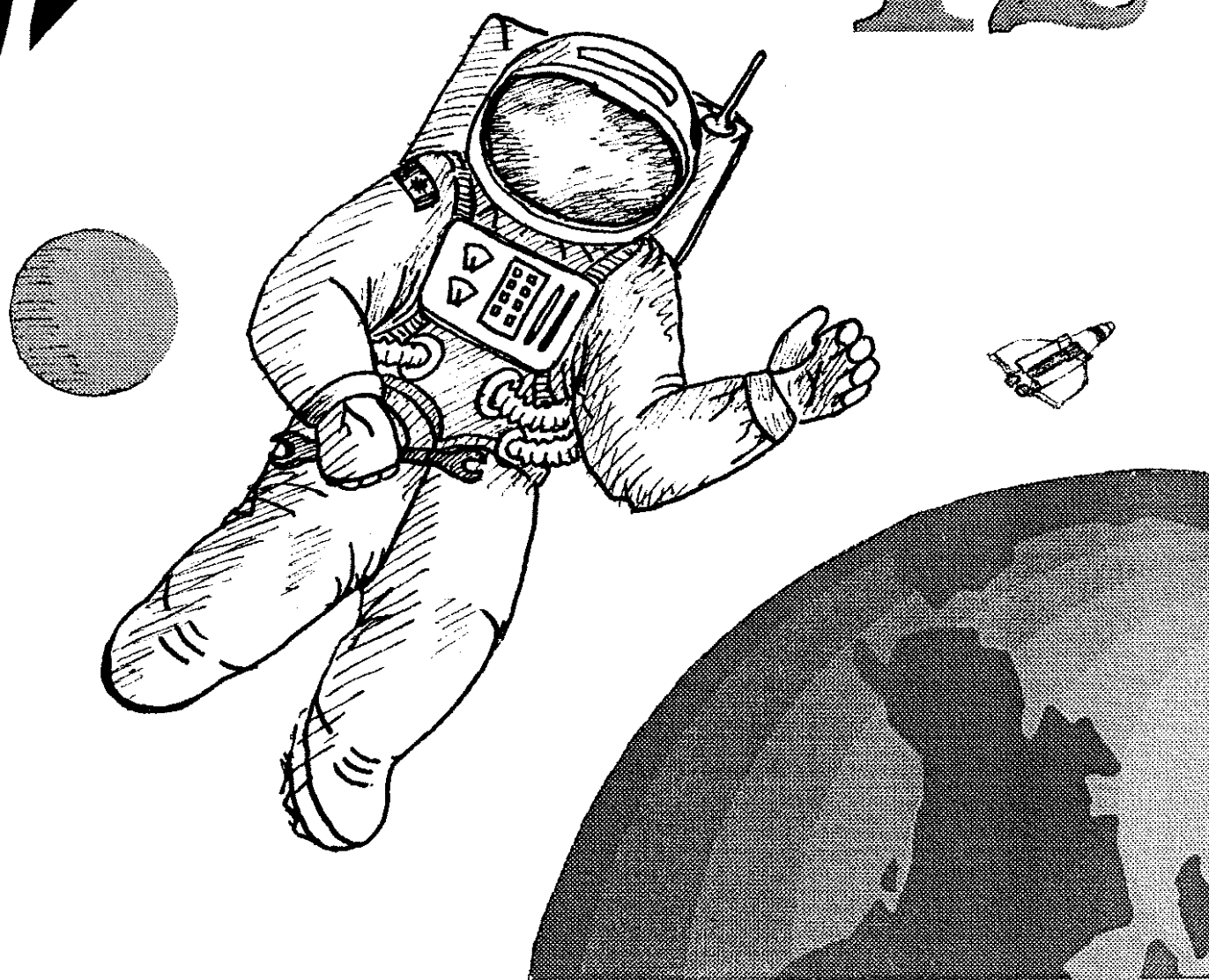


UNDER THE OZONE HOLE

12



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NUMBER Twelve - December, 1995

Published quarterly (or so) by
The Spuzzum Press &
Nuclear Cheese Wuncler Press

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Subscriptions:
\$15.00/four issues or The Usual.

WHY YOU GOT THIS ZINE:

- ☐ Editorial whim.
- ☐ You're an Oilers fan and we feel sorry for you.
- ☐ We like you.
- ☐ We don't like you.
- ☐ Your name is not Merv Griffin.
- ☐ You have secret fantasies about Barney.
- ☐ The devil made us do it.
- ☐ You can remember the band Paul McCartney was in *before* Wings.
- ☐ Spam, spam, spam, spam, spam
- ☐ SPOON!
- ☐ You know every Monty Python routine by heart.
- ☐ We need to hear from you, or this is your last ish. Send money, a LoC, an article, something!

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Contributors

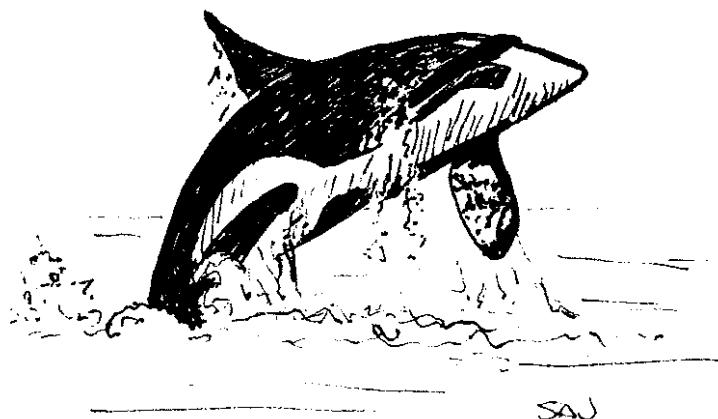
Adam John Kaye Charlesworth, Alistair Craig,
John Willcox Herbert, Karl Johanson, Paula
Johanson, E.B. Klassen, and Dr. Grayson E. Meade.

Art

All art by Stephanie Ann Johanson.

About The Cover

Stephanie Ann Johanson has done something for
the cover. I don't know what it is, but I'm sure it's
very good.



THE EDITOR'S OPINION

by Karl Johanson

It got cold here a few weeks ago (pause for laughter from residents of anywhere else in Canada). It got cold enough to freeze things (pause for a long drawn out 'aaaaaw' from the rest of Canada). The kiddie pool Stephanie bought for the dogs had a 6 inch layer of ice in it. One morning while the temperature was still sub freezing it rained and the rain froze to whatever it landed on. Little hemispheres of ice stuck to everything, acting like well greased ball bearings. It shut the whole city down. They told everyone not to drive and not to walk either. The city was warned, "If you slip it'll take the ambulance more than an hour to get to you."

I took the dogs outside and played slip around on the concrete deck for a while. The grass was slippery, the trees were slippery, the bushes were slippery. Gaby looked at me with a "what did you do to the lawn?" look. (Well it looked that way to me.) I looked at the Barbecue. It too was covered with a layer of clear pebbly ice.

The clear ice made me think of the window on the barbecue. Now why do barbecues come with windows? I mean, you're barbecuing stuff in them. The spanking clean window on a brand new barbecue will, in about three minutes, become a dull black window with occasional bits of shinny black. Every now and then a bork of grease will get splattered on it and trickle down the pane, leaving a slightly translucent line for 45 seconds or so.

Let's assume for a minute that by some miracle of technology, soot proof glass is invented (maybe by adapting the rear window defrosters from cars to heat the glass up hot enough to ignite any carbon, or carbon-containing molecules, sticking to the glass). Is anyone going to use the window? "Gee, wunner if ma burgies is done. I'll jus lerk in da liddle winder here and . . . Hey, it's *dark* in there." Now, if you cook something with a high fat content you can get a fair amount of flames happening, but there are still two problems here: 1) the flames are underneath what you're cooking and thus don't light it up for squat; and 2) it's a barbecue! The @#\$%ing thing is full of smoke from the burger grease dripping all over the coals or lava rocks. Visibility inside the barbecue is down to a couple of centimetres at best. That's why everyone in history who has ever wondered how the food was doing inside a barbecue completely ignored the little window and opened the lid to look.

What scares me the most is that if some manufacturer wised up and sold barbecues without a window, people probably wouldn't buy it. "Gee, this model looks pretty good, but I can get this other one over here with a nifty window for only \$45.00 more."

THE EDITOR'S OPINION

by John Willcox Herbert

Yes, we are still alive, we haven't Gafiated, and all those rumours involving us and the Royal Family are mostly unfounded. I can say with near certainty that Prince Charles and Karl are not getting divorced. But I really can't comment about the Corgis.

Great Lies of Fandom #1: The zine is in the mail.

As we enter Aurora Award season, no doubt some in fandom will complain that the Auroras are meaningless because of the small number of voters. But as previously demonstrated in these pages, the per capita voting for Auroras is significantly higher than for the Hugos. Consider this: the number of people eligible to vote for the Golden Globe Awards, arguably the second most important entertainment awards after the Oscars, is 95. At this year's Golden Globes, only 80 people voted in the Best Picture category, a similar amount to the number of voters in many Aurora categories.

Great Lies of Fandom #2: I'm going to concentrate on my writing.

Representative Helen Chenoweth (Republican - Idaho) on the science of endangered species (as quoted by Alexander Cockburn in the 12/25 issue of *The Nation*):

"A species goes out of existence every twenty seconds. Surely a new species must come *into* existence every twenty seconds."

Great Lies of Fandom #3: Sure, I'll volunteer for the convention.

I dunno, but I think all NBA games broadcast on tv in Canada should have a purple halo put around the basketball. Otherwise, the game's just too darn hard to follow.

Great Lies of Fandom #4: You really deserved to win.

In no particular order, and for no particular reason, here are my ten favourite movies of all time:

Ed Wood, The Right Stuff, The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai, Evel Knievel, A Night to Remember, A Day at the Races, Batman (1966), Forbidden Planet, Ghostbusters, Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, Little Big Man, Big Trouble in Little China, Dr. Strangelove, Forrest Gump and The Abyss. (Yeah, that's fifteen, but it's my list.)

Great Lies of Fandom #5: Gee, Frank, it looks almost natural.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Valerie Herd (who is involved with "The Friends of Vedek Bareil;" write c/o 7459 Nasrullah, Niagara Falls, ON, L2H 2M4); Thomas Phinney (COA: 342 Kimball Drive, Rochester, NY, U.S.A., 14623); Colin Scheidl, Larry Scott, Cath Jackel, Michelle Wilson.

Great Lies of Fandom #6: I'm a Trekker, not a Trekkie!

