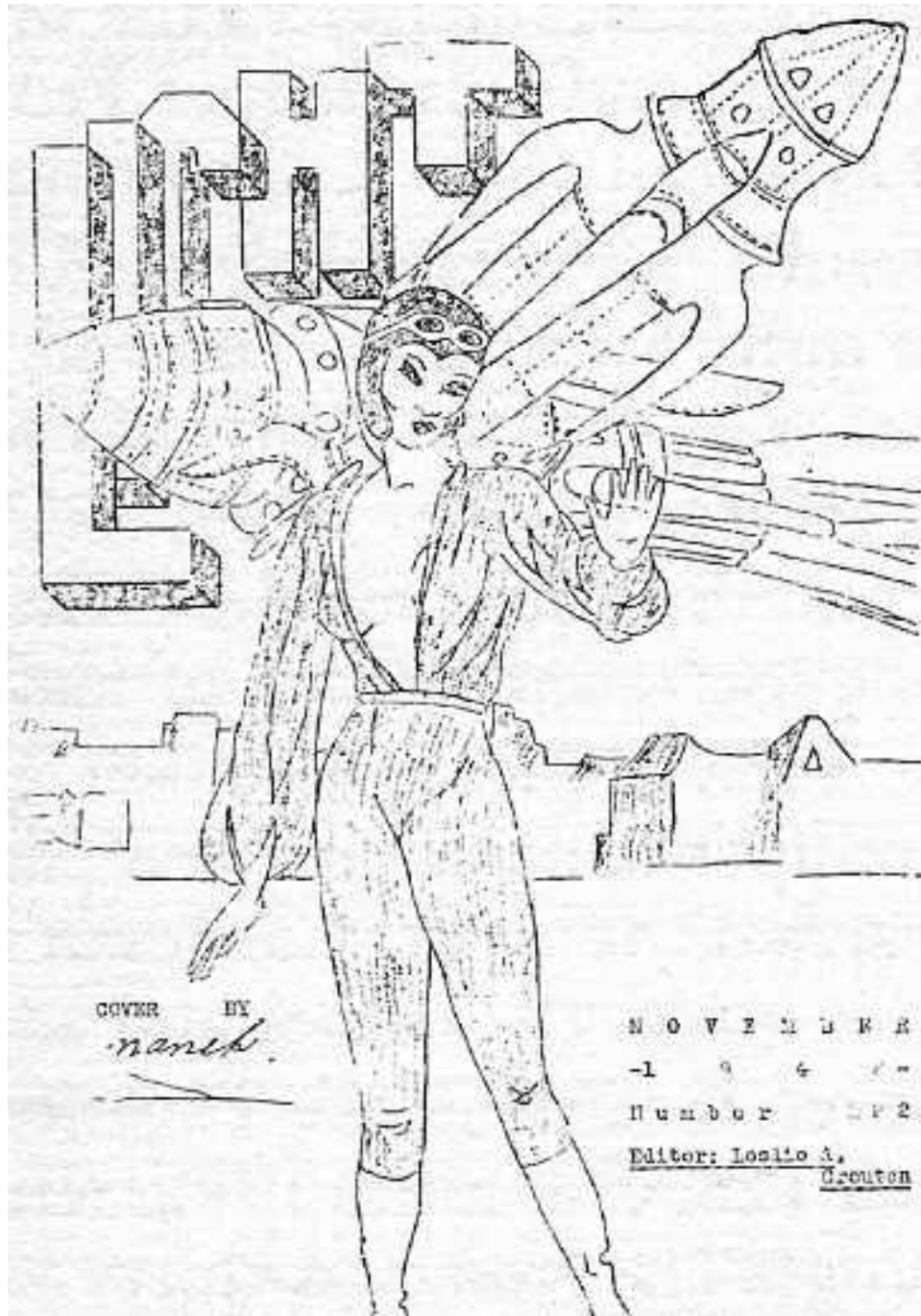


WCSFAzine

The Fannish E-zine of the West Coast Science Fiction Association
Dedicated to Promoting the West Coast Science Fiction Community

#6

Feb 2008



THE MOST POPULAR CANADIAN SCI-FI FANZINE OF THE 1940S

LIGHT #122, NOVEMBER 1942. FAN-EDITOR: LESLIE A. CROUTCH

IMPORTANT STUFF YOU CAN SAFELY IGNORE

WCSFAzine Issue # 6, Feb 2008, Volume 2, Number 2, Whole number 6, is the monthly E-zine of the West Coast Science Fiction Association (founded 1993), a registered society with the general mandate of promoting Science Fiction and the specific focus of sponsoring the annual VCON Science Fiction Convention (founded 1971).

Anyone who attends VCON is automatically a member of WCSFA, as is anyone who belongs to the British Columbia Science Fiction Association, a social organization (founded 1970) which is the proud owner of the VCON trademark. Said memberships involve voting privileges at WCSFA meetings.

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Since WCSFAzine is *NOT* the official organ of WCSFA, the act of reading WCSFAzine does not constitute membership in WCSFA or grant voting privileges in WCSFA. Therefore you don't have to worry about WCSFA policies, debates, finances, decisions, etc. Unless you want to. Active volunteers always welcome. WCSFA Website:

< <http://www.user.dccnet.com/clintbudd/WCSFA/> >

IMPORTANT STUFF THAT IS VERY COOL

Your membership fee: Nothing!
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Got something better to do: No problem!

WCSFAzine *IS* a fannish E-zine publication sponsored by WCSFA to promote and celebrate every and all aspects of the Science Fiction Community on the West Coast of Canada.

You can download the latest issue (and past issues) from < <http://efanzines.com> > or contact the Editor at: < rgraeme@shaw.ca > and ask me to email you a PDF version of each issue as soon as it is ready.

WCSFAzine is not intended to be an information newswire service, or an industry promotional outlet, but rather an eclectic ongoing anthology of bits and pieces of nifty rumours and misinformation as viewed through a fannish lens. You can expect the focus to be on the West Coast, but with a peripheral vision including the entire world of fandom. Anticipate info on upcoming books, fannish events, local clubs and conventions, film reviews, short essays, weird cover art, spin doctor publicity announcements, peculiar speculations and astounding bits of trivia to put you in touch with your fannish heritage.

WCSFAzine is not intended to be the perzine of the editor, though I will filter everything through my alleged wry sense of ~~imbecility~~ humour.

You, and I mean YOU (!) are invited to submit short (VERY short – say 2 to 3 paragraph) articles, mini-essays, letters of comment, art fillers (small pieces of art) and/or cover art to the Editor at:

R.G. Cameron, Apt 72G – 13315 104th Ave, Surrey, B.C., V3T 1V5.

Or submissions in both electronic text and B & W line drawing in jpg form to: < rgraeme@shaw.ca >

Particularly interested in personal experience/view/opinion/review articles, preferably light in tone. Also any interesting news.

No pay, but plenty of egoboo. Cheers all! The Graeme

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Note: All unaccredited articles are by the Ghod-Editor.

ART CREDITS:

Clip Art: 3.

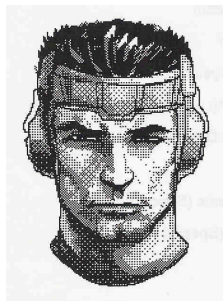
Leslie A. Croutch: 11, 12.

Brad Foster: 5.

William Robert (Bob) Gibson: 13.

William Rotsler: 7, 38.

EDITORIAL



Once again I am up against my self-imposed deadline, but I think I've done fairly well. Certain things I didn't get done, some articles not as big or as well researched as I had intended, no doubt many typos, errors & fallacies present, but that's all part of the fun of zine pubbing.

Next issue I will have an article about the BBC Live Dinosaurs show coming to General Motors Place this weekend. Cost me \$111.00 (more than one week's food budget!) for tickets for myself and my wife, but from everything I've heard it will be well worth it. Though, for that price I expect to see the T-Rex attack the people seated in the arena (Alyx and I will be up in the balcony. We bought the – relatively -- cheap seats).

Controversy continues to shake the hallowed halls of The British Columbia Science Fiction Association, namely whether or not to go online and cut back paper-print production. All I can say is pubbing a zine hosted by Bill Burns is an absolute delight compared to the drudgery of printing and mailing. I highly recommend going online to any and every zine faned. At any rate WCSFAzine may soon be joined on efanazines.com by its far older 'brotherzine' BCSFAzine. That would be cool.

Since I'm working late, I won't actually start work on WCSFAzine #7 till tomorrow evening. I plan on deciding what I will choose for a cover, download some info on VCON and the cover subject from my Canadian Fancylopedia, then do some research on same to see if I can expand the material. By the end of the weekend finish my next installment of VCON 33 report, chose a retrofilm review, and ? Thus the saga continues.

Please, send locs! I'd dearly like to know what readers think of all this. Any feedback a'tall!

I should have the next issue finished by March 1st. Many thanks to Bill Burns at < <http://www.efanazines.com> > for hosting. Please send me feedback! < rgraeme@shaw.ca > Cheers! Ghod-Editor The Graeme

CONVENTION STUFF

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF VCON 2: Part One

THE 2NDVANCOUVER SF CONVENTION - FEBRUARY 18th – 19th, 1972:

by The Graeme

OCTOBER, 1971:

The three clubs (UBC SFFEN, SF3 & BCSFA) which had sponsored VCON 1 were dormant during the summer of 1971. Then the UBC SFFEN Newsletter #1 (for 1971/1972) came out October 24th, 1971, with the following handwritten note: *"Since the BCSFA was not active this summer we are extending your membership for another year."*

This issue, a 2 page ditto, was edited by Robert Scott & Robert Leung. After mentioning the Hugos (Larry Niven won for RINGWORLD), they comment:

"All kinds of good things are planned for this year in SFFEN.... Another convention is in the planning stages...."

NOVEMBER 1971:

In the UBC SFFEN Newsletter #2, produced by Rob Scott & Rob Leung, it is announced that:

"On February 18th & 19th, 1972, the UBC and SFU Science Fiction Societies are hosting the 2nd annual Vancouver SF Convention. The Guest of Honour will be Philip K. Dick, author of MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, UBIK, A MAZE OF DEATH and about 25 other novels. The convention will be held at the Biltmore Hotel on 12th & Kingsway. There will be a banquet at which the Guest of Honour will speak, panels, a varied program of speakers, films, symposiums, parties, an art show and a fashion show. The rates are \$3.50 before Feb 4th, \$5.00 after. Banquet tickets are \$4.25... there is a choice of Salmon steak or veal cutlets...."

Not all of these promised items were to occur. It is of interest to note that no mention is made of BCSFA as a sponsor for the second convention. In fact, the flyers produced for the convention say: *"SF3 with the cooperation of ubc sfffen PRESENTS"* etc., so it looks as if the concept of BCSFA as a off campus coordinating entity had been discarded, for the time being.

JANUARY 1972:

Newsletter #3 came out on January 12th, 1972, written and printed by Robert Leung and Robert Scott.

In reference to the upcoming convention:

"All members are strongly urged to join soon. Note that the convention is budgeted for \$500 so we need about 150 attendees to break even.... Philip K. Dick's talk will be entitled "The Human and the Android: a contrast between the authentic person and reflex machine". His new novel is FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID and he describes it as being objective as opposed to all his recent novels. He is also collaborating with Roger Zelazny in what is sure to be a mindblower of a novel, DEUS IRAE."

In fact, Dick had been suffering from a writer's block due to his personal problems. The invite from Vancouver had inspired him to write the above mentioned speech, his first sustained writing for quite some time.....

In addition, the newsletter noted that the 'fashion show' mentioned last issue was, in fact, to be a masquerade.

FEBRUARY 1972:

Philip K. Dick was Guest of Honour at VCON 2. Since I don't have much material on the actual convention, but am aware that Dick's experience in Vancouver during and after the convention transformed him radically, I've decided to devote the rest of this chapter to describing what happened to him as best I can with the material available to me. A bit of a digression, in other words.

My sources of information are:

- **DIVINE INVASIONS**: a life of Philip K. Dick' (an excellent biography) by Lawrence Sutin, Harmony Books, 1989.
- Dick's own articles in Mike Bailey's perzines '**THE LONG HELLO**' & '**THE LONG GOODBYE**', circa 1975, plus Bailey's comments in same.
- Dick's letter recounting his Vancouver experience in the December 1972 issue of **SF COMMENTARY** (#31) published by Bruce R. Gillespie.
- my own interview with local Journalist Michael Walsh (then Province Newspaper Movie Critic) in May, 1994.

How did Philip K. Dick come to be invited as GoH? Mike Bailey explains in his perzine 'THE LONG GOODBYE':

"It all started in April 1971 at the first Vancouver SF Convention.... on the first night in the party suite we had an informal discussion about "favourite authors". Phil Dick's name came up several times and the remark was made by Frank Denton of Seattle that Dick was an author who apparently shunned fandom. The seed was planted. We thought that because Dick was highly thought of by many fans, including myself, and because he shunned fandom, then his presence as guest of honour at our next convention would help make the convention a success..."

However, when Philip K. Dick was invited by the organizers to be Guest of Honour, no one knew he was on the verge of a complete mental breakdown. But initial correspondence began to raise doubts. Bailey wrote::

"Before he came to Vancouver he wrote some personal letters and we were a little apprehensive about what to expect when he arrived. We worried a little about drugs also..."

For one thing, his house had been ransacked three months earlier, as described by Dick in an article later sent to Mike Bailey in December 1972:

"...the vast robbery and looting of my house a year ago in San Rafael, which caused me to move out of the United States entirely while I thought it over. I came home one evening and found rubble and ruin, my locked files blown open, papers of every sort gone, stereo gone, virtually everything gone, windows and doors smashed. To this day I don't know who did it. Robbery was not the motive; too many valueless items were taken, too much care to take correspondence and business records.... the police to a certain extent favored the theory that I'd done it myself. I didn't. I to a certain extent favored the theory that they had done it..."

And the bank was about to foreclose on his house (which happened while he was visiting Vancouver). No wonder the thought of an all-expenses paid trip appealed to him. According to Mike:

"When he arrived in Vancouver (Wednesday, February 16th), we were pleasantly surprised by his turned-on, humorous manner. He flew in at night and he was such a whirlwind that within a couple of hours we had checked into the hotel and visited a downtown cabaret..."

However, Mike was a bit surprised -- and worried -- to hear Dick declare during a quiet moment *"that he felt he didn't have long to live, and would never write another book."* This was not quite the sort of exciting guest the local fans had been looking forward to.

However, Dick perked up somewhat the next day (Thursday, February 17th), when, as reported by Mike:

"...the university English Department held a luncheon on his behalf in the University of B.C. Faculty Club (very high class), and afterwards he gave his convention speech in a large, filled lecture hall. It was very well received..."

Stan Hyde recalls that years later, while sitting in Susan Wood's office at UBC discussing SF, another Professor (who'd attended the faculty luncheon for Dick) walked in and asked:

"Whatever happened to that wonderful man, Philip Dick? You know, he was his own worst enemy."

Yep, that's Dick in a nutshell.

Of the speech, Dick wrote in late 1972:

"I think I worked four months on it, trying to sum up an entire lifetime of developing thought. At the time my personal difficulties were so great (in November 1971 my house was torn apart and looted, evidently by political

extremists) that I felt I wouldn't live much longer; I sensed, incorrectly I'm glad to say, that the speech would be the last thing I wrote. Therefore I poured into it all the remaining ideas in my head, in particular my germinal notions for future books. However, I did live on."

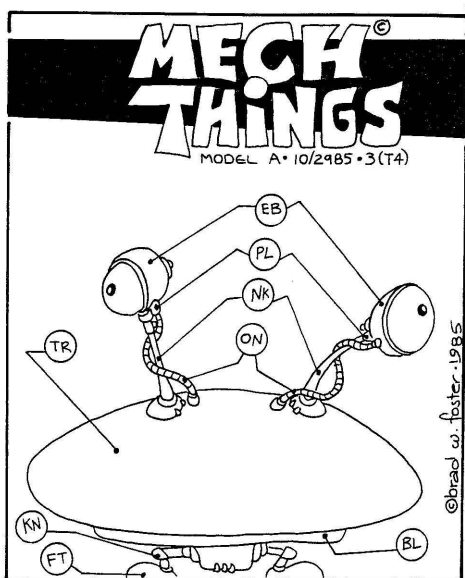
"I flew to Canada in February 1972, but bad luck still plagued me: the girl with whom I had been in love since my wife left me in 1970 did not as planned accompany me; at the last moment she tore up her plane ticket.... Kathy is her name; she is the girl mentioned at the end of the speech who stole the cases of Coke and then turned in the empties for the deposits. I had expected her to be seated beside me in Vancouver when I delivered the speech, and at UBC when I gave it there. She hadn't known I'd be telling about her prank in the speech and I had planned to turn to her as I ended and kiss her..."

"It almost killed me, though, to be in a strange country without friends, without her specifically..."

Kathy had been so important to him and his proposed speech that before arriving in Vancouver he had sent a press release to the Vancouver Province which read in part:

"...He is currently working day and night on his new novel simply called KATHY, named after the girl he is bringing with him to the Vancouver Science Fiction Convention on February 16.... The novel really does not exist as yet, except in his head, but Kathy does, and he hopes the people at the convention will welcome her and like her...."

Dick was extremely disappointed and depressed that Kathy had decided not to come and be with him when he gave his speech:



"...My determination to make Kathy.... remembered had to content itself with this piece in the Province. Kathy was immortal, but only in Vancouver. I felt, though, that I had done something important to me in getting this into print, but I couldn't stand to realize that she hadn't heard me give the speech about her, since it was in the speech that I developed my concept of the authentic person that so clearly described her..."

