

OZONE
COMICS



No. 13 - Mar. 1996

UNDER THE OZONE HOLE

APPROVED
BY THE
OZONE HOLE
CODE
AUTHORITY



COSMOS COMMANDERS!
Stunning Origin Issue!

UNDER THE OZONE HOLE

NUMBER Thirteen - March, 1996

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All uncredited material is by the Editors (blame them).

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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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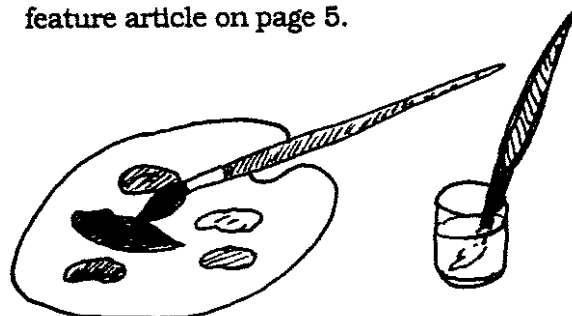
Adam John Kaye Charlesworth, David Gordon-MacDonald, John Willcox Herbert, Karl Johanson, Paula Johanson, E.B. Klassen, Sally McBride and Garth Spencer.

Art

All art by Stephanie Ann Johanson.

About The Cover

Barbara McLean depicts the cast of that great new television program, **COSMOS COMMANDERS**. For the latest info on this brand new phenom, see the feature article on page 5.



THE EDITOR'S OPINION

by Karl Johanson

Sleep is a precious commodity at conventions. With so much to do and so many people to talk with, it's easy to get far too little sleep. Prep work for things like art shows, dealers tables or panels, as well as possible long drives, can add significantly to convention sleep deprivation. One possible solution is to sleep whenever you have a spare moment.

One of the few really useful things I got out of my time in the army is the ability to fall asleep fairly easily. I gained this skill during a medevac platoon exercise with five 21 hour shifts. I can't fall asleep anytime at will; however, I can fall asleep at will sometimes. People often come up to me and say, "Hey, Karl, how do you manage to sleep on the concrete floor during your 15 minute coffee break?" For years my only answer was, "I dunno."

After a few years of careful thought I came up with this advice: If you can't sleep, pretend you're in a lecture (at the back of the class next to one of those vent fan white noise generators that you stuck your pen into in grade 3) and the most boring teacher you can remember is talking. This doesn't seem to work for everyone.

Later I came up with a subjective description of what goes on in my mind when I force myself to sleep. First you go to the middle. Then make it so all of the noises you hear, the feelings you feel, the thoughts that occur, etc., are coming from different directions. Slow down your pulse and respiration, then cut off all of the directions one by one. You should find yourself asleep. Now the problem with that advice is that people then ask me, "Yeah, but how do you do all that?" The only reply I have, "You just do it," normally just annoys people to the point where they won't even bother trying.

While mowing the lawn the lawn one day, the answer occurred to me. The way to explain to people how to sleep just a little easier. There I was mowing away trying to avoid running over the power cord (which I've only done once, not bad considering that those orange cords and lawn grass are the same colour to my colour challenged optic lobes). In addition to watching the cord I'm also trying to keep the lines straight, as if it really matters. I mean are people really going to drive by, look at the lawn and say, "Hey, Fred, look at that, the asshole who lives there can't even mow a straight line! What a jerk!" (And would it matter if they did?) I'm also trying to remember the words to "Tongue Tied" which I'm singing, knowing the mower is drowning out all the bad notes. On top of all this I'm trying to direct all the grass to one side of the lawn so I don't have to do too much raking. So, with my mind all tied up on other things, I failed to notice that one of the bolts holding the mower handles together had come loose and disappeared. I didn't find it while raking, indicating that it's in the compost adding trifling amounts of iron to next year's soil, or that it's on the lawn destined to break the sound barrier enroute to the neighbour's yard the next time I run over it with the mower.

So I took the mower around back and looked for the bolt tin. Now I'm sure most of you have or have seen one of these. It's an old cookie tin filled up with random nuts, bolts, washers, nails, screws, hinges, eye hooks, some metal bits of no readily apparent function and some hopelessly tangled wire. While searching through the tin for a bolt to fit the holes in the mower

handle and a nut to fit the bolt, I had a thought. It was the same thought I've thunk every single time I've looked through the bolt can. I'm sure you all know what that thought was. *Hey, you know I should really sort all this stuff out.* I didn't, of course; I never do. And I finally realized that I almost certainly never will. As a matter of fact the amount of effort it would take to sort the mess out is probably far greater than the long term time saving benefit I'd get from having it sorted. No one is going to walk by our tools, look at the bolt tin and say, "Hey, Fred, look at that, the asshole who lives here can't even sort out a tin of bolts! What a jerk!" So you know what --and this is really radical-- I decided to quit worrying about it.

Now my advice if you have trouble sleeping is to find that bolt tin in your life. I want to make it perfectly clear that I'm talking about a bolt tin kind of thing here. I'm not talking about an 'I can't sleep cuz I feel guilty about beating up my spouse' or an 'I really should be getting around to getting my brakes fixed' kind of thing. Anyway, find your personal bolt tin (and you may have more than one) and resign yourself to the fact that you're never going to sort the bolts. Then tell yourself that it really doesn't matter whether or not those bolts are sorted. You can sort them if you want or leave them piled in a gaggle in the can and you shouldn't lose any sleep either way.... If that doesn't work, try sorting the bolts.



THE EDITOR'S OPINION

by John Willcox Herbert

For the first time since 1985, I will not be attending Norwescon this year in Seattle. One reason is the exchange rate between us and the U.S. Another is the fact that Norwescon organizers seem to have no idea that when someone requests a room on the quiet floor, they may indeed actually require some *quiet*. For more times than I care to remember in the last few years, our little group has requested the quiet floor. We have been assured upon pre-registration, and upon check-in at the hotel, that we had been granted our little request and were indeed on the quiet floor. Sadly, the American interpretation of "quiet" must be something not covered by the Free Trade Agreement. "Quiet" lasts only until your neighbours check in. Nothing is more disconcerting than to have the Masquerade emcee announce in front of 3,000 convention goers that the wildest, bitchingest party of the con starts at midnight in the room next to yours — on the quiet floor. Excuses given us include:

1. The hotel screwed up. Your floor *is* the party floor.
2. The convention screwed up. They told us your floor *is* the quiet floor.
3. What are you complaining about? Your room *is* on the quiet floor. It's the room *above* yours that's on the party floor.
4. Someone on your floor wanted a party, so we changed the designation.
5. Well, maybe you should have *asked* for the quiet floor!

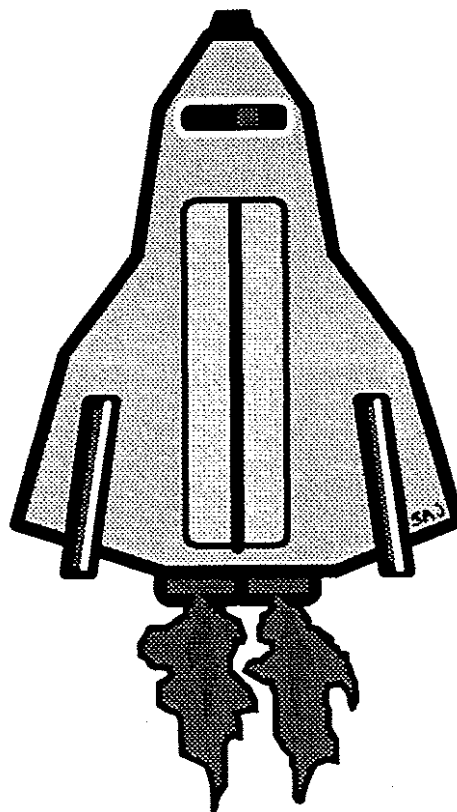
Now to be fair, last year we really did get a room on the quiet floor. However, the outside "smoking area" was right beside our window. But I digress.

Perhaps the real reason I won't be attending this year is the fact that I may be turning into a BOF — a Boring Old Fart. You see, I've attended Norwescon for eleven years; nothing that happens at Norwescon this year will surprise me: there will be a ton of panels, but all the ones I want to see will take place at the same time; most of the guys in security will be gomers with IQs equal to their shoe size; there will be a lineup at Registration; the food in the hotel will be good, but expensive; the Masquerade will start at least half an hour late; early Sunday morning someone will pull the fire alarm; and the Dealers' Room will be well-stocked, but I've already bought everything.

I've seen it all. Drive-by shooting in front of the hotel? You bet. Fire in the hotel? Old hat. Boring guests? Hey, who hasn't seen that! Con books aren't ready? Boring. Costumed moron swinging his sword around? What a cut up! Secret Service (the *real* one) invades a convention? Yawn. Someone builds a condom hot air balloon (complete with passenger compartment and candle for a heat source), and lets it loose in the lobby? Yup. It flew really well until it reenacted the *Hindenberg*. Heck, I even had to disarm an overzealous "Starfleet Security Officer" who thought it would fun to check my Fleet ID. I once endured an hour and a half of bad tapdancing as the judges considered their verdicts at a Masquerade. (We all thought it the funniest, most surreal halftime show ever until, to our horror, we realized they were serious.)

This isn't to belittle Norwescon (then again...). In fact, I rarely take part in any of the structured parts of any convention anymore. Some of the best cons I've gone to are ones where I've hung around with my friends from near and far. Which makes me think that since I no longer enjoy the "convention" parts of a convention, I must be becoming a BOF.

But this can't be! I'm too young to be a BOF. (I have all three Pearl Jam CDs; how can I be old? Okay, so I don't listen to them often....) Gee, I hope I figure this out before it's too late and the Reform Party stops looking like brownshirts and begins to look more like a reasonable alternative. May I live that long.



WHEN SMART-ASSES GET ON THE NET

Article #232

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
From: uj257@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (John W. Herbert)
Subject: Nifty New Show
Date: Sun Nov 5 12:08:52 1995

Has anyone else seen that nifty new show 'Cosmos Commanders'? I thought the fx and the acting were very good (it was nice to see Kent McCord back in action again). The dialogue was a little stiff, but the story was passable, especially the allegorical elements. It's also great to see aliens that really look like aliens, not just actors with plasticine on their foreheads.

John Willcox Herbert
Sooke, B.C., Canada
co-editor, UNDER THE OZONE HOLE
"Keep your stick on the ice."
— Red Green

Article #233

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
From: xr945@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Heather K. Cleeb)
Subject: Re: Nifty New Show
Date: Sun Nov 5 17:19:16 1995

What time, and channel, is Cosmos Commanders on?

Heather

Article #234

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
From: ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Karl F. Johanson)
Subject: Re: Nifty New Show
Date: Sun Nov 5 17:25:05 1995

In a previous article, uj257@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (John W. Herbert) says:

>
>Has anyone else seen that nifty new show
>'Cosmos Commanders'? I thought the fx
>and the acting were very good (it was nice
>to see Kent McCord back in action again).
>The dialogue was a little stiff, but the story
>was passable, especially the allegorical
>elements.

I thought Cory Newlander (did I spell that

right?) was a tad esoteric, but I loved the air lock scene. "Heliox makes me sneeze." Hee hee, what a line.

Karl Johanson, Victoria B.C. Canada
-It's okay to disagree with me. However, once I explain where you're wrong you're supposed to become enlightened & change your mind. Congratulating me on how smart I am is optional.

Article #235

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
From: ud001@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Jim Cowling)
Subject: Re: Nifty New Show
Date: Sat Nov 11 23:55:57 1995

I dunno. It seems like the show, after only a couple of episodes (have there been more than two? — I missed the premiere... then again, I missed the premiere of Space: Above and Beyond and didn't miss much) is becoming even more of a "showcase for out-of-work SF/action actors" than even B5. I mean, B5's got Billy Mumy and Walter Koenig, and Cosmos Commanders has its own gang (I really hope Gil Gerard isn't a recurring character with his portrayal of 'Jet' Stuart, hotshot freighter captain "with a dark secret that could spell the end of Command Central").