In no particular order, and for no particular reason, here are my ten favourite books of all time:

Steel Beach (Varley), *The Glass Teat* (Ellison), *Speaker For the Dead* (Card), *The Fall of Hyperion* (Simmons), *Dying Inside* (Silverberg), *Lincoln's Dreams* (Willis), *Nobody's Son* (Stewart), *The Right Stuff* (Wolfe), *Bug Jack Barron* (Spinrad), *Our Angry Earth* (Asimov and Pohl), *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Adams), *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* (Thompson), *Summer of Love* (Mason), *Slaughterhouse Five* (Vonnegut), *Virtual Light* (Gibson), *Breakfast of Champions* (Vonnegut), *Gateway* (Pohl), *A Bridge of Years* (Wilson), *Heavy Weather* (Sterling), *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (Brown), *Genius* (Gleick) — hey, this isn't fair! I can't pick just ten!

Great Lies of Fandom #7: Not only will we break even, but, heck, I think we might even turn a small profit.

The logic is inescapable, of course: If Canada is partitionable, then so is Québec. In theory, anyway. And certainly, some parts of an independant Québec (areas along the Ontario border, the North) could choose to remain in Canada with possibly little fanfare or strife. But the suggestion that parts of Montréal could remain part of Canada, while perhaps useful as a political exercise, in practice would result in a situation akin to West Berlin, a position no doubt unacceptable to both sides. And we see the likely resolution to such a predicament played out every night on the news. Can't happen in Canada? I'll wager the people of Sarajevo once thought the same way. Somebody please turn down the rhetoric.

Great Lies of Fandom #8: This is a genuine signed, first edition.

In no particular order, and for no particular reason, here are my ten favourite CDs of all time:

Quadrophonia, The Who; *Alchemy*, Dire Straits; *The Game*, Queen; *The Final Cut*, Pink Floyd; *Abbey Road*, The Beatles; *Scenes From the Southside*, Bruce Hornsby and The Range; *The Joshua Tree*, U2; *Empty Glass*, Pete Townshend; *Hold Your Fire*, Rush; *Secret World*, Peter Gabriel.

Great Lies of Fandom #9: You know, in most sf clubs the ratio of women to men is three to one.

Which leads us to the topic of "asymmetrical federalism." Many provinces take the view that Canada is composed of ten equal provinces, and argue that all provinces must be treated equally. Any provision that treats any province differently is therefore wrong. (Québec, on the other hand, views Canada as two founding nations, and believes that confederation must reflect this.) Many who argue for the ten equal provinces theory forget that Canada is founded on asymmetrical federalism. Every province, when joining confederation, cut deals with the federal government. An example: a condition of British Columbia joining confederation is that the federal government run the E&N railway here on Vancouver Island. The railway loses money and the feds have been trying to drop it for years, but each time they try, the provincial government takes the feds to court and wins.

A little compromise is needed here. This doesn't mean that we must sell the farm to keep the cows, but we must be ready to look for, and be open to, some creative solutions.

Great Lies of Fandom #10: The next issue will be on time. I promise.



Have Yourself a Merry Little Snake-Oil

by Paula Johanson

I drew my brother-in-law Leonard's name for the Silly Christmas Gifts Party my in-laws are hosting this weekend. I never know what to say to Leonard. He's a lawyer who likes hockey, he already has an iron bar for passing the bar, and he has all the hockey stuff he wants, including season tickets. What to give him? So I wrapped a chocolate box in a home-made snake-oil pamphlet saying:

New AMAZING Substance! **Mm-Hmm!**®

Four out of five speech therapists surveyed agree: "A must-have for everyone who uses speech at work, at home and at play!"

During your busy days, or in the comfort of your home, do you find yourself talking or writing? Many people do. But it's hard to admit it when you have the heartbreak of finding yourself ...at a loss for words.

"It was *awful*, I guess," says one victim of *aglossia* after his experience. "Like, I just stood there, eh? And she goes, 'So?' And like, I said nothing, eh?"

Who among us hasn't known the heartbreak of *aglossia*, the loss of speech, to happen? We'd all like to be *witty*, *charming*, and *Johnny-on-the-spot* with marvellously *appropriate* comments at every turn in the conversations so essential to a word-filled world. But at one time or another we've all been put on the spot like this during a crucial conversation, groped for words and come up speechless.

".... !! ..." agrees another victim, nodding and gesturing aimlessly as her eyes take on the *glassy* stare of a deer on the road, caught in your high-beams at night.

Or worse yet, if you force words out at moments like that, you may find yourself saying something truly dreadful. You will have to eat your own words and even so, may never recover from the public disgrace. Some poor souls are reduced to the horrors of *hoof-in-mouth disease*, to which none of us are immune.

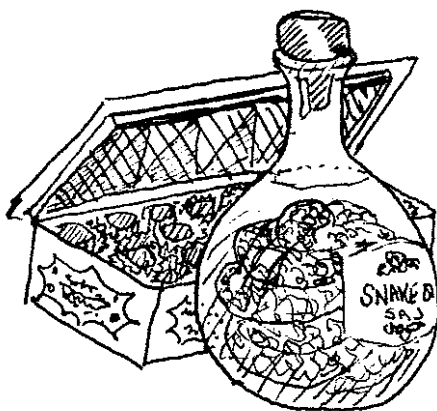
BUT—never fear. There is a new product on the market now, to relieve your stress and anxiety at those dreadful moments when you have nothing to say. **Mm-Hmm**® has no moving parts, no active ingredients and a completely spurious effect upon anyone caught at a loss for words. *And it's available without a prescription.* You might ask, how can something so simple work for me?

Mm-Hmm® is easy to use. The next time you are talking with someone and find yourself not knowing what to say next, simply apply **Mm-Hmm**® to your tongue and hold it there. The *tasty* experience will relieve your distress. And naturally, no one could be expected to speak around so large a confection.

This marvellous remedy is made of durable ingredients, providing a natural solution to your immediate problem; a single **Mm-Hmm**® should last long enough for people around you to fill the silence

with comments of their own. You will not need to do more than listen attentively. By the time you have consumed the **Mm-Hmm**® you will either know what you wish to say, or the conversation will be at an end. Perhaps the immediate vicinity will be struck by a large, flaming meteor. At any rate you will be off the hook. **Mm-Hmm**® has a second use, *for extreme situations only*. When someone else is talking, you may offer them one. There are no guaranteed results, but you can take your chances.

Enjoy *freedom* from word-related stress today!



Gee, I hope he likes chocolates. But I don't know how to ask him. I never know what to say.

Digging In the Dirt

by E. B. Klassen

It was one of those mornings that looked perfect. It was warm without being hot yet, and clear as only a prairie sky can be. We were waking up in a motel in Lethbridge, Alberta, a motel room paid for by a local television station. This was to prove to be the coolest stop to date on Paula's book tour. But while she was getting ready for a mid-morning interview, the twins and I were getting ready for dinosaurs.

After a quick breakfast, we left Paula to wait for the limousine that was to pick her up, and we headed even further south to the small town of Warner, Alberta. The day before had been spent at Head-Smashed-In buffalo jump (an unexpected delight) and the evening in the perfection of the Lethbridge Nikka Yuko Centennial Japanese Garden — which we hadn't known existed until we were leaving Head-Smashed-In. The buffalo jump had been a destination for me, but Paula had found out about tours to Devil's Coulee that left from Warner. And now she wasn't even going with us.

Driving into a new place is always a bit confusing for me. You never know how close or far off a turn is, you don't know the landmarks, and worst of all, you never know when you're going to get there or whether you've already driven past. It's hard to imagine Warner having this effect on me; Warner is a town of a couple of hundred sitting like a slight bulge on an otherwise uniform highway cutting straight across the prairie from Lethbridge to the U.S. How could you miss anything? But I worried about it, as I always do.

The ubiquitous grain elevators, subject of so much mediocre mall art, rose out of the horizon marking another knot of civilization on the prairie. Warner. We turned off the highway and drove down the main street. Main street Warner looks a bit like a movie set; old buildings, a few cars, dust, lots of For Sale and For Rent signs. The only thing missing was the tumbleweed blowing through.

The one exception to this ordinariness was a gas station/general store. The first thing you see, pulling in to Warner, is a building covered with garish dinosaurs. We drove down the main street, turned around, and pulled in at the dinos. After stocking up on drinks for now and drinks for later, I asked where the Devil's Coulee Interpretive Centre was. Looking at me a bit strangely, the woman behind the counter replied that it was the building right next door. I looked out the door opposite the one we'd come in by, and sure enough, there was a brand new building with that distinctive architecture that says "here be something paid for by the Alberta provincial government". It couldn't be anything BUT the interpretive centre. See what I mean about me and new places? But in my own defense, I want to say that I was trying not to miss any stop signs, and it was hidden behind the garish dinosaurs, so I really couldn't be expected to see it right off, could I?

We parked at the interpretive centre and yes, I found the door without asking. The interpretive centre also houses a number of municipal offices and a real estate office, but we found the centre all right (first door on the left). We were greeted by a friendly woman who happily took my money for the tour (about \$20 Can.) and invited us to look around.

The centre itself is broken up into a number of smaller rooms. One is for video presentations, another houses a display of fossils and interesting stuff found by a local group of rockhounds, and another holds a number of displays on loan from the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller. There were also a number of staff milling about doing various things, but mostly talking over coffee. And they were more than happy to chat with us. I suspect that this was a natural friendliness, as we arrived in mid-August and the season still had another month to run. We chatted with the staff, watched fossils being removed from their surrounding matrix, and checked out the displays. The kids naturally found the gift store, which surprised me by having a lot of reasonably priced things to buy. Lots of stuff under \$2, including excellent plastic replicas of *Albertosaurus* tooth casts (one of which currently resides in Ben's collection of stuff).

Ten o'clock finally rolled around, and the staff courteously hustled us into the video room to watch a short film of the dig site we were going to visit. The dinosaur eggs at Devil's Coulee were discovered in 1987 by (who else?) an amateur. Wendy Sloboda was a 17 year old volunteer at the Royal Tyrrell, and was asked to do an area survey. She was told what to look for; layering with bits of bone washing out and, oh yeah, you might see these little bits of black stuff with pebbling on one side and smooth on the other. Them's dinosaur eggs. So off she went. And sure enough she found these little bits of black stuff that were pebbled on one side and smooth on the other. And there were tonnes of the stuff. Alberta's first dinosaur nesting site had been discovered.

The gang of us piled into the bus (actually, the five of us piled into a van) and headed out to Devil's Coulee. I was kind of surprised; there were Ben, Lila, and myself, and another woman and her daughter (roughly the same age as my kids) and that was it for paying customers. Yet the staff seemed happy at the response they were getting. I was to see later that the 1:00 pm tour had a couple more people in it, but nothing like the response I had kind of expected. Which was great. I like smaller groups over larger ones anyway. But it does make me kinda worry about the future of the program.