After giving his "THE ANDROID AND THE HUMAN" speech at UBC, Dick and Mike Bailey:

"... went to the Graduate Student Centre and had a round-table discussion which was supposed to be a radio interview. But Phil completely befuddled the interviewer. (For example, just as a tape ran off the machine, Phil held up his hand and exclaimed that he had just figured out how to express all his philosophy in one sentence. The announcer scrambled to get a new tape onto his machine, and didn't realize he had been taken until we all started laughing.)..."

TO BE CONTINUED

VCON 32 NOW RETRO! – Part Three By The Graeme

VCON 32 -- OCTOBER 20th, SATURDAY, 2007.

Up bright and early (by convention standards) at 8:00 AM. Run myself a hot bath to soak in while I sip my first cup of morning coffee and slowly gain consciousness at least to the point of self-awareness and an ability to relate functionally to my immediate physical environment. This goal at least 89% achieved, I set up the day's first video for the media-deprived masses and descend to the hospitality suite in search of better coffee and something solid to put in my stomach.

Well it is only 9:00 AM. Naturally there are only four people in the suite. This time of day I'm surprised to see that many. Ray Seredin, Billie Mcleod, Author Eileen Kerhaghan and her husband (whose name I know but like so much else it has gone adrift in my aging memory banks --- hmm, 'Michael' springs to mind?), and myself, all picking at assorted finger food left on the table and injecting coffee into our veins.

Sounds like an exhilarating, unique adrenalin rush, does it?

Actually it *is*, in a quiet, very pleasant manner. It's the conversation you see. At first we start out slow, exchanging horror stories about getting to the convention in the driving rain. Which brings to mind life experiences with crazy drivers in general. Which segues into a discussion of craziness as a sort of humour, at least when seen in retrospect. Which naturally turns to the subject of humour in Shakespeare, the traditional jolly grave diggers being perhaps the only truly sane characters among the usual lot of ambitious, scheming King-wannabes. Which then brings up the question of whether medieval Kings were at all sane as we understand the concept in modern times, or even by the standards of the day. By the time we finished talking I feel mentally stimulated and excited (though the additional four cups of coffee might have something to do with it).

I don't normally have morning conversations of this calibre. I usually get up before my wife, and my morning mumblings to our Guinea Pigs, Duck, Cat & Tarantulas seldom lead to a meaningful exchange of viewpoints, other than the usual clearly expressed "FEED ME!", which I find lacking as a basis for intellectual discussion. Furthermore, meaning no disrespect to my co-workers at the warehouse, Shakespeare is seldom discussed during our coffee breaks. *This* morning at the convention makes for a pleasing contrast to my usual routine.

That's the thing about Sci-Fi conventions. You can join a conversation in the hospitality suite, or perhaps a heated discussion at one of the panels, or indeed wherever and whenever a clump of fans has momentarily gathered, and windup talking about the most surprising topics. Newbies tend to wander the halls, feeling left out of things, thinking 'look at all these people who seem to know each other. Look at the fun they're having. How do I get in on it?'

Simple. Speak up. Join in. You'd be surprised how often the fans in animated conversation do *not* know each other. Whatever the particular interests of individual fans, most share broad interests in Sci-Fi and Fantasy in general, not to mention a lively interest in myriad other things, and all, or at least nearly all, are more than eager to share their views and at least a few are willing to listen to *your* views. Most fans *enjoy* the art of conversation. Discussing obscure but interesting topics enthusiastically with complete strangers is *common* at Sci-Fi conventions, it is one of the inherent traits of such conventions. It is part of the *great fun* of attending such conventions.

So don't be shy. Speak up. And if the person you're talking to turns out to be a complete fugghead (they must be, since they don't agree with you), then move on to someone else. Develop the art of drifting from conversation to conversation in the hospitality suite, listening till you find a topic which intrigues you and conversationalists you feel comfortable with. Then jump in feet first with your opinions clenched firmly in your tongue. That's how you break the ice. That's how you have fun... and make friends. They may wind up being friends you only ever run into on the local convention circuit, but hey, that's part of the pleasure and fun of con-going too!

As I leave the Hospitality suite I run into former C.U.F.F. winner Murray Moore (who is currently up for D.U.F.F. – I hope you voted for him. I did.) and his wife Mary (if my disintegrating memory serves – maybe I have Alzheimer's, but I've been like this all my life, so mayhaps nothing to worry about). I've recounted this story before but I'll repeat it here:

In the course of our conversation Murray pulls out the CD 'STRANGE VOYAGES' which contains the complete set of Mike Glichson's fanzines ENERGUMEN and XENIUM.

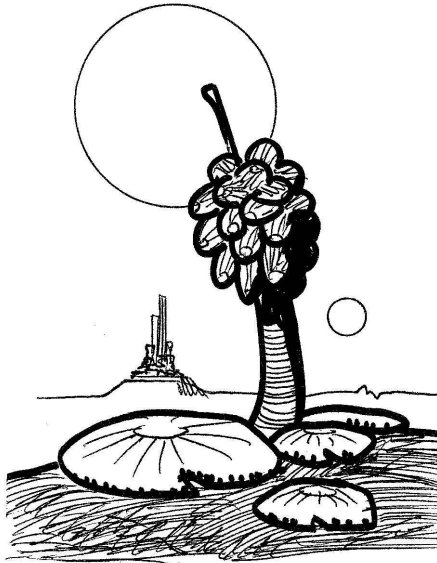
"I am Taral's agent," explains Murray. "I've got six of these. Only \$15 each. Know anybody who might want to buy one?"

"Yes, ME! Right NOW!" I reply, gleefully reaching for my wallet.

"Wow! That was easy. I must be a better salesman than I thought. Anybody else?"

I name Garth Spencer, who it turns out will snap one up just as fast as I did, and another party who shall go unnamed because he turned down the opportunity, which I find odd given his penchant for promoting zinedom. But then, fans are traditionally poor and operating on a tight budget at conventions, so maybe he will put it off till another time. (See ad at the end of this issue for info on how *you* might acquire this treasure of Canadian zinedom.)

Next I take in the art show. The art is well mounted on colossal free standing panels owned by VCON. We've had them for decades and they're beginning to get a bit tattered, despite the traditional paint job every five years or so. Trucking them from Steve 40's basement and trucking them back after the convention is over has been one of VCON's most enduring traditions. Trying to find a storage facility other than Steve's basement so he can finally be rid of them is another of our enduring traditions. One of these days we'll succeed.



There is no doubt the boards are handy. They allow the art work to be handsomely mounted to maximum advantage. The works by artist Guest of Honour Martin Springett are especially enticing. One in particular holds me in thrall. Titled 'Coney Hatch' it is a finely detailed colour (pencil? Ink?) drawing of an ornate, carved wooden wall-gate that brings to mind both Norse and Haida carving traditions, at least to *my* mind. Very dramatic, very brooding, conveys a sense of alternate-worldliness. Have no idea what the title means (a Coney is a rabbit is it not?) or whether the work relates to a particular story or myth, but visually it has a hypnotic impact on me, draws me into the scene. I stare into it for quite some time. However, priced at a minimum starting bid of \$400 I cannot even contemplate owning it. Still, feel privileged to study it close up and at my leisure.

I move on and discover a table of drawing doodles by 'Torrin', actually reprints of finely detailed (pencil? charcoal?) sketches of assorted mythic figures. Only \$5.00 each. I select three I think Alyx, my wife, will like. A man holding a large, pet Tarantula (she likes Tarantulas), an Anubis-like figure portrait (she likes Anubis), and a study of a man leaping into the air and transforming into an eagle (who doesn't dream of doing that?). Seems to me Torrin has provided portfolios of his art to browse through for several years in

a row. There's perhaps a good chance he will do the same next year at VCON 33. If you are on a limited budget and interested in fantasy art, I highly recommend checking out his sketches. He has some good stuff there!

Lots of other good artists have their work on display, running the gamut from pleasingly amateur to solidly professional. Once again, as often in the past, Rose Wilson has done a magnificent job organizing and running the VCON art show. Her biggest problem, I understand, is resisting the impulse to bid on more pieces than her budget can safely handle. I, on the other hand, have the good luck to have no budget at all to speak of, so sadly am able to resist the siren lure of the art treasures on display.

Till I spot 'Escape From Acheron' by Chilam. I think it's an oil painting (I'm really clueless when it comes to identifying art techniques) depicting a truly surreal scene. A small, obviously frantic human figure is fleeing across a sandy waste. Two grey stone arches add perspective. At least three giant floating eyeballs with long, trailing, tentacle-like tails are staring down at the running man. Each eye critter floats at a distinct distance from the viewer, so that the sense of perspective is greatly enhanced. The background sky is a deep, rich black, so that the eyes and the arches stand out in vivid relief. I just love it. It's small, maybe only a foot long and fewer inches high, but I'm entranced. This is the kind of art I faunch for!

Later in the day I corner Chilam and ask if I could perhaps pay for the piece in installments, picking it up when fully paid for. (I recall it was around \$100, again too rich for my paltry budget.) He considers it might be possible to figure something out. Then adds he may well still have a print or two. Seems it was a big hit with people when he first created it during his 'Surreal' phase and he'd been able to sell quite a few prints. So one way or another I may well end up with a print (or the original) of 'Escape From Acheron'. That would make me very happy.

Chilam is not only a talented artist, but a good friend of VCON. He has on occasion run the art show in the past, and, being in touch with numerous fellow artists, has never experienced any difficulty in 'flooding' the art show with art. Should an artist drop out before the convention, or a panel remain unspoken for, Chilam allows to how he would have no problem taking up the slack with his own work. One of the perks of running an art show, if you happen to be a starving artist in need of sales...

If you ever attend VCON, don't miss the art show! Always one of the highlights of the convention. We have many good local artists, and of course, it serves as a venue for our Artist Guests of Honour. So if you're serious about collecting good genre art, be it originals or prints, be sure to budget accordingly, as there is sure to be *something* that will catch your eye! And I'm told the end-of-con art auction is fast-paced fun, of late usually hosted by Steve Fahnstalk, who is by reputation

quite an entertaining auctioneer. (I admit I haven't been present these past many years, I'm afraid I might get carried away and bid on something. It sucks being lower working-class. If I ever win the lottery I'll build WCSFA/BCSFA a clubhouse and panel its walls with art from local genre artists. One of my many fantasies...)

Most of the rest of the working hours of the convention this day I spend 'monitoring' the situation in the video room, if only because a number of kids attending the con have attached themselves limpet-like to the furniture and I want to make sure that A) they don't damage anything, and B) aren't exposed to anything inappropriate for their age.

Fortunately, most of the films I'm showing belong to an era where the level of violence actually depicted is something less than contemporary Saturday cartoons and the sexual content is virtually non-existent. Martin Springett's son, who is perhaps 10-12 years of age (?) sits restlessly fidgeting through three 50s B movies in a row, apparently bored as far as I can tell, but I learn later comes out raving with excitement over the 'wonderful' Sci-Fi monster movies he's seen. Excellent. Another convert.

To tell the truth, I'd be reluctant to show many a modern flic unless I was permitted to enforce an age limit. The old movies, with their limited budgets and lack of gore are relatively harmless for young people, serving only to stir their sense of wonder and attract them to the genre, their imagination more than making up for any lack of credible realism apparent in the film. But modern genre films? With their emphasis on bloody gore, fast-paced violence, characters you can't identify with or care for, characters that are usually dull and boring, the *only* redeeming features being the violence and the realism of the violence? I tell you, what films have gained in budget and effects, they've lost in terms of characterization and plot.

(I'm not saying the old films possess *intelligent* characterization & plot; rather that they exhibit *entertaining* characterization and plot...)

How do you safely show young kids modern genre movies in the hope of converting them into life-long SF&F movie fans? Teenagers, no problem. If they see anything they don't like or makes them feel uncomfortable they'll scoff at it, make fun of it. But younger kids might be put off genre films for ever if something impacts them the wrong way. Sigh, tis a responsibility I feel when running a video room. It's all about first impressions.

When I was a kid, my parents being out partying (my dad was an Air Force officer after all), and my brother out hell raising (he was a teenager after all) I'd be up late all alone shivering in exquisite fear and anticipation watching Universal horror classics on TV's 'Shock Theatre', films like THE WOLFMAN and THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN. Or if not 'Shock Theatre', movies like ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS, or IT, THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE. Probably the closest to nirvana I've ever experienced.

I'd hate to be a little kid up late watching SAW II all alone. Put me off adults for life, it would.

Perhaps I'm just being nostalgic for a bygone era. I am an old phart after all. And there are plenty of good old-fashioned monster movies still being produced. I enjoyed THE MUMMY, and TREMOURS. Despite a certain amount of graphic violence, I think modern kids could handle those films without being traumatized, especially because the characters are so much fun. That's the key, I think, a sense of fun, of excitement, of wonder. So many modern films are sadly bereft of such things.

Adults arrive in the video room too. I've been beating the drum for fifties B movies for so long some people show up just to find out how big a liar I am. Murray Moore, for instance, eager to find out if a certain low budget horror flic featuring monster suits sewn by the cameraman's grandmother really is a 'disguised Faulkneresque love triangle' as I've been maintaining for years. And Ed Beauregard, wanting to know if a certain avian beastie really does move the audience to laughter the second they first see its horrific, leering visage, and by Ghu it does! I don't know if these people leave with a newfound respect for my ongoing passion for B movies, but at least they've learned I'm not a *complete* liar. Progress.

Sitting in the video room for hours on end is no great burden for me. I can watch these films forever, drinking in the familiar details, questing for anything I've previously missed, reveling in the quirky dialogue, the period piece streets scenes, etc. But I must admit feeling a bit sacrificial in that I've missed a whole bunch of good programming. I should have liked to watch the 'Hobbit Country Dancing' lesson, attended 'Furry 101' to figure out what the attraction is, thrilled to the 'Pencils at High Noon' cartoon war, attended the 'Mad Science Cabaret', listened to the 'Guerrilla Music Jam Session' and added to my insult vocabulary at 'Klingon 101', but such is fate. When you volunteer to serve on a concon, your service comes first. That's what makes a convention work.

But when all is said and done, there comes a time in the day when every good concon member ceases their work and seeks out the hospitality suite, looking for relaxation and companionship, oblivion and good beer, conversation and laughter.

I circulate for several hours. I recall Garth Spencer spouting poetry, someone beginning to beat on bongo drums till he remembers we dare not risk noise complaints, Murray Moore announcing his D.U.F.F. candidacy (Down Under Fan Fund – if he wins he gets to attend a convention in Australia as a representative of North American fans), Ryan Hawe listening patiently as I explain all about BCSFA/WCSFA/VCON & myself (I didn't notice his name tag, hadn't recognized him, thought I was talking to a newbie rather than the glorious Keeper of the FRED – he showed considerable restraint in not calling me an idiot to my face...), more arguments with the conspiracy theorist fan, and no doubt much else besides, no doubt much clever wit and profound declamations on my part, or somebody's part, but by the time I retreat to my room I'm too tired to write out notes and quotes...point is: good time had by all. Great way to end the day.

TO BE CONTINUED

PREREG NOW FOR VCON 33 in 2008!

VCON 33 -- (Oct 3-5, 2008) Vancouver, BC. Canada's oldest ongoing Sci-Fi convention (VCON 1 was held in 1971). Author GoH: Patrick Rothfuss (author of 'Name of the Wind'), Artist GoH: Lisa Snellings-Clark. Current pre-registration membership price: \$45 Cdn. Make out cheques to 'VCON' and mail to VCON, c/o Box 78069, Grandview RPO, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V5N 5W1. 85 members pre-registered so far. Details re hotel, rates, dates, more GoHs, etc to be announced. If you'd like to help write: < vconchair@gmail.com > For updated info: < www.vcon.ca >

MINI-CON PLANS UNVEILED – The VCON 33 concon are in the early stages of planning 4 minicons to raise awareness of VCON in the Lower Mainland and in particular, to raise more seed money & sell more memberships for VCON 33. Each minicon will feature a short single-track program, will have its own theme, and be located in a different town in the Lower Mainland (tentatively Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey & North Vancouver). Potential themes include media, writing, gaming & ? Further details to be announced as they develop.

GAMING GUEST OF HONOUR REVEALED – VCON 33 Chair Danielle Stephens has announced James Ernest of CHEAPASS GAMES in Seattle will be Gaming GoH at VCON 33. CHEAPASS GAMES is renowned for its inexpensive yet wonderfully enjoyable board games like 'Enemy Chocolatier', 'Devil Bunny Hates The Earth', 'Jacob Marley, Esq', 'Kill Dr, Lucky', and 'One False Step For Mankind'.

Check out CHEAPASS GAMES at < <http://www.cheapass.com> >.

FANATICAL FANAC FABLES

RETRO FANZINES: LIGHT #49, JAN 1952

Faned: Leslie A. Croutch

FANED BIO: LESLIE A. CROUTCH

Leslie A. Croutch was Canada's third faned, and the most famous Canadian fan in the 1940s.

Croutch was born in White River, Ontario, on April 25, 1915. The family moved several times, before finally settling in Parry Sound on the Eastern shore of Lake Ontario in 1929. He lived the rest of his life in his parent's house, address: 41 Waubeek street, until dying in a very Canadian manner on January 2nd, 1969, suffering a heart attack while shoveling snow. He never went beyond grade 10. Self employed all his life, he ran 'Croutch Radio Service' out of his bedroom for many years, then had a workshop built on to his home, and with the advent of television, operated 'Croutch Radio & Television service'.

He was a no-nonsense, plain-speaking kind of guy with a punning sense of humour. His brother Victor stated: "*He had no private life. He met the public day in and day out as a repairman.... Les was neither bashful nor retiring. He kept to himself a lot.*" Bob Tucker wrote that Croutch "*was solidly rooted in the mundane world of radio and television. To me he was someone for whom SF was a hobby.*" He had many close friends in Parry Sound, yet none of them knew of his SF fanac which seems to have been strictly relegated to contact with outsiders. His other interests included a life-long love of movies, going to see an average of two a week, and reading a great number of history and electronics publications.