Can you *believe* the hype they spiel in the trailers for the show? Not only is Stuart's "dark secret" a joke, but you'd think the producers and writers would figure that their audience would be smart enough to know that nothing's going to destroy Command Central in the first few episodes of the series! C'mon!

I've been reading in alt.cos-commanders that the show's getting bumped in a lot of markets, including Seattle, so, like Forever Knight, it's going to be hard to predict when the next episode'll be shown.

Bad news aside, some interesting moments: I like the names of some of the alien races, especially the Vons... since there's been no communication with them, and for all we know they're nothing but Von Neumann machines (self-replicating drones or whatever). Kind of neat. But what I want to know — are the Vons *just* self-replicating drones? They've caused enough damage, but it seems kinda pointless and random. If the writers are going to do more with them, they have to be more reasonable than just "random threats".

'Course, I don't want to see them just as a destructive force (like in Greg Bear's _Forge_Of_God_).
Karl, John, any thoughts?

Jim Cowling, moderator, rec.arts.comics.info
scowling@cyberstore.ca — professional hacker, struggling writer

Article #236

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
From: ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Karl F. Johanson)
Subject: Re: Nifty New Show
Date: Sun Nov 12 09:10:41 1995

In a previous article, ud001@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Jim Cowling) says:

(* buncha stuff deleted *)

>I like the names of some of the alien races, >especially the Vons... since there's been no >communication with them, and for all we >know they're nothing but Von Neumann >machines (self-replicating drones or what- >ever). Kind of neat. But what I want to >know — are the Vons *just* self-replicat- >ing drones? They've caused enough dam- >age, but it seems kinda pointless and ran- >dom. If the writers are going to do more with >them, they have to be more reasonable than >just "random threats". 'Course, I don't >want to see them just as a destructive force >(like in Greg Bear's _Forge_Of_God_).
>

Names of races? You should check out the pilot episode with the Bosnarians. The TV execs thought it was too controversial to show on TV as the real world parallels were too obvious.

About Gil popping up; at least he left Tweaky in his other show.

Karl Johanson, Victoria B.C. Canada
-It's okay to disagree with me. However, once I explain where you're wrong you're supposed to become enlightened & change your mind. Congratulating me on how smart I am is optional.



Article #237

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Karl F. Johanson)
 Subject: Re: Nifty New Show
 Date: Sun Nov 12 09:14:06 1995

In a previous article,
 xr945@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA
 (Heather K. Cleeb) says:

>
 >What time, and channel, is Cosmos Com-
 >manders on?
 >
 >Heather

Should be channel tÆÓ*daé
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Karl Johanson, Victoria B.C. Canada
 -It's okay to disagree with me. However,
 once I explain where you're wrong you're
 supposed to become enlightened & change
 your mind. Congratulating me on how smart
 I am is optional.

Article #238

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: uj257@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (John W. Herbert)
 Subject: Re: Nifty New Show
 Date: Mon Nov 13 06:02:41 1995

In a previous article,
 ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA
 (Karl F. Johanson) says:

>About Gil popping up; at least he left Tweaky
 >in his other show.

Speaking of guest stars, since they film in
 England we might look forward to some
 British guest stars. I hear Eric Idle might be
 in an upcoming episode.

John Willcox Herbert
 Sooke, B.C., Canada
 co-editor, UNDER THE OZONE HOLE
 "Keep your stick on the ice."
 — Red Green

Article #239

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: po493@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Saul Birkett)
 Subject: when is this show on??
 Date: Fri Nov 17 10:07:09 1995

Everybody's talking about this show COS-
 MOS COMMANDOS (?). When is this
 thing on? I've never heard any mention of it
 anywhere else. What's the premise? Is it
 similar to BABYLON 5? Is it syndicated,
 British, or what?

Saul.
 "My God, it's full of stars!"

Article #243

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: eu779@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA
 (Michael D. Lemur)
 Subject: The new episode
 Date: Tue Dec 5 23:30:28 1995

WOW!
 I just saw my taped copy of Cosmos Com-
 mandoes tonight. I've been so busy I haven't
 have a chance to watch it until now. This is
 the best one they've aired yet. It puts the B5
 CGI effects to shame. I love first contact
 episodes of SF shows and this week's epi-
 sode was no exception. How they could've
 afforded a budget to make CGI aliens as a
 principal guest character I don't know. It was
 great. As a Larry Niven fan I've always
 wanted to see something like a Puppeteer
 walking and talking. Well, with this week's
 episode, I've seen the next best thing

If you've taped this week's show and haven't
 seen it yet, do yourself a treat and throw the
 tape in right now.

In the words of Captain Logonstall:
 "Sometimes it's easy to blow up
 a starship."

Mike

—
 Freud once wrote:

"I cannot help this patient,
 because he's wall-bumpin' stu-
 pid."

Article #244

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Karl F. Johanson)
 Subject: Re: The new episode

Reply-To: ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA
 (Karl F. Johanson)
 Date: Wed Dec 6 12:55:10 1995

In a previous article,
 eu779@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA
 (Michael D. Lemur) says:

>WOW!
 >I just saw my taped copy of Cosmos
 >Commandoes tonight. I've been so busy I
 >haven't have a chance to watch it until now.
 >This is the best one they've aired yet.

It was good. However, in the scene where the
 astrogator alien is eating I said, "watch, he's
 going to burp now." Sure enough, 3 seconds
 later, *burp*.

Was that really Bill Froog in the end credits?
 I didn't tape it.

Karl Johanson, Victoria B.C. Canada
 -It's okay to disagree with me. However,
 once I explain where you're wrong you're
 supposed to become enlightened & change
 your mind. Congratulating me on how smart
 I am is optional.

Article #246

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: uj257@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (John W. Herbert)
 Subject: Re: The new episode
 Date: Fri Dec 8 16:34:02 1995

In a previous article,
 ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA
 (Karl F. Johanson) says:

>Was that really Bill Froog in the end credits?
 >I didn't tape it.

Well, close. It was William Froug, Jr. His
 father, William Froug, Sr., of course, was a
 production executive on the original Twilight
 Zone. Obviously, the "quality television
 gene" runs in that family.

If there's one thing I don't like about CC, it's
 the terrible episode titles: "The Syndrome
 Factor," "The Roads Have Tolls," and
 "Skippy." Not great titles (although I did like
 "Deterring the Tide." Brilliant.)

John Willcox Herbert
 Sooke, B.C., Canada
 co-editor, UNDER THE OZONE HOLE
 "Keep your stick on the ice."
 — Red Green

Article #247

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: wi364@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA
 (Monica Herbert)
 Subject: Last week's CC
 Date: Sun Dec 10 14:29:21 1995

Last week's episode of Cosmos Commanders was the best yet!

I particularly enjoy how they manage to mix deep socially-relevant drama with subtle satire, sprinkled with the odd "in joke" (did anyone catch the reference to Back to the Future II?)

Monica

Article #248

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Karl F. Johanson)
 Subject: Re: Last week's CC
 Reply-To: ug837@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Karl F. Johanson)
 Date: Sun Dec 10 21:54:26 1995

In a previous article,
 wi364@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA
 (Monica Herbert) says:

>Last week's episode of Cosmos Commanders was the best yet!

>

>I particularly enjoy how they manage to
 >mix deep socially-relevant drama with sub-
 >tle satire, sprinkled with the odd "in joke"
 >(did anyone catch the reference to Back to
 >the Future II?)
 >Monica

What? "The shark still looks fake"?

Karl Johanson, Victoria B.C. Canada
 -It's okay to disagree with me. However, once I explain where you're wrong you're supposed to become enlightened & change your mind. Congratulating me on how smart I am is optional.

Article #249

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: po493@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Saul Birkett)
 Subject: Re: Last week's CC
 Date: Mon Dec 11 11:09:08 1995

>>Last week's episode of Cosmos Com-

>>manders was the best yet!

Would someone PLEASE tell me when this show is on and on what channel???

Thank you!

Saul.

"What do you want for Christmas, Crow?"
 "I want to decide who lives and who dies."

Article #250

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: ul604@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Paula Johanson)
 Subject: CC
 Date: Thu Jan 4 19:27:28 1996

Just caught the latest episode of CC and I have to say that the parental discretion warning just before the opening credits just wasn't necessary. I think most people are capable of handling such mature themes and the warnings work better with shows like X-files which have graphic depictions of heads in bins of liquid nitrogen and the like.

Paula

Paula Johanson

ul604@freenet.victoria.bc.ca

-If I were more imaginative, this would be a witty comment supporting at the same time both national unity and our confederation's grand and diverse nations in association. Ca serait a la fois bilingue.

Article #251

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: jj772@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (Bob White)
 Subject: Re: Last week's CC
 Date: Fri Jan 5 15:18:58 1996

Please, from me too — what is this show and when is it on?

—

Health, happiness and a small bit of time to yourself now and then,
 Bob

Article #257

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: uj257@freenet.Victoria.BC.CA (John W. Herbert)
 Subject: CC Cancelled?
 Date: Jan 12 12:42:42 1996

I've just heard a rumour that Cosmos Commanders has been cancelled. Can anyone confirm this?
 And right before the Zamboni's true identity is revealed!

John Willcox Herbert

Sooke, B.C., Canada
 co-editor, UNDER THE OZONE HOLE
 "Keep your stick on the ice."

— Red Green

Article #264

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: xr945@freenet.victoria.BC.CA (Heather K. Cleeb)
 Subject: Re: CC Cancelled
 Date Fri Jan 12 23:14:56 1996

WHEN IS THIS SHOW ON!?!?!?

Heather

Article #270

Newsgroups: vifa.sigs.ru.sf
 From: robo@freenet.victoria.BC.CA (Robert Gunderson)
 Subject: CC is Cancelled - WRITE NOW
 Date Sat Jan 13 06:43:01 1996

Yes, the rumours are true. The network has cancelled COSMOS COMMANDERS. The only chance the show has is if we all get together and WRITE NOW!!!

Write a *polite* letter to the network execs and ask them *politely* to change their minds. Tell them how much you love the show and how you support the companies that sponsor it. BE POLITE. BE LEGIBLE. BE COHERENT. We only have one shot at saving CC, so we have to get this right the first time. The address is:

Jon Wellington
 Vice President Programming, UBS
 50 Mohawk Road West
 Lethbridge, AB
 T1K 5J5

The important thing is that you write this man ****immediately****!! The networks are deciding on their fall programming schedules right now, so if we are to be heard, we must WRITE NOW RIGHT NOW!!!

Robert

"Virtual sex - the next best thing to being there." — Monika Bandersnatch

Leers And Frothing on the Campaign Trail '96

Part One - Amor's Revenge

by John Willcox Herbert

The desperation in his voice should have been a clue. I should have known better. Something should have told me that to listen to him was a mistake. Where was that little voice inside my head when I needed it? Sure, it was there last night, spending hours telling me that there was a one litre jug of Oreo Ice Cream calling me from the supermarket, but now, now when I really needed the voice to tell me something HELPFUL it was long gone, baby. Outa here.

I picked up the phone. It was... him.

"John," said the voice of Aurora Award winning radio personality with great hair Adam Charlesworth. "I need your help." Quickly I sized up the situation and hung up.

The phone rang again seconds later. *Damn*, said the little voice inside my head, just before it vanished into the ether, to forcing me to fend for myself. *He called back. Fortunately, there's Plan B.*

I picked up the phone again. "Hi doodley-doo!" I said, disguising my voice as that of cartoon character Ned Flanders. No one would ever suspect a thing.

"John, it's me, Adam. I have—"

"Sorry, you've got the wrong numberino!" I hung up again. Close, too close.

The phone rang. Again.

Damn, said that little voice. *He's called back again!! I want some ice cream.* And it was gone.

"Plan C?" I whimpered to myself. "Is there a Plan C?"

There was no answer forthcoming, save the incessant ringing of the phone. No escape. Have a tequila, baby.

"Hello?"

"John, it's me, Adam." There was a long pause.

"Yes?"

"Sorry, I was waiting for you to hang up on me again. Listen, I need a favour."