The drive out was nothing short of....well, lots of southern prairie. Hills to the south, foothills and mountains to the west. Beautiful, but beautiful in a severe, exposed kind of way, so different from the lush wildness of my beloved west coast.

It was the hills to the south that the driver first mentioned. "That's the Milk River Ridge." I had noticed the name on a road sign, but it meant nothing to me.

"Sorry," I said, "I don't get the reference."

"Well," said the fellow driving, "that's the hills that stick out at ninety degrees to the foothills." I still didn't get it, so he continued; "Ninety degrees. Why would there be hills at ninety degrees to the range of mountains?" Obviously not enough coffee yet this morning. My mind was back in the late Cretaceous, not on anomalous hills in southern Alberta. "See," says the driver, "Those hills mark the southernmost point of advance of the last glaciers." And my mind exploded.

I turned my head to look south, began to take in the hills of Milk River Ridge, and suddenly the landscape was covered in ice. Ice rising up over our heads, smashing the ground flat (and incidentally killing all the native earthworms. The worms which are here now are all imports. The ecological niche formerly filled by earthworms was taken over on the prairies by centipedes and millipedes). There, at what are now hills, was the ragged edge of the ice, the mess it was pushing southwards. I could see the blue ice rising, the dirt and rock mixed up at the indefinite edge, the mud and melting, hawks soaring overhead in the sunlight. Then the ice began to recede, and I slowly came back to the

present. "Ah," I said, not too brilliantly. "That's Milk River Ridge."

I'm not really certain what I was expecting a dinosaur dig to be like, but what it was, was nothing. We drove a tattered dirt track beside a barbed-wire fence to the top of a slight rise. The grass was burnt down to nothing in the way all grasses are burnt down to nothing in the late summer in Alberta. To the north was a faint glitter of blue; a reservoir, I was to find out later.

And as we got out of the van, seven large white birds flew towards us. They weren't too high up, and they cut in over the coulee that lay to the east and began to circle. They formed a large wheel, and all circled it once. Then two birds broke off almost as if thrown by centrifugal force, and stuttered northwards. They almost paused, and then one flew back to the wheel and the other flew north to the reservoir. Another circle, and two more birds were thrown off. One returned and one flew north. And again. And again, until only one bird remained, and then it too flew north to the beckoning water.

I have no idea what this display meant. I don't know the behaviour that prompted it, I don't know if it was some kind of omen, I don't know if it was a message from god/dess. But it was damned strange. And it fascinates me still.

I looked south and saw...nothing. Two small hoodoos on a hill on the far side of the coulee. White clay. Alkali deposits. I looked down the trail that led into the coulee. A man was just coming up. "Hey!" he called. "Did you all see the pelicans?"

I was to find out later that this was Wendy Sloboda's dad. As I understand it, he spends a fair bit of time in the summer helping out at the dig site by walking tourists like us around while the folks from the Royal Tyrrell try and get some science done. And he showed us around the site.

We walked down the trail into the coulee and saw...not much. Some metal stakes, a bit of rope, a couple of tarps, and a large white blob. And a couple of people shooting the breeze. I began to get excited.

We walked part way down the trail, and our guide (I never caught his name—just later, Wendy Sloboda's dad) mentioned that we were now at the point that, as we went down, there would now be fossils. As he talked about the site, what was being done, and what we really shouldn't do, my daughter looked down at her feet. Then she picked up a rock. "Dad," she said, a bit under her breath, "is this a fossil?" It was. A beautiful leaf print. I suggested she show it to the guide, who commented that it was indeed a fossil, a leaf print, and didn't it just go to show that all you had to do is look down at the right time? And then, with tremendous self-control, Lila returned it to the ground. As we were supposed to.

It turned out that the large white blob was a hadrosaur nest. They had jacketed the top, flipped it, and jacketed the bottom. And that was all the hadrosaur nest we got to see. But I did get to ask a question that I hadn't ever had answered before. See, I remember reading that you put a plaster of paris jacket over/around fossils you were going to move. But I had used plaster since I read that, and I knew it stuck like anything to whatever it touched — especially after hardening. So why take off all the matrix and replace it with something equally difficult to remove? Therefore, there must be something between the plaster and the fossil. But I couldn't remember ever reading just what it was. So I asked. And found out that it's paper. Any kind you happen to have on hand, wetted, and slopped all over the fossil. You know, that question had been ticking away in the back of my head for nearly 25 years. Never bothered me enough to spend time researching the answer, but there nonetheless. And now it's gone. Of course I later mentioned this to Robert Runté, and he said, without missing a beat, "Wet paper. Seen it everywhere." Naturally. Everyone knows this but me. Bloody typical.

We were shown what Wendy noticed, what led to this dig being funded. Little tiny pieces of black stuff, ranging in size from one to six millimetres across. And so many of them that they looked like really fat black sand. There were dozens of flattened fossilized eggs eroding out of the coulee banks, spreading these little scraps of shell down the hillside in the spring or after a rain. Once you saw what to look for, you couldn't miss the stuff.

We toured the dig site (unremarkably small area, that), and heard about the current understanding of the site. A riverbank with lots of soft mud and sand, so that hadrosaurs could bury their eggs (like the sea turtle) and let Mother do the work. Eventually the little ones would hatch, and they would be near a source of water and food.

But every so often things would go wrong. There would be a late season downpour and the river would flood after nesting, leaving the eggs and developing hadrosaurs under way too much mud. They would be crushed by the weight, or starved of oxygen, and lay under layers of slowly hardening muck. We were told that there were two basic ways that the fossil eggs were found; the first was simply crushed with shell and skeleton in layers. The second was squeezed like a grape, with the embryo squirted out from one end of the egg.

But the flooding wasn't a regular occurrence. If it were, then the hadrosaurs would simply have found a less dangerous nest site. Floods could occur a year or a century apart. So the paleontologists at Devil's Coulee don't have a continuous record of the local hadrosaur population, but an intermittent one.

After the tour, we were told to wander freely about, look at stuff, ask any questions we wanted. My kids and the other ten-year-old girl on the tour were positively bursting to get across the coulee and up the hill on the far side to the small hoodoo. I told the girl's mother that I would go with them, leaving her to talk with Wendy's dad (whom she apparently knew). I followed the kids, who were making terrific time up the hill.

I stopped them about halfway up, mentioning that this put us about even with the dig site, and might mean that we could find a few fossils if we looked around. They spent an amazing five minutes looking about before heading up the hill to the hoodoo.

The view from the hoodoo was stunning (as was the three metre drop on the far side). Miles of Alberta, a future dig site (marked) where a young carnivore had been found, and the reservoir off to the north. While I was drinking this in, the kids were commenting on the volumes of marmot crap we were standing in. Significant details, that's what kids notice.

The three wanted to head over to another hill joined to the one we were on by a small ridge. I agreed, and off they went. Of course my daughter and the other girl got along. You have to assume a certain community of interest with any other kid whose parent hauls them off to see a dinosaur dig site. As we were making our way to the other hill, crossing the ridge, I happened to pay attention to where I was walking. No, that's not strictly true. I was paying lots of attention to everything. After all, this was a dig site. Fossils were to be found here. So I was looking. And I started picking up small chunks of stuff that really did look like they should be fossils. I pocketed them and followed the kids.

When we got back to where the grad students were lazing about in the sun, I pulled the bits out of my pocket. "I was wondering, "

said I, "if these might happen to be the sort of thing you're looking for?"

"Infant hadrosaur bone fragment. Infant hadrosaur bone fragment. Infant hadrosaur bone fragment. Freshwater turtle shell fragment. Beats me, but probably hadrosaur. Where'd you find them?"

"Just over there, where the two hills come together."

"Ah. On Fossil Ridge."

Don't mind saying, it blew me away. Even though, as it was a dig site, I had to hand over the bits, I had managed to find fossils. And find out what they were formerly a part of. This was exactly what I wanted to do when I was ten. And the desire had never really gone away during the intervening decades. I wanted to find fossils, dammit! I wanted to be a part of this great dinosaur-finding community. And now I've done it. At a dig site, in the company of professionals, I reached down to the ground and picked up bits of nothing and knew what they were. And even though they were relatively unimportant, even though the place was well known enough to have been given a name, I still did it, and it just doesn't get better than a moment like that. For a brief and shining moment, I was ten years old, a part of it all, and in heaven.

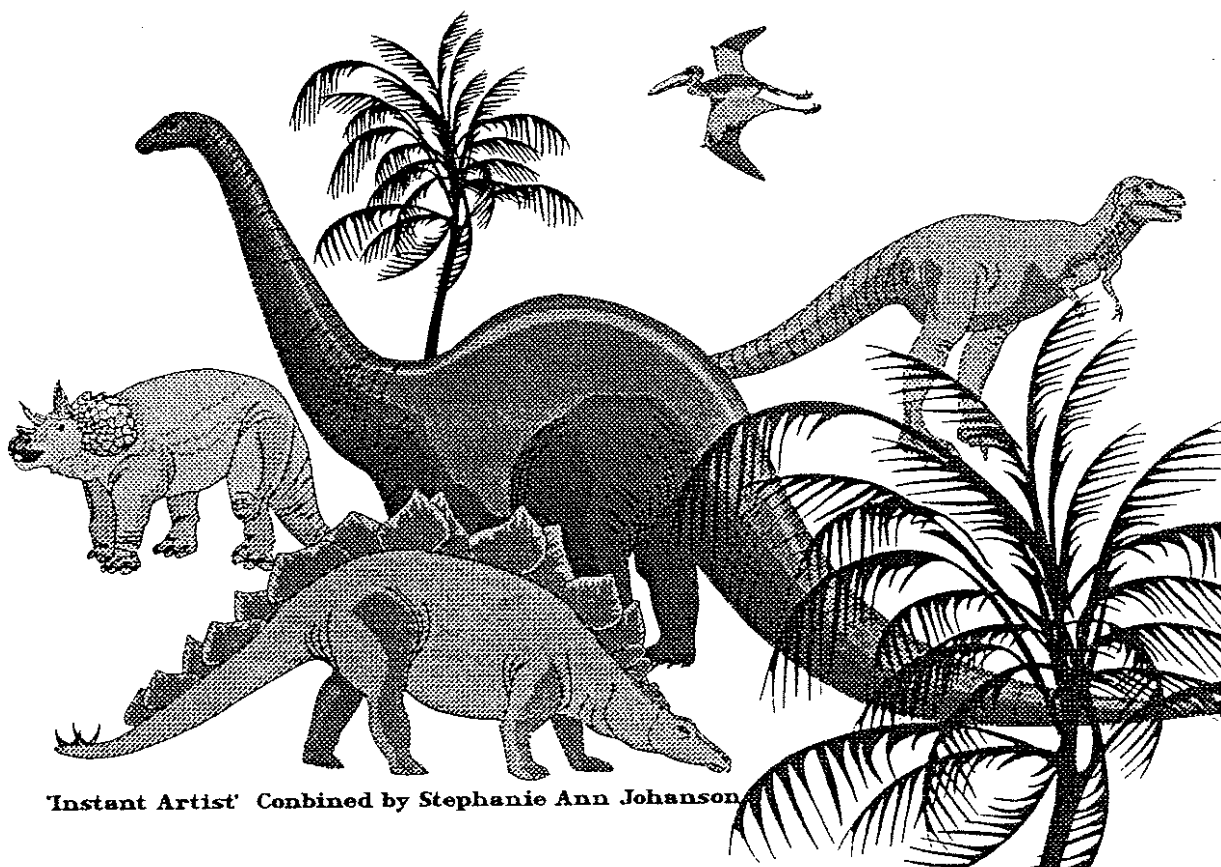
The rest of the day, I was high on excitement. I passed on information to the interpretive centre that the Alberta Provincial Museum paleontologist(s) were recovering masses of bones out of the gravel pits surrounding Edmonton. A bit of information that hadn't filtered down south. And I babbled almost uncontrollably to Paula when we picked her up. And to Robert Runté when we got together with him. And for the next couple of days.