In his life he produced at least 175 fanzines under the titles LET'S SWAP, CROUTCH NEWS, CROUTCH MAGAZINE MART NEWS, LIGHT, THE VOICE & ELECTRON. In 1944 and again in 1946 he was elected to the board of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, being considered its Canadian representative, and also served as corresponding secretary for the Northern Fantasy Fan Federation for its short-lived four year existence (1948 to 1951). He was a member of FAPA (the Fantasy Amateur Press Association) from 1943 to 1963.

He was a prolific writer of articles for other zines as well as his own, as was considered a prolific letterhack (fan slang for writer of letters of comment). Of his fanac he wrote (in 1942): "*For myself, I think I am doing my share in upholding Canadian fandom. In the past I have appeared (articles, news, fiction) in the following U.S. fanzines: MSA BULLETIN, SPACEWAYS, VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION, LE ZOMBI (cartoon). In England in TIN TICKS and FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST. I have material coming up in America's SPACEWAYS, VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION, TELLUS, FAN-ATIC, and plenty of material out going the rounds...*"

Indeed Croutch was quite consciously an advocate of Canadian zinedom, as witness the following written in 1942: "*Is there a true Canadian fandom?... Personally I believe in its existence sincerely. We have two going fanzines: CENSORED and LIGHT. In British Columbia we have a new one in the labour of being given birth to: VULCAN. In Toronto Mason works mightily on THE GOON'S GAZETTE... Let's see where LIGHT goes: 17 to Canadians, 5 to English fans, and the rest (28 or more) to Americans... The small group of Canadians it goes to are fairly active in contributing to it... 9 of*

them.. Available talent that I know of in Canada covers all fields. John H. Mason in Toronto is an able writer, both pro and fan, fictional and article. Fred Hurter can do articles, fiction, verse, and also some art. Gordon L. Peck and sister Shirley Peck (of Vancouver) are both writers and able artists. Nils H. Frome (of B.C.) is a fictionist and a very able artist...Fandom is really alive in Canada! We may not shout from the housetops – we may not throw out our chests and make a big noise – but we are growing in number and in power and are rapidly developing a unique character all our own."

And writing in 1948: "Published for Canadians by Canadians. Why not? For too long Canadians have acted as though they were ashamed to be Canadians. Why shouldn't we brag about our nationality? We've got just as much, if not more, on the ball than a lot of others."

Further commenting in 1949: "What has publishing a fanzine meant to me? It has meant pleasure – a hobby that has kept me occupied – a hobby that I have shared with friends, and I have found that that kind of hobby gives me the greatest joy... In its small way, it has carved out for me a niche among people that like the same things I do... But the greatest pleasure has been the knowledge that its voice has been the loudest and most insistent Canadian one in America and world fandom. CANADIAN FANDOM and CENSORED have shouted loudly too, but LIGHT does it the most often...."



He also wrote a large amount of fiction, at least 100 stories, most of which appeared in his or other's fanzines, but some of it was professionally published. For a while Forrest J. Ackerman served as his agent. AMAZING STORIES published his 'The Day The Bomb Fell' in its Nov 1950 issue, and his most famous, a post-holocaust story titled 'Eemanu Grows up', appeared in the June 1948 issue of FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES. Other stories were published in UNCANNY TALES, EERIE TALES, and FUTURE FICTION. His story 'Playmate' was anthologized in both THE AUTHENTIC BOOK OF SPACE (London 1954), and TALES FROM BEYOND TIME: FROM FANTASY TO SCIENCE FICTION (New York 1974), the latter edited by L. Sprague de Camp and Catherine Crook de Camp.

But it is his per/genzine LIGHT for which he is best remembered. As Harry Warner Jr. wrote in NEW CANADIAN FANDOM #6 (Jan 1983): "Les was one of my favorite fans of all time.... I'm quite aware that Les wasn't the kind of writer who took enough time to make his fanzine contributions as entertaining today as they were when first published, but there's a vitality to everything he wrote, an enthusiasm and joie de vivre that makes them better than the more polished output of the famous fans of the period who wrote dearly dull stuff."

He became a legend in his own time, being described in the Fall 1948 issue of CENSORED as "...one of Canada's oldest and most prominent (in more ways than one) fan, and the pioneers of aj-jay Canfanac." The "in more ways than one" reference is a dig at his size, 5 foot 11 inches and somewhat overweight in a rumpled, bear-like manner. Or as Fred Hurter observed: "General impression of Croutch -- there's a lot of him." Croutch was held in affection by Canfandom through out most of his fanpub career. But alas, he always remained true to his chatty, informal, punning style, and gradually began to seem dated to new generations of fans. This led to a falling off of his fanac, till he gafiated in 1963. But there's no doubt that at his height he beat the drum for Canadian zinedom & Canfanac, inspiring many to contribute and even pub their ish, and was much beloved by Canfandom for his efforts. According to Harry Warner Jr, in his heyday Croutch was considered by contemporary Canadian fans as "the founding father of their fandom". He deserves to be remembered.

Not least for his contribution to *the usual*. Whenever you see this term in a zine's masthead, "Available for the usual", it means the faned is willing to trade his zine in exchange for yours, or in exchange for article contributions, art contributions, or regular letters of comment. Getting something to read, or use, or getting a reaction, is of far greater worth to a faned than getting cash for a subscription. In fact, many zines do not have a subscription price, as mere money is considered valueless compared to the true coin of the realm, egoboo.

Yet the earliest zines were all subscription zines, or subzines. At what point did the concept of *the usual* take hold? Many point at Robert W. Lowndes LE VOMBITEUR which ran 37 issues from Dec 1938 to Dec 1940. But according to Harry Warner Jr., the more likely culprit is Canada's own Leslie A. Croutch.

Warner stated in FOCAL POINT #11 (Aug 1970): "Le Vombiteur has been credited with the pioneer status in this respect... but that was an awfully small fanzine, and for years after its appearance, its influence wasn't fully felt. I suspect that an untitled single-sheeter that Les Croutch mailed to a lot of fans late in 1945 provides one of the first full statements of the attitude that was taking control of fannish thinking, and the appearance of this philosophy in duplicated form may have helped to popularize it."

Quoting a portion of the single-sheeter in question: "If you want to receive LIGHT, all you have to do is drop me a line... and say so... You don't have to send me money. I'm not after a contribution, though if you ever send one I'll be very appreciative... I don't even ask you to write a letter in return for every issue, though I do like to get them and feel that if I spent time on this publication and send it to you, you should drop me a line now and then... My return for this? Well, this is a hobby. It is a sort of avocation... I like publishing. I like to show what I print to others. I like to write just for fun."

However this influence may date from even earlier. As far back as Feb 1942, contributing to UNCANNY TALES, Croutch wrote that LIGHT "is a rather unique (zine). It is not a subscription affair, but is a sort of semi-private house organ, going only to correspondents of mine who wish to read it. It circulates in the U.S., Canada, England, and Scotland."

At the very least, it can be said Croutch was in the forefront of spreading an early version of a concept (later known as *the usual*) among the faneds of his day.

As for the final legacy of Croutch and his beloved LIGHT, Harry Warner Jr. wrote in #11 of FOCAL POINT in 1970: *"I keep thinking about Les Croutch. His death more than a year ago might still be unknown in fandom, if Bill Danner hadn't belatedly answered a letter and found the answer back in his mail box, with DECEASED stamped on the envelope. There's nobody active in Canadian fandom today who was part of the old Croutch gang. Les is rarely mentioned when people reminisce about old days in fandom. Nobody ever reprints from the fanzines he published over a span of two decades... If Les still exists somewhere and hasn't altered his outlook on life and fandom, I'm sure he'll understand my good intention when I say that LIGHT was the best of all possible crudzines. If you looked for impeccable mimeography, polished writing, the best available art, and a consistent format, you would have a long hunt through all those scores of issues, with little success in your quest. But LIGHT was as comfortable as a pair of old shoes, nobody ever got angry at anybody else in its pages, and after all these years it still seems to be alive as the ink and paper incarnation of a good guy's personality... I wish someone still produced something as scruffy and unassuming and genial as LIGHT."*

(Note: in 1982 Hounslow Press of Toronto published a book on the life of Croutch by John Robert Columbo, titled "YEARS OF LIGHT: A CELEBRATION OF LESLIE A. CROUTCH: A COMPILATION AND A COMMENTARY." Now out of print, it's well worth getting a hold of if you can. It not only puts together a compelling story of Croutch's life, interests and achievements, it's a great survey of Canadian Fandom in the 1940s.)

LIGHT began as an adzine and gradually evolved into a per/gen/apazine. In continuous production from 1937 to 1963. Various titles were as follows:

- #1 (1937/38) to #92 (Dec 1940) = CROUTCH MAGAZINE MART NEWS.
- #93 (Jan 1941) to #99 (Apr 1941) = CROUTCH NEWS.
- #100 (Apr 1941) to #103 (Jun 1941) = ELECTRON.
- #104 (Jun 1941) to #107 (Aug 1941) = CROUTCH NEWS.
- #108 (Sept 1941) to #135 (Fall 1945) = LIGHT.

Then Croutch decided to restructure his numbering system based on the name change to LIGHT. Thus if #108 is considered to have been #1, then #136 must be:

- #29 (Nov 1945) to #69 (1961) = LIGHT.

Note: There were further issues, but Croutch gafiated some time in 1963.

As to production methods: #1-99 were carbonzines, #100-107 were hectographed, and #108 on were mimeographed.

And as to why he chose the name LIGHT, Croutch wrote: *"For the record, it was I who thought of the name LIGHT. It was short, snappy, lent itself easily to punning, of which fact many have taken advantage, was easy to remember, and was distinctive."*

REVIEW OF LIGHT #49 (Jan 1952)

The cover of LIGHT #122 (1942) reproduced on the cover of this WCSFAzine is taken from Columbo's book. Since the BCSFA/WCSFA archive does not contain #122 I cannot review it, but I choose to print its cover because it is so evocative of the era. It perhaps represents the best 'face' that LIGHT was capable of presenting to fandom at large.



However, the archive includes #49, whose cover (reproduced on the left) possibly represents the *worst* LIGHT had to offer, as it is rather crude, depicting 4 disembodied and somewhat randy heads floating -- by virtue of their propeller beanies -- up & down in front of the nylon-stocking legs of a woman whose upper half is unseen, the heads smacking their lips as they stare wide-eyed at the 'gams', an angry devil's visage above spurring them on. Sadly, it is by Croutch himself, and I gather it is rather typical of his work.

But apart from artistic merit (or lack of), you needn't rush to judge in terms of considering it immature or puerile. You have to remember the times. It was considered 'daring' to even mention sex, and the two words most often associated with public commentary on sex were 'dirty' and 'smutty'. In the 1950s, for instance, the RCMP were empowered to enter people's homes and examine personal libraries. James Joyce's ULYSSES and any book by Henry Miller would automatically be seized, being illegal in Canada, along with many other works now recognized as genuine literature.

Croutch was a life-long groutch about censorship, which he felt was an insult to the intelligence of every adult. Yes, he was criticized for putting nudes on his covers, and for assorted jokes and puns sometimes dealing with sexual topics in an unsubtle but never blatant fashion, but he genuinely felt a crusading zeal to oppose censorship and root out what he regarded as hypocrisy reflecting the immaturity of

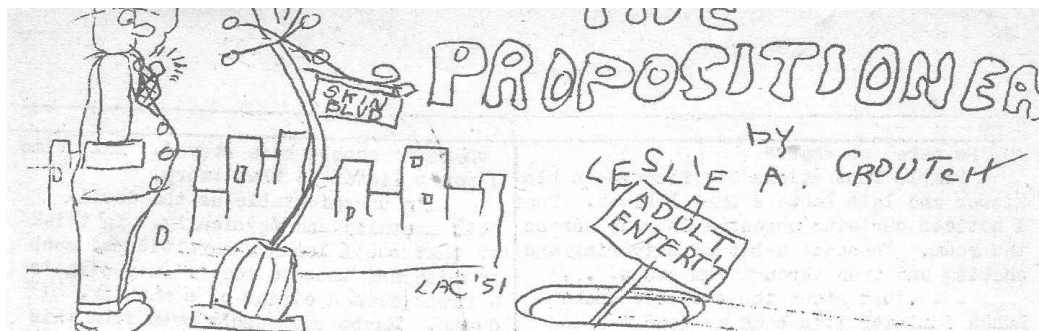
contemporary society. Croutch insisted that nudity in art was erotic rather than pornographic, views to the contrary being childish. His view was considered obscene by the more conservative fans, but was applauded by those who agreed with his advocacy of greater artistic freedom.

Tweaking the sensibilities of the censorious-minded appealed greatly to Croutch. Using the pseudonym THE PROFESSOR he took on the visage of a virulently virtuous and putatively puritanical writer who frequently wrote to Ackerman's VOICE OF THE IMAGI-NATION (VOM for short) in a relentless assault on the nude VOMAIDENS appearing on the covers, and also in opposition to the more liberal views expressed by other contributors, circa early 1940s, till he was 'outed' as *"the lusty Les Croutch, the Canadian sexperimenter in stf"*. There is no doubt he took great delight in parodying his critics under the guise of 'The Professor'.

Getting back to the questionable 'artistic merit' of the majority of LIGHT's illustrated covers, Harry Warner Jr. had this to say: *"Les kept getting into trouble with a few fans over his artistic productivity. His own sketches ran heavily to Chic Sales as subject matter, usually with some kind of punch line involving science fiction or fandom. When he published the work of other artists, he had a bad habit of putting extremely ugly nudes on his front cover. Some of them had ninety-degree angles at spots where a normal body should be either straight or gently curved, leading to the general impression that only girls with steel plates in their bodies would pose for LIGHT's artists. Breasts usually looked like an extra pair of lungs..."*

How is this Croutch's fault? Like most faneds, I assume he took whatever fanart he could get. He may have specified female nudes as the subject matter, but I doubt he insisted on a lack of mammary realism. I suspect it had more to do with a combination of the artists' limitations and their attempt to convey the perceived physical beauty standard of the period.

Anyway, after the cover, issue #49 has a colophon reading: *"LIGHT – published every so often by Leslie A. Croutch, Box 181, Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada, for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and a motley crowd of hangers-on, all of whom get the magazine gratis. No payment beyond a free copy in which material appears, but as everybody gets his/her copy free who gives a damn? The editor is abetted now and then by the able help of the disabled Robert W. Gibson, Samuel Welcome-to-my-house McCoy and ex-sergeant Norman Vee Lamb."*



The next page is headed by an illustration drawn by Croutch himself to introduce his story THE PROPOSITIONER, about a man propositioned off the street by a pimp. When the main character meets the girl: *"I expects this babe to start the long blather but she's quiet as the proverbial grave. Maybe she's dumb, I think, and am happy, as I don't like my women yak yakking all the time."* Undressed, the woman turns out to be three-legged, and the man flees, convinced he was about to be entrapped by an alien. The character's final comment: *"I feel sorry for the girl."* Presumably he wouldn't have if she had turned out to be an ordinary prostitute. The SF element is very weak, and is swamped by the pseudo-hardcore detective fiction style ala Micky Spillane, but nevertheless remains an interesting attempt to combine the two genres.

A crossword puzzle by Robert (Bob) W. Gibson offers such clues as *"Author who introduced tendrils, callidity, and toti-potency"* (Answer: Van Vogt), *"Our neighbour's satellite"* (Answer: Phobos. This is spelled wrong. Should be 'Phobos', one of the Martian Moons), and, possibly a comment on Croutch as faned: *"One thing Croutch must do with LIGHT"* (Answer: edit).

Typical Croutch pun: *"Well, bless my soul," said the ram, as he plunged over the cliff. 'I didn't see that ewe turn.'"*

Page five is devoted to LET'S SWAP. The heading states: *"This is the 123th listing to appear ---- older'n' 'Light'! LET'S SWAP!"* and adds: *"Cash or swap ---- What have you got! ---- Postage paid --- I want 8mm movie film ---- Radio books --- STF Weird and Fantasy books and anthologies."* Croutch offers pocketbooks like H.P. Lovecraft's 'Weird Shadow Over Innsmouth and Other Stories' and A. Merrit's 'Face In The Abyss', and a plethora of 1940/50's SF magazines including: AMAZING, ASTOUNDING, CAPTAIN FUTURE, FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, GALAXY, NEW WORLDS (English), PLANET, OTHER WORLDS, STARTLING STORIES, SUPER SCIENCE (Canadian), and THRILLING WONDER; all from 25¢ to 50¢ each! Sounds cheap now, but expensive enough at the time. Croutch was willing to accept money; but preferred an item of equal value for exchange.

The longest article is 'Light Flashes' by Croutch, on the subject of record players, or more particularly, the different types of playing needles. He reveals that cactus needles *"never were any good"* and damaged the grooves, especially after sharpening, and that taking out a steel needle and putting it back in is a bad idea, for one or two plays will have ground the

end of the tip into a chisel shape and "you are sure to get it turned so the chisel tip becomes a chisel in fact and it will cut into the record groove and ruin the record."

The best current solution? Use a light pressure pickup "with a precious metal needle, or a sapphire needle, or a diamond tip, and you will find that even after many thousands of plays there is no apparent wear either with the needle or with the record." An insight into obsolete technology. However, some of his comments (he is a radio/TV repairman after all) are totally meaningless to someone as ignorant as I: "And this stuff about push pull triode outputs – push pull pentodes, beam power tubes, with proper negative feedback, can give you the same curve within reason." (?) Haven't got a clue.

I like his comment on contemporary televisions: "A leading company states that their TV receiver contains 14,370 feet of wire, 799 individual parts, 756 soldered joints, and requires 7,458 assembly operations. No wonder a TV set costs upwards of \$500! " A lot of money in 1952!