There was still time! There was still enough time for my little voice to return and get me through this. But, alas, it was not to be. My voice had deserted me. I was alone, much too alone. I had no choice but to give in and set myself on a course that would drastically alter my life and this country as we know it. I was about to help Adam enter politics.

"Yeah, sure. Whatta you want?"

"I've got it on very good authority that they're going to call the provincial election tomorrow."

"That rumour's been around every week for the last year."

"Yes, but I have it on *very good authority* that they're calling it tomorrow."

"Okay, so they're calling it tomorrow. So what?"

"Well, if they call it tomorrow, I'll be announcing my candidacy for the Green Party in Victoria Hillside the day after. Will you be my campaign manager?"

Some, like MP Nelson Riis, call politics in British Columbia "a blood sport." Wrong. Politics in British Columbia is more a cross between American Gladiators and Stupid Pet Tricks. Politics in Québec, for instance, is like watching the fifth estate; in BC it's more like Wheel of Fortune or A Current Affair. (In fact, former Social Credit cabinet Minister Bud Smith was featured on A Current Affair because he had the misfortune of having someone tape his cel phone calls to a newspaper reporter he was trying to hit on while giving her juicy behind the scenes gossip and insider information. Oops.)

BC's second premier was Amor de Cosmos. His real name was William Alexander Smith, but he changed it to a name that he said "tells what I love most ... order, beauty, the world, the universe." He eventually went mad.

From 1952 to 1972, BC's premier was Social Creditor W.A.C. (Wacky) Bennett. Under his reign more dead people voted in provincial elections than at any time previously. In 1986, Bill van der Zalm was elected premier on the platform of style, not substance: "The smart candidate avoids detailed policy statements for they rarely help and can do you harm. Your answers should concentrate on style." He stylishly treated BC to possibly the most corrupt government Canada has ever known (Mulroney's being the possible exception). Was Adam seriously considering joining these damned souls in Hades the Legislature? Indeed, he was.

I decided the best course of action for me as Adam's campaign manager was to hide out behind the scenes and do nothing. This way I figured I could lie low, escape notice, watch some tv and maybe see Adam at the end-of-campaign party. (I would call it a victory party, but let's get real....)

Adam, however, had other ideas. He actually expected me to do some work. *Damn* him. Fortunately, the RCMP came to my rescue. Bingo-gate had reared its ugly head again.

On the day the election was to have been called, the RCMP raided a number of locations, including NDP party headquarters, for materials relating to the Nanaimo Commonwealth Holdings scandal. So for now the election was as dead as Tony Orlando's acting career. Adam was off the hook for the moment, but plans had to be made.

Quickly, I assembled my crack crew — The Myles in '89 Gang: Angst Philben, degenerate, weapons expert, and speech writer for David Duke; Monika Bandersnatch, blackmailing expert and part-time Madonna stunt double; Marsha Chondrite, a financial whiz who worked in Ottawa during the Mulroney years and just *loves* the Airbus A320; Robert Gunderson, professional Tiny Tim impersonator and part time spin doctor; and Robert Runté, a sociologist from Alberta who paid me five bucks to mention him in this article. They were joined by our new recruits: Jamie Tower, hair consultant; Buzz Berkowitz, who claimed Adam owed him \$50 and wasn't going to let him out of his sight until he was paid, and Mikhail Gorbachev, former ex-communist. They were all looking to me, the campaign manager, for leadership. I ad-libbed an aspiring speech.

"Listen. We're gonna lose. And we're gonna lose big. But let's make sure that doesn't stop us from... er... not winning."

My troops listened intently to my every syllable. Obviously, my speech had hit home; their gaping mouths and surprised expressions were testament to that. Now we needed to solidify the feeling that was present, that rock-hard, electrifying surge of near-apathy that was pushing through the air like a slam dancer with compound fractures in both legs.

"Now, first things first," I said. "We need to pick a campaign song."

There was little discussion. My initial choice, *Through Being Cool* by Devo, was selected nearly unanimously. Jamie left our little group at this point. (They'll never find the body. Politics is a mean game.)

Next, I presented my list of Possible Slogans:

Vote For Adam. It Could Be Worse.

Vote For Adam. He'll Cook You Dinner.

Up and Adam.

Adam and the Green Party. Guilt is on Our Side.

Vote Charlesworth. Desperate Times Call For Desperate Measures.

Adam. He Likes Cheese.

Charlesworth. He Has More Hair Than Harcourt.

Adam. No Longer on the Lunatic Fringe.

Charlesworth. Anyone But Mike Harris.

Your Options Are Limited. Vote Charlesworth.

Charlesworth. Mediocrity to the Masses.

Charlesworth. He Won't Win, but What the Hell.

Adam liked the last one, and so did I. Mikhail liked any slogan that mentioned "party."

Next I decided to spring a surprise on Adam: a practice press conference. Earlier, I had jotted down some questions he was sure to be asked. But Adam surprised me; he was ready with answers.

Question: Just how will the Green Party save the world?

Adam: I think you are really just asking me how am I going to save the world, or how is my voting for you going to save the world. My answer to this is to ask you the opposite. What are you going to do to help destroy the world? Today for instance we are overfishing and deforesting so massive an area of the planet that naturally occurring species are being removed from the Earth at over three hundred times the rate of the previous century. If we were to do nothing (the NDP strategy), at the present rate all life on the planet could be safely removed in less than 250 years. But I am sure that we could improve on this figure if really try to. Let's remove those tiresome environmental bonds that hold industry back and hinder job creation in the province and of course we should also allow the foreign logging companies and the offshore fishing industry to take whatever they need so as to help provide more jobs in their countries as well. And all this will come with the special added bonus feature that we could reduce the lifespan deficit we are currently facing so as to be able to maximize extinction of the Earth in only 100 years' time. But it won't happen if we are not prepared to make bold hard decisions. To do it, we will have to cut health care. Selling out to foreign multinationals never actually generates any revenue for BC; a look at the Mining and Forestry books for the last fifteen years shows that it has actually cost British Columbians money to denude our forests. Health care won't be enough, of course; the Liberals plan bold incisive cuts in Education as well so as to further protect the future of British Columbia's economy in the Global marketplace. This is how I choose to answer your question. Last year the herring fishery was considered a success because it ran for half an hour. The entire year's catch during a lunch break, and it was considered a success from the previous year's twenty-two minute fishery. Salmon rivers that carried 150,000 salmon brought only thirty thousand last year and this year just ten thousand. A 96% reduction in fish stock is what business as usual has done for the future of this province. The flaming letters in the sky that say The World is Ending are getting bigger each day; UV ratings, air quality indexes, sunblock in the high double digits. A vote for the Green Party doesn't mean all this will go away but it *does* mean that you are voting for a party that can see farther ahead than four years.

Question: What's your view on this Québec thing?

Adam: As a BC provincial candidate my views on events occurring in another province are moot. I just hope that the citizens inside Québec are able to come to a decision that they can live with.

Question: Why are you goddam fascist tree-huggers taking away an honest man's right to work?

Adam: Actually we are trying to make a world where you can keep your job cutting down trees for your entire life. A sustainable cut that provides a guaranteed number of jobs. Remember the pictures of the province at the turn of the century. Trees so big it took forty men a week to cut one down. Today, if we had those trees still, forty men could cut them *all* down in a week, instead of the years it originally

took. Where are all those trees now? Why are you afraid you are going to lose your job? Because there are no more trees to cut down? If you are accusing us of cutting down the trees that sustained your livelihood and that of others in the logging industry you must remember that it was the forest companies being allowed to overcut in the past that has led to our present state. We are suggesting a certain level of restraint to protect what is left, but if the people of BC are willing to vote for legislation to remove every single tree from the province in order to keep you in work then we are more than willing to go along with it. Newfoundland used to be covered in trees; so did Scotland and Greece, actually. Beautiful places, really, a bitter cold bare empty rock of an island with no jobs, an island where you can get an excellent pint of bitters but no place to get out from under the rain, with no jobs. And a group of islands and bare rock with less topsoil than a pound of Moneys mushrooms but luckily also surrounded by a warm and inviting Mediterranean Sea. Best two out of three?

Question: What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow?

Adam: I refuse to answer that question on the grounds that I may have to provide a demonstration of my silly walk after I do so.

Question: How can we balance the budget?

Adam: Carefully. Considering our ozone deficit, our salmon deficit, our forest deficit and our fiscal deficit, I'd say carefully about covers it.

Question: Boxers or briefs?

Adam: Briefs.

Question: What about welfare reform?

Adam: What about it? I believe that welfare should always be there for the people who need it. If you design an American welfare system, the *laissez faire* approach to social programs, you will find that people will approach welfare with a more "do it yourself" air, with Smith and Wessons at bank machines, rather than a quiet queue. The difficult part is designing a system that provides welfare for people who need it, not just people who want it.

Question: Why are you running when you know you'll never win?

Adam: Good question! Why *would* someone run? I suggest you think about it.

Damn. He had an answer, a *serious* answer, for every question I had posed. Some even made sense. Praise Bob, he was serious. I realized I would have to change tactics. I was going to have to come up with a better strategy than changing Adam's last name to Charlesworthsanjabi.

NEXT ISSUE: Premier Mike Quits, The Job No One Wants, Adam on the Trail, and Stupid Political Tricks.



REVIEWS

BETWEEN THE COVERS

by David Gordon-MacDonald

I, Robot: The Illustrated Screenplay

Harlan Ellison and Isaac Asimov

Illustrations by Mark Zug

Warner/Aspect, 1994

A Byron Preiss Visual Publication

Child of an Ancient City

Tad Williams and Nina Kiriki Hoffman

Illustrations by Greg Hildebrandt

Macmillan/Atheneum, 1992

A Byron Preiss Visual Publication

Sherlock Holmes in Orbit

ed. by Mike Resnick and Martin H. Greenberg

DAW Books, 1995

The Unopened Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

John Taylor

BBC Books, 1993

Harlan Ellison has a mouth and boy can he scream! Fortunately, when *The Beast That Shouted "F*ck You" at the Heart of Hollywood* lets loose it is usually entertaining, literate, and not infrequently deeply moving. Such is Ellison's screenplay of the classic Asimov collection, *I, Robot*.

The screenplay's history is peculiarly Ellisonian: a year (December, '77 - December '78) spent writing the script, followed by an angry exchange with Bob Shapiro, the executive in charge of production, in which Ellison intimated (deservedly) that Shapiro had all the brains of an artichoke, succeeded by Ellison's removal from the project within a few weeks. However, Shapiro subsequently proved Ellison's point by telling the entire Hollywood community, through an interview in *Variety*, what H.E. had called him. The film never went into production despite abortive attempts to involve people like Irvin Kirshner and Gary Kurtz over the next few years. Later still, respected veteran producers Edward Lewis and John Mantley won US\$1.46M from Warners for being squeezed out of the project. It was Mantley who originally engaged Ellison to write the script, and who, like Ellison, had the vision to see that it *should not* be done as an anthology film.

This is the screenplay's greatest strength—*I, Robot* is not a collection of short subjects. Instead, it is a cohesive whole which uses all or part of various stories from the 1950 collection to tell the life story of

Susan Calvin and show her enormous influence on the history of Asimov's universe. Altogether, four stories are used in their entirety: "*Robbie*"; "*Runaround*"; "*Liar*"; and "*Lenny*". The events of another, "*Escape!*" are mentioned, though not shown, and the remainder exist as background and subtext, not impinging directly on the plot.

Asimov was immensely happy with the screenplay and the way in which Ellison had told the story in his own way without losing the spirit or intent of the original material. This is not Asimov redone by Ellison, this is Asimov being paid tribute by Ellison — and a carefully done, loving tribute it is. Ellison's love of the material and personal affection for Asimov infuse every line of the script. Better, Ellison's artful hand has created a script with impact; this man can really push an audience's or reader's buttons. If this film as well as it reads, it could be the finest SF film yet (although with Hollywood's record concerning SF this isn't saying a whole hell of a lot). This is a screenplay that deserves to be produced, and produced with the same respect for the source with which it was written. We may count ourselves lucky that the script was not bastardized into a "cute robot" movie in the wake of the *Star Wars* films, as was suggested by Shapiro the veggie-cranium.