But even now, when I look at the tiny black fragment I discovered at the bottom of my pocket that night, I get that deep sense of having been a part, however small, of that long line of amateurs who somehow keep turning up amazing discoveries of these unimaginably ancient creatures.

Postscript:

Two and a half months after this trip, we were putting in water and sewage to our new house. The backhoe was digging between eight and ten feet down. As I was directing the backhoe, Ben was checking out the few rocks that were coming out with the sand and clay. Sure enough, he pulled one out slightly bigger than my fist. And full of fossilized miniature sea creatures. The amateur tradition continues.

{["Digging in the Dirt" will also appear in *Spasm*. Contact E.B. Klassen at paula@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca.]}



'Instant Artist' Combined by Stephanie Ann Johanson

Fandom or Fakery

or, What the hell does a BNF do anyway?

by Adam John Kaye Charlesworth, BNF

I remember being a young fan, contemptuous of those who didn't attend every meeting, who only showed up to vote once a year at election time. People mentioned briefly at tables of other young fans who gathered regularly to say, "Did Adam actually go to a meeting this year? What the hell happened to Adam, anyway?" Well at least I am still occasionally mentioned at BCSFA meetings and occasionally receive e-mail from other members convention committees I am supposedly on but have actually done no work for as yet. Yes, I am talking about me. My younger self is appalled at my insensitive approach to the new fans and the fact that I spend more time at conventions and meetings talking to people I know rather than trying to get to know new people.

I still do my monthly spot on The Ether Patrol reviewing the latest books, magazines and neat stuff but I seldom listen to the show all the rest of the month. I still read five to ten new books each month and have begun to communicate with several authors of these novels directly about how they make me feel but I don't seem to actually be sending any of these reviews to magazines or newspapers in order to collect rejection slips.

Since 1990, I have either been on the short list for some sf award or I have actually won one every single year till perhaps now. If I didn't win the award I certainly knew the person who did. In fact with the exception of Joël Champetier, I have had dinner with or wanted to sleep with every 1994 and 1995 Aurora winner. I don't remember actively cultivating these people as friends but somehow all my friends win Auroras or other awards despite my constant and somewhat irritating distraction techniques. The only work I ever do gets printed in UTOH or broadcast on The Ether Patrol, both award winning vehicles in fandom. But I never go to meetings as fans have begun to irritate and generally piss me off. To top it off I have a life outside of fandom which I find generally more interesting and more enjoyable.

Help, I've gafiated and I want to come back.

I will stop whining now and tell you about a recent party I went to in Vancouver. It was at Mike Jackson's new house on 70th in Marpole. Mike had moved out of his other slightly tarnished house on El Alamein because he was sick of that crazy roommate stuff and was glad to finally break out and get a better place to live... with four different roommates. Anyway I was at one of his parties. If you have ever been to one of Mike Jackson's parties you know exactly what I mean when I say they are all identical. Mike and his roommates all invite as many people as possible to come over on a certain day after a certain time and then sit back and watch or even actively hide. It's an interesting technique to partygiving but the unfortunate drawback to the "no host, nothing barred" party is that some loud crazy person is always running around the house chasing someone else with a rubber (insert chicken, dart gun, dildo or just leave it all by itself) and you never know anyone's name. You never know who anybody is because it is against some sort of Jacksonian ethic to ever introduce anyone to anyone else. So, as usual, Mike has invited all of his most interesting friends and acquaintances over. I see them at every party of his I have ever gone to, and I still don't know any of their names or who they are. We just smile and nod at each other while drinking bottles of Evil Penis Beer. Anyway I decided that this time come hell or high water I was going to meet some people who I didn't know and talk to them about sf. I get to the party early. Only Mike and new roommate Number One is there. Mike is cueing up a tape of a video project he is working on which in some aspect involves Don DeBrandt. Mike introduces me to roommate Number One and I am so totally dumbfounded I immediately forget his name. Oh well. Don arrives and we watch this introduction to a video game which Don has called Dead Space. Several characters are introduced, generally by them chainsawing their way through the previous character onto the screen. The story is about a sentient computer who works as some kind of private investigator. The computer has an office and a desk and a bottle of bourbon which is constantly lying half drunk and propped against his CPU. It is cute and not at all badly done. After we watch it Mike turns to me and says, "How was it?"

"Not bad," say I in response. Mike looks defeated and I realize that I have just been an asshole. "I mean, not to damn with faint praise, Mike, that was fucking terrific! I mean the whole idea," I said scrambling, "of a sentient shamus is great, a great game starter, and several plots immediately leap to mind. The machine has to work or its sentient licence will be revoked as no one like the A.I.s taking work away from the breeders and butchers, and it has to be self employed because no one will give it a job. Only people who are desperate will ever stoop to coming to it for work so there is always a desperate rush on everything. The A.I.P.I.," I finish off, "is, wow, just brilliant-- I mean inspired-- plot lines just leap out of this one, baby!"

I spend the next three minutes spouting off other plot ideas as fast as I can think of them until Mike's stunned face stops me. "The A.I.P.I. ... I never thought about any of that stuff." Mike mouths the letters AIPI to himself and then the door opens and a hundred people walk in and I don't speak to Mike Jackson or Don DeBrandt again for seven months.

Anyway at this party I started as many conversations as I could by asking people what was the last book they'd read. You could tell that Mike and his roommates had not just invited sf fans to the party as most of them could actually read and had actually finished a book in the last month. However they were also mostly too hip and cool to spend much time talking about something that didn't involve them in a more direct fashion. Finally, I started up a neat dialogue with this guy named Michael. I found that he was very well read and interested in the things about sf that I was and we talked about writing and then he mentioned that he too was writing and then he mentioned that he'd won the L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future award a few years back but was having trouble with some writer's block on the motivational level. "Wait a minute, you're MICHAEL CONEY!" I say at a loud and excited volume with the huge brain-to-hand gestures that get me into trouble in hot tubs, bus lines and cafeterias. I had no idea, I'd thought he was another wannabe hack like myself and now I find myself wishing I had my tape recorder to do an interview for the show... he looks up at me and says in the exact same tone of voice

I'd used when I discovered his last name, "Wait a minute, you're... ADAM CHARLESWORTH!!!! I thought you would be older. Someone of your stature and connections with fandom I for sure thought would be much older...." We had made a connection here at Mike Jackson's party; we both knew each other's last names without having to say them to each other. We were both a little bit famous, in that weird insider fannish clique way, and somehow we both connected. We continued to talk until it was much later and then I schmoozed a ride home with David Langtry who is always worth mentioning as he is a terrific guy (cute and single too) and I didn't think anything more about this at all until John Herbert gave me free rein over his Diet Coke and said go ahead, type all night.

Older, connected, stature, even ...mature. These were all words used by Michael, someone who had won an international award, someone who had all the correct and proper insights into writing and publishing (i.e. mine), someone who had actually written something. Somebody who was a somebody had mistaken me for something other than what I was. I mean, could I have become a West Coast BNF and not even know it? Someone should come up with some sort of chart or something so people would be able to know when it was okay to start putting those initials after their name without an air of pretension. Okay, so I have met and dined with or slept over at the house of or interviewed repeatedly all the Aurora novel winners since 1990. I mean, I can call Robert Runté up at any time of the day or night and he still sounds pleased to hear from me. I think about all the names involved in fandom from Toronto to Vancouver and I seem to know them all. Connected. Not me. It isn't possible, I am simply not old enough to be connected.

So okay, here is an idea we've been kicking around for some time now. The BNF Chart.

(This is so that when we have accumulated enough points we can show them to an adjudicator and then be issued a pass so that some member of the preferred sex knows that they are supposed to sleep with you at the next convention.)

Point system: There are several prizes to be "won" and you can use your points at several levels but only once. You cannot exchange your guest of honour bonus points for a free meal more than once if you get my drift. Penalty points are never used up but must be earned away.

Publishing any of fanzine or clubzine	Minus 10 points per zine started
Every issue published	Plus 1 point
Every zine delivered to your house	Plus 1, if you are not a subscriber and don't publish your own
Every zine delivered to a pseudonym	Minus 1/2 a point
Every time you're on the cover of a zine	Plus 2 points
If your subscriber list is over 100	Plus 1/10th of a point per person
Every time you're listed in Factsheet 5	Plus 1 point
Every semi prozine started	Minus 20 points (what arrogance!)
Every semi prozine issue published	Plus 7 points

Clarification...if you have published ten different zines but have only done the first issue of each, that works out to minus 100 points and positive one points for each issue, for a total of minus 90 points. It is possible and very very common to say that you are going to be publishing a zine and not do it. If you are just thinking about it, minus 1 point only; if you have actually picked a name and maybe written an article for it then you receive the whole minus 10 but no bonus 1 for actually getting around to it. Semi pro points go to the editor(s).

If it is a club zine that doesn't get published then the negative points apply to every member in the room at the first meeting in which it is mentioned. Note that club zines also reap bonus points for club members for every issue that they have actually contributed something something to, as opposed to just being mentioned in.