And most interesting of all, close to my heart as a faned, is his commentary on the SPEED-O-PRINT he owns, though it is not clear to me whether this is the brand name of his mimeograph itself or simply the title of its paper feed mechanism. He has a lot to say about the latter device: "For a long time I never used the automatic feed on my machine, but the last LIGHT was run off using the feed. At the time I was very enthusiastic over the results as LIGHT was run off in about half the time due to not precounting the paper – just putting a stack in and then counting the sheets as they come through But in the last few weeks I have been reconsidering and now I am wondering if this advantage is worth the disadvantages."

"For one thing, using the automatic feed increases the paper wastage quite a bit. Using hand feed you can put a hundred sheets through and get 100 sheets that are usable. Using the feed you have to put at least an extra 10 sheets through and even then you can't be 100% sure of getting 100 perfect ones. Using hand feed you CAN get registration that is a good 90% better than when using the feed."

"Another thing, it is easier to adjust your speed so that you can get better copies by going slower near the end of your run than when using the feed, where you seem to run faster, and where the feed arm acts as a drag that has to be overcome, resulting in a certain amount of jerkiness if the speed is lower than a certain minimum."

"I have not yet decided whether this issue will be run off 'by hand' or 'by feed'."

All in all a varied issue offering insight into his numerous interests both professional and fannish.

BOB GIBSON: 1940S CANADIAN FAN ARTIST

A minor matter perhaps, but in my 'GOOD NEWS FOR FANZINEOPHILES' article last issue I quoted Dale Speirs as writing: "This makes Alberta one of the top places for SF collections. Several years ago the University of Calgary Library received the Bob Gibson collection, an equally massive library of SF."

I then commented: "As for the Bob Gibson collection... I believe the Bob Gibson in question might be the Bob Gibson fanartist appearing in zines like CANADIAN FANDOM in the late 1940s and early 1950s. But I'm not sure, because there were two Bob Gibsons active in fandom at that time, one living in Picton, Ontario, and the other in Calgary, Alberta.

Which was the fanartist I do not know. Maybe one of my readers can fill me in."

Well, now I can say that Bob Gibson the fanartist was the Calgary Bob Gibson, and in fact the same Bob Gibson who ultimately donated his SF collection to the University of Calgary. How do I know this? Well, to start with, I remembered seeing a page of Gibson fanart in the special Torcon issue of Crouth's LIGHT (#36 August) reprinted in John Robert Columbo's book YEARS OF LIGHT: A CELEBRATION OF LESLIE A. CROUTCH. I turned to the appropriate page and discovered that the two pieces in question – reproduced on this page – were by Bob Gibson of Calgary. Great! A mystery solved. Not exactly the Da Vinci code, but what the heck...

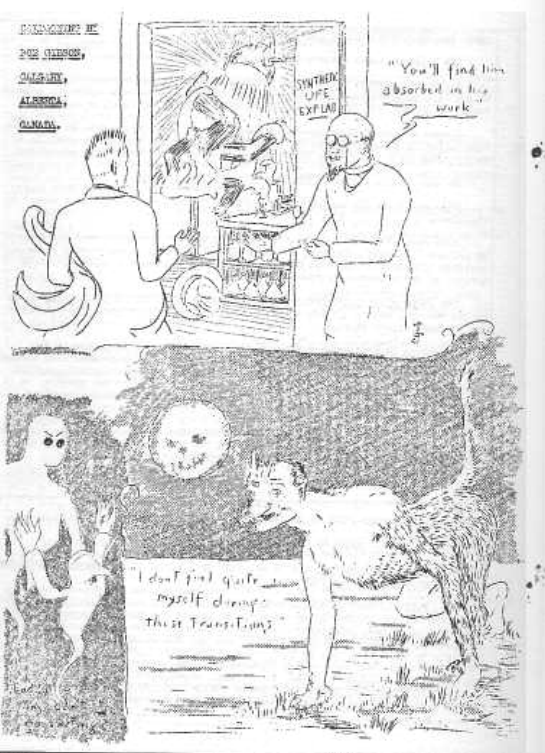
In the upper panel, the sign on the door reads "Synthetic Life Exp Lab", and the bearded guy is commenting "You'll find him absorbed in his work."

The werewolf in the lower panel is saying "I don't feel quite myself during these transitions."

And the lettering on the left of the upper panel reads "Cartooning by Bob Gibson, Calgary, Alberta, Canada."

So, who was this Bob Gibson guy, fanartist?

William Robert (Bob) Gibson was born in 1908 on a farm in Springbank, Alberta. He picked up the habit of reading early, especially when a year-long bout of Scarlet fever left him bed ridden with time on his hands. Jules Verne in particular appealed to his imagination. Since the farm was within walking distance of



Calgary, as a teenager Bob would often simply walk to the downtown library to borrow books.

Verne may have introduced him to Sci-Fi, but what triggered his life-long interest in collecting books and magazines in the genre? Andrew Gibson, Bob's son, *"speculates that his father's interest in collecting books may have stemmed from an incident when Bob witnessed his father pitch his grandfather's collection of books and magazines down a well in order to make more room in the house. That material remained visible - and agonizingly unreachable - for years after."*

When the Second World War began, Bob volunteered his services despite being over 30 years old. He wound up as a gunner in an artillery unit that was stationed in England, eventually taking part in the Sicilian and Italian campaigns. According to Harry Warner Jr. Bob was in England *"and meeting fans"* by 1942, and that *"Bob Gibson was a silent fan in Canada. But when he went to England with the armed forces, he added 500 books to his collection and helped to establish the British Fantasy Society, serving on its advisory board."*

He may have been 'silent' before he went overseas, but – perhaps inspired by his contact with British fans -- he found the time to correspond with Canadian fans and even contribute to Canadian zines. The earliest reference I can find for his wartime fanac is a cartoon on page 6 of CANADIAN FANDOM # 5 (Nov 1943), and a short story titled 'Little Drops of Water' which appeared in CANADIAN FANDOM #6 (Feb 1944). By that date he was well enough known among Canadian Fans to have his photograph -- labeled 'Gnr. Bob Gibson' -- appear on the cover of that issue (along with 14 other prominent Canadian fans: Sgt. Ted White, John Hollis Mason. Albert A. Betts, Alan Child, Ron Conium, Leslie A. Croutch, Al Godfrey, Fred Hurter, Viola Kenally, Al Macrae, Jack Sloan, Beak Taylor. John G. Hilkert & Jessie E. Walker), and to be listed in a Canadian Fan Directory of that time as *"M3020 Gibson W.R."*, the address being: *"R.H.Q. 11th C.A.F.R., RCA Canadian Army Overseas, Central Mediterranean Forces."*

After the war he moved back to Calgary. The CANADIAN FAN DIRECTORY prepared (but never distributed) by the Canadian Science Fiction Association in fall of 1952 lists the address of 'Gibson, W. Robert' as *"2421, 25 "A" St., S.W. Calgary, Alta."* He seems never to have left the Calgary area but continued to live in the region till the end of his life.

In the immediate postwar years Gibson continued contributing material to Canadian fanzines. From 1946 to 1949 CANADIAN FANDOM averaged only two issues a year, but LIGHT came out twice as often, so it is not surprising that the bulk of Gibson's contributions seem to have been mailed to Leslie. A. Croutch's LIGHT. Croutch was lucky enough to enjoy a wealth of contributors over the years.... The two fan artists most often used (apart from Croutch himself), were Bob Gibson (the better of the two) and John Cockroft (who did the only offset cover) with frequent contributions from Nils Helmer Frome (Canada's second Fan Ed) in the 1940s and William Grant (most famous for his art in CANADIAN FANDOM) in the 1950s.



Of Gibson's contributions to LIGHT, Taral Wayne wrote: *"He first appeared to my knowledge in '44... He did most of Croutch's covers for the next several years, only disappearing from sight, after a pause in '48, in 1951. It was all on-stencil, not overly-bad, but difficult to describe, since stencil techniques tend to disguise differences in style. His ideas were usually good, and his skills adequate for them. A Cyclopean creature on the cover of LIGHT #33 Sept 1946, an inside page in #34 Jan 1948 illustrating what waits in the dark for you to strike a match, and a cover on #46 Oct 1951 of a fan trapped in a maelstrom of fanzines not only shows Gibson at his best, but also what a wide range of topics he could successfully handle....Gibson also drew cartoon pages, fillos for the corners, and most logos that Croutch didn't do himself."*

One reason why Gibson apparently gafiated (fannish slang for 'Get Away From It All') in the early 1950s may have to do with CANADIAN FANDOM going on hiatus in 1949, not to be revived till Sept 1951, and LIGHT stopping with #46 in Oct 1950 and not returning with #47 until Nov of 1951. It may be that, his two principle outlets having 'dried up' for months on end he simply got out of the habit of submitting fanart or any other material.

On the other hand, Gibson was still active in January of 1952 when #49 of LIGHT featured a crossword puzzle by him offering such clues as *"Has got the girl on many a magazine cover"* (Answer: 'B.E.M.', which stands for 'Bug-Eyed Monster', a term invented by American fan Martin Alger in August, 1939), *"Most-trodden planet"* (Answer: 'Tellus', i.e. 'Earth'), and *"Often brought by Atomic wars or by playing margins"* (Answer: 'Ruin').

#49 also included a letter from Gibson about his puzzle: *"Hope you can use this. I started it way back when – when I had some time. Then the rains came and the floods descended, and our cellar sprung a spring. I had to persuade – by hand – up to 200 pails of water a day into the drain."*

"Note – We live on a hilltop, among neighbours similarly afflicted. When at last we were able to arrange for a pump it was time to start teaching ceramics night classes. I've used up any spare time finishing up the crap. Didn't even write to Norm" [Lamb].

"Started it by crossing stf authors and a few titles. Then filled in with ordinary words. Ended up with one error – a number missed."

"Never tried one seriously before – and will take some powerful persuasion before I try another. Brrr."

Gibson may have been active for longer than 1952. At least 19 issues of CANADIAN FANDOM were published in the 1950s, and about 23 issues of LIGHT, not to mention other Canadian zines of the decade like A BAS, CANADIAN CAPERS, FIE, GASP, IBIDEM, MIMI, WENDIGO & VANATIONS, so it is possible Gibson continued to find worthwhile venues for his art. Certainly drawing was a lifelong interest and hobby of his, so ongoing fanac seems at least a possibility. It would take access to surviving copies of the zines of the era to confirm or deny this.

(Hmmm... I just checked the complete six issue run of VANATIONS in the archive. No sign of Gibson. Oh well.)

Certainly, perhaps primarily because of his passion for magazine and book collecting, Gibson remained on the periphery of local fandom for quite some time to come.

Garth Spencer quoted Dale Speirs of Calgary as writing: *"I only knew Bob Gibson as a nodding acquaintance at conventions and in secondhand bookstores. He was prominent in fandom in the 1940s and 1950s but basically withdrew after the faanish barbarians swamped SFdom. He was a quiet man and quite sercon."*

Speir's comment that he didn't withdraw until the modern 'Barbarian Invasion' (historically referring to the meteoric rise of Trek & other media fandom) would indicate he was semi-active as a fan (fanartist?) into the early 1970s.

And there is some evidence suggesting Gibson remained partially active into the 1980s. Writing in 1985 Taral Wayne commented: *"In Calgary, Bob Gibson has been doing local work, since NonCon 4 at least..."*

Is this in reference to the Bob Gibson, or another fan artist of the same name?

A 'Bob Gibson' was 'resident head artist & T-shirt designer' for Noncon 4 in 1981, contributing cover art & 3 other pieces for the program book, all signed with a distinctive, ornate 'B' & 'G' combined into a sort of backwards 'E', sometimes with the 'ob' & the 'ibson' of his name in smaller letters trailing off the backwards 'E' one above the other. Also, *this* Bob Gibson seems to have had a thing for one-legged bovine unicorns (as witness the ad for Noncon 4 in the Noncon 3 program book).

Is this *the* Bob Gibson, or another fan artist of the same name?

Colin Hinz recalls there was (in the context of the 'original' Bob Gibson) some sort of Guide to Calgary Fandom type of publication in the early 1980s featuring a Gibson cover (though it may possibly have simply been a reprint of an older piece). Colin also believes Gibson was still minimally involved in fanart around that period, but isn't sure if his memory can be trusted on this.

And Garth Spencer once mentioned (in the context of the 'original' Bob Gibson) that Gibson had been a Guest of Honour at Onocon 85. An advert single-sheeter promoting Onocon 1 confirms this, stating: *"Specially invited to this 3 day escape from the mundane world are 2 honoured guests – long-time fan and artist Bob Gibson, designer of the Noncon 4 & 6 T-shirts, and Dr. Janis Svilpis, whose collection of pulps form the basis of his edifying and entertaining slide shows."* Long-time fan? How much long-time? And Colin Hinz declares that the 'original' Gibson was at least present at the following Onocon in 1986. So the likelihood exists he was in fact the GoH the year before. He would have been around 76 years old at that time.

Gibson died on January 8, 2001 at the age of 92.

The reference to ceramics in Gibson's letter to LIGHT #49 is proof that the 'original' Bob Gibson' is the 'same' Bob Gibson whose collection went to the University of Calgary. To quote from the biography of Gibson appearing on the collection's website:

"On his return to Calgary [after the war] he found an outlet for his artistic talents through drawing and ceramics. In addition to work as a part-time commissionaire, he taught ceramics classes through the Allied Arts Council and set up an artistic ceramics business in his garage, complete with two electric kilns. In 1958, he met a student named Renata who became his wife in 1959."

"A few decades later a bicycle accident on Crowchild Trail forced him to break a contract to deliver ceramic figurines. He never returned to it. He dedicated his weekdays to reading and collecting books and stayed on as a weekend commissionaire, an occupation that allowed him even more time to indulge his interests."

"Bob's book collecting pursuits made him a well-known figure at used book stores around Calgary, where he could often be seen checking titles against his own holdings that he documented in several binders.... His preservation of an important literary, cultural and historical resource leaves a lasting legacy for future generations of students and scholars."

On Aug 1st, 2002, U of C Alumni Andrew Gibson donated his father's collection of science fiction works to the University of Calgary Library. In April of 2006 it was recognized by Heritage Canada for its 'Cultural Property Significance'. I assume this means a government grant will be forthcoming. They'll need it. The library estimates it will cost approximately \$500,000 dollars to properly catalogue and preserve the collection.

The Gibson collection includes 1,913 hard covers, 24,030 pocket books, and runs of 434 pulp magazine titles, including the wartime Canadian magazine UNCANNY TALES which, according to U of C Librarian Mary Hemmings, *"featured the work of Canadian science fiction writers such as Thomas P. Kelley, Leslie A. Crouth, John Hollis Mason and Dennis Plimmer... In addition to these Canadian titles, the Collection contains rare runs of Canadian editions of American titles. Many of these Canadian printings featured Canadian artists and writers... The Gibson collection also has the complete 10-issue run of the now extremely rare French LES ADVENTURES FUTURISTIC (Montreal 1949)."*

"The collection is supplemented by original research conducted by Bob Gibson for over fifty years."

"First, there are three boxes (seven linear feet) of hand-lettered index slips. A modest estimate numbers these author entries at about 10,000...."

"Second, there are 888 compilations that Mr. Gibson collected, bound and indexed during his lifetime. It is estimated that these contain roughly 6500 individual speculative fiction stories from British, American and Canadian magazines from as early as the 1870's... The covers of these anthologies list the contents of each compilation and have been hand-illustrated by Mr. Gibson..."

How does the University of Calgary's Bob Gibson Collection compare to other leading Science Fiction collections?

University of Liverpool: 25,000 items.

Texas A&M : 40,000 items.

University of Calgary: 40,000 items.

University of Sidney: 70,000 items.

University of California: 400,000 items.

The latter university, whose collection is known as the Eaton Collection, includes what must be the world's largest Sci-Fi fanzine collection: 300,000 items! (According to the Eaton Collection's website.) The foundation of this massive archive was laid by the posthumous acquisition of the collections of famed American fans Terry Carr, Bruce Pelz, and Rick Sneary.

No where can I find any reference to fanzines being included in the Gibson donation. Given his passion for collecting genre publications, and his long history of fanac, I should think Bob Gibson at least preserved those fanzines in which his contributions appeared. If so, it may well be that his family chose to retain those as mementos of his personal, creative life, perhaps to donate them at a later time. One can only hope.

So ends my preliminary account of the life of this now-obscure Canadian fan once well known and popular in his era. I would be delighted if any reader is in the position to send me further information. I would be especially thrilled to receive copies of his published fan art and would be proud to reprint them in WCSFAzine.

2008 CUFF DELEGATE NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!

By Peter Jarvis (Jan 01, 2008)

You could be the next Convention Unity Fan Fund Delegate At the 2008 CONVENTION held at KEYCON!

NOTE: The deadline for receipt of CUFF nominations is February 28th, 2008.

The Canadian Unity Fan Fund (CUFF) is a Canadian national fund, which provides for an Eastern Canadian or a Western Canadian science fiction enthusiast to attend Convention. Convention is the annual convention of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association. Traditionally, the location of Convention alternates between Eastern and Western Canada. The CUFF delegate is chosen from nominees residing in the opposite region of Canada. For 2008, the Convention is being held in Western Canada (Winnipeg) so this year's CUFF delegate is being sought from Eastern Canada (East of the Manitoba border). Further information about Convention may be found at: < www.prixaurorawards.ca >

CURRENT CUFF NOMINATION RULES

In order to be eligible as a candidate for the position of CUFF delegate, prospective nominees must be a Canadian citizen, or permanent residents of Canada. Nominees need to complete the following simple steps.