If you'd like to see this script filmed, Ellison does tell you where to write, but in the meantime, the book produced by Byron Preiss Visual Publications is superb. Not a little of the book's visual appeal lies in the beautiful paintings of Mark Zug which illustrate it. If this script ever gets before the camera, the producers will be damn fools if they don't get Zug to do the production design. He is an illustrator who pays close attention to the text yet remains refreshingly imaginative in his depictions. The emotions of the characters in his paintings reach out and enfold the reader and are an exceptionally well matched complement to Ellison's text.

More than most speculative fiction, *I, Robot: The Illustrated Screenplay* is a look at what might have been, but now that this attractive book is out and receiving well deserved attention, this is one *might have been* that could yet be. Or, so we may wish.

Another Byron Preiss Visual Publication is *Child of an Ancient City* by Tad Williams and Nina Kiriki Hoffman. There are aspects of this book which rather reminded me of Michael Crichton's early novel, *Eaters of the Dead*. *Child* has a similar ability to transport the reader back to the days of Arab civilization when the Caliphate was at the height of its powers and was the most cosmopolitan society then extant. Williams and Hoffman share Crichton's ability to recreate the flavour and pacing of a narrative (allegedly) penned in the Arabic of centuries gone, but take the reader far deeper into the mind and soul of the people.

Child is the story of a diplomatic delegation travelling north into Europe, then home again. On the way they must pass through those regions, such as the Carpathians, where things are known to go chomp in the night, and there they start losing members of the party. Finally, the nightwalker who has been dining on their companions offers the remaining members of the group a deal: each will tell a sad story, and then he will do so, and if they do not unanimously agree that his story is the most mournful, they go on unmolested. Otherwise, should the nightwalker's tale be the saddest, they must give him one of their number in parting before they are allowed to continue.

The tales are thoughtfully told and ironic; reading them one can imagine oneself seated in a shady spot in a middle eastern marketplace before a storyteller who spins the tales for you alone, waiting at each cliff-hanging climax for the chink of a coin in his bowl before continuing.

Like all Byron Preiss publications, this slim volume is well illustrated, this time by Greg Hildebrandt, and he does not disappoint — but then, neither of the Hildebrandt brothers ever does. Both text and illustrations are charming and utterly involving; *Child of an Ancient City* is well worth a look.

As expiration of Holmes copyrights has permitted, so have all manner of Sherlock Holmes volumes seen print in the last fifteen years or so. It isn't just Holmes and Watson, it's Holmes and Hyde, Holmes and Dracula, Holmes and Fu Manchu — in fact, Holmes and every bloody character from popular fiction or history that copyright allows! Some, such as Dracula or The Phantom of the Opera, rate more than one attempt at a team-up story. I use the comic book term "team-up" quite deliberately. There is an aspect of

these stories which is rather too much like one of those cross-company stories in which, for instance, the Hulk gets to beat the crap out of Batman. Naturally, the quality of these Holmesian outings varies from the near perfection of Michael Hardwicke or Nicholas Meyer to the abysmal ramblings of Frank Thomas. The recent anthology, *Sherlock Holmes in Orbit*, edited by Mike Resnick and the inevitable Martin H. Greenberg, presents twenty-six stories which range from one end of the quality scale to the other.

The problem with this anthology is that too many of the stories are excuses for plot gimmicks and gimcracks, or simply awful pun stories with delusions of grandeur. A look at the table of contents reveals that a quarter of the titles themselves are puns. Not really a good sign. The most successful of the stories include "The Phantom of The Barbary Coast" by Frank M. Robinson, which reads the most like a Conan Doyle story of any in the volume, and "You See But You Do Not Observe" by Toronto's Robert J. Sawyer. John DeChancie's "The Richmond Enigma"

is a quite satisfying addendum to Wells' *The Time Machine*, and David Gerrold's "The Fan Who Molded Himself" is slick and chilling despite a self-mocking title pun for which the man really ought to be shot. (An early Gerrold novel was entitled *The Man Who Folded Himself*.)

Gimmicks aside, if you are a Holmes fan *Sherlock Holmes in Orbit* will still have plenty to interest you, though I think you will find it worthwhile to look up a similar, and better, Holmesian speculative fiction anthology from a few years ago, *Sherlock Holmes Through Time and Space*, edited by Asimov and Greenberg.

Far more consistent in the area of quality is *The Unopened Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* by John Taylor. This is a collection of new Holmes stories originally presented as a series of six radio plays on BBC Radio 5. Taylor was both writer and producer of the series as well as author of these prose versions and is extremely successful at remaining true to the characters as

depicted by Doyle. All of these stories pass the most important quality test for a Holmes tale: does it read like Doyle, and more specifically, is the narrative voice that of our old friend John H. Watson, M.B. Ch.D.? In all these tales, we are comfortably at home in Doyle's Victorian and Edwardian London but without drowning in cliché. Taylor manages to find new elaborations on the existing canon using fascinating historical details straight from the headlines of the period in which the originals were set and does not make the mistake some pasticheurs do of abandoning all that Doyle had written in favour of his own matrix. In some cases, the mysteries are a tad easy for the reader to solve, but this is simply because they were designed originally as radio plays and the exposition has had to occur in a different order in the prose renderings. Despite that failing, I look forward to more from Taylor and the BBC; these are enjoyable, highly competent examples of the genre.

BOOKS, MOVIES, TV (AND OTHER STUFF) REVIEWS

Batman Forever

Make no mistake: *Batman Forever* is an entirely different animal than its two predecessors, *Batman* and *Batman Returns*. Gone are Michael Keaton as the Darknight Detective and previous director Tim Burton remains only as an executive producer. The biggest change is the departure of Burton's trademark dark, brooding atmosphere and deadpan dark humour. *Batman Forever*, directed by Joel Schumacher, is a slam-bang action flick that rarely pauses for breath, a rapid-fire burst of staccato editing and high-energy set pieces. A lot of time is spent blowing things up in this picture. In fact, a whole new slew of Bat-toys are introduced (new and improved versions of the Batcave, Batmobile, Batwing and a brand new Batboat) and all of them get blown up by the end of the film. In fact, the Batwing and Batboat both barely survive no more than a couple of minutes of screen time. I think there's even a plot.

Let's cut to the chase. Who makes a better Batman? Val Kilmer slips into the role effortlessly and seamlessly and indeed outshines Keaton as the Caped Crusader. Keaton, however, brought a certain quirkiness to Batman's alter-ego Bruce Wayne that is sadly lacking in Kilmer's performance. So

it's a tossup. The rest of the cast turn in mostly satisfactory performances. Tommy Lee Jones's Two-Face, after a rousing, rip-roaring start, gets nearly forgotten as Jim Carrey's Riddler takes control, becoming merely an add-on that has to be continually shoehorned into the story. The movie is indeed designed to take advantage of Carrey's recent phenomenal popularity as we are treated to endless shots of him hamming it up and mugging for the camera. Unfortunately he grows rather tedious.

The film's action sequences are spectacular, and the Robin subplot works very well, too. Director Schumacher says he wanted to film a "real comic book" and that is exactly what he's done. The plot is strictly comic book, and the characters are basically two-dimensional.

If you thought the previous *Batman* films were too heavy and disturbing, you'll probably like *Batman Forever*. If you liked Burton's slightly twisted vision of the Dark Knight, then this film will likely disappoint.

—J.W.H.



Cosmos Commanders

Finally, a chance to see some new sf on tv that packs some punch. I mean, I haven't seen anything this good since... there hasn't been anything this good. A cute punchy series like a cross between *Max Headroom* and *Babylon 5* with a little *Prisoner* thrown in. If you have yet to see this series let me set this up for you. The world is a peculiar one. National governments have more or less ceased to exist. Corporations now have citizens who work towards earning the right to have a family or a vacation. Medicare is free inside the corporate states but if you turn up a disease linked to your genome then producing offspring becomes much more expensive. These states expunge all those who cannot find a job or fulfil their corporate parent's stock option buy-out clause and are sent out into the world beyond the arcologies. The world is not a pretty place and all of the habitable areas are generally being lived in by the corps. Everyone else on Earth is forced into living in the next to habitable zones. These all seem to be places like Arizona in the summer with no irrigation or the Northern Queen Charlottes during a mid winter gale. Still, this is where humanity is trying to make a stand. The conflict between the corporate states and the people is the classic have versus have nots but very little violence is used to resolve issues. When violence is used the Cosmos Commanders are called in. These are giant robot sentinels which act as arbiters in any dispute you ask them to take part in. They are incredibly deadly and are fully

loaded with nuclear and laser weaponry. They were built by an unknown source and seem to be self repairing. They are responsible for the general level of peace that earth is now in but they have their own drawbacks. To summon one to a dispute one must find an offering pad and take one's own life while on it. This is the only way to summon a Commander to any conflict but once there they will decide on the fairest of outcomes for all parties concerned. Nothing short of your own life will bring a Commander to a scene of conflict. Naturally, this is where the first episode starts with a group of celebrating / tearful people who follow the Cause (the name for anyone who will sacrifice themselves) to the offering pad. The pad closes and the Voice is heard (kind of like a British James Earl Jones) "Do you give yourself willingly without duress?" "Do you understand what it means to summon a Commander?" "Do you know the answer in your heart?" and then zap bright light and the credits roll. This is the beginning of every episode. Kent McCord is a chronicler. Whenever a Commander is summoned he goes to that place to see what is happening and, whenever possible, before. It is his mission to find out who the Commanders are and who built them, what their true function is and if they really represent a FORCE FOR JUSTICE, which is the emblem often seen painted on a Commander's hide. The episodes are always about a conflict between people as they try to use what resources are left to restore the shattered balance of the ecosystem. Now, true to the use of the word cosmos, there are people off earth as well. Mars is a gigantic food and mineral farm that feeds the space factories and arcologies that spread throughout the system. There are almost no people on Mars as it is entirely run by sentient machines and lifers. As the series progresses one of the biggest conflicts is the one between normal humans and lifers. As it turns out, the technology to prolong life has improved to the point that you no longer have to die a natural death. But once you have the lifer augmentation performed you lose your Earth option. Meaning you have to leave Earth, as you upset the balance too much. The operation may be performed at any time outside the domes but the Commanders seek out lifers on Earth and force them to emigrate off the planet. The corpors are never granted the option of choice and must live a normal life span inside the domes. You can buy extra years as a corpor by avoiding children. Fifty years if you have only one child and a hundred years if you have none. Anyway, the normal people of Earth do not take kindly to lifers and most of them are found off planet somewhere. Then there are the sentient machines. These are

capable and clever little beasts but again their use has been banned on Earth. There are very clever machines and computers but none that have reached sentience are allowed to exist on the planet. Most of the stories that involve machines are set in cyberspace, but then this has so far been a rare occurrence in the show. Anyway, McCord's character has acquired a small air vehicle and he is a bit like a charismatic Slartibartfast who flies around in an auto piloted F-16. Each show has a heavy message to send and does so in a wonderful sf kind of way. All the machines and tech simply serve as a way to talk about human issues and how they reflect on us all. Now I hope I have whetted your appetite but I refuse to give away any more. If you haven't seen *Cosmos Commanders* you're in for a treat. Watch your local PBS station and if they don't carry it, write them and demand that they do. This is simply the best written, best produced, most exciting new show I have ever seen. Watch it.

— Adam John Kaye Charlesworth

Cuthbert and the Merpeople

by Kathy Mezei / drawings by Anne Stratford

Cacanadadada Press (now Ronsdale Press) unpaginated \$5.95

Kathy Mezei did what many of us have done: spent a vacation making up a story to tell a child. The difference is that after telling each episode she hurried back to camp to type it up. The result is *Cuthbert and the Merpeople*, a naturally paced story with a frame to keep the story grounded in the here-and-now.

But "grounded" is the wrong way to describe a story with fantasy sea creatures, and two people talking about them while paddling a canoe around Hornby Island. For all that Cuthbert is a sea serpent from Loch Ness, the waters he chooses to adventure in are the bays and sea caves of Hornby Island. The merpeople are not pleased when he falls asleep in their sea palace.