Every sf convention you go to	Plus 1/5th of a point
Every con you're asked to attend	Plus 1 point
Every time you're Fan Guest of Honour	Plus 5 points
Every con you ghost at	Minus 3 points
Every world con you go to	Plus 1/2 a point
Attending under a pseudonym	Plus 1/10th of a point unless pseudo is used at convention in subsequent years, in which case you get a full 1/5th.
Every non attendance as guest	Plus 1/2 a point.
Every no show after buying membership	Minus 1/2 a point
Every panel you're on	Plus 1/2 a point
Every panel you go to	Minus 1/5th a point
Every painting you sell at auction	Plus 1 point
Every dead dog party you go to	Plus 1/5th a point
Every con com you chair	Plus 2 points if con succeeds Minus 5 points if con does not take place
Every con committee you're on	Plus 1 point Minus 3 points if con does not take place
Con badges worn	Minus 1.5 points for every badge over three worn on site Plus 1/5th of a point for any badge drawn by any pro artist
If you're a gamer	Minus 3 points
Every story you publish	Plus 1 point for every story printed where no money changes hands. (If you get paid, you are a filthy pro.)
Every time you're solicited for work	Plus 1 point

Every time you don't follow through	Minus 2 points
Every book dedicated to you	Plus 10 points
Every sf award you're nominated for	Plus 3 points (only if you're on the short list)
Every time you win	Plus 5 points
Every time you don't	Minus 2 points
Every sf award winner who knows you	Plus 1/2 a point (must be first name basis)
Every time you appear in Locus	Plus 2 points (name or photograph) (Science Fiction Chronicle may be substituted in years it wins an award and Locus does not.)
Every sf club you're a member of	Plus 1/20th of a point per actual meeting attended
Every club you're blackballed from	Minus 1 point
Every club functionary position held	Plus 1/10th of a point
Every time position used as a come-on	Minus 1 point
Every flamewar you're in within club	Minus 1/2 a point
Every flamewar you win	Plus 1/2 a point
Every sf film or book you own	Plus 1 point if no body else you know has a copy
Every time you try for one of these points and fail to get it	Minus 1 point
Every time your name is published	Plus 1 if in a professional venue you do not produce
Every time you're asked to judge and issue an official bestowing of BNF point privileges	Plus 10 points
REDEEMING POINTS (or what is it all worth anyway?):	
Every Minus 100 points	You're a big name black hole. A do-nothing weight around fandom's neck who must be publicly talked about as someone who just isn't very nice, <i>or</i> Blackballed from Fandom.
Every Minus 50 points	Mandatory that any partner who is a fan must consider breaking up with you and may see other people while making up their minds.
Every Minus 20 points	Full rights to say "that jerk" once, when someone talks about you and you are not there.
Every Minus 10 points	Must always bring an extra six-pack to a party and leave it in the fridge with a note saying "take one."
Every Minus five points	Must buy Positive 5 point person two drinks if asked, <i>or</i> Must ask to talk with them for ten minutes (twenty if it is Garth Spencer).
Each negative full point	Nothing.
Each negative 1/2 point	Nothing.
Each negative 1/5th point	Nothing. (Pointing out someone is at - 1/2 point earns a negative 1 point)
Each 1/5th point	Nothing. (trying to redeem a 1/5th point costs a point)
Each 1/2 point	Nothing.
Every full point	Nothing.

Every 5 points	Hospitality staff must purchase you a drink, introduce you wittily to a group of chatting fans, and interrupt you five minutes later, saying, "Mr. Gibson needs your revisions right away."
Every 10 points	Con Registration flunky must ask in a happy, curious, and interested sort of voice what the last con was you attended, and comment that "...this con will be so much better, now that you're here."
Every 15 points	Zine Editors must print your LoC's every time (no more "we also heard froms") for one year.
Every 20 points	Con Chair must ask you to attend a panel at a convention (but not necessarily give you a free membership), <i>or</i> You get a free subscription to a zine.
Every 50 points	If you ask a member of the preferred sex on a date, they must not answer no right away, <i>or</i> Someone has to treat you to dinner while at a con.
Every 100 points	You may call yourself a BNF for five years and place letters after your name (but you should still feel foolish when doing so), <i>or</i> You must be asked to be Fan Guest at a convention.

There. A list and chart so that we will all know where we stand. In order to redeem positive points or point out someone's negative point sum, one must provide proof and send it (along with a five dollar administration fee and a S.A.S.E.) to:

B.N.F. ?
311- 3244 Quadra Street
Victoria, BC
V8X 1G2.

Certificates of awards of merit are then sent out with a business card which must be torn up by the redeemer of the award after the award has been served. Negative point winners are published in local area papers and con bulletin boards so as to let everyone know who they are.

Global Warming or Global Cooling

by Dr. Grayson E. Meade

*There was a young man from Québec
Who was buried in snow to his neck.
But the young man survived
'Cause the greenhouse arrived,
And it's no longer cold in Québec.*

Much has been written recently on the subject of global warming, a phenomenon that, if continued, could produce adverse climatic changes. Global warming is believed to be caused by trace gases in the atmosphere (greenhouse gasses) that trap surface radiation and return most of it to the earth. These greenhouse gases are minor constituents of the earth's atmosphere, such as sulphur dioxide, nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and methane, as well as several of the chlorofluorocarbons.

Of these trace gases only carbon dioxide and methane occur in sufficient quantity to contribute much to the greenhouse effect. Carbon dioxide alone accounts for more than half of the heat trapped by trace gases. Methane is a more efficient infrared absorber than carbon dioxide, but much less abundant. The principal sources of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere are from fossil fuel combustion and deforestation. The principal sources of methane are from rice cultivation, cattle raising, leakage from landfills, coal, oil, and natural gas.

Temperature records show that the earth has warmed about ½°C in the last hundred years. During the same time there has been an increase in greenhouse gases. Thus there appears to be a direct correlation between an increase in greenhouse gases and an increase in temperature.

It is this recent increase in temperature and carbon dioxide that has sparked great concern about global warming. Many scientists have

made computer-generated predictions based on further increases of carbon dioxide. Earlier climate modelers made calculations based on the doubling of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, over that of 1900, within the next 50 to 100 years. Such an increase in carbon dioxide, it is predicted, might lead to a climate in which the earth's temperature would be as much as 10°C warmer than the present. Computer based calculations show that such a temperature increase would lead to melting of the ice caps, resulting in a sea level rise and coastal flooding; shifts in agricultural zones, desertification, and unpredictable dire consequences.

Such predictions as well as that of other prophesied disasters, be it a stock market collapse, runaway inflation, floods, dust bowls, or crop failures and famine, always attract more attention than rosy scenarios. Some recent climatic models suggest a temperature rise of only 1.4°C from a doubling of carbon dioxide in the air. A little warming of the earth might make it more habitable instead of leading to catastrophe as many climate modelers suggest.

There is clamor from environmentalists and concerned groups that we do something to prevent the build-up of greenhouse gases and global warming. Would a little warming be generally beneficial or detrimental? We know from the geologic history of the earth that a milder climate than the present has generally prevailed. Compared to the past average climate we are living now in a relatively cool period.

However, if the earth is warming what measures, if any, should be taken to counteract it? Should the government spend hundreds of billions of dollars in an attempt to stabilize or reduce the amount of greenhouse gases? If the government is to do something about global warming, should we not first determine, without any doubt, that the increase in greenhouse gases is responsible for global warming?

The current build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is not the only time in the earth's history when such an increase has occurred. Those who clamor for action now on the problem of global warming may lack the perspective to be gained from knowledge of climatic changes that have occurred over millions of years of earth's history, and particularly those of the last few thousand years.

As an aid to such a perspective, instead of using computers, let us examine the geologically recent climatic history recorded in two widely separated environmental areas. One is the Antarctic ice cap, the other the Great Plains of the United States.

The evidence of past climatic conditions gathered from 2,000 metres of ice core in Antarctica by a Russian drilling project is both interesting and enlightening. These 2,000 metres of core represent a 160,000 year record, encompassing the time from near the end of a glacial period, through the following glacial period, into the next glacial period and finally our recent inter-glacial period.

The ice cores show that the temperature and the amount of carbon dioxide rose together and fell during glacial times. It is not clear whether the carbon dioxide variations caused the temperature changes, or vice versa.

About 130,000 years ago there was a rapid build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere concurrent with rising temperatures almost identical to what we are experiencing today. I suspect no one would blame the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation for causing the build-up of carbon dioxide at that time. About 130,000 years ago, as an ice age was ending, the percentage of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was about 200 ppm. During the following interglacial period from about 130,000 to 110,000 years ago the concentration of carbon dioxide rose from about 200 ppm to nearly 300 ppm.

Then the temperature and percentage of carbon dioxide dropped rapidly as the next period of glaciation got underway. In our present inter-glacial age, which began about 11,000 years ago, the percentage of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased from about 200 ppm to 300 ppm by 1920. This is essentially the same amount of carbon dioxide increase as occurred over 100,000 years ago in another inter-glacial period. Since 1920, the concentration of carbon dioxide has risen to 350 ppm.

The maximum temperature increase that accompanied the carbon dioxide build-up 130,000 years ago was about the same as that of today. The higher temperatures recorded in the ice cores lasted about 10,000 years then fell rapidly for about 10,000 years as a new glacial period began.

The first half of this glacial sequence has essentially been duplicated in the 11,000 years since the end of the last glaciation. During this time the average temperature has risen to equal that of 130,000 years ago. Since the first half of the ancient inter-glacial is shown to be so similar to the first 11,000 years of our present cycle, perhaps we should assume the second half of the cycle will also be similar.

If so, during the next 10,000 years as we move towards another period of glaciation we will experience decreasing temperatures and decreasing percentages of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Leaving the climatic events recorded in Antarctic ice cores, we may turn to consideration of the climatic events recorded in the late Pleistocene and recent geology of the Great Plains.

A fact well known to most geologists, but possibly little known to other scientists is that a stream, whether permanent or ephemeral, is not always cutting downward in its valley. A stream is alluviating, or building up, its valley perhaps half the time it exists, or more. Sometimes it cuts laterally; then the valley is neither being aggraded or degraded.

Cyclic downcutting of streams following periods of aggradation produces alluvial terraces. These terraces, built during periods of stream aggradation, are a common feature of valleys. The size of a terrace is more or less proportional to the size of the valley. Alluvial terraces hence are small in headwater drainages such as arroyos or draws, but it is here that they are most sensitive to climatic changes.

There is only one factor that can influence these drainages to behave, world wide, in a manner consistently similar: — that is, to progress through cycles of degradation and of aggradation at approximately the same time, and that is climatic change. A proper interpretation of these cycles tells us a great deal about the climate of the past.