1. Submit a written document outlining their fannish history, and their reason(s) for wishing to be the CUFF delegate. The submission must be dated and provide full contact information.
2. Provide signed nomination letters from six Canadian fans; three fans from Eastern Canada and three from western Canada.
3. Agree to assume the duties & responsibilities of the position of CUFF Administrator (see below).
4. Agree to represent CUFF and their region of Canada by attending the 2008 Convention, which will be hosted by Keycon in Winnipeg, Manitoba May 16-19, 2008. It is also Keycon's 25th anniversary! Further Keycon information can be found at < www.keycon.org >

CURRENT CUFF RESPONSIBILITIES

The winning candidate will have four main responsibilities as the CUFF Delegate/Administrator.

1. Have fun interacting with fans from the other side of the country by attending Convention.
2. Write and publish a Trip Report of your experiences.
3. Work to replenish the funds used to finance your trip.

4. Administer the process of finding your replacement.

For more information or to submit your nomination, please contact the 2007 CUFF delegate Peter Jarvis at email < pjarvis@nas.net > or by post at : Peter Jarvis, RPO Box 57331, Jackson Square, Hamilton, ON, L8P 4X2.

NOTE: The deadline for receipt of CUFF nominations is February 28th, 2008. This is to allow for the possibility of a vote if more than one person submits their nomination.

CUFF was established in 1981 to help bridge the distance between science fiction enthusiasts from Eastern and Western Canada. Due to organizational and geographic barriers the Eastern and Western regions of the country operate in relative isolation from each other. By bringing science fiction fans from opposite sides of the country together, an opportunity is provided to learn from the experience of different fan bases and regions. Finances are raised through a series of fund-raising efforts, as well as donations from prominent science fiction individuals and organizations.

IN SEARCH OF RICHARD ALBERT ERTL

An Argentinean fan, Carlos Abraham, is attempting to learn as much as he can about a fellow Argentinean who was an active fan in the 1950s. Richard Albert Ertl is said to have wrote and edited a fanzine with the help of a SF club in Canada circa 1955. True or false?

So far all I have come up with is a piece in Harry Warner Jr's A WEALTH OF FABLE which may or may not be accurate -- in which he states: "Another fan in Argentina, Ricky Ertl, was in correspondence with Buck Coulson and a few other United States fans. He once attempted to publish a fanzine, but his intention was foiled when he failed to get the government license needed by individuals before they could obtain a mimeograph."

Communication with a number of fans established that, while the Canadian connection remains unknown, Ertl did, back in the 1950s, regularly loc the American fanzine YANDRO published by Buck and Jaunita Coulson. According to Juanita, they sent him American Jeans and bubble gum in exchange for "Argentinean fumetti and yerba mate, etc". In his locs he never mentioned a Canadian connection, but instead wrote about his difficulties trying to pub his ish "under the hostile-to-weird-ideas regime" in Argentina. Judging from a photo he sent the Coulsons, Ertl was "blondish and slender -- one of the many Northern European émigrés who ended up in Argentina when their parents left Germany, etc., in the 40s, either voluntarily as part of the German infiltration or involuntarily to get away from the coming debacle there."

Meanwhile Carlos discovered, reading the October 1955 issue of the American prozine IMAGINATION, a review of an issue of the fanzine EISFA (edited by Jaunita Coulson) which apparently included an essay by Ertl titled "Science Fiction in the Argentine."

Carlos would dearly love to read that essay and any locs in Yandro, or any other material written by Ertl and published in North American fanzines. If anyone reading this possesses any such writings by Ertl (or for that matter, any new information at all), please send it to me at < rgraeme@shaw.ca > and I'll pass it on to Carlos.

Being a Canadian fhistorian (fannish slang for fannish historian), I am particularly interested in any light being shed on the 'Canadian connection' circa 1955. By that time I suspect the Vancouver SF club was moribund, but there were active clubs in Toronto and Montreal, and possibly elsewhere on Canada (there had been quite a few clubs in the early 1950s, but most had faded away by mid-decade). So far no evidence of Ertl's relationship with Canadian fandom, but who knows? I eagerly await your response if you have any fresh info to offer!

LATEST CANADIAN FANCYCLOPEDIA UPDATES

The Canadian Fancyclopedia is the Graeme's ongoing attempt to put together a 'Fancyclopedia III' but one with an emphasis on the history of 20th century Canadian Sci-Fi Fandom. See < <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html> >

UNDER F: FAN FILMS, CANADIAN (added Les Croutch Fen film project).

UNDER Z: ZAP! ZAP! ATOMIC RAY IS PASSE WITH FIENDS! (added Les Croutch's reaction)

LATEST ZINES ADDED TO EFANZINES.COM ARCHIVE

The Graeme's WCSFazine #5, Mike Glyer's *File 770* #151, John Thiel's *Surprising Stories* #16, Chris Garcia's *The Drink Tank* #157, Henry Welch's *The Knarley News* #127, John Purcell's *Askance* #6, Andy Hooper, Randy Byers & Carl Juarez's *Chunga* #13, Kim Huett's John Brosnan Collection *You Only Live Once*, Chris Garcia's *The Drink Tank* #158, Arnie Katz's *Vegas Fandom Weekly* #104, another *Concatenation Newscast*, Jean Martin & Chris Garcia's *Science Fiction/San Francisco* #58, *TVOF Podcast* #13, Mike Glyer's *File 770* #1.

ZINEPHOBIA

Ghu dang it! Despite the best of intentions I still didn't get around to reviewing any zines. This makes two issues in a row! My only excuse is I got caught up in the research for some of the other articles. Oops, *two* excuses! For about a week I was feeling poorly and didn't actually do *anything*. I'll try to make zines my priority for the upcoming issue. Promise!



ASK MR. SCIENCE!

(As submitted by Al Betz, Corresponding Secretary for Mr. Science.)

Ms. DG, of Burnaby, B.C., asks: What is electricity?

Beginning students of electricity are taught an analogy between the flow of electricity through a wire and the flow of water through a pipe. This is closer to the truth than most scientists believe. There is a great deal of space between the atoms of a metal. And it is through this empty space that the electric fluid flows. A non-conductor does not conduct the electric fluid because there is far less empty space available between its atoms or molecules. The function of the rubber or plastic insulation on a wire, incidentally, is simply to keep the electric fluid from leaking out of the sides if the wire, thereby making slippery puddles on the floor.

Ms. DM, of North Vancouver, B.C., asks: Why are rocks so hard?

Although they may appear to be inanimate objects, rocks are in reality very slow moving, rather unintelligent animals with very thick skins. Because they move so slowly they have developed some interesting defense mechanisms. First, rocks do not taste good and most creatures that try eating one do not repeat the experiment. Second, rocks do not like to be sat upon. If you sit on one it will become tense, its skin getting harder and harder until you finally have to move. By the way, when rocks are in a hurry they simply crawl into streams where the water acts as a lubricant, allowing them to slide along the ground more quickly.

FAN AWARDS

RETRO 1976 ELRON AWARDS

Presented at VCON 5 by David George.

1. Worst Television Production: **Space 1999**.
2. Excessive Fiction in the Pursuit of Science: **The Apollo-Soyuz Linkup**.
3. For the Perpetration of Terrible Short Stories Which were Written at Meetings and Which were Subsequently Published in the BCSFA Newsletter: **The British Columbia Science Fiction Association (BCSFA)**.
4. For Assault on the English Language with Strange and Perverted Over-usage of the Comma and Semi-Colon: **Marauders of Gor, by John Norman**.
5. Elron Hall of Shame: **Roger Elwood**.

Notes on #1: SPACE 1999 was a disappointing U.K. Sci-Fi TV series produced & created by Gerry Anderson (of SUPER CAR & THUNDERBIRDS fame) 1975-7. Essentially a rip-off of the early STAR TREK TV series, it featured a Moon base full of wooden characters – despite being live action – exploring the universe as Earth's runaway Moon careens from one star system to the next. The special effects were often good, the miniatures quite nifty, but the plots and especially the character interaction were dull and boring, no matter the presence of actors Martin Landau, Barbara Bain, & Barry Morse.

A lack of light-hearted humour and an absence of entertaining histrionics ala Kirk style further leadened the production. The occasional man-in-a-suit monster put me in mind of the VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA series, but without that series' sense of fun and adventure. I have the feeling that Anderson demanded excessively restrained performances from his actors in order to lend credible realism to the premise, but succeeded only in removing every last vestige of entertainment value. The actual science in the series was not credible either, and wasn't nearly as interesting as STAR TREK bafflebagg; it was just nonsense. I disliked the series so much I stopped watching it halfway through the first season. In short, it was a dud. Well worth an Elron.

Nevertheless, it spawned no less than 16 novelizations during the course of the production, divided among four authors: Brian N. Ball, Michael Butterworth, John Rankine and E.C. Tubb. Typical titles included MOON ODYSSEY (1975), LUNAR ATTACK (1975), COLLISION COURSE (1975), & ROGUE PLANET (1976). Tubb's books, at least, were probably entertaining, as he was a competent writer of 'space opera' yarns.

Notes on #2: The Apollo-Soyuz linkup was the first time an American spacecraft docked with a Soviet spacecraft. Since the two hatching systems were incompatible, the American spacecraft was attached to a docking module whose far end hatch was designed to match the hatch on the Soviet spacecraft. Taking place on July 15-24, 1975, this highly hyped mission filled the gap between the last lunar landing (Apollo 17, December 1972) and the launch of the first American space station, Skylab (in April 1981).

Thing is, there was a huge gap in time when nothing exciting was going on in the way of American manned missions, and public interest in the program dwindled accordingly. Plus, spaceflight enthusiasts were still outraged over the cancellation of the last 3 or 4 planned lunar landings, this Apollo-Soyuz mission essentially being flown by 'surplus' Apollo craft and Saturn rocket originally built for a lunar mission. What added insult to this was the absolute political BS surrounding this mission, some even going so far as to claim that this 'miraculous' level of cooperation between America and Soviet Russia was of far greater importance than the lunar landings. Poppycrack I say. The mission wasn't necessary. It was just a made-up mission designed for PR purposes. Currently, as far as I know, Russian and American spacecraft are still incapable of docking with each other, though both can dock with the current space station, which has dedicated docking hatches (correct me if I'm wrong). Only the one docking module was built.

In other words, this Elron was awarded because genuine scientific exploration (the lunar landings) had been replaced by propaganda BS (look how nice & friendly the superpowers are!). After all these years, I'm *still* annoyed!

For the record, the crew members were:

Apollo crew: Thomas P. Stafford, Vance D. Brand, & Donald K. Slayton (one of the original Mercury astronauts).

Soyuz crew: Valeriy Nikolayevich Kubasov & Alexei Arhipovich Leonov (first man to walk in space, March, 1965).

Notes on #3: - Circa 1976 members of BCSFA enlivened meetings by writing group stories, participants taking turns adding one sentence at a time. In the February 1976 issue of the club's newsletter BCSFAzine (#32), the text of 'Stoned', a group story written at the January meeting, is printed in full. The principle "ringleaders being Iona Elrod, William Gibson, & Daniel Say." Perhaps because of Gibson's inherent talent (so obvious in his later novels), the story reflects -- or begins, at any rate -- at an astonishingly high level of craftsmanship:

"The clearing was circular, walled with dense green and roofed with clear, translucent blue. Beyond the tangled lianas and rotting boles of fallen date palms, the sea heaved rhythmically. Then, just beneath the swelling surface, the baroque iron prow of an exotic antique vessel was seen. Slicing with Victorian dignity through the limpid waters of the coastal shelf, it swung toward the beach..."

But soon a process of transformation begins, perhaps reaching a negative apogee with this paragraph:

"Then he thrust her backwards on to the voluptuous expansive softness of the Venerian couch; feverishly his fingers penetrated the diaphanous folds tantalizingly cleaving to the frugiverous curves of her upper breasts, contentedly munching mangoes. Timidly, with a hesitant, gentle smile, he offered her left breast an apricot."

Sigh. Nobody writes like that any more.

Notes on #4: MAURAUDERS OF GOR: flesh, made, raw; without, redeeming, virtue; published: in 1975; probably, no, connection, to: Merrill's Mauraunders: of: WW11 fame; another, product, of: John Norman's fertile; fervid; fecund; foolish; fervor to: A): Make, more, money; B): appease, fanatical, followers; & C): liberate women, into, sexual; submissiveness: slavery. (Is that strange and perverted over-usage enough for you?)

Notes on #5: - Roger wins again (he previously won the Elron Hall of Shame Award in 1974), this time for his Canadian 'connection'. From August 1975 to February 1977 the Canadian publishing house Harlequin Books (of Romance novel infamy) published a mass market pocketbook series of Sci-Fi novels in Canada under the imprint 'Laser Books', publishing 57 titles in all. Roger Elwood, based in New York and already well known for his editorship of numerous anthologies (and for his evangelical writings), was given the task of selecting manuscripts for the series. He is generally considered to have chosen mostly mediocre works by little known authors, for example the first one: SEEDS OF CHANGE by Thomas F. Monteleone. This book "was issued FREE to libraries and booksellers as a promotional item in order to generate sales of later titles." One hopes Monteleone's contract wasn't based on royalties!

The only Canadian author Elwood selected was Augustine Funnell, who contributed # 39 in the series: BRANDYJACK, and its sequel #48: REBELS OF MERKA. Alas not exactly an auspicious start to a writing career – Funnell went on to sell a few Sci-Fi short stories to American prozines in the 1980s and that was about it.

Monteleone on the other hand, went on to publish a whole bunch of novels, including THE SECRET SEA (1979) -- about Captain Nemo and the Nautilus in a series of parallel worlds -- and teamed up with David F. Bischoff for the DRAGONSTAR novels. So he wound up being a success of sorts.

Oddly enough, the well-known and respected American artist chosen to illustrate the covers of the Laser books, Frank Kelly Freas, had a genuine Canadian ‘connection’. He grew up in Ontario! Alas, though he did the covers for *all* the Laser books (making them worth collecting for that reason alone) none of them could be said to represent his best work.

At any rate, the Laser Book imprint was a financial failure for Harlequin Books, an experiment worth halting, and Roger Elwood as series editor must share some of the blame. A blow to Canadian pride and the reputation of Canadian publishing. No wonder the SMOTES (Secret Masters of the Elrons) deemed him worthy of a second Elron.

2008 FAN ACTIVITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS OPEN FOR VOTING!

Next to winning a fannish Hugo or a fannish Aurora, the FAAn Awards are the most prestigious awards in fandom!

The winners of the 2008 Fan Activity Achievement (FAAn) Awards will be announced on April 27, 2008, in Las Vegas, NV, during Corflu Silver < www.corflu.org >

Deadline for voting is Saturday, Feb. 23, 2008. No voting during Corflu this year.

Submitting Your Ballot: You may submit your vote in either of two ways:

* By email: < corflu25faan@yahoo.ca >

* By real mail: Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Road, Mississauga, Ontario L4Y 1C8 Canada

Voting: You may enter as many choices as there are blanks indicated for each category, though you do not have to fill any category or vote in all categories. You are voting for fanzines, writing and art published in 2007. Self-votes will not be counted.

Voter Eligibility: If you want to cast a ballot, you are welcome to do so. The administrator has the right to ask for credentials from fans previously unknown to him.

CATEGORIES:

- 1) Best Fanzine (5 choices)
- 2) Best Fan Writer (5 choices)
- 3) Best Fan Artist (3 choices)
- 4) Best Letterhack (3 choices)
- 5) Best Fan Website (3 choices)
- 6) Best New Fan (3 choices)
- 7) Number-One Fan Face (3 choices)

Note: Steve Stiles has asked that his name be removed from consideration in the ‘Best Fan Artist’ category.

Note: Number 5 is also known as the Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award.

If you think you may be unknown to the Administrator, please cite a fan who can confirm your credentials

Please go to at < <http://www.corflu.org/pdfs/2008faanawards.pdf> > to download the ballot.

Utterly Biased Suggestions:

- 1) Best Fanzine – WCSFAzine.
- 2) Best Fan Writer – R. Graeme Cameron (The Graeme)
- 3) Best Fan Artist – Taral Wayne
- 4) Best Letter Hack – Lloyd Penney
- 5) Best Fan Website – Canadian Fancyclopedia (check it out at < <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.htm> >)

Is this not unashamed self-promotion on my part? You betcha! After all, I’m not allowed to vote for myself, but I will vote for Taral & Lloyd. Vote for somebody! If you are an active part of Sci-Fi fandom, this is your chance to rate your

peers and reward their efforts to promote our beloved genre. Stand up and be counted! Make your opinions known! Rah rah hoopla I say! All part of the fun of being a fan.

AURORA AWARDS NOMINATIONS OPEN

Clint Budd, webmaster for the Aurora website, writes:

Please bookmark the new official Aurora website: < www.prixaurorawards.ca > OR < www.prix-aurora-awards.ca >.

The Aurora Awards are now open for nominations.

Go to this page for either the on-line nomination form or the printable nomination form:

< <http://www.prixaurorawards.ca/English/AwardProcess/nominating.html> >.

NOTE: **Nominations close March 17th, 2008.** Nominations mailed in must be postmarked March 10th/2008.

ELIGIBILITY: To nominate, you must be a Canadian citizen (not necessarily living in Canada), **or** a permanent resident of Canada.

The person you nominate must be a Canadian citizen, (not necessarily living in Canada at the time), **OR** a permanent resident of Canada.

You may select up to 3 nominees in each category. All selections will be given equal weight. There is no fee to nominate.

THE CATEGORIES (DEFINITIONS)

-- **Best long-form work in English:** For a published novel or fiction collection in the English language by a Canadian writer released in Canada within the previous calendar year (2007). Such a work may be science fiction or fantasy.

-- **Best short-form work in English:** For a published novella, novelette, short story or poem in the English language by a Canadian writer released in Canada in the previous calendar year (2007). Such work shall be science fiction or fantasy;

-- **Best work in English (other):** For SF or Fantasy activity in the English language in the previous calendar year (2007) not encompassed by the previous two subsections. For example: Canadian media presentation, Canadian anthology, Canadian magazine, or critical writing or editing by a Canadian, Canadian translator (into English).