The drawings are an imaginative complement to the story-teller guiding her canoe and day-dreaming child past a mermaid and merboy frolicking in the ocean. Anne Stratford's water-colours accent the cover and some drawings, but the plain black-and-white pages invite a little careful colouring on the part of a young reader.

This is Cacanadadada Press's first book for children. It's a fun read for kids on a vacation, who might be inspired to make up stories of their own. But Mezei is a tough act to follow.

— Paula Johanson

The Dinosaur Heresies

by Robert Bakker, PhD

I'm reading a really interesting book at the moment called *The Dinosaur Heresies* by Robert Bakker, PhD. I gotta tell ya, this is the book I've been waiting for. Bakker takes on all the orthodoxies we automatically accept about dinosaurs (that they are jumped-up lizards, cold-blooded, what they ate) and stands them on their head. Many of these "heresies" are becoming more familiar now, but this is the place where they started. The book was published in 1986, read by Michael Crichton (who based, yes, *Jurassic Park* on it), and Bakker became the dino expert on the Spielberg film. (I was listening to him this morning on CBC local programming, and he was talking about the JP raptors. Seems that the largest that had been found were about the size of a large wolf — say, four feet high. Spielberg wanted something more impressive for on-screen. He said make them twice as big. The artists were going nuts — they HATE making inaccurate dinosaurs. Bakker tried to make noises about how it would be okay, but they knew he was just blowing smoke. But they did it. Then a colleague faxed him a drawing of a new find. Yes, a raptor claw twice the size of any previously found. BTW, Bakker **LIKES** the dinos in JP).

The nice thing about *The Dinosaur Heresies* is that Bakker provides his reasoning for his thoughts on the dinos. In fairly clean, accessible prose, he discusses lizards and their niches and how this might or might not apply to dinos; moas and how their digestive systems may have mirrored that of Brontosaurus. It helps that Bakker is also a decent artist and can (and does) profusely illustrate his ideas. There is, for example, a clean and informative drawing of a crane, a stegosaur, and an African elephant, showing leverage points and bracing that lead him to the conclusion that if an elephant can stand on its rear legs, then a stegosaur most certainly could; much better ligament bracing down its spine, and twice the leverage between spine and hip.

Bakker is also smart enough to admit that his theories are not new. Throughout the book he gives credit to papers published in the last century that predate his thinking. This isn't about hogging credit, this is about getting it right.

Anyway, I'm having a great time with this book, and I recommend y'all grab a copy from the library. Most all the new thinking on dinos in one accessibly-written volume. Way cool.

— E.B. Klassen



Of Two Minds

by Carol Matas and Perry Nodelman
Bain & Cox (73 Furby St., Winnipeg MB
R3C 2A2)

154 pp. \$11.95 paperback

Reading a lot of fantasy books never hurt anyone, but it does give Princess Lenora a lot of ideas, in the new juvenile novel from the Winnipeg-based publisher Bain & Cox. *Of Two Minds* is the story of Princess Lenora and her perfectly ordinary ability to imagine things real. An ordinary ability, that is, in her home kingdom of Gepeth, where everybody can make things real. And Gepeth is "a good balanced world. A place for everything, and everything in its place," says the Queen to Lenora. "Why can't you just accept it, like everybody else in Gepeth?"

But Lenora has some ideas she wants to try out before the marriage her parents have arranged for her with the prince from a neighbouring kingdom. Prince Coren is nobody's dream prince — not only is he skinny, pale and freckled, he resists using his ability to read minds. Why? Because he's tired of people jumping into his head uninvited, and has resolved not to do it himself, which makes him very odd in his own country.

"What he wanted was a place where the world was real and solid, not some imagined place that existed only in your head. His parents might be content with the magnificent rooms and mansions they imagined they were living in, inside their minds. But Coren himself was just too sensible to blithely ignore the real dust and ruins that he saw all around him in Andilla, the once beautiful buildings that had been abandoned when people decided that mental dwellings were better than real ones and mental beds softer than real mattresses... Gepeth sounded like paradise in comparison to Andilla."

The wedding plans are made, but Lenora isn't ready to be tamed by an arranged marriage. And Coren wants nothing more than to — but that would be telling. And the co-authors, Carol Matas and Perry Nodelman, have worked so hard to tell their story of adventure and the ethics of imagining new worlds. This pair of writers are Canada's answer to the Brothers Grimm, and their collaboration is not only a good read for nine to fourteen-year-olds, but it makes a good read-aloud book for parents with younger children.

— Paula Johanson

*Mother Of Storms*

by John Barnes; Tor, 1994

Expiration Date

by Tim Powers; HarperCollins; 1995

I read a lot of science fiction. I like it and want to keep up with what's happening in the field, but I also get through a lot of it because my husband Dale Sproule and I edit a magazine (*Transversions*) and one of our editorial duties is reading the slush pile. I'm fascinated by the short fiction form, but I never feel happy unless I have a big, meaty novel on the go as well. There's just something so satisfying about anticipating snuggling into bed, or curling up on the couch, with Dale a book that has a bit of heft to it. (Come to think of it, Dale has a bit of heft to him, too....) Though I've been reading a lot of enjoyable police procedural mysteries lately, and they're fun and great to learn technique from (heh, heh... no really, I mean writing technique), I'd rather talk now about a couple of "big" sf/fantasy novels that I enjoyed recently.

John Barnes's epic *Mother of Storms* has been talked about and raved about a lot, but I'd like to throw in my opinion too. First of all, I couldn't put it down. Okay, okay—I stopped reading when my eyes fell out late at night, but I kept at it while eating. For sheer scope, verve, relentless momentum and power, it's rivalled only by the planet-wrecking storms Barnes writes about. The plot starts out with a simple "oops" scenario. Methane stored in rock strata below the oceans is released into the atmosphere causing, inevitably, giant hurricanes to spawn in the warmed Pacific. The destructive paths of the hurricanes are monitored or experienced or studied by a multitude of finely drawn characters ranging from an ordinary Joe trying to avenge his daughter's shocking death, to a lonely astronaut who becomes something much more than human. Throughout, the detail is engrossing, the many individuals carrying out the interweaving storylines quirky and believable.

The only problem I had with the book had to do with the extremely raunchy sex scenes. The problem as I see it is not with the sex as such—sex in literature is fine—in this case, though, I think it borders on the gratuitous. My reason for thinking this follows.

One of the main subplots and driving forces of the narrative is something called "the wedge." A wedge is an experience drawn directly from a human brain and made available on the net for others to experience (or get off on). One of the most fascinating characters in *Mother of Storms* is Synthi Venture, a net employee wired to provide broadcasts of her experiences. She's been engineered into a cartoon version of woman, over-en-

dowed, totally plastic on the outside, but—surprise—a mature, warm-hearted and in fact troubled soul on the inside. Part of what troubles her is the work she does, which involves over-the-top violent sex scenes. Why so violent? Because according to the workings of the various nets into which the masses plug for fun, only extremely violent, out-of-control emotion can come through the filter of the wedge/net experience. Thus the technology has been perverted and degraded to the extent that large social problems driven by net use are happening. All this is background for the rising terror and destruction of the storms. My problem happens when Synthi, newly restored to sanity and in touch with her "inner self" again, etc., takes matters into her own hands and tunes everyone connected to her very popular character into the warm and fuzzy feelings she gets by helping others through the devastation in the storms' wake. Instantly rioters put down their loot, panicked folk start to rebuild, and so on. The feelings Synthi projects are—and this is stressed in the story—of the gentle, civilized sort not associated with violent porn. Yet, almost a whole planetful of people easily tunes into these noble sentiments, and world rioting and destruction are averted in the nick of time. Hmm. So why all the scenes, sprinkled liberally throughout the novel, of "necessarily nasty" sex and degradation? Is it to titillate the reader? Is Barnes perhaps saying something about how easily the "masses" are swayed by the media and how they've been duped for years? To me, it doesn't follow. Either the electronic experience has to be overblown to work at all, or it doesn't. To have the plot hinge so tightly on this techie double-talk, and what amounts to a *deus ex machina*, doesn't seem fair. All this is really a minor quibble, though. I heartily recommend the book if you haven't already read it.

Tim Powers' latest, a modern fantasy called *Expiration Date*, may not be available yet in Canada or the USA, but when it arrives, you really ought to read it. Oh, yes, you really ought. This is, I think, his tenth book (I've read six or seven), and each seems to be wilder and more magic-ridden than the last. Much of his work concerns historical characters like Byron, Blackbeard the pirate and others, and is set in the 1800s. This one, like *Last Call*, is set in the modern day in the States, and contains the usual bizarre collection of misfits, losers, the halt and the lame, the walking dead (oh, yes indeedy), ghosts, talismans, rituals and alcohol that one expects from Tim Powers. I think he must have a lot of fun writing the stuff, because it's a romp to read. *Expiration Date* concerns the adventures of a young boy named Kootie

who has inadvertently swallowed the ghost of Thomas Edison. Kootie meets up with Lew Sullivan, who has been trying to escape the consequences of his father's death at the hands of a vengeful ghost-eater. More wild characters turn up. Some comic, most deadly (or dead), all off-the-wall. I do think some of Powers' other novels, particularly *The Stress of Her Regard*, *The Anubis Gates*, and *Last Call*, are a bit more carefully crafted and thoughtful than *Expiration Date*. Perhaps it's the added weight of historical fact in the first two, or the deeper protagonist in the last that makes the difference; perhaps Powers is just letting himself cut loose more here. Again, a minor quibble with a splendid book, complete fun to read if you like your fantasy of the wildly inventive, no-holds-barred variety. There's no way I can describe what goes on in this insane wonder of a tale—you'll have to try it to see if Powers is to your taste!

—Sally McBride

Ripley's Believe It or Not: The Riddle of Master Lu

Video interaction has come a long way in the past three years. I remember when I would look at the back of a computer game box and see all these fantastic pictures and great graphics and see the words "all scenes depicted occur in game." Of course they fail to mention that they all occurred in the non interactive introductory section of the game. With *Ripley*, things have changed.

The Riddle of Master Lu, the latest game from Sanctuary Woods, uses nothing but live actors as game people. They have filmed every scene in the game on video and then blue screened into make believe and fantasy settings with such accuracy and attention to detail you are often transported directly to the scenes. There is one in particular where you climb an ancient tower in the city of Moch Moche and the wind is howling past your ears and you're standing on top of a precipice and you actually feel that Ripley is in danger of falling off. It is a rare instance when the games mechanics jerk you around to remembering that you are not really Robert Ripley trying to solve a quest. Of course there are some drawbacks. Like all games with one ending, no matter how free the initial options are or how much freedom of choice you have in deciding which puzzles to solve first, you always end up at the same place at the end of the game. Also the game is lacking in the traditional way of most adventure games in that whenever Ripley actually does something with a person or a found object you know that it must be important. Still, a first of its kind in the interactive computer

game market as an exciting and interesting puzzle/riddle quest game which sends you all over the world to try and stop the Nazis from gaining too much power over China just before WW II. The negative aspects of the game in no way limit the excitement and depth of adventure you experience when you play this game. I came home to find my wife in the emperor's tomb. She was genuinely spooked by what she found there and asked me to hold her hand while she played. This is a great game and I will look forward to any further adventures Ripley may have in store for us in time.

—Adam John Kaye Charlesworth

Sophie's Spyglass

by Mike Coney
Porthole Press Ltd
14 pp free

Author Michael Greatrex Coney, with many novels to his credit and short stories in international magazines, is Mike Coney to his friends in and near Sidney, BC. Not content with writing science fiction, Coney has become a publisher. Porthole Press has released two of his novels (*No Place for a Sealion* and *A Tomcat Called Sabrina*, each \$9.95) and now a short story as a complimentary chapbook. *Sophie's Spyglass* was first published in the *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* in 1993, but it is not a fantasy of another world. An ordinary married couple are visiting England, and an ordinary visit it is, complete with strange plumbing, pubs and bickering. When he leaves her in the rented car on a narrow lane, she is full of scorn for his search for his twenty-year-old memories of a girl... who showed a spyglass to him one holiday.