The geomorphic response to changing climatic conditions varies from the mouth to the headwater drainages of a stream. Major river valleys display major events. For example, each alluvial terrace records inter-glacial time, while each period of downcutting records a wetter, glacial period. Minor valleys, such as arroyos or draws, are sensitive to the minor climatic changes which are usually obscured in the major drainages.

In the United States, the best place to observe and interpret stream cycles is in the Great Plains, from Texas to Canada. In headwater drainages throughout the Great Plains these minor cycles of aggradation and degradation are well preserved. Such cycles provide evidence of the climates that have existed here during the last few thousand years.

During the last glaciation, which was a long period of time when the climate was wetter and colder than the present, valley erosion progressed headward into minor drainages beyond the point reached by any erosion since. In other words, the glacial period of erosion was much longer than any subsequent erosional period.

As the beginning of a warmer and dryer climate marked the end of the most recent glaciation, alluviation began in these drainages. The beginning of this cycle of alluviation is dated at about 11,000 years ago. This is also the time of extinction for many elements of our Pleistocene fauna, and it marks the appearance of man in North America.

Since the end of the glacial period there have been three periods of valley alluviation (drier times) and three periods of valley erosion (wetter times), counting the present. Since the end of the last (Wisconsin) glaciation each succeeding period of alluviation has been of shorter duration, less arid, or both. These cycles, all successively smaller, are shown graphically on the chart.

Based on historical records, the present erosional cycle began about the middle of the last century, in response to a relatively wetter and cooler climate than that which preceded it.

It needs to be understood that inasmuch as cycles of the same age occur in areas of vastly different amounts of precipitation, the cycles represent a relative change to dryer or wetter conditions respective to the previous cycle. Thus a climatic change to slightly wetter conditions, above the average of the previous cycle, will initiate an erosional cycle whether the previous precipitation were stabilized at 10 or 50 inches per year. Conversely, a climatic change to dryer conditions will produce valley alluviation regardless of the previous average precipitation.

The warmest, most arid post-glacial period was about 7,000 years ago (see chart). Following this arid period the climate again became cooler and wetter, with a succession of dryer and wetter periods leading up to the present. Our climate today is neither as wet and cold nor as warm and dry as it was in the recent past.

We now appear to be in a time of such short climatic cycles that it is more likely than not we are presently at the midpoint of an inter-glacial period. Certainly we are in the initial stage of a wetter and cooler climate. Though there will continue to be climatic fluctuations as in the past, the future cycles should be a mirror image of the past. Overall, the trend will be to wetter and cooler times, leading to another glacial period. 11,000 years is the approximate length of time from now to the next glacial period.

It is of course desirable to reduce the amounts of harmful emissions in the atmosphere for which man is responsible. But inasmuch as carbon dioxide and methane are the gases that trap most of the infrared radiation from the earth, should governments spend hundreds of billions of dollars in an attempt to reduce these gases in the atmosphere?

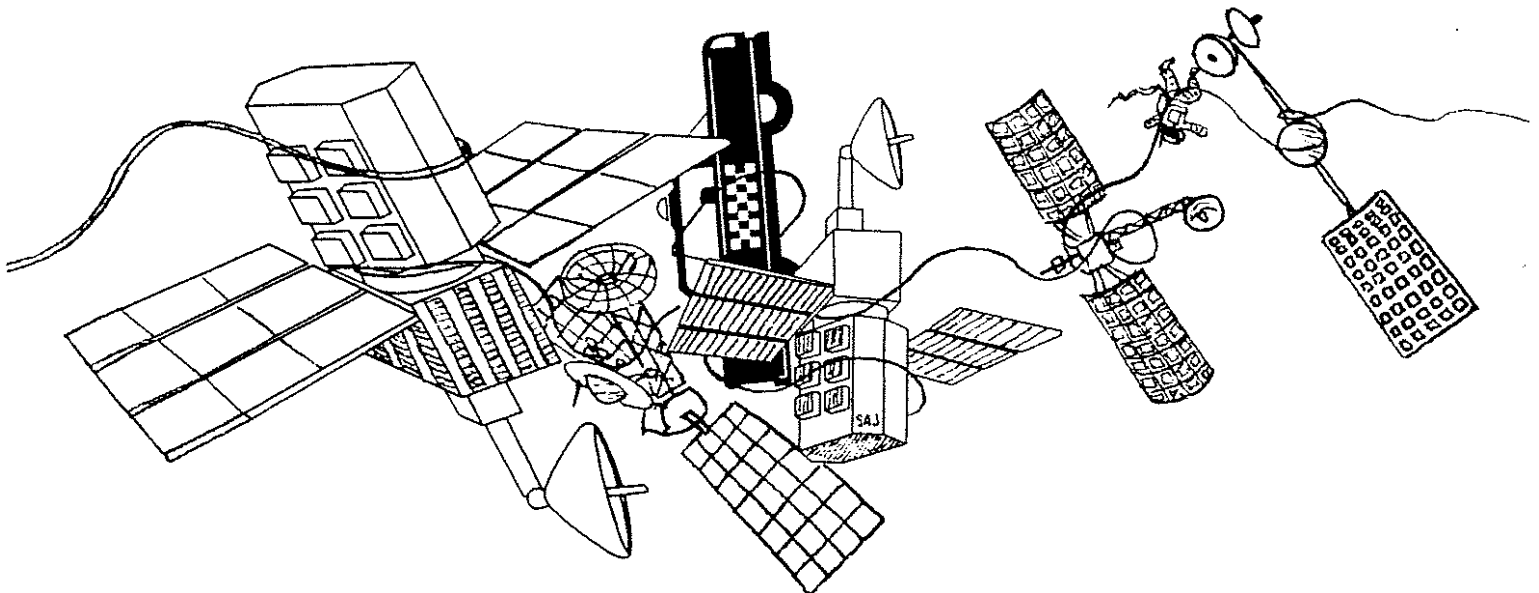
Such an attempt would entail drastic reductions in use of coal and oil at a time when viable alternatives are not available. Increased use of nuclear power is hardly a solution, considering the problems of safe disposal of nuclear wastes. Government subsidized solar energy would offer but little relief; this source of energy is not yet practical to power transportation. Finally, should the government spend billions of dollars in an attempt to prevent global warming when the geological evidence indicates that we are presently entering a period of cooler temperatures, not warmer?

I won't count the global warming alarmists out; they are likely to win the day and secure huge government expenditures to save us from the effects of global warming. The winners will be recipients of government expenditures; the losers will be taxpayers.

It has been shown that essentially equivalent amounts of carbon dioxide to those now present were in the atmosphere long before man could have been responsible. However, many scientists believe that the present increase of carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere is producing the "greenhouse effect" and the estimated $\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ to 1° increase in temperature. This slight warming may be a temperature lag from the previous warmer cycle, comparable to our seasonal lag in temperature.

With the past as a guide, it is obvious that the earth's climate is not static. It will continue to become wetter and colder, dryer and warmer, regardless of anything we do. But if somehow we were capable of slowing or preventing a "greenhouse" warming of the earth, would we be doing the right thing? The evidence is that we are now entering a wetter and colder period. To reduce greenhouse gases may only speed up the natural cycle of global cooling. Perhaps in only a few decades there will be "global cooling" alarmists to besiege politicians to do something about global cooling.

Some of us who live in the higher latitudes where winter temperatures frequently plunge to 40°C below zero would welcome a little global warming. I for one would like to have a long enough summer to vine-ripen some tomatoes.



A Good Day Not To Be One

by Alistair Craig

(Material from IDIC Newsletter #40 courtesy of IDIC Editorial Committee: Janet Quarton, Sheila Clark, Valerie Piacentini.)

A good day not to be one what? A Star Trek fan, to be quite precise. Yes, the unmentionable series is about to get a good deal more unmentionable thanks to some corporate intervention. The following rather chilling news item appeared in newsletter #40 of IDIC, a 1,150-member Star Trek club based in Scotland.

The Star Trek Welcommittee received the following report from Jan Jackson, their Australian representative.

AUSTREK was invited by the Australian representatives of Paramount Pictures to attend a meeting on Monday, March 20, 1995 with a senior official from Paramount's Licensing Department, as were representatives from other Star Trek fan clubs throughout Australia. Rowena Christiansen and I attended to represent AUSTREK's interests at this meeting, for which no agenda was provided beforehand. To put things in factual terms, Paramount's representatives communicated the following points:

- Paramount's position is that fan clubs have been costing it money by using its intellectual property without paying for its use. That will stop.
- No Star Trek videos of any kind are to be shown at meetings of any club. (An application for a non-theatrical license would be *considered*, but *only* for episodes that had been televised in Australia and released on sell-through video in Australia.)
- No unlicensed or non-locally sourced licensed Star Trek materials are to be sold by fan clubs.
- There will be no more unlicensed conventions. All Star Trek conventions MUST be licensed, but they will NOT be exclusive to Star Trek: The Official Fan Club of Australia.

The issues that are still to be resolved include whether fan clubs can describe themselves as Star Trek fan clubs, e.g. in their names, and the continuing production of their newsletters.

We were informed that Australia is the first country for the introduction of these new guidelines but that **these changes will be made world-wide**. The official stated that Paramount does not wish to close down Star Trek fan clubs but it will be resolute and vigilant in protecting its intellectual property in order to ensure its continued profitability. Legal action will be forthcoming where breaches occur.

We have been told to expect correspondence from Paramount giving us more specific information on the changes they require.

Surprising? Not really. Paramount is just mopping up the last dribble of revenue it can possibly squeeze out of its immense cash cow. It has been a growing phenomenon for almost ten years, but the most noticeable aspect, the proliferation of licensed products, has now reached a peak at the same time as the quality of these items has reached its nadir. There is so much Trek merchandise available that sales have begun to suffer as they eat into each other's market, and even the hardcore fans have begun to wonder just how many trashy bits of paper and plastic inscribed with the Star Trek name they really need.

On another front, in Britain, perhaps the last bastion of the fan-run Trek con, professional events run by the Creation Convention Corp. or by Horizon Conventions are well into the process of wiping out their non-profit competition. Their usual tactic is to identify a market with a particularly successful con and schedule an event shortly before, allowing them to mop up as much of the fan cash as possible and incidentally drive the fan-run cons under.

In North America, there are few purely Trek conventions anymore. Partly this is due to diversification of fan interest — there are a lot of different SF offerings on the tube and at the movies, these days — but it is also due to intense competition from the Pro Cons. If there continue to be any fan operated cons on either side of the Atlantic it is likely they will be licensed and strongly resemble the Pro Cons, with the profit going to Paramount, not to charity. We certainly will not see the likes of the \$40,000 raised for charity at the last Glasgow Star Trek convention.