-- **Best long-form work in French:** For a published novel or fiction collection in the French language by a Canadian writer released in Canada within the previous calendar year (2007). Such a work may be science fiction or fantasy.

-- **Best short-form work in French:** For a published novella, novelette, short story or poem in the French language by a Canadian writer released in Canada in the previous calendar year. Such work shall be science fiction or fantasy;

-- **Best work in French (other):** For SF or Fantasy activity in the French language in the previous calendar year (2007) not encompassed by the previous two subsections. For example: Canadian media presentation, Canadian anthology, Canadian magazine, critical writing or editing by a Canadian, Canadian translator (into French).

-- **Artistic Achievement:** For a work or body of work produced by a Canadian artist within the previous calendar year (2007).

-- **Fan Achievement (publication):** For a Canadian fanzine or fannish newsletter or amateur publication relating to science fiction and fantasy fandom published at least once during the previous calendar year (2007). Publications may be either hard copy/paper or electronic. Club publications, such as clubzines, are not eligible for this award

-- **Fan Achievement (organizational):** For contributions to Canadian convention or club activities during the previous calendar year (2007).

-- **Fan Achievement (other):** For Canadian fan activity in the previous calendar year not encompassed by the previous two subsections. For example: multi-media presentation, music, art, apas, fan-writing, etc. (2007)

FILTHY PRO NEWS

AUTHOR HAPPENINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

(New information highlighted in violet.)

DON DEBRANDT < <http://www.sfwaweb.org/members/DeBrandt/index.html> >

Don has his 'Cyberjunk' website, which has not been updated in several years. He promised me at VCON 32 he will update soon. But see his website under the name 'Donn Cortez' < <http://www.donnecortez.com> > for a complete listing of books, stories, articles & comics under both names.

Don lives in the Lower Mainland area and was (as always) in enthusiastic attendance at VCON 32. His latest books include the mystery 'The Man Burns Tonight' and the CSI MIAMI series volume titled 'Harm For The Holidays: Heart

Attack'. Currently he is returning to his roots by working on a Sci-Fi trilogy, starting with his upcoming hardcover mystery/sci-fi novel *'Lucidity'*, which is about two 'Ectives' (emotive detectives) in the near future where emotions can be read, implanted, bought, sold, and stolen. As Don put it, "I am always searching for a new pantheon" and for the purposes of this trilogy "took a hard Sci-Fi approach to New Age Mythology". As a result certain 'soft' sciences like sociology and sexology are now shifted into the realm of 'hard' science, and certain 'fringe' sciences like Telepathy and UFOlogy become 'soft' sciences. The first volume *'Lucidity'* will be published in 2009.

DAVE DUNCAN < <http://www.daveduncan.com> >

Dave lives in Victoria, B.C. His latest books: *'The Alchemist's Apprentice'*, & *'Children of Chaos'* (the latter winning the 'Best Long-Form Work in English' Aurora Award at Canvention 27/VCON 32 which he was happy to accept in person from presenter Peter S. Beagle). "I'm told I got a standing ovation as well, but I was too astonished to notice. My thanks to all those who voted (and possibly stood)."

'Alchemist's Apprentice' is available in trade paperback & will be released by Ace in mass market paperback February 2008.

Coming in March 2008, *'The Alchemist's Code'* will be released by Ace in trade paperback & *'Mother of Lies'* (presently available in hardcover) will be released by Tor in mass market paperback.

In August 2008 *'Ill Met in the Arena'* will be released by Tor in hardcover. **"Why 'a series of one'? Because at the moment this is a standalone novel...I like this world a lot, so I may revisit it if enough readers agree... The story is told in an odd fashion, which I hope will not put you off. When you get to the end you will see why it had to be structured this way."**

WILLIAM GIBSON < <http://www.williamgibsonbooks.com> >

Bill lives in Vancouver. Check out his web site for his Q&A interview 'Across the Border to Spook Country'. His latest book: *'Spook Country'*. **Characters include: "Hollis Henry is an investigative journalist, on assignment from a magazine called Node. Node doesn't exist yet, which is fine; she's used to that. But it seems to be actively blocking the kind of buzz that magazines normally cultivate before they start up. Really actively blocking it. It's odd, even a little scary, if Hollis lets herself think about it much. Which she doesn't; she can't afford to."**

MATT HUGHES < <http://www.archonate.com/> >

Matt lives on Vancouver Island. He was one of the presenters at the VCON 32 Aurora Awards ceremony. His first Henghis Hapthorn novel *'Majestrum'* is now out in trade paperback from Nightshade Books. The second novel in the series, *'The Spiral Labyrinth'* is available from Nightshade Books in hardcover.

The complete Guth Bandar saga is now published as a novel titled *'The Commons'* from Robert J. Sawyer Books.

On his website Matt writes: **"My stand-alone Archonate novel, *'Template'*, will be out in May... *'Le Brillion Noir'*, the French version of *'Black Brillion'* translated by the inestimable traducteur of Jack Vance into French, Patrick Dusoulier, is out from Editions L'Atalante...I'm more than 40,000 words into *'Hespira'*, the third Hapthorn novel, and enjoying the work. Readers who come across the Night Shade Books catalogue blurb, however, should not put much reliance on it. I had to provide copy for the catalogue before I'd actually begun to think about what would happen in the book, and my novels tend to evolve as I'm writing them – so any connection between the book and the blurb will only be tangential. But it is turning into a rattling good read."**

"My Guth Bandar novella, 'The Helper and His Hero,' which ran as a two-parter in the February and March issues of The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, has made the preliminary Nebula Awards Ballot, voted on by members of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA). F&SF editor Gordon Van Gelder has posted the novella, as well as all other F&SF stories on the Nebs ballot at:"

< <http://www.sfsite.com/fsf/fiction/preneb07.htm> >

EILEEN KERNAGHAN < <http://www.lonelycry.ca/ek/> >

Eileen lives in the Lower Mainland area and attended VCON 32. Check out her latest books: *'Winter on the Plain of Ghosts: a Novel of Mohenjo-daro'*, *'The Alchemist's Daughter'*, & *'The Sarsen Witch'* (reissue in August).

"My historical fantasy novel 'The Sarsen Witch', the third book in the Grey Isles series, will be back in print this summer. Shortlisted for an Aurora award in 1990, it's a tale of earth-magic, megaliths and high adventure in the bronze-age world of the Wessec warrior-chieftains. This new edition of 'The Sarsen Witch' will be released by the Juno Books imprint of Wildside Press in August 2007."

Her latest Young Adult Novel *'Wild Talent, A Novel of the Supernatural'* is scheduled for 2008 publishing by ThistleDown Press.

CRAWFORD KILIAN < <http://crofsblogs.typepad.com/> >

Continues to teach at Capilano College in North Vancouver. His latest books: *'Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy'* (1998), & *'Writing for the Web'* (1999). See E-address above for his blog. He is currently working on another novel, plus **"a couple of nonfiction books and articles for online journals."** Both of the books mentioned above are available from Self Counsel Press; < <http://www.self-counsel.com/ca/> >

DONNA MCMAHON < <http://www.donna-mcmahon.com/> >

Lives in Gibsons on the Sunshine Coast and attended VCON 32. She won a 2001 Aurora Award for her book reviews published in Tomorrow SF, BCSFAzine & other publications. Check out her novel *'Dance of Knives'* which is set in Vancouver in the year 2108. The sequel *'Second Childhood'* is pending publication.

"I'm Canadian. I write a kinder, gentler future urban hell." – Donna.

NINA MUNTEANU < <http://www.ninamunteanu.com> >

Lives and teaches in Victoria, B.C. You can order her Sci-Fi novel *'Darwin's Paradox'* by Dragon Moon Press from Amazon.ca (release date was November 15, 2007), and her short story *'Virtually Yours'* is to be found in *'The Best of Neo-opsis Science Fiction Magazine'* anthology published by Bundoran Press and unveiled at VCON 32. Check out her website for her other publications, including her blogs.

Nina contributes frequently to the blog page on her web site. Recent articles include: 'Power to the Tiny: Nanogenerators Scavenge Energy', 'The Physics, Biology and Chemistry of Angels', & 'Designer Organisms Promise New Life...At What Cost?'

SPIDER ROBINSON < <http://www.spiderrobinson.com/index2.html> >

Spider lives in the Lower Mainland area. His latest book: *'Variable Star'*, (Tor). "The hardcover is in its third printing, the reviews have been most gratifying, and an avalanche of reader mail has warmed Spider's heart." The first 8 chapters are posted on the site <http://www.variablestarbook.com/>, and the paperback hit the stands November 27th.

Around the same time, Baen Books published the hardcover, *'The Lifehouse Trilogy'*, a reissue of *'Mindkiller'*, *'Time Pressure'* and *'Lifehouse'*: < <http://www.spiderrobinson.com/books.html> >

"And *'The Stardance Trilogy'*, the omnibus of his collaborations with Jeanne, based on their Hugo- and Nebula-winning novellas (*'Stardance'*, *'Starseed'*, and *'Starwind'* will soon be released as a Blackstone Audiobook."

And then there's the exciting Stardance movie project slated to be produced in Imax format by James Sposto. For more information go to: < <http://www.stardancemovie.com> >

Most amazing of all, on December 30th Jeanne Robinson & Dancer Kathleen McDonagh experimented in Zero G dancing aboard a 'vomit comet'. See the above article 'Stardance Happened Now!', and go to Jeanne's blog at < <http://stardancemovie.blogspot.com/> > for the latest info and film clips of this historical first!

NOTE: the blogspot has a couple of film clips (including the compilation shown on CTV) and Jeanne's written commentary, but the stardancemovie site features even more film clips, including a 'dry run' with Jeanne discussing planned actions and nature of modern dance VS traditional, a real cool clip of a crewmember floating Jeanne off the floor and spinning her end over end, literally revolving her in midair, and a final micro-gravity experience with 'everybody' cavorting, including James Sposto, the director of the upcoming IMAX film of 'Stardance'. These clips are also posted on YouTube.

Jeanne and Kathleen appeared on CTV's CANADA AM Tuesday, January 15th. "One of my favourite moments came *after* the interview, as they were closing the show. The co-hosts were asked whether they'd care to try that crazy zero-G dancing stuff. "Oh yes," one woman said enthusiastically. "Oh my, yes. Definitely." Now *that's* the kind of response we like." – Jeanne.

Also check out Spider's latest podcasts at: < <http://www.spiderrobinson.com/podcast.html> >

Take note that on "July 4 - 6, 2008 at the Vancouver Island Music Festival in Courtney, BC (for more info see: < <http://www.islandmusicfest.com/> >) Spider will be sharing the stage with musician Todd Butler, and comedian/actor Harry Shearer, one of the voice actors on the Simpson's."

Spider and Jeanne will be appearing in a forum on "The Culture of Innovation" as part of the Deutsche Telekom Exhibition CeBIT 2008 digital Technology trade show in Hannover Germany, March 8th, 2008.

ROBERT J. SAWYER < <http://www.sfwriter.com/> >

Robert lives in Mississauga, was a program participant at VCON 32, as well as MC for the Aurora Awards. His short

story '*Biding Time*' won for 'Best English Language Short Story' Aurora.). "This is my tenth Aurora Award win (and my fifth in the Aurora's best short-story category). The full text of "Biding Time" is available < [right here as a Word document](#) >...."

'*Biding Time*' was in the anthology '*Slipstreams*', and has just been released in the '*Penguin Book of Crime Stories*' edited by Peter Robinson.

And be sure to check out Robert's latest book: '*Rollback*'.

Rob will be a panelist at Ad Astra in Toronto, March 28-30, 2008, at Eeriecon in Niagara Falls, NY, April 18-20, 2008, at Keycon 25 in Winnipeg, May 16-19, 2008, Special Guest at Comic-Con International in San Diego, CA, July 24-27, 2008, and a panelist at Denvention 3 Worldcon, Denver, Colorado, Aug 6-10, 2008, & at World Fantasy Convention in Calgary, Alberta, Oct 30 – Nov 3, 2008.

ALYX J. SHAW < web site pending >

Lives in Surrey. Her novel '*The Recalling of John Arrowsmith*' (Book One of her trilogy '*A Strange Place in Time*'), is available by mail order from Doppelganger Press: < <http://dopplegangerpress.com> >

It will soon be available in E-book form as of March 2008 from Torquere Press:

< http://torquerebooks.com/zencart/index.php?main_page=index >

Note: '*A Strange Place in Time*' is a completed trilogy. Both publishers have contracted to publish the remaining two novels '*The White Palace Awakens*' and '*The Merry Executioner Returns*' in due course.

Note: Alyx J. Shaw is also a regular contributor to '*Forbidden Fruit*' online magazine which is updated quarterly.

LISA SMEDMAN < <http://www.lisamedman.topcities.com/> >

Lives in the Vancouver area and attended VCON 32 as the Gaming GoH. Her latest novels (on the 'Lady Penitent Trilogy': Book 1 '*Sacrifice of the Widow*', and Book 2 '*Storm of the Dead*', plus upcoming later this fall, Book 3 '*Ascendancy of the Last*'. **From her website: "Interested in the ancient Amazons? Click on the Amazon to read what the ancient writers wrote about them, view Amazon paintings by contemporary artists and read about my trip to Turkey in search of the Amazon homeland."**

NOTE: Most of these novels are available at **White Dwarf Books**, 3715 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6R 2G5. Phone (604) 228 – 8223. E-address: < whitedwarf@deadwrite.com > Web site < <http://www.deadwrite.com/wd.html> >

MEDIA MADNESS

RETRO FILM REVIEW: CAPE CANAVERAL MONSTERS (1960)

By The Graeme

Of the three films written and directed by Phil Tucker, this 1960 gem may be the greatest (ROBOT MONSTER is a classic, but unfortunately SPACE JOCKEY is lost, not a single copy known to exist).

The film begins with 2 white dots of light going "Beep beep" above a boulder on a rocky beach. Of course they're saying "Beep beep." They're aliens. Up to no good too. Sneakily watching a guy smoking a pipe. His girlfriend comes running from the surf, and together they ride off in his car, the aliens clinging to its rear bumper! Up to no good, I tell you!

SMASH goes the car, an effect realized by having the camera inside the car bounce up and down. The two humans are dead. Suddenly they come back to life, sort of, as their corpses are now animated by the aliens. They exit the right front door, which is odd, because the man's left arm is sticking out the left rear window.

"Hauron! Your arm! I'll sew it back on at the laboratory!"

"Hurry Nadja!" cries Hauron. Now we know their names.

Cut to lovely early NASA footage of a rocket being fueled. Cut to the interior of a blockhouse and see a cigar-chomping General named Hollister, a mad German scientist named Von Hoften, assorted extras, and two happy-go-lucky teenagers named Tom and Sally, the latter a waif-like gal sporting dark glasses and hair knotted in a bun, who happens to be Hoften's niece.

The rocket takes off, flips end over end, and blows up.

"When there is a thing happens there is always a reason somewhere!" declares Von Hoften. This doesn't help matters any.

"Maybe it was something from the outside?" suggests Tom.

"Flying saucers, or something like that?" inquires Von Hoften sarcastically. Tom shuts up.

A Corporal Wilson (who bears an uncanny resemblance to Lee Harvey Oswald) phones from the gate. "The dogs are upset!"

"Put a leash on the dog and take a look!" growls the General.

"Does that mean there was something outside that could have caused the failure?" asks Tom plaintively. Everybody glares at him. He shuts up.

Meanwhile the dogs catch Hauron's scent (rancid, even putrid, being dead and all) and give chase. They rip his left arm off (Nadja's nice needle work ruined!). The Corporal pumps six bullets into him. No effect. Hauron escapes and rejoins Nadja. "Your arm. It's been torn off again." As if he didn't know. Nadja has a talent for stating the obvious.

At this point Hoften catches Tom whispering to Sally. "Do not make goo goo eyes at my niece!" he thunders.

"He was only asking me to go for coffee," Sally protests. "After all, this isn't Germany!" (You old Nazi uncle, you!)

Hoften recoils as if slapped in the face.

"I didn't mean that," she explains, "but this is America, and I was born here."

"Doctor Von Hoften," adds General Hollister, "It's different here. The kids, well, they have more freedom."

To drink coffee? My god, all this fuss over coffee!

Hoften goes on the rampage. "She'll do as I say! I will not tolerate mixing business with pleasure while I'm in charge of this project!"

The General's face sinks into a dour expression. What, no coffee allowed? At least he has his wet, stinking cigar. Hoften lets him chew on that. Got to have one vice. But no coffee. Damn!

Corporal Wilson jauntily strolls in with a severed arm under his arm. "Intelligence told me to bring this straight over to you, sir." And what did his conscience tell him? Or his instincts? Why listen only to his intelligence? Weird man.

"What the hell is it?" responds the general. Guess he's climbed the ranks without ever seeing action. The arm is placed on a trolley, blood dripping on to the floor. Everyone present has no reaction to the gruesome sight, almost as if they were bored actors standing around waiting for their cue. Uncanny.

Nadja and Hauron enter a cave filled with the same kind of equipment found in the blockhouse. Strange. Hauron slumps against the wall and leaves 'his' body. ""You never felt comfortable in the body of an Earthing!" snaps Lydia. "From the very first I was against you as a partner. Oh, you're a good enough scientist, and you're for the plan....but no violence!" (Is this a criticism?) Hauron's dot darts about in agitation.

We see Tom standing beside a telephone booth in which friend Bob is phoning somebody. A newspaper boy silently offers Tom a newspaper. Tom silently rejects it. This kid (Tony Solar) is given a credit for his 20 second scene. He was probably one of the film's principal financial backers, judging by the quality of the sets.....