Coney's dialogue shows he has a listening ear, and he has a deft way of making clear which memories are the most important for this man with ties to the past and the present. This brief story is as compelling as a memory, and as subtle. By making copies of this chapbook available in Hawthorne Books on Cook St., Porthole Press (2082 Neptune Road, RR 3, Sidney, BC V8L 3X9) will stir up a reader's interest in Coney's two humorous novels set on Vancouver Island, as well as the many imaginative novels available from other Canadian and American publishers.

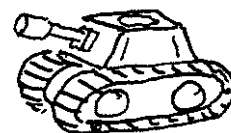
—Paula Johanson

Tank Girl: Love It or Get Lost Jerk

Anyone who did not see this film should be deeply ashamed. This was simply the best comic/film adaptation I have ever seen. It made *Batman* look sick and *Super-*

man dull. *Tank Girl* explodes with laughs, frivolous cartoon action and ridiculous situations. It also rocks and has a wonderful female slant to it that is seldom seen in male dominated Hollywood. Jet Girl and Tank Girl find themselves allied with the rippers, a mutated race of kangaroos, against the evil Corporation of Water and Power. Since there is no water, the world is controlled by the CWP with the exception of some chirpy individualists who live in a big house. Unfortunately for everyone but Tank Girl they're all killed to provide a motivational force for TG to get even. JG's reasons are easily defined but this is a comic book style movie we are talking about here. I laughed and smiled the whole way through this picture and I predict that the reason this film flopped is because it is ahead of its time. In ten years people will be making films like *Tank Girl* and getting rave reviews and then people like Siskel and Ebert and Leonard Maltin will have to sneak back and change their reviews so they won't look like such complete jackasses for not seeing the brilliant potential that this film oozes with. I mean, finally a film that is willing to take chances with dialogue, sets and characters without having to stoop to extra blood and bigger tits to pull it off, and it gets panned universally. All I ever hear from reviewers when they are reviewing films is "boy this is just more of the same old crap we always see from Hollywood—why don't they ever do something new." Well now we know it's because most reviewers are even more retro scared of anything that might be different than the producers of *Tank Girl*. I mean, they can sit and watch *Halloween VIII: A New Beginning* and talk about its merits as a picture, but try something new and—BAM—it is ridiculous. Anyway, I liked this film a lot (*Tank Girl*, not *Halloween VIII*). I think it shows potential for a different style and manner of filmmaking and storytelling and I hope that people will see it on video. It is not a kids' movie, it is not a child movie. It is a serious adolescent teenager flick suitable for any adult comic book fan. Of course fans of the comic book might be disappointed in the liberties they took in converting the character to the screen but let's just say, Get real fanboys. All reviewers who aren't me and who disagree with anything I say... are just wrong.

—Adam John Kaye Charlesworth



SCIENCE FICTION NEWS

The new Doctor Who is Paul McGann (Alien 3). The new Fox pilot is currently filming in Vancouver and will probably air on Fox and the BBC this May. Eric Roberts plays The Master. And Sylvester McCoy will be on hand to pass the hat, er, scarf — parsley, um, torch — whatever.... Everyone, all together: The Borg are Back and There's Gonna Be Trouble, hey-la hey-la, the Borg are Back. Jonathan Frakes, aka Commander Riker, will direct when Star Trek: Resurrection goes before the cameras this spring for a fall release. (Resurrection is only a working title—it will change because Fox has already claimed that title for Alien IV).... The Mask II starts filming this November.... Bugs Bunny and Michael Jordan will star in Space Jam.... Indiana Jones IV will probably not get made (after two years of development, there's still no script), but Steven Whatsisname will direct Jurassic Park II, possibly this year.... seaQuest DSV became seaQuest 2032 which became seaQuest — Cancelled. This third season was a great improvement over last year (but let's face it, there was no where to go but up).... Sean Connery will play an astronaut in Do Not Go Gentle. His character panics before a 1960s moon shot and aborts the mission, but years later and terminally ill, he is determined to get to the moon somehow. Computer technology will enable Connery to play the older astronaut as well his younger "Right Stuff" counterpart.... Johnny Depp has left the Speed Racer project.... Vincent Perez has the title role in The Crow II.... Michael Dorn, as Worf, joined the cast of Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. Now if they would only give him something to do.... Dreamworks SKG has optioned Heinlein's The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.... Val Kilmer may skip Batman and Robin. George Clooney may replace him as Batman. Uma Thurman will play Poison Ivy and Alicia Silverstone will play Batgirl. Mr. Freeze is not yet cast, but Arnold Schwarzenegger is where the smart money is. (Look for Batwoman, Bathound and Batmite in Batman V).... Pierce Brosnan has signed to do a couple more James Bond flicks.... Tim Burton is directing Mars Attacks, based on the 1950s cards. The budget is said to be over \$100,000,000.... While waiting for all the Spider-Man lawsuits to settle, Canadian born director James Cameron begins filming his latest this spring, Titanic, a blockbuster about the ill-fated maiden voyage. (He's already been filming at the wreck).

1995 Hugo Awards

Best Novel: *Mirror Dance*, by Lois McMaster Bujold;
Best Novella: "Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge," by Mike Resnick;
Best Novelette: "The Martian Child," by David Gerrold;
Best Short Story: "None So Blind," by Joe Haldeman;
Best Non-Fiction Book: *I. Asimov: A Memoir*, by Isaac Asimov;
Best Dramatic Presentation: "All Good Things....," *Star Trek: The Next Generation*;
Best Professional Editor: Gardner Dozois;
Best Professional Artist: Jim Burns;
Best Original Artwork: Brian Froud for *Lady Cottington's Pressed Fairy Book*, by Brian Froud & Terry Jones;
Best Semi-Prozine: *Interzone*;
Best Fanzine: *Ansible*;
Best Fan Writer: Dave Langford;
Best Fan Artist: Teddy Harvia.

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer, 1993-94: Jeff Noon.

14th Annual Science Fiction Chronicle Reader Awards

Best Novel: *Brittle Innings*, by Michael Bishop;
Best Novella: "Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge," by Mike Resnick;
Best Novelette: "Cocoon," by Greg Egan;
Best Short Story: "None So Blind," by Joe Haldeman;
Best Dramatic Presentation: *The Mask*;
Best Pro Artist: Bob Eggleton;
Best Pro Editor-Magazines: Gardner Dozois;
Best Pro Editor-Books: David Hartwell;
Best Semi-Prozine: *Science Fiction Chronicle*;
Best Fanzine: *Mimosa*;
Best Fan Writer: Dave Langford;
Best Fan Artist: Dan Steffan.

1995 Locus Awards

Best Science Fiction Novel: *Mirror Dance*, by Lois McMaster Bujold;
Best Fantasy Novel: *Brittle Innings*, by Michael Bishop;
Best Dark Fantasy/Horror Novel: *Fires of Eden*, by Dan Simmons;
Best First Novel: *Gun, with Occasional Music*, by Lois Jonathan Lethem;
Best Novella: "Forgiveness Day," by Ursula K. LeGuin;
Best Novelette: "The Martian Child," by David Gerrold;
Best Short Story: "None So Blind," by Joe Haldeman;
Best Non-Fiction: *I. Asimov: A Memoir*, by Isaac Asimov;
Best Art Book: *Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Art*, Cathy Burnett and Arnie Fenner, eds.;
Best Collection: *Otherness*, by David Brin;
Best Anthology: *The Year's Best Science Fiction: Eleventh Annual Collection*, Gardner Dozois, ed.;
Best Editor: Gardner Dozois;
Best Artist: Michael Whelan;
Best Magazine: *Asimov's*;
Best Book Publisher: Tor.

Arthur C. Clarke received the NASA Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the agency's highest civilian award.... Vonda McIntyre sold two alternate histories to Pocket Books.... Karen Harber, S.N. Lewitt and Melissa Scott all recently sold *Star Trek: Voyager* novels.... Speaking of *Star Trek*: William Shatner has "written" novels, Walter Koenig wrote a novel, Nichelle Nichols has a novel out... Now Jonathan Frakes (three book series called *The Abductors* to Tor) and LeVar Burton (untitled novel to Warner) both have signed to write novels.... John Barnes and some astronaut named Buzz (yes, that Buzz) delivered their collaboration *Encounter with Tiber* to Warner.... Arthur C. Clarke will collaborate with Michael P. Kube-McDowell on a new novel, *Trigger*. Clarke's latest, *Richter 10*, written with the late Mike McQuay, will be out this spring. Both are from Bantam.... K.W. Jeter sold *Noir* to Bantam.... Harry Turtledove has sold a four volume alternate history of World War I to Del Rey.... Nicola Griffith sold a novel and collection to HarperPrism.... Connie Willis and Cynthia Felice sold *With This Planet* to St. Martin's.... David Brin, Greg Bear and Gregory Benford have each sold a novel set in Isaac Asimov's Foundation universe to HarperCollins. Benford also sold *Cosm* and another novel to Avon.... Larry Niven's *The Ringworld Throne* will be out this spring from Del Rey.... Neal Stephenson's next novel will come from Avon.... Dan Simmons has sold two novels to, you guessed it, Avon....

Canadian News

Sean Stewart's new novel, *Clouds End*, will be out this August from Ace. He also turned in *The Night Watch. Resurrection Man* was up for the Bram Stoker Award and A New York Times Notable Book for 1995.

Robert J. Sawyer's recent novel *The Terminal Experiment* has been optioned as a film. His next novel is *Starplex*.

Spider Robinson sold *Callahan's Legacy* to Tor.

Paul Neumann has created a web site (one of them computer net kinda things) known as the CanSF Resource Guide. He is soliciting relevant information to be posted on the web site. Currently there is information on clubs & other organizations, publications, cons, as well as links to some related sites.

In recent e-mail to UTOH Paul mentioned, "... the Guide is still missing lots of stuff, plus I've got to clean up the regional organization of some of the subjects. In

retrospect, its current setup somehow says "regional bias," which I didn't intend. Anyhoo, the Guide is going to go through its most comprehensive overhaul within the next few months. I've enlisted some very good help. Paul Valcour seems to know the Canadian SF community rather well, so that should tell you right away that the Guide is going to grow in leaps and bounds."

Anyone with information they wish to send Paul can contact him at:

Paul Neumann
267 Holmwood Ave.

Canadian SF web pages:

Gordon's Home Page — http://mindlink.bc.ca/Gordon_Smith/
Alan Barclay — <http://vanbc.wimsey.com/~alanb/>
Robert J. Sawyer — <http://twilight.greynware.com/authors/sawyer/>
Mark Shainblum — <http://www.vir.com/~shainblum/markhome.htm>
Edward Willett — <http://www.wbm.ca/users/ewillett/index.html>

Ottawa, Ontario

K1S 2P8

gonzo@magi.com

The web site can be found at:
<http://www.magi.com/~gonzo/>

Cath Jackel of On Spec Magazine has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association, a 350-member organization.

While no Canadians got nominated for a Hugo, a few Canucks were long-listed.

Garth's News by Garth Spencer

V-Con 21 is on for May 1996. A posting is or should be still on rec.arts.sf.fandom. If all else fails, contact graeme_cameron@mindlink.bc.ca.

R. Graeme Cameron has stepped down as BCSFazine editor. He will continue with his own zine, *Space Cadet*. The new editor of BCSFazine is John Wong.

A new gaming con, ConQuest, will be held at the Sandman Inn this November in Vancouver. People to contact include Manoa Friedson at 873-2526.

I have twice tried to contact Linda Ross-Mansfield about CUFF - she is the western administrator, I believe, and has posted an article about CUFF in BCSFazine and Con-TRACT - and both times my e-mail bounced back.

There have been changes, clubs dissolved, and amalgamations in the *Star Trek* subculture in Vancouver. People to quiz are Pam Henschell (now where did I put her number ...) and Merina Matthews (581-4705).

Northstar 1 is scheduled for September next year. See Zine Listings.

There may or may not be another Vancouver convention besides V-Con in 1997. Developments are still developing.