How likely is it that Paramount could successfully crack down on Trek fans in Canada? Extremely likely! They have done it already. In 1978, a Canadian zine, The Dreadnought Chronicles, earned the distinction of being the only Star Trek fan publication ever legally enjoined from publishing. As it happened, they had thrown together a story which strongly resembled the script of Star Trek: The Motion Picture, and Paramount panicked, sensing a threat to the project that was meant to be their big-budget competition for the Star Wars films. It was a simple matter of synchronicity — Dreadnought was the type of fan fiction that leaned heavily on re-using favourite devices from the source series/movie, and the script of ST: TMP was in many respects a rehash of several old Trek episodes. Thus, working from the same source material, they managed to come up with very similar plots. An accident, yes, but it didn't save the zine.

For many years, media fans have operated clubs and cons and published zines in Canada and the U.S.A. under the presumption that they exist in a grey area of copyright law: i.e. that using this copyright material is fine as long as it isn't for profit. Maybe the news of the Dreadnought Chronicles business didn't spread, or people aren't listening, because many still embrace that fallacy. Unauthorized use of copyrighted or licensed material can be punished and has been, quite effectively, in the past.

All this is enough to make non-Trek media fans quite nervous. It can't help but make them all the more aware of just how good their relations are with people like Babylonian Productions (Babylon 5), Chris Carter (X-Files), or Panzer/Davis Productions (Highlander). In many ways their existence as organized fans depends on corporate sufferance. Even the unpleasantness between Doctor Who fans and the BBC (mostly due to a couple of testy BBC1 Controllers) seems minor compared to what Paramount is undertaking. Paramount has realized

that since their polls show that up to 50% of the U.S. population (i.e. half of 260M people) say they are fans and watch Trek at least occasionally, the relatively small group of hardcore fans has become statistically insignificant. They may have brought the original show back from cancellation in the 1960s and put it back on the large and small screen later, but now, from the marketing standpoint, they don't matter. They might as well not exist. End of story.

ADDENDUM

The above was written several months ago. Since then, it appears that half a year of condemnation from fans and even from Star Trek actors such as Majel Barrett have stayed Paramount's hand. Nothing more has been heard of their plan. Yet it does appear that Paramount's attempt is just the latest move in an ongoing battle to reduce media fandom to "Official" fan clubs only. It is an attempt doomed to failure, of course, as media fandom is far too large to quash and banning non-profit appreciation groups is something that is an ill-defined section of the law in both the U.S. and Canada.

Still, not long ago, I received a letter from Jeff DeMerchant, who has been publishing an excellent zine called Seventeen-Oh-One out of Fredrickton, New Brunswick. Jeff was wrapping up this zine and preparing to replace it with a Babylon 5 zine called Third Age. The following extract from his letter shows the results of his attempt to be upfront with the B5 production office:

Dear Third Age contributors and other interested parties,

Several months ago I wrote to J. Michael Straczynski to inform him of my plans to publish a fan production based on Babylon 5. I finally received a reply a couple of weeks ago from Joanne Higgins (assistant to Straczynski) of Babylonian Productions. Even though my letter emphasized the fact that this fanzine was not for profit, Ms. Higgins has expressly forbidden me to publish Third Age, stating that "...All publications using the Babylon 5 name must be licensed through Warner Bros. as they own the rights."

[I have omitted the next section, as Jeff had not yet heard about Paramount's latest antics and so complimented them on their benevolent attitude towards fans. I'm sure he feels quite differently now he knows the details.]

Warner must also be unaware of the other B5 publications that are out there. As a result, I will not be publishing Third Age as planned. I've also written back expressing my disappointment in this apparent "ban" on B5 fandom; if you'd also like to be heard, please write to the following address: Joanne Higgins, Babylonian Productions Inc., 8615 Tamarack Ave., Sun Valley, CA, 91352, U.S.A.

Now, let it never be said that I am opposed to creators' intellectual property rights, but television series have a way of intruding into our collective consciousness that sets them in a somewhat different category. They inspire the imaginations of millions of people every week, and all that creative energy shouldn't be wasted. It may not be great art, but it gets the creative imagination working in many people who might otherwise have difficulty getting their ideas down on paper (or disk, as the case may be). Fortunately, I don't think that media fandom can be controlled. It has proven damn near impossible for anyone who has tried over the last thirty years. What are they going to do, send the Thought Police to confiscate computers? How many cyber-cops would it take to monitor the net properly? Of course, Paramount already seems to be monitoring internet activity intermittently, and has threatened legal action against one Star Trek zine advertised on the net, so there is every possibility they will try.

If Jeff and the editor of that zine advertised on the net made any error, it was adopting too high a profile. Media fans have always done their own thing quietly, and neither tried to seek official sanction nor advertized in any of the non-fan media. Perhaps Jeff was also a little naïve to think that any small player such as a zine publisher could get the attention of anyone in Hollywood.

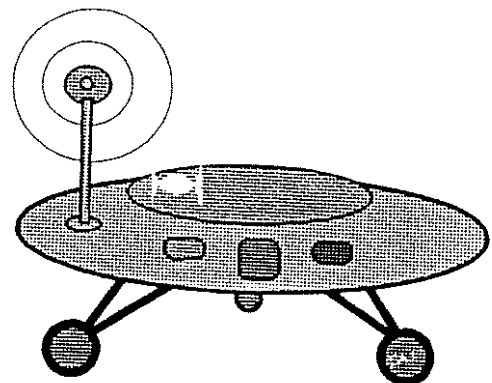
However, there is one aspect of these examples of corporate tunnel vision that is ironic, perhaps even amusing. Jeff DeMerchant said it best in another part of his letter when he states that fan activity helps "...publicize and enhance the commercial success..." of series like B5 (or the various Treks). So when they try to exercise legal sanctions against zines and suppress fan activity the entertainment industry is doing something worse, by their standards, than cutting their own throats: they are picking their own pockets. Will they attain the necessary level of insight to recognize this anytime soon? Don't bet on it. In short, this wasn't the first botched corporate attempt to control media fandom, and it won't be the last.

{[This Editor responds:

While Alistair makes many valid points, I think even studios recognize the difference between a group of, for example, Star Trek fans discussing (in person, in print, or on the net) various aspects of Star Trek, and a fan (or groups of fans) publishing a magazine featuring stories and characters set in the Star Trek universe, which is owned by Paramount Pictures. The simple fact is that Star Trek fiction zines are an illegal use of the Star Trek copyright.

Having said that, is it really worth the money and the negative publicity to go after a fan-produced zine? One would think not, as on the other hand as Alistair has stated, zines and other fanac do promote whatever show is involved. But some companies vigorously protect their intellectual properties. (Try publishing a zine with a black mouse on the cover on see how long it takes for Disney's lawyers to come knocking on your door. Not long, I'd bet.) And I don't know what sort of response you'd expect when writing a production company to say that you were going to "...publish a fan production based on..." their property. No matter how tolerant they are of fan activities, they must say it's illegal to protect their rights.

--J.W.H.}}



TOP TEN THINGS THAT NEVER HAPPEN ON STAR TREK

10. The *Enterprise* runs into a energy field of a type it has encountered several times before.
9. The *Enterprise* goes to visit a remote outpost of scientists, who are perfectly all right.
8. Some of the crew visit the holodeck and it works properly.
7. The crew of the *Enterprise* discovers a totally new life-form, which later turns out to be a rather well-known old life-form having a bad hair day.
6. The crew of the *Enterprise* is afflicted by a mysterious plague, for which the only cure can be found in the well-stocked *Enterprise* sick bay.
5. The captain has to make a difficult decision about a less advanced people, a decision which is made a great deal easier by the Starfleet Prime Directive.
4. An enigmatic being composed of pure energy attempts to interface with the *Enterprise* computer, only to find it has forgotten to bring the right leads.
3. A power surge on the bridge is rapidly and correctly diagnosed as a faulty capacitor by the highly trained and competent engineering staff.
2. A major Starfleet emergency breaks out near the *Enterprise*, but fortunately some other starships in the area are able to deal with it to the satisfaction of everyone.
1. The *Enterprise* is involved in a bizarre time-warp experience which is in some way unconnected to the late 20th century.

Starting a Writers' Workshop

by Paula Johanson

When I began a weekly writers' workshop in Victoria, in an inner-city community association building we called "The Cove", my main goal was to get in touch with other beginning writers. We got in touch, all right: women and men, teenagers and the retired, "salt of the earth" and "mentally ill", university graduates and dyslexic illiterates. And we wrote, and we wrote, and we wrote. There were poems, stories and personal essays. We held public readings and put on a writers' festival. Some of us wrote graffiti without guilt on sidewalk chalking days; others found words to write personal feelings. For all of us, there was the relief that here were other people who cared about writing, too, and whether our words said what we thought.

I knew from Creative Writing courses in university that feedback helped me to write better, and commenting on other people's writing helped me look more carefully at stories and poems. A workshop with my friends had been an incentive to keep writing after my twins were born, especially since one other member knew what it was like to type one-handed while cuddling a baby. At The Cove, I learned more, by working with people from different backgrounds and varying skills.

I learned that we could depend on our core of three members, who came weekly for two years, and brought poems or stories almost every week. We were volunteers at The Cove and parents of toddlers, so this was our major social and "professional" contact of the week. We could also depend on four or five members to attend weekly for three to five months each. The workshop was continually changing around its common core as we got jobs, moved, or weathered crises.

There were always at least two participants who were mentally ill, including one of our three core members. We never had any disturbing incidents, only one argument. They were members like the rest: some brought poems weekly for four months, some wrote stories regularly, if not with complete literacy, and some attended a few times before moving on. One dropped in on our monthly open-mike reading one evening, with her head shaved and a glassy stare as she recited her poem beginning "Who owns the rights to God?" The impact was

stunning.

Moments like that could not be predicted, but the regular pattern of the workshop was consistent. We started at our regular time on Friday afternoons, with tea and coffee already brewed and paper and pens ready for use. Sitting around a table, we listened as poems were read aloud. Stories were usually photocopied and taken home for members to read and scribble notes on, but were sometimes read aloud. We spent up to an hour giving our reactions and suggestions to two or three pieces of writing.

For a change of pace, we'd refill the coffee cups and one of us would read aloud an essay from Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones*. This book has suggestions, exercises, anecdotes and encouragement. Reading it made most of us want to keep writing. It didn't matter whether we wrote the Great Canadian Novel or letters to our aunts. Some of us wanted to be professional authors and some wanted to write private feelings for our journals. Goldberg's essays encouraged us to write.