Soon Tom and Sally and Bob and Shirley are happily doing nothing in a convertible parked amid desolate hilly desert terrain (in Florida?). Bob slips Tom a small package. (Of condoms? No, salt. Salt?) Then a small transistor radio. As Tom changes channels, he comes across static. He deduces it's caused by aliens and bravely offers to go off alone to look. "I think I will come," declares Sally brazenly, but Tom ignores the hint and instead they go in search of little green men. They don't find any.

Meanwhile Hauron and Nadja are in communication with their Leader. "We need more Earthlings, especially females!" Hauron seems to relish the prospect. "Be more careful with the electro-shock and the freezing. The last ones you sent were dead." (Gee, I wonder why?) Hauron and Nadja grin at each other. They pulled one on the glorious leader!

The next day Hauron creeps from rock to rock along the beach till he gets a nice view of an Atlas rocket being fueled. He's carrying a seven-foot combination pogo stick and plunger. Oops! I mean a 'ray-gun'!

Oddly, we now watch a captured V-2 take off, then arch over into the desert just beyond a whole batch of rather excited people running in all directions. Boy, that 'ray-gun' works real wonders, turns one type of rocket into another as well as blowing 'em up real good.

Back in the cave laboratory Hauron is feeling pretty cocksure of himself, in fact downright randy. "I didn't do badly for a one-armed man, did I?" he boasts.

"Do we look for new specimens now?"

He gently chucks Nadja under the chin with his finger. "For now, I think we need some rest." Aha! Beginning to explore all the possibilities inherent in the human male form is he?

And again, being hormone-driven teens, our heroes are back in the same spot sitting in Bob's car doing nothing. Must be the Pat Boone alternate universe. Once again Tom and Sally are so bored they walk off in search of aliens. Not so boring if they find some!

And once again they don't.

But Hauron and Nadja find Bob and Shirley!

Tom and Sally return to the car and express dismay, come close to emoting. What to do? Go for help? Nah! Better to let the transistor radio lead them! They return to the hills.

In the cave we see Shirley, lying on her back on a lab table, begin to twitch awake. Hauron plunges a needle into her arm. "Hurry with that metallic cloth!" he shouts. "She's unconscious now, but Earthlings are strange!" Oh, and I suppose stripping a woman of her clothing and wrapping her in gold lame is normal? Not to mention freezing her solid in a big plastic tube? Where do these aliens come from anyway?

Then it's Bob's turn. He's going to lose an arm. Nadja reaches across his bare chest with a giant surgical fork (fork?) and begins to work. Cut to Tom and Sally stumbling through bushes, so bored they're throwing rocks about and kissing. Cut back to Hauron trying his new arm out. He likes it!

"You're right about his lack of life force," states Nadja, pointing at Bob. "He's dead."

"I didn't want to use his whole body," smirks Hauron.

"He had a nice chin," teases Nadja.

Hauron's eyes light up. We've already seen that chins are a big turn-on to these aliens (hmmm, if our former Prime Minister Mulroony were sent as ambassador...what a disaster!).

"His chin to replace yours," adds Nadja, inflaming Hauron further. He nods fervid assent.

Meanwhile Tom and Sally have discovered the cave. "We found something...still don't know what it is though...." he murmurs.

They stumble across a light beam alarm that paralyses them.

"Take the needle blaster and see what we got this time," orders Hauron, fondling his new chin.

Nadja (despite the scars and bruised flesh on her face -- she was in a fatal accident remember) is in full teasing mode. "If your new chin needs a little trimming, I'll fix it when I get back." Talk about a turn-on!

Soon Hauron and Tom, the latter held against the wall by an invisible force, are engaged in light banter. "You must be an unusual student," suggests Hauron.

"I don't think so," replies Tom, there are plenty of guys my age who're a lot smarter." No kidding!

And yet, and yet... Tom weasels out of Hauron that the operating feature of the Gizmo restraining him "is Drazanon, which can cause burns and glows in the dark." Tom stares down at his watch. Aha! Radium! He also tricks Hauron into revealing that the bubbling fluid in the teleportation chamber (referred to throughout as just a 'tank') corresponds to Hydrogen.

"Same atomic weight?" "No, much higher." Then it's *not* Hydrogen!

Hauron and Nadja turn their attention to 'preparing' Sally while Tom slips out of his restraint and out the hatch. Nice guy! The aliens are a bit annoyed, but merely speed up their work.

Tom breaks into Elmer's Realty and phones the Sheriff's office. They believe him and vow to rescue Sally. Elmer, allegedly an old coot (I say allegedly because he's played by an actor who looks younger than the actor portraying Tom, who's supposed to be a teenager!), tells Tom to hold still while he phones the Sheriff. "But I just called him!" "Aren't you the brassy one."

At this point Hauron tells Nadja to take Sally to another cave, leaving him alone.. with Shirley! He pops her frozen body out of the plastic tube, lays her down on a bench and begins to paw at her gold lame. What a perv!

Later we see Nadja confronting him on a hillside. "Nadja, I.I..." he sputters. "We'll discuss it later," she says coldly, though not coldly enough it seems. "You put her clothes in the proper place. I'll prepare for our friends." He drops the clothes in some bushes. Ah well.

Cut to the Chief Deputy and his sidekick, name of Moss, arriving at Elmer's to lead him and Tom into the hills. Tom doesn't lead as he seems to have forgotten where the cave is. Indeed, he seems to have lost all common sense, for he deliberately leaves the other three for no apparent reason. Mind you, he does find Sally... And Nadja... And gets zapped by a ray-gun. The other three are merely buzzed by Hauron in dot form. "Dog-gondest thing I ever did see," declares Elmer. "Nothing but a little old green ball like to make mincemeat of us."

Moss is hurt. The Chief Deputy orders him to stay and stand guard while he and Elmer go. Moss objects. Elmer volunteers. Moss and the Chief Deputy hoof it, leaving Elmer on his lonesome.

And of course Tom is once again bantering with aliens. He offers to give them the inside dope on how to blow up rockets in exchange for freedom.

"Tom, don't!" implores Sally.

"Sally! Ixnay, oneyphay opeday!" he tells her.

"What is that language you speak?" asks Hauron.

"Just my way of telling her that I love her," says Tom. He then tells Hauron there's no radium in the missile about to be launched, so his ray-gun is sure to work. Not sure I follow the logic, but Hauron does. He leaves quickly, eager to destroy another American phallic symbol in the act of..er..launching.

Tom whispers to Sally, "With a little help, we can lick these freaks!" Somehow she finds this encouraging. He's pleased by her response. "You suppose your uncle would mind us getting married?" he pleads.

"Is that a proposal?"

"I guess it is. Is that a yes or a no?"

"You may be bright in math, but you certainly don't know much about women."

He grins nervously. She hasn't answered his question. Poor sap.

Hauron fails to destroy the rocket. He's quite annoyed when he returns. He's even more annoyed when the army shows up. And he's particularly annoyed when he winds up with TEN prisoners, including Von Hoften and General Hollister. Reverting to dot form, he and Nadja enter the tank and return to their planet.

Unfortunately they've set the stasis beam so no one can escape.

No problem, Tom takes the salt Bob had given him and some wallet plastic inserts and throws it into the not-quite-hydrogen, starting a chemical reaction which triggers an explosion that blows the top off the hill and destroys the lab, effectively switching off the beam and allowing everyone to escape. Slight logic flaw, but hey...Pat Boone universe....

Inexplicably Sally gets into a police car with Moss and drives off. As they go around a bend out of sight we hear a crash and Sally's scream. End of movie.

This wonderful film is very rarely shown. Isn't that a shame?

UPCOMING NIFTY FILM PROJECTS:

HOST 2, is in preproduction by Chungeorahm Film of Korea. It will feature multiple monsters and is a prequel to THE HOST rather than a sequel. Watch for the battle of disgruntled monster VS spunky forklift.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DORKS, the 2005 German film, is being remade by Warner Independent. Michael Showalter will direct. Quite possibly the world will end soon, judging by 'signs' like this..

Lionsgate is preparing to start a **CONAN** movie pending resolution of the writers strike. Screenplay is by **SAHARA's** Thomas Dean Donnelly and Joshua Oppenheimer.

George Romero's **DIARY OF THE DEAD** opens this month. The trailer seems like a combination of **DAWN OF THE DEAD** and **THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT**. Hope it's more original than that.

According to Al Trestrial, grandson of the legendary E.E. 'Doc' Smith, Ron Howard's film company is negotiating for the rights to Smith's seminal **LENSMEN** novels of the 1930s. Smith 'invented' Space Opera long before George Lucas.

TUROK, SON OF STONE cartoon animation film has been released direct to DVD. According to Stan G. Hyde it's quite faithful to the original comic books, but probably too violent for young kids. Indians VS Dinosaurs!

Walt Disney studios is converting the original two **TOY STORY** films to 3-D format, as well as getting set to film **TOY STORY 3** in 3-D set for June 2010 release.

BLOOD, BOOBS AND BEAST is a Troma documentary on Don Dohler, a little known horror film director who once published CINEMAGIC, a magazine for amateur monster movie makers with 'how-to' articles.

THE COTTAGE is a UK horror comedy directed by Paul Andrew Williams about two bungling kidnappers, one of whom is played by Andy Serkis! Very low budget, very gory, and apparently very funny.

SLEEP DEALER takes place in the near future when water is the most important resource and both factory workers and military pilots are connected to their machines via virtual reality 'nodes' attached to their bodies. P.K.Dickish...

OTTO; OR, UP WITH DEAD PEOPLE is Canadian director Bruce LaBruce's gay zombie movie. LaBruce previously unveiled **THE RASPBERRY REICH** at a Toronto Film Festival. Both films said to be very pornographic.

SEMUM is a Turkish horror film based on an authentic legend about some sort of exorcism gone wrong. Directed by Hasan Karacadag. Said to have very good effects and great cinematography.

LET THE RIGHT ONE COME IN is a Swedish horror film about a young boy and a young girl, except that the latter is actually a vampire nearly 200 years old!

DIE WELLE (THE WAVE) is about a German school teacher who teaches what Facism is really like by establishing a dictatorship in his classroom, with dire results. Based on an actual 1970s California school experiment.

THE BROKEN is about evil mirror people who bust out of mirrors to slay their real-life counterparts. Has some effective moments but critics say not nearly as good as it should or could have been.

AMERICAN ZOMBIE by Grace Lee is a mock (but serious) documentary about zombie lifestyles (if they were to actually exist) culminating in coverage of a zombie festival where normals are not normally allowed. Exceptional.

It is rumoured that both parts of the upcoming **THE HOBBIT** films will be directed by Guillermo del Toro (of **PAN'S LABYRINTH** fame). Toro and Peter Jackson as producer could prove a cool combination.

VAMPIRA DEAD

Maila Nurmi, the pioneering and influential TV horror hostess **VAMPIRA** - also famous for her appearance in Ed Wood's immortal "PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE" - recently passed away in her sleep at the age of 86.

She was born Maila Syrjaniemi in Petsamo, Finland, December 11, 1921. Her family having moved to the United States, she entered show business as a model, dancer, and actress. In 1944 Mae West fired her from the cast of the Broadway play 'Catherine The Great' because Mae West feared being upstaged. Then director Howard Hawks discovered her performing in Michael Todd's Grand Guignol midnight show 'Spook Scandals' and shopped her around Hollywood, but to little effect. She wound up being a chorus line dancer with such as future burlesque stripper Lili St. Cyr.

Her 'big break' came when she went to a costume party dressed as Morticia from Charles Addam's New Yorker magazine cartoons. Someone from channel 7 TV in Hollywood saw her and placed her under contract circa 1954/1955 to introduce their horror movies. As Vampira she became the first horror host/hostess ever to appear on TV. Her sexuality and double entendres earned her an Emmy nomination in 1954 for "Most Outstanding Female Personality." Articles about her appeared in Life, TV Guide & Newsweek magazines. Fan clubs sprang up. But it was a short-lived fame. Alas, no footage is preserved of her TV appearances as Vampira, but dressed as that character she appeared in PLAN NINE.

In addition to her one-day shoot for the infamous Ed Wood film, she also played a Beat Poetess in *THE BEAT GENERATION* (1959), Etta Toodie in *SEX KITTENS GO TO COLLEGE* (1960), the Hag/Sorceress in *THE MAGIC SWORD* (1962) and a number of minor characters in other films.

She was also famous for turning down a “let’s have sex” offer from Elvis. And for suing Elvira for stealing her ‘image’ – long, raven hair, closefitting black dress with deep cleavage – but failing because it was common knowledge she had herself ‘creatively copied’ Morticia to produce Vampira. In later life she took up painting as a hobby, often doing self-portraits in her persona as Vampira. These are now much sought-after collector’s items.

R.I.P. Vampira!

6TH ANNUAL RONDO HATTON HORROR AWARDS OPEN FOR VOTING

These awards, named after Rondo Hatton, a sufferer of acromegaly (same disease as the Elephant Man) whose exaggerated features allowed him to play a ‘monster’ without using makeup in such films as *PEARL OF DEATH* (1944), *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SPIDER WOMAN* (1944), *THE BRUTE MAN* (1946), & *THE SPIDER WOMAN STRIKES BACK* (1946), were created by David Colton and Kerry Gammill in 2002 “to honour the best in monster research, creativity and genre appreciation. These awards are by fans, for fans.”

Categories (& listing a few of the nominees) include:

- 1) Best movie of 2007: *BEOWULF*, *THE HOST*, *ROB ZOMBIE’S HALLOWEEN*, *THE MIST*, etc.
- 2) Best television presentation: *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA*, *DOCTOR WHO*, *HEROES*, etc.
- 3) Best classic DVD: *NOSFERATU*, *LOST WORLD*, *SPIDER BABY*, *20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH*, etc.
- 4) Best classic DVD collection: *AZTEC MUMMY COLLECTION*, *THE FLY COLLECTION*, etc.
- 5) Best restoration: *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*, *THE GIANT CLAW*, *QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE*, etc.
- 6) Best DVD extra: *CORRIDORS OF BLOOD censored footage*, *NOSFERATU 52 minute documentary*, etc.
- 7) Best DVD commentary: *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE Malcolm McDowell*, *SPIDER BABY Jack Hill*, etc.
- 8) Best independent production on DVD: *CHAINSAW SALLY*, *FESTIVAL OF FRIGHT*, *PICKMAN’S MODEL*, etc.
- 9) Best book of 2007: *BELA LUGOSI: DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES*, *FORGOTTEN HORRORS*, etc.
- 10) Best magazine of 2007: *MAD SCIENTIST*, *G-FAN*, *SCARY MONSTERS*, *VIDEO WATCHDOG*, etc.
- 11) Best article of 2007: *APE FIENDS OF THE SILENT ERA*, *THE LOST VOYAGE OF SINBAD*, etc.
- 12) Best magazine cover: *AMAZING FIGURE MODELER*, *FILMFAX*, *MONDO CULT*, *MONSTER BASH*, etc.
- 13) Best website or blog: *CREEPY CLASSICS*, *FRANKENSTEINIA*, *LUGOSIPHILIA*, *HORRORHOSTS*, etc.
- 14) Best convention of 2007: *BLOBFEST*, *CINEMA WASTELAND*, *HORROR HOUND WEEKEND*, etc.
- 15) Best fan event: *BLOB PANIC REENACTMENT*, *MONROEVILLE MALL ZOMBIE WALK*, etc.
- 16) Best horror host of 2007: *GHASTLEE GHOUL*, *THE BONE JANGLER*, *DR. GANGRENE*, etc.
- 17) Best audio horror site or podcast: *CULT RADIO A GO-GO*, *ROTTING FLESH RADIO*, etc.
- 18) Best CD: *THE GHASTLY ONES*, *GODZILLA 98*, *LURKING CORPSES*, *MYSTERIOUS ISLAND*, etc.
- 19) Best horror comic: *ASTOUNDING WOLFMAN*, *CITY OF OTHERS*, *FALL OF CTHULHU*, etc.
- 20) Best toy, model, or collectible: *FRANKENSTEIN GIANT PEZ*, *MR HYDE AURORA REISSUE*, etc.
- 21) Count Alucard’s controversy of the year: *WHERE’S MY MAGAZINE? DO I HAVE TO BUY IT?* Etc.
- 22) DVD company of the year: *ALPHA VIDEO*, *ANCHOR BAY*, *CRITERION*, *DARK SKY FILMS*, etc.
- 23) Classic film most in need of restoration?
- 24) Writer of the year?
- 25) Artist of the year?
- 26) Monster kid of the year?
- 27) Monster kid hall of fame? (Past inductees include Forrest J. Ackerman, Ray Harryhausen, Don Glut, etc.)

To vote, go to < <http://rondoaward.com> >, read the rules, download the ballot, and email your choices to Dave Colton at < taraco@aol.com >. Voting is free! Deadline is Midnight, March 8, 2008. Just for fans! Just for fun!

ODD BITS

RETRO CLASSICS TRIVIA: WILL THE FUTURE BE AS WEIRD AS THE PAST?

ANCIENT ROMAN MINING TECHNIQUES By The Graeme

(Reprinted From BCSFAzine #238 March 1993)

Hah! I defy you to find a subject more obscure than this one. When was the last time you had a really riveting

conversation on this topic? Well, I'm going to supply you with plenty ammo for your next cocktail party. "Ah yes, that reminds me of the practice of hushing in ancient Roman open cast mining techniques..." Yes, you'll knock em dead!

Now consider that even primitive barbarian 'Conan' cultures require metal, sufficient to meet the demand for swords (for men) and brass bras (for women, and some men, the ones warriors won't talk about in mixed company). In a movie or a book you're liable to get the traditional 'warrior convinces smithy to make the best sword ever' scene, but nothing on the source of the metal. I had a tendency to picture some scraggly loin-clothed slaves digging pits and narrow tunnels with pick axes and running up and down wooden ladders, long wooden ladders, carrying baskets with ore-bearing rock to the surface, though I wasn't quite sure what they did to the rock to get the ore out. This picture isn't very accurate or complete..