I have sent a general history of Canadian fandom to Moscon for its program book, boiled down to 5,000 words. Well, almost that far down. I am finally tackling the history of Toronto fandom. Incomplete drafts of Québec fandom and Maritimes fandom await more contributions for correction and completion.

The Timebinders, a loose association of North American and British fans of fanhistory, has been holding Fanhistoricons associated with existing cons, and now has a World Wide Web homepage, edited by one Laurie Mann. There is also an e-mail list maintained for sharing around messages and postings concerning fanhistory. Dick Lynch in the midwest is sharing for criticism and expansion an outline he prepared for a general history of fandom in the 1960s. Rob Hansen's decade-by-decade history of British fandom can now be downloaded - it's online. Discussion continues on preparing a Fancyclopedia III and whether to update/how to input online Harry Warner's *All Our Yesterdays*.

They include: Robert J. Sawyer for Best Novel with both *End of an Era* and *For-eigner*; Robert Charles Wilson for Best Novel with *Mysterium*; On Spec for Best Semi Prozin; The Frozen Frog and Under the Ozone Hole for Best Fanzine; and Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 for Best Dramatic Presentation (co-discoverer David Levy is Canadian).

In the post-con announcement, Conchair Bob Bramwell described Banffcon 95 as a "huge success." 250 persons attended the convention, which showed a slight profit.

KeyCon (Winnipeg) was the winning bid for the 1996 NonCon (the annual Alberta SF con). KeyCon takes place starting May 17, 1996.

Karl Johanson won a free game of bowling while participating in the 1995 UTOH championships. "The special red pin was in the center of the other four pins and I clobbered all of 'em with one bowling ball. It was one of the little ones too," Karl was quoted as saying during the after-tournament salt and vinegar chip eating frenzy.

There is, or soon will be, a new SF magazine called Parsec, self described as Canada's first national mainstream science fiction publication. Published bi-monthly. Send letters to the editor at:

The Editor, Parsec
Unit G, Suite 108
1942 Regent St.
Sudbury, Ontario
P3E 3Z9

or fax them to: 1 (705) 523-5276

Stop Press of Vancouver offers an annual customized calander for congoers in the Pacific Northwest. Write now and get your own planning calendar for conventions within a day's driving time, *plus* the 1996 Worldcon and Westercon advance information! Only \$6 (Canadian or American).

As well, Stop Press offers SF, fantasy and horror market information on disk, updated quarterly. Write now and get the latest market addresses, updates and requirements! Specify format desired and we can probably accomodate you. Send only \$10 (Canadian or US - \$12 for Macintosh formats) to:

Stop Press
(Garth Spencer)
P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O.
Vancouver BC
K6B 5B1

Out of This World: Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Literature

Published in conjunction with the year-long exhibit of Canadian SF & F at the National Library, *Out of This World* recognizes the remarkable international achievement of such writers as Judith Merril, A.E. Van Vogt, Phyllis Gotlieb, Charles de Lint, Guy Gavriel Kay, Margaret Atwood, Robert Sawyer, William Gibson, Lesley Choyce, and Elisabeth Vonarburg. Essays by John Robert Colombo, John Clute, Christine Kulyk, Robert Hadji and others trace the history of this genre in Canada, while contributions from William Lane (Vanishing Point), Gregg Thurlbeck (*Prisoners of Gravity*), and Michael Skeet show the impact of SF & F writing on radio, television, and popular music.

The book includes bibliographies and listings of Canadian SF & F for English and French authors, biographies and character sketches of the authors by Heather Spears, and a comic strip by Larry Hancock and Michael Cherkas. Available in French translation from Editions RD (Robert Davies Publishing).

\$19.95 from Quarry Press
P.O. Box 1061, Kingston, ON
K7L 4Y5

Obituaries

John Brunner

John Brunner was born September 24, 1934, in Crowmarsh, England. He dropped out of school at 17 intending to become a writer, and sold his first novel later that year. His early work was mainly space opera, but in the 1960s, he moved towards hard SF. He grew more experimental, and this period culminated with his most ambitious work, his Hugo Award winning distopia *Stand on Zanzibar* (1969). He continued with the distopian theme in *The Sheep Look Up* (1972) and *The Shockwave Rider* (1975). Recurrent health problems curtailed his output in the 1970s and 1980s, much of his work falling back to his early space opera roots. He suffered a stroke while attending the World Science Fiction Convention in Glasgow, and died the following day, August, 25, 1995. He was 60.

Irving "Friz" Freleng

Born in Kansas City, Friz Freleng moved to Hollywood in the 1920s as an animator for Walt Disney. In 1930 he joined

Warner Bros., and together with other soon-to-be animation legends Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, and Bob McKimson in the building called Termite Terrace, created the famed stable of Warner Bros. cartoon characters, including Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Sylvester, Tweety Bird, Porky Pig and Yosemite Sam. After Warner closed its animation studio in 1963, Freleng created The Pink Panther. He won five Academy Awards, including four for his work at Warner, including such classics as "*Birds Anonymous*," "*Speedy Gonzalas*," and "*Knighty Knight Bugs*." He died in Los Angeles on May 26, 1995. He was 89.

Jerry Siegel

Jerry Siegel and his childhood buddy, Canadian born Joe Shuster, were early SF fans. In 1932, Siegel wrote and Shuster illustrated five issues of a fanzine, *Science Fiction*. But in 1938, they entered a different realm of publishing when they finally published the first adventure of who was to become the most famous superhero of all, Superman. They wrote and drew all of Superman's adventures until 1947 when they sued the comic company for more money and they were fired. They were near poverty in 1978 when, just as the first *Superman* film starring Christopher Reeve made \$82 million, a protest by comic book artists led to DC Comics awarding them a substantial pension and restoring their creators' credits. Shuster died in 1992, and Siegel died of heart failure on January 28, 1996. He was 81.

Terry Southern

Among novelist and screenwriter Terry Southern's credits were the 1959 satirical novel *The Magic Christian*, and the screenplays for *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* and *Barbarella*. He died of respiratory failure on October 29, 1995. He was 71.



LETTERS OF COMMENT

Lisa Thomas
1672 BMG
Henderson, KY
42420
U.S.A.

I'm running a little short on time so here's THE USUAL.

*{{Thank you, Lisa. It's not often we get such a wonderful letter as yours. Truly, a masterwork of brevity and yet not without depth and, dare I say, humour. Thank you for your letter. Your humble servant,
—J.W.H.}}*

Dale Speirs
Box 6830
Calgary, AB
T2P 2E7

UTOH received today, many thanks.

Bernie Klassen's article on working as a stucco labourer was of more than passing interest to me. Not because I work in construction, but because I am a landscaping maintenance foreman and see the same things he does, only from the other side. Such as labourers who complain that they never get ahead, but don't want to take formal training in their employment for fear (actual fear, in many cases) that they might be expected to read books and learn how to think. It is a popular saying in many jobs that "...they don't pay us to think around here....," but many of those who say that couldn't even think if they were paid to do so. Bernie figured out why soap is added to stucco mix because he moves in slightly more intellectual company (that is, fandom) than most, but many wouldn't even ask the question in the first place.

His friend who didn't want to learn landscaping from books will probably be okay if he ever mows lawns, but he'll be in trouble with anything more complicated such as disease diagnosis or pruning. Many jobs, however, don't need formal book learning. Not one of my equipment operators was trained with books; no matter how technology advances, the only way to learn how to drive a tractor is hands-on instruction. Pulling weeds by hand out of tree wells and shrub beds does not require literacy, which is why about 25% of our labourers are actual illiter-

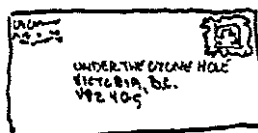
ates (mostly immigrants, but some Canadian-born, shamefully). Trouble is, new machines and methods have enabled us to reduce the number of labourers needed, and they'll have no place to go without book learning. But this, I suppose, is preaching to the choir. I don't imagine many illiterates read UTOH.

There was talk in the LoCool about the Alberta Express, the alleged cold air mass that makes life miserable down south. Funny peculiar, but us Albertans call it simply an Arctic polar front. Blame Yukon and NWT, not us. After all, we get our rainy weather from BC, and we don't call it the Vancouver express. Runté's article on the Lethbridge flood was interesting. Calgary being further upstream, we had only a 3 metre flood, so can't complain, but it has been a wet summer. So wet that at Conversion 12 here in July, a Seattle visitor commented on how green Calgary was. When people from the Pacific Northwest notice the green here, you can get an idea of how wet it has been. Normally we have green only from Victoria Day to August Civil Holiday, but the traditional vistas of brown and tan are nowhere seen. The Calgary newspapers have been running advice on how to cope with depression induced by constant grey skies. Almost as bad as living in Vancouver, except we pay less taxes.

{{When I was a young tyke I used to wonder why American TV referred to places like Seattle as "the Pacific Northwest" when it was south and east of us. I also wondered why Albertans 1,000km or more east of us were called "westerners".

Your "...they don't pay us to think around here..." reference reminded me of the army. If they questioned you about something you did and your reply included, "I thought", you were yelled at & told, "it's not your @\$%ing job to think." If you followed orders and did something you weren't taught how to do properly & got it wrong, you were yelled at and told, "well think, you stupid @\$%."

—K J.}}



Laura Houghton
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Phoenix, AZ
U.S.A.
85048

Greetings, Editbeings!

There is a hell-spawned cold going around my workplace, which I have caught. Evidently I didn't instruct my immune system to armourplate itself with sufficient force. As a result of this oversight, I am now chainsucking cough lozenges. I have arranged two different flavours in the candy dish on my desk, and have no doubt that they will prove to be almost as popular a treat as the last form of sugary goo I put out for public consumption, given the epidemic. It annoys me that cough drops are stuffed with sucrose and honey. Be thin and miserable, or fat and able to speak and breathe. Some choice.

You're probably tired of hearing this, but I really enjoyed the last issue of UTOH, and am tickled positively fuchsia that you have scooped yet another Aurora. Of course, with my brain currently feeling like a hard-boiled egg with a top that was forcibly removed with a spoon and then got toast dunked into it to remove the squelchy bits, I can't actually recall anything in the zine (except my LoC, ha ha), but I know it was a good ish because hey, when isn't it?

On the brighter side of life, my cleaning lady is at the house, scouring away two weeks' worth of grime even as I type. I would like to go on record at this point as stating that hiring a cleaning lady is a matter of philosophy, not laziness, for me. Is there any true virtue in cleaning your own house, or indeed in having your house clean at all? No, though a clean house is often thought to be more pleasant. On the other hand, is there true virtue in getting rid of your drudgery if you can afford it, thereby giving employment to someone who wants to do that job, and freeing yourself up to spend quality time with your spouse, relaxing so that you will be ready for work again tomorrow, and generally keeping focused on those things in life which are truly important to you instead of wasting time on menial tasks? I would argue that there is.

...Hands up all those who spotted my elaborately clothed and veiled defence mechanism. I believe what I wrote up there, but somehow there's a part of me that is uncon-

vinced. Never mind, I will come home tonight and be able to bathe in a clean tub, dry off on clean towels, and go to sleep between clean sheets, and my feverish, tired body will appreciate every lazy second of it.

Well, my work awaits. I note that I have already had a taker for my cough drops, so I shall send you this note and return to my appointed task of earning enough money to keep myself in fattening pharmaceuticals.

Best fishes and a sis-boom-bah, Au-ro-RAH!!

Lloyd Penney
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Many thanks for another UTOH. Things have happened, and other things haven't, so I'll chatter on about them, and then attempt to say something witty about the issue at hand. That's how this letter of comment thing works, doesn't it?

Speaking of working, I'm not. In March, I was hired by Maclean Hunter as the new circulation director for a group of six industrial magazines. The fact that I'd never done this kind of circulation work didn't faze them, and they said it would take a year to fully learn the job. I did my best, learned a lot, and was subsequently let go after three months. Reason? I'm still not sure, although I have been told in subsequent interviews with other potential employers that MH hiring and firing practises are arcane at best. So, once again, I have been stuffing the mailbox with resumé's, and Yvonne's been faxing them out at a rate of four a day. A gigantic pain, but something's got to happen soon.