After reading an essay, or instead of it, I would pass around newspaper clippings from the Books Pages of the local papers or the Saturday edition of the *Globe and Mail*. Local news was mentioned, such as coffeehouse readings or the launch we held for a neighbour's local history book. Anyone who had heard



of a writing contest or a magazine needing submissions would share the address and other information. Books and magazines were sometimes lent among members. We also kept in touch with the provincial writers' association and shared the newsletter.

After about twenty minutes, we'd get back to the serious business of workshopping each others' writing for up to another hour. We stopped on time, and members hung around afterward to chat, pick up the stories for next week and then catch the bus.

The time involved? Two hours, weekly. The expense? Those who had any money that week tossed 25 cents into the tea and coffee fund. The Cove gave us paper and a reasonable number of photocopies, and some members who could afford it had copies made of their stories. The space needed? Enough room for everyone to sit around a table.

The most important thing we learned was how to make useful comments on each others' writing without being cruel. Even the most dull or upsetting story deserves politeness, after all, and writers are often very sensitive to the difference between "I couldn't see why your character did that" and "It was a boring story." This doesn't mean we only said nice, bland things — we tried to show where the writing worked, where it didn't, and what we thought the writer could do to make it better.

One of our members used the word "fuck" almost every time she spoke, yet she never once called any of us a fucking idiot. Another member was considerate when reading stories that didn't follow his personal moral standards. And we all learned to state our opinions so that they didn't bruise the people who would be reading our own stories and poems next week.

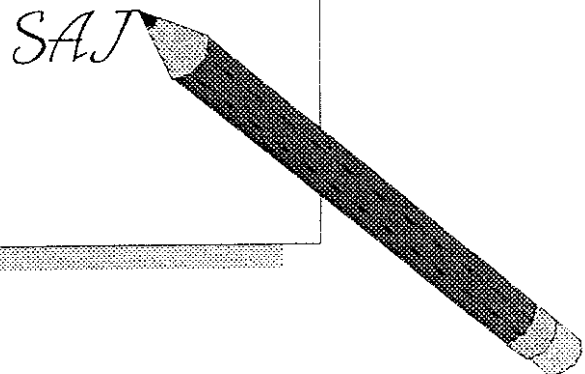
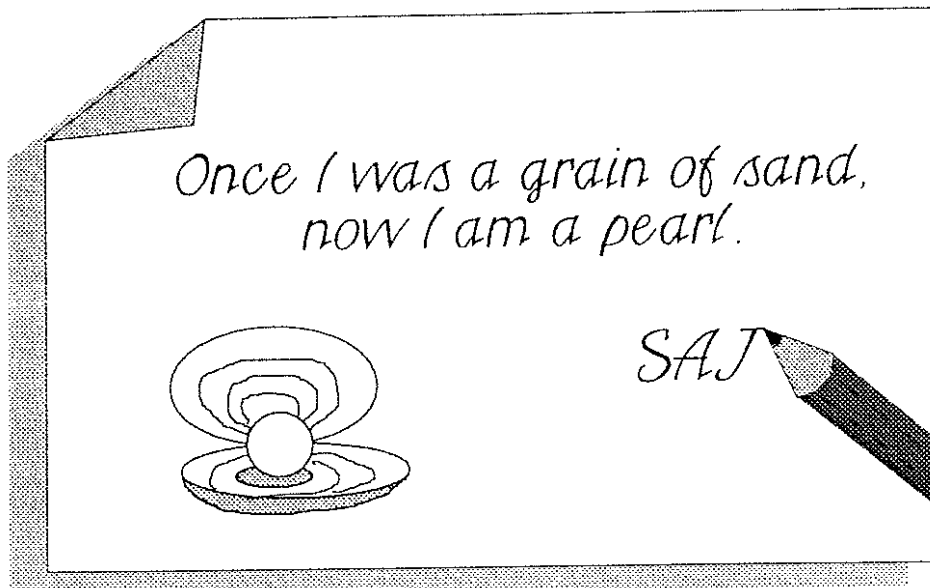
Aside from being considerate to one another, each writers' group makes its own workshop rules, such as asking the authors to wait until the end of the discussion to reply to comments. Usually everyone participates as writer and critic, but it soon becomes clear that even published writers may be lousy at analyzing a story or talking about it; and beginners may have been reading for fifty years and know what makes an interesting story tick. We encouraged each other to keep writing and to send our work to magazines and publishers. After all, somebody writes those community papers and bestseller romance novels!

One member sent her "true confession" romance story about treeplanters to the Treeplanters' association magazine. The editor bought it, though he'd never printed anything but factual articles and ads before. "It was about real treeplanters," the acceptance letter said. "It was about us. How could we not want to read it?" We at the workshop cheered her first professional sale.

There are five rules for professional writing, according to the late Robert Heinlein:

1. You must write.
2. You must finish what you write.
3. You must send your writing to a publisher.
4. If it is returned, keep sending your writing to new markets.
5. Refrain from excessive re writing unless to meet an editor's directions.

As beginning writers, whether or not we ever hoped to sell our work, we found that joining a writers' group helped each of us tremendously as writers as well as in our home lives. Just being able to express myself better made me feel like a more competent person and a better parent, as I began writing stories that other people enjoyed reading. Working together, for a year or for just a month, gave feedback and a sense of community that went a long way.



CONVENTION LISTINGS

1996

RHINOCON 3

March 8 - 10

London, ON

GoH: Steven Brust.

Rhinocon, c/o Neil Belsky, Box 151,

Alisa Craig, ON, N0M 1A0.

rhinocon@suspects.com

ODYSSEY TREK '96

March 15 - 17

Skyline Brock Hotel

Niagra Falls, ON

GoH: Tanya Huff.

Odyssey Trek, c/o 10 Highgate Drive,

#13, Stoney Creek, ON, L8J 3P7.

bhagey@hookup.net

CON*CEPT '96

March 22 - 24

Holiday Inn Crown Plaza Metro Centre

Montréal, Québec

GoH: Terry Pratchett; Art GoH: Bob

Eggleton; FanGoH: Hal Clement.

Con*cept '96, Box 405, Station H,

Montréal, PQ, H3G 2L1.

BORÉAL '96

March 22 - 24

Held in conjunction with Con*cept '96
(see above).

GoH: Joël Champetier; Guests: Donald
Kingsbury, S.N. Lewitt, David Hartwell,
Kathryn Cramer.

Boréal '96, c/o Con*cept '96, Box 405,
Station H, Montréal, PQ, H3G 2L1.

PRISONERS OF THE (K)NIGHT

March 29 - 31

Holiday Inn Yorkdale

Toronto, ON

GoHs: Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Poppy Z.

Brite, Kim Newman, Stephen Jones,

Nancy Baker, Nancy Kilpatrick; Toast-
master: Larry Stewart.

Pot(K)N, David Gracey, 203 - 23 Oriole
Road, Toronto, ON, M4V 2E6.

FLEET ACADEMY NORTH

April 28 - 28

Holiday Inn Yorkdale

Toronto, ON

Special GoH: D.C. Fontana; GoH: Karl

Schroeder; FanGoH: Bjo Trimble;

Toastmaster: Larry Stewart.

Fleet Academy North, 26 Doddingdon

Drive, Etobicoke, ON, M8Y 1S4.

S.Loweachee@genie.geis.com

V-CON 21

May 17 - 19

Delta Pacific Resort

Richmond, BC

GoH: Kim Stanley Robinson; Toastmas-
ter: R. Graeme Cameron.

V-Con, c/o #110 1855 West 2nd Ave,

Vancouver, BC, V6J 1J1.

ptupper@direct.ca

http://www/mindlink.net/a7657/v-

con21.html

CLAM SHOOT '96

May 20 - 22

Long Beach, BC

GoHs: Captain Tuttle, Kilgore Trout,

Cordwainer Bird, Bob Johnson; Main

Course: Robert Gunderson.

Clam Shoot, c/o You Know Who.

CANCON 5

May 17 - 20

Talisman Hotel

Ottawa, ON

GoHs: Robert Charles Wilson, Charles de
Lint, Robert J. Sawyer.

Cancon, c/o James Botte, Box 5272,

Merivale, ON, K2C 3M1.

cancon@diana.ocunix.on.ca

http://www.achilles.net/~cancon/

cancon.htm

KEYCON 13

May 17 - 19

Winnipeg, MB

GoHs: Larry Niven, Tanya Huff;

FanGoH: Sunshine Katz; Toastmaster:

Dave Hayward.

WinSFA, Box 3178,

Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4E6.

http://www.mcs.net/~star/html/keycon

WOLFCON 7

May 17 - 20

Old Orchard Inn

Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Wolfcon, c/o Wendy Duff, Site 13, RR#3,

Armdale, NS, B3L 4J3.

910825s@ace.acadiu.ca

ADASTRA 16

June 7 - 9

Holiday Inn,

Yorkdale, ON

GoH: David Hartwell.

Ad Adra 16, Box 7276, Station A,

Toronto, ON, M5W 1X9.

http://www.maple.eolists.ca/users/white/
adastra.html

CON-VERSION XIII

CANVENTION 16

July 19 - 21

Glenmore Inn

Calgary, AB

GoH: C.J. Cherryh;

Toastmaster: Mel Gliden.

Con-version, Box 1088, Stn. M.,

Calgary, AB, T2P 2K9

L.A. CON III

54th WORLD SF CONVENTION

August 29 - September 2

Anaheim Convention Center, Hilton Hotel

& Towers, Marriott Hotel,

Anaheim, California

GoH: James White; Media GoH: Roger

Corman; Fan GoH: Takumi and Sachiko

Shibano; Special Guest: Elsie Wollheim;

Toastmaster: Connie Willis.

L.A.Con III, c/o SCIFI, Box 8442,

Van Nuys, CA, USA, 91409.

lacon3info@netcom.com

NORTHSTAR 1

October 24 - 27

Harrison Hot Springs Hotel

Harrison, BC

GoH: S.M. Stirling;

FanGoH: R. Graeme Cameron.

NorthStar 1, c/o PO Box 61007.,

571 West 57th Ave., Vancouver, BC,

V6P 6S5.

Mimick@kefron.portal.ca

http://www.seanet.com

1997

LONESTARCON 2

55th WORLD SF CONVENTION

August 28 - September 1

Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center

Marriott Rivercenter and Marriott Riverwalk

San Antonio, Texas

GoHs: Algis Budrys and Michael Moorcock;

Fan GoH: Roy Tackett; Toastmaster: Neal

Barrett, Jr.

LoneStarCon 2, P.O. Box 27277, Austin,

TX, U.S.A., 78755-2277

lsc2@io.com