I didn't mean to come off as a snarky old dinosaur in my LoC, honest.... On September 6, Yvonne and I were on the radio on AM640 in Toronto, talking Star Trek. The producer said she didn't know anything about Star Trek, and the alarm bells went off. I should have listened. When we got to the station, we met the host who knew even less. We agreed that we'd take it slow and easy, and talk about the subject at hand, and talk to the fans. That agreement was right out the door the second the microphones went on, for all the host did was scream about "TREKKIES!!!" and "SPACE CADETS!!!" and "Why don't you have a life?" We gave her filthy looks all through the hour and forty minutes we were on the air, and tried to dispel all the stupid assumptions she had, but she wouldn't be convinced otherwise. The only good thing to come out of this was that we got to keep our coffee mugs. This experience

only reinforces my feelings that the press and the media are not our friends.

(Is Sandra Riedel a former Western fan, and would she like to find Eastern fandom here?)

Just a note to Dr. Computo: when you see the label "Intel Inside," take it as a warning. What does Dr. Computo think of Windows '95, and what does he think will happen when Bill Gates has all the money in the world?

Yes, if you look at the convention listings, and then, at the obit column, Roger Zelazny died a couple of days before his scheduled appearance at Ad Astra 15. It was a surprise to us because Roger had phoned the con about ten days before, and cancelled because his mother was dying. Well, it was Roger himself who was dying, but he didn't want to worry people, and he didn't want to be the centre of attention. That was typical of a very unassuming man, and a great writer. And John Brunner's gone, too.

Let me tell you about the most sick and twisted zine I know of that comes from Victoria, and it's not UTOH. It's called Svelte, and I saw an issue of it at a friend's home. Contact these sickies at 1792 Hatwood Pl., Victoria, BC, V8N 1H8. Issue five had a cover depicting the newest Canadian superhero, Saw-Don-Cherry-Naked-Once Man! You guys will love it.

{{Dr. Computo (in his secret identity as Joe ComputerGuy) works at Intel and in fact e-mailed me numerous lists concerning the Pentium problem, e.g.: The Top 9.99998776 Things Wrong With Pentiums.

I suppose you've got to expect that some media people are complete assholes (of course a couple of hours watching daytime talk shows will tell you that). Perhaps the thing to do is to let them have their moment of anti-Trek venting and respond with something like, "That's very good. You've captured exactly the attitude that most ignorant people have concerning science fiction fans and we're so glad that you're enlightened enough to invite us onto your program." If that doesn't work, set phasers on stun!

—J.W.H.}}



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Dear Editors:

Received UTOH Number Eleven today. As you can see, I now have an e-mail address. I now access the internet daily, but mostly for alt.recovery.aa and a couple of groups for those playing computer games like SimCity 2000. I still work for the Post Office (postage rates to Canada went up last month). Now that I am mostly Gafia, I read even more SF and fantasy than I used to, although most of that is what the library buys, and it varies in quality.

And after reading the zine I really haven't much to say. Cannot seem to get the old enthusiasm for LoCs that I once had. A nice zine, with a few good chuckles, but still nothing to provoke a lengthy LoC. (But read my tagline.)

Anyhow, please publish my e-mail address for those who may want to get in touch with me.

Yours Aye...

—Scotty, I Need Shields NOW! Aye Captain, Dress or Panty?

Paul Neumann
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Some of you already know that I maintain the Canadian SF&F Resource Guide on the WWW at URL: <http://www.magi.com/~gonzo/cansfrg.html>

Throughout my quest in compiling the CanSF Guide, I've come in contact with many people. The people included in the list are active in the Canadian SF community in one way or another. Other people on the list have been recommended. So why is it that I'm sending you a message? Obviously, the subject header is clear enough, and I consider all of you key people in the Canadian SF community. Surely there are some people missing from the list, so please forward this message to anyone you think might be interested in the various things I'm about to propose as far as promoting Canadian SF is concerned.

Promoting Canadian Speculative Fiction: I'm happy that Canadian SF is gaining ground. I keep thinking of Robert Runté's speech at Can*Con '95 of how far Canadian SF has come in the last 15-20 years. Certainly, quite a few among us are thinking of

ways how we can give Canadian SF that extra boost in popular acceptance. Many of us are familiar with the common vectors of spreading the word about SF: conventions. Generating interest in all the various SF conventions across Canada can be slow and tedious. Word of mouth and print adverts are great, but not fast enough. How do we get the reading Canadian public interested in Canadian SF? Sure, the Internet is quick and easy, but not everyone has access to it. The other option is television, which brings me to Prisoners of Gravity. PoG, I suspect, has done much for SF in general, and Canadian SF in particular. Its demise was a shock, but all good things come to an end.

However, it's a tradition that I believe should be continued, and the likeliest candidate to produce a similar new show about speculative fiction and the arts: Discovery Canada.

There is a potential thread happening in alt.tv.discovery.canada about this very issue. Would a "petition" help in creating such a show? Thoughts and comments would be appreciated on this matter. I've also sent a message to Discovery Canada <comments@discovery.ca>. I invite you to participate in this emerging thread. At the same time, would it be practical to hammer out solutions to promoting Canadian SF in the various rec.arts.sf.* and ont.sf-lovers newsgroups?

The CanSF Guide: I have a sneaking suspicion <grin> that there's still quite a bit of information missing in the Canadian SF&F Resource Guide. I invite you to examine the information already available and suggest/forward any other information you might have to enrich the Guide.

Send any info to: gonzo@magi.com or snail to the address above.

More Internet Stuff: Recently, I was also thinking how we could further bind the Canadian community on the WWW. Would it be a good idea to start a Canadian SF News page detailing up-to-the-minute announcements, gossip, releases, etc.? The point of the exercise would be to put in e-print the vibrancy of the Canadian SF community. Suggestions are welcome.

I'm aware of the activities of the CanCon Society and the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Foundation, but would also like to hear of their on-going activities in greater detail. Of course, other clubs and organizations are welcome! If any of you are members, or know of anyone who is, please forward this message to them.

I sincerely hope to hear your ideas via personal e-mail and/or Usenet! I personally think that the timing is right to put Canadian SF into that spot-light that it so much deserves!

Murray Moore
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I have received, read, and enjoyed Under the Ozone Hole Ten and Eleven.

Before I received UTOH, I typed the following, as part of a letter of comment on an issue of Opuntia, and of The Frozen Frog, to Dale Speirs and Benoit Girard, respectively. This remains my position, after having read and enjoyed UTOH.

"I also (at Ad Astra) learned the results of the Aurora Awards. Number of voters for best fanzine: 94; nominators, 65. Under the Ozone Hole, 52; BCSFazine, 34; From Beyond the Oort Cloud, 17; The Frozen Frog, 9; Bardic Runes, 4. What's wrong with this list?

"Opuntia is not on it. I haven't received an Ozone Hole, but I can't believe it is five times better than Frozen Frog. Opuntia is not on it. Another reminder that fan polls should not be taken as the ultimate indicator of relative worth. And where's Opuntia?"

Sci fi will never die - unfortunately. I read the three Canadian Press-origin stories about the Winnipeg Worldcon reprinted on page 27 of UTOH Ten. "Sci-fi," not "science fiction," appeared in each headline. The ratio of appearance of science fiction to sci-fi, in the text of the three stories, was three to one, one to five, three to three.

I can understand the headline writer's wish for an abbreviation of science fiction. "SF" or "sf" is acceptable. To the credit of the sf people quoted in these stories, all used science fiction, none used sci fi.

I looked at the photographs reproduced in UTOH Ten and Eleven, interested to find a fan whose fanzine I have received, whose LoCs I have read, or otherwise is known to me through sf fandom. Reproduction of photographs of fans remains uncommon, although photocopying seems to be the most common form of printing sf fanzines.

Some of the mystery goes out of fanzines when you see an image of other fans. Until one sees another fan in the flesh, or a reasonable facsimile of the fan, one can imagine how another fan looks, using as material the fan's fanzine and the written word. Drawn, and TV and film, adaptation of the adventures of the hero of a fictional series can fail or succeed on the ability of the artist or actor to meet the reader's vision of the appearance of the hero. A fan's printed output is a kind of personal series. Moshe Feder and I met during the 1994 Ditto. Moshe told me I didn't look as he thought Murray Moore would look. Ned Brooks has

not met me, but he has seen a photograph of me. His reaction was that I look like a banker!

"Sure," you respond to Garth Spencer's LoC, "we could fill up our pages with the latest fan feud about how Fan A slagged off Fan B who slagged back so Fan A quit Club Z, and then Fan C reported it in Zine X but got all the facts wrong. But who would read it? Or care?" Of course there's a market for this material. Look at all the faithful readers—including me—of Frank magazine.

John's review of seaQuest DSV was helpful. I have not watched an episode. I am not going to start watching. Reading about it seems more entertaining, and takes less time.

My intent is not to be picky—I enjoyed Paula Johanson's articles "Sex Dance" and "Northwest Passage"—but one of the two babies born following the dance being female is meaningless, as the ratio of female to males is 51 to 49.

I also, even more gingerly, point out that "fulsome," as Paula uses it in her review of Fools Errant, is misplaced. My reading is that she is approving when she reports Fools Errant author Matt Hughes describing his character's adventures in "fulsome prose." My Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines fulsome as cloying, excessive, and disgusting by excess.

I wholeheartedly can agree with her suggestion that Lister Sinclair would be a good reader of books on tape. Which reminds me of the New Yorker cartoon: a book store with a sign in the window, announcing the availability of Books on Paper.

{There've been a few opportunities for us to get involved in fan feuds in these pages, but we've made an editorial decision not to get involved in crap like that. Also, some of our readers have told us one reason they like UTOH is that we don't report on feuds. Besides, we don't have the battery of lawyers that Frank must have.

—J.W.H.}}



UNDER THE OZONE HOLE

Three-Time Winner of the Prix Aurora Award for Best Fanzine

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Features "*How I Lost My Convirginity*" by Laura Atkins, news, reviews, and fiction by F.F. "Bones" Norman. Cover features Brian Mulroney as The Terminator.

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Another Karl's Kartoon! The first chapter of "*Tale of the Young and Slothful*" by Laura Atkins. John destroys Space Rangers.

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The first infamous all-colour Robert Runté cover! "*Impossible Battle Biking*" by Laura Atkins (with pictures, only one). The Robert Runté Guide to Fandom Part One! Plus, an honest-to-God real LoC from Brian Mulroney!

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Special All-Pets Issue! The Robert Runté Guide to Fandom Part Two! News, and pictures of our pets!

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Special Conspiracy Issue! The Robert Runté Guide to Fandom Part Three! Still more "*Young and Slothful*"! Proof that Brian Mulroney is related to a hamster (it says so on the cover)!

Number Seven

A gazillion reviews! The Under The Ozone Hole Quiz! Plus reviews, reviews and reviews. The cover features the cast of Star Trek: Voyager.

Number Eight

Special *Apollo 11* Anniversary Issue! News, reviews and funny stuff. (A note to collectors: there are eight different covers for this issue. Ain't photocopiers wonderful?)

Number Nine

We get ready to go to Worldcon in Winnipeg! Map! Programming Changes! The Robert Runté Guide to Fandom! Canadian Facts! Sean Stewart Interview! Profiles of Catherine Girczyc and Don H. DeBrandt! Plus Clam Shoot news! Twice the usual quota of silly bits and spelling mistakes! And Robert... *all over* the cover!

Number Ten

Worldcon in Winnipeg Wrap-Up issue! Pictures, reviews, notes, comments, and silly stuff. "*Northwest Passage*" by Paula Johanson, The Final "*Tale of the Young and Slothful*," and Adam Charlesworth on his new-found belief in Western-Canadianism. Plus an interview with author Robert J. Sawyer.

Number Eleven

Clam Shoot pix! Articles by E.B. Klassen, Paula Johanson, Robert Runté, Karl Johanson and Dr. Computo! An interview with Sally McBride! Plus, a clown on the cover!

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