A Roman legion, on the other hand, consisted of five to six thousand guys staggering along their famous roads with swords, spear heads, daggers, helmets, chain mail or other body armour (and cooking pots) made of iron or bronze. Once ensconced in a base (if timber, using thousands of nails; if built of stone, tons of lead to lock the stonework together, to pipe water, etc.) they'd spend a lot of time fashioning replacement parts, or in one example discovered intact at a base in England, engaged in make-work projects to keep them occupied, in this case, a cache of tons of nails. (Perhaps it was a supply depot?) The needs of the entire Roman army combined with civilian requirements meant the production of thousands of tons of metal annually, and not just iron, but gold, silver, lead, tin and copper (think of the millions of coins minted). So if you're going to write about a reasonably advanced but 'ancient' alien culture, mining is something you'll totally ignore, but hey, for the premise of this article, I'm saying you need to know.

Fortunately a certain ancient Mr. 'Know-It-All', Pliny the Elder (as opposed to Pliny the Younger, whose excuse for not accompanying the Elder to observe the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius – where Pliny the Elder died, overcome by fumes – was that he had to stay home and finish his homework, and no one has believed him for nigh on two thousand years) set out to write the definitive encyclopedic account of absolutely everything. To give you an idea, the first section of his NATURAL HISTORY is called 'The Universe And The World'. He boasted it contained 20,000 'facts'. Some of his more typical facts are of the "*parakeets are especially full of fun when given wine*" or "*men are keener on sexual intercourse in winter, and women in summer*" variety, but as he actually visited mines in Spain in AD 72-74, his comments on mining are the best ancient source on the topic. Archaeology has since added details.

METHOD ONE: scrabble at the stuff on the surface. This is the easiest method. But even as early as Roman times, all the easily accessible gobs of metal lying about had been picked up (which is why that if we lose our technological knowledge for some reason, mankind will never rise again above a stone age level of culture, because there won't be *any* metal available.) Pliny describes placer mining, or the search for nuggets and grains of gold found by washing sediment in pans of water, just as gold prospectors do today. He mentions one lucky stiff in the reign of Nero who found a deposit of sand in Dalmatia which yielded 50 lbs of gold a day! Hot Jupiter! Such strikes were rare. And I bet Nero's agents contacted him and suggested he fork over a goodly 'donation' to the imperial treasury. Oh well.

METHOD TWO: dig furrows through solid rock, which Pliny tells us is a method called 'channeled' or 'trenched' mining. In the case of gold, the miners pickaxe along veins of quartz, and if need be, follow the vein if it dips so that the trench becomes a shallow tunnel. The resulting clumps of rock knocked free of the pick face are "*crushed, washed, fired and ground to a fine powder.*" Sounds like hard work for somebody. The powder was shaken with mercury in a vessel to draw out impurities, then poured through a well-dressed hide: "*the mercury is exuded through the hides like a kind of sweat and the gold is left pure.*" Hmmm, didn't leave the workers feeling very pure... mercury is a deadly poison, even to breathe its fumes... get the feeling Workers Compensation would have had their work cut out for them back then?

Now we start to get into the more spectacular, not to say ridiculous, methods of mining employed by the Romans.

METHOD THREE: 'deep-vein' mining, as Pliny calls it. "*By the light of lamps, long galleries are cut into the mountain. Men work in long shifts measured in lamps, and may not see daylight for months on end. The roofs of these are liable to give way and crush the miners... arches are left at frequent intervals to support the mountains above.*"

So far so good, but now comes the mind bogglingly idiotic part: "*When the work is completed, the workers cut through the tops of the arches, beginning with the last. The opening of a fissure gives warning of the impending collapse, but this is only seen by a watchman perched on top of the mountain. With a shout or a wave the look-out gives the order for the miners to be called off and at the same time rushes down from his vantage point. (I'll bet he does!) The ruptured mountain falls asunder with an unimaginable crash, and is accompanied by an equally incredible blast of air.*" This, the ancient equivalent of blasting, is designed to produce a heap of debris more accessible than what tunneling produces.

Now let's look at this from the miner's point of view. You're deep inside a mountain, deliberately undermining the supports. Meanwhile you're hoping some jerk who sucked up to the boss and has been given the 'easy' job of standing atop the mountain looking for imminent signs of collapse is going to provide at least some advance warning. Sure. The guy on top sees things start to slide and begins bounding down the slope like a demented mountain goat screaming his head off. Someone standing at the mine entrance pauses for a billionth of a second to shout "Get out!" before running away. The first guy inside the mine starts running toward the exit, hopefully remembering to pass along the warning. The next guy further along starts scrabbling to safety, and hopefully he remembers to pass along the warning as well. You are at the end of a chain of miners --- thirty, forty, fifty? – and by the time you take note of all the hoopla and pitter-patter of running feet you've still got plenty of time to get out? Sure. If X = speed of collapsing mountain and Y = speed of panicked miners running through dark, uneven tunnels, then X + Y = D, as in deader than a doornail.

Meanwhile Pliny is standing on the slope on the opposite side of the valley saying, “Gee. This is amazing. And how do the miners escape?” To which the mine boss replies, “Don’t worry about it. We’re getting a fresh shipment of slaves tomorrow.” (I made up the last part, but it seems plausible.)

Fortunately (for the miners), not all deep-vein mining involved this last drastic step. Pliny notes: *“It is a remarkable fact that shafts begun on Hannibal’s initiative (back when Spain belonged to Carthage) are still in existence; they are named after their discoverers. One such mine, known today as Baebelo, provided Hannibal with 300 lbs of silver a day. The galleries ran over a mile into the mountain, and along the whole of this distance, water-men stood day and night in shifts measured by lamps, bailing out water and making a stream.”*

You know, now I understand why some slaves volunteered to become gladiators.... much more exciting than bailing water in a damp mine for twelve hours a day...

FOURTH METHOD: open-cast mining. In this method, large bodies of water are collected in reservoirs on slopes above suspected ore bodies, and then unleashed in a sudden flood to wash away the overlying dirt and loose rock. This is nowadays called ‘hushing’. Why, I don’t know. Pliny was very impressed with the effort involved, quote:

“Another equally laborious and very expensive task involves the feat of bringing streams along mountain ridges – often a distance of 100 miles – to wash away the debris from mining operations. The miners call these channels ‘Corrugi’, and they involve countless problems. The incline must be steep to produce a surge rather than a steady flow of water and consequently high-level sources are required. Gorges and crevasses are bridged by aqueducts. Elsewhere, impassable rocks are cut away to allow space for hollow wooden troughs. The workmen cutting out the rock hang suspended by ropes, so that viewed from a distance the operation seems to involve not so much a species of strange animals as of birds. Most hang suspended as they take the levels and mark out the route – man leads rivers to run where there is no place for him to plant his footsteps.”

“On the ridge above the head of the mine reservoirs are excavated, measuring more than 200 feet each way and 10 feet deep. Five sluices each about 3 feet square are constructed in the walls. When the reservoirs are full, the sluices are knocked open so that the violent downward surge of water is sufficient to sweep away the rock debris....”

Well, if I had any choice I’d rather work in an open cast mine than a deep-vein mine. Either way, you can see this was big business. Spain alone produced 20,000 lbs of gold a year, involving the Gods know how many thousands of tons of rock in the processing....

Pliny also talks about iron mining, which involves similar practices. It is interesting to note that he states iron from China is the best quality available (and yes, the Romans traded with China, though not directly. On land – depending on the period – the Persians/Sassnians/Parthians were the middle men; on sea the Arabs & Indians). Probably because, unknown to Pliny, Chinese technology of the time routinely produced cast iron objects, whereas the Romans did not know how to construct furnaces hot enough to melt iron, so smithying was their only means of creating iron tools and weapons. (Note that Europe did not develop cast iron until the 18th century.)

Incidentally, the Romans and the Greeks knew about magnets, or lodestones. Pliny states: *“The architect Timochares had begun to use lodestone in the construction of the Temple of Arsinoe at Alexandria, so that the iron statue it housed might appear to be suspended in mid-air, but the project was halted by his death.”* Just as well, I don’t think it would have worked.

Now, mines are quite damp, and the water needs to be pumped out. The Romans evolved some highly sophisticated means of doing so, but I’m running out of space, so I’ll save the topic for another time. I hope I have at least made my point that ‘ancient’ technology can be on a vast and complicated scale, so don’t be afraid to ‘think big’ when writing about supposedly less advanced alien cultures.

Can I think of a Sci-Fi work that has something to do with mining? I suspect there are numerous stories dealing with asteroid mining for instance, but the only one that springs to mind is the tale of a man in a space suit trying to find his way out of a maze of rock tunnels and stay one step ahead of an unspeakably monstrous creature stalking him in the dark. It’s all about his mounting fear and terror spurred by his imaginings. Finally he stumbles out of the tunnel system onto the surface of the asteroid. In the light of the stars he sees assorted antennae, stalked eyes and tentacles hesitantly writhe out of the tunnel entrance, then slowly withdraw. The man realizes his imagination had made the threat worse than it actually was. Yes, it was a creature hunting for its next meal, but a creature like any other creature operating on instincts and basic needs, not an evil, malignant monster-demon, it was simply an animal. Somehow this makes him feel better. The story has always stuck in my mind.

I just spent 15 minutes searching through the browning anthologies in my tattered paperback collection. Can I find the story? Remember its title? The author? Of course not. All I could come up with is Arthur C. Clarke’s 1950 tale A WALK IN THE DARK, about a man walking at night along a road on a rocky, lifeless planet, slowly allowing his imagination to conjure an image of a monster keeping pace with him. Then, just as he sighs with relief realizing the colony buildings are close beyond the next rise, he hears the chitinous sound of giant claws clicking in the darkness in front of him. Rather the opposite of the story I’m trying to source.

Okay, a pathetic attempt to tie Pliny’s account into Sci-Fi. But my original point stands, just because an alien culture might be less advanced technologically doesn’t mean that it will be any less complicated or less impressive than what Man can produce. Not to mention less weird....

ZENN AND THE ART OF MANDARIN MAINTENANCE

‘Mandarin’ as in ‘Government Bureaucrat’, and ‘ZENN’ as in the ZENN car manufactured in Quebec, the ZENN being a ‘Zero Emission No Noise’ vehicle. It’s a reasonably cute, rather small electric car that plugs into any electrical outlet for recharging, makes no sound whatsoever, and leaves no carbon imprint at all. Manufactured in Canada, it sells in the United States, but is illegal to sell in Canada. The manufacturer plans to charge \$12,000 if and when he can legally retail it in his own country. Quite a bargain for a guilt-free handy-dandy runabout. Should appeal to students methinks.

Actually, I’m not being totally fair to the bureaucracy. After a delay of some years, the Federal government did finally agree the car could be sold in Canada, but only if the individual Provincial governments concurred. So far only my home Province of British Columbia has declared the car legal. Everywhere else in Canada it remains forbidden fruit.

You’d think with all the public demand and pressure for something less polluting than the current herd of SUVs, a non-polluting, fun-to-drive, totally quiet “you can hear the birds chirping” vehicle would be on the fast track to success, but of course not. That’s not what bureaucracy is for.

You’d think that a home-grown product that has the potential to bring millions of dollars in revenue into the country to help combat our trade deficit would be welcomed with open arms and given every incentive, support and encouragement, but of course not. That’s not what bureaucracy is for.

Remind me again what bureaucracy *is* for?

But again, I’m not being totally fair. The ZENN car is not designed to replace cars for long distance travel, it’s meant to be a neighbourhood urban car for “dropping off the kids & picking up groceries”. It only goes 25 MPH, has a range of 35 miles, and requires 4 hours to recharge 80%, 8 hours to recharge 100%. But if all you want is a second car to tootle around running errands without having to haul out your gas guzzler, the ZENN car would seem ideal. It meets all safety requirements, comes with many typical car features, and features 13 cubic feet of storage space. When featured on the RICK MERCER SHOW Mercer said “Let’s see if we can fill her up with *“a typical Canadian week’s worth of grocery shopping”*”. He then proceeds to load two shopping carts of beer and one box of corn flakes into the hatchback. It all fits!

This sort of electric car would appear to be the cutting crest of the wave of the future. Isn’t it about time we all started swimming?

Check out their web site at < <http://www.zenncars.com> > and sign their petition, if you feel so inclined, to urge “*all provinces of Canada to adopt electric vehicle friendly legislation that would allow the ZENN to be driven on-road.*”

LOCAL EVENTS:

KUROSAWA FILM SHOWINGS: THE HIDDEN FORTRESS & SEVEN SAMURAI

February 2-4, 6-7, at Pacific Cinémathèque, 1131 Howe Street (North of Davie), Vancouver, BC.

George Lucas has cited ‘The Hidden Fortress’ and ‘Seven Samurai’ as the chief inspirations for his Star Wars cycle. Both films directed by Akira Kurosawa.

-- **Feb. 2 (Sat), 7pm:** ‘The Hidden Fortress’ (‘Sword of Doom’ at 9:35)

-- **Feb. 3 (Sun), 4 (Mon), 6 (Wed), 7:15 pm:** “Seven Samurai” double billed with various.

-- **Feb. 7 (Thur), 9:20pm:** “The Hidden Fortress” (‘Throne of Blood’ at 7:15)

Double-bill price for “Seven Samurai”. Adult tickets: \$9.50 (single bill), \$11.50 (double bill).

Student/Senior (65+) tickets: \$8 (single bill), \$10 (doublebill).

For more info, see http://www.cinematheque.bc.ca/jan_feb_08/samurai_02.htm

or phone 604.688.FILM (3456) (24-hour film info)

or phone 604.688.8202 (office).

SCI-FI WRITERS WORKSHOP:

Feb. 23 (Sat), 2pm: Dennis Foon will present ‘Possible Worlds’ (workshop).at the Central Library of Vancouver Public Library, 350 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC. Alma VanDusen & Peter Kaye Rooms, lower level.

In this workshop, award-winning author and playwright Dennis Foon will examine the demands of speculative fiction and fantasy writing, offering tips on how a seed of an idea can evolve into a fully realized world.

FREE. A program for adults.

For more info, please contact VPL at 604-331-3603.

SCI-FI PANEL ON GAMING:

Feb. 26 (Tue) 7pm: ‘My Virtual World: Gaming - Distraction or a New Way of Learning?’ (panel) at Central Library of Vancouver Public Library (VPL), 350 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC. Alice MacKay Room, lower level.

Part of the Speak Up series (bringing “together many ..perspectives .. an opportunity for public dialogue.”). This year’s series explores the role of technology in our lives.

Panelists are: Suzanne DeCastell, Associate Dean of Education, Simon Fraser University, Katherine Monk, film critic, CanWest, & Dave Warfield, Head of Game Design, Vancouver Film School

FREE. A program for adults.

For more info, please contact VPL at 604-331-3603.

Info for the above items provided by BCSFAn Julian Castle.

LOCAL CLUBS:

B.C. BROWNCOATS:

The B.C. Browncoats, founded April 2004, are fans of Firefly and Serenity, created by Joss Whedon. 300 members.

"Every Thursday from 8-10 PM we meet in the Canadian Browncoat's Chat Room. New members are always welcome, so please come and join us for a chat!" Simply register at < <http://p201.ezboard.com/bccanadianbrowncoats2932> >

See < <http://www.browncoats.ca/> > website for details & info, or The Vancouver Firefly/Serenity Meetup Group (Vancouver) at < <http://firefly.meetup.com/12/> > "Grab a drink, pull up a chair and join us online! It's free...and it's FUN!"

B.C.S.F.A. – THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION:

Founded 29th January, 1970. Currently offers for its \$26 membership fee: a monthly social gathering at the home of the Treasurer, a 'Feeding Frenzy' get together at a different restaurant every month (currently on hold), a book discussion held on a monthly basis at the 'Our Town Café', a monthly 'Royal Swiss Navy Disorganization meeting' at the home of BCSFAzine editor Garth Spencer where random topics are picked out of a hat and hotly debated, and of course, 12 issues of BCSFAzine. For details, such as time & locations, check out the BCSFA Club website listed below.

BCSFAZINE ADDRESSES:

BCSFAZINE EDITOR (subscriptions, submissions, letters of comment, trades) – BCSFAzine, c/o Garth Spencer, P.O. Box 74122, Hillcrest Park, 4101 Main Street, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V5V 3P0.

OR: email < garthspencer@shaw.ca >

NOTE: BCSFA MEETING & PARTY: Saturday February 16 @ 7pm at the Moore-Freeman home, 7064 No. 1 Road, Richmond, B.C. Phone (604) 277-0845 for directions.

NOTE: BCSFA BOOK DISCUSSION IN VANCOUVER: Thursday February 21 @ 7pm at the "Our Town" café, 245 East Broadway, Vancouver. The topic book will be 'SPHERE' by Michael Crichton

NOTE: ROYAL SWISS NAVY DISORGANIZATIONAL MEETING (DISCUSSION GROUP): Saturday February 23 @ 8 pm (?) at Garth Spencer's place, 82 East 40th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. Phone him at (778) 865-2372 for directions.

BCSFA SPONSORED WEB SITES:

BCSFA CLUB WEB SITE: < <http://www.bcsfa.net> > (Currently 'frozen' pending new site manager)

BCSFA YAHOO DISCUSSION GROUP: < http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_scifi_assc/ >

CANADIAN FANCYCLOPEDIA: < <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html> >

B.I.F.F. MEETINGS (Burrard Inlet Fan Fellowship) – Every Friday (except long weekends & VCON weekend) @ 6:30 PM till closing time (officially 9:00 pm). A weekly social meeting for SF fans, founded June 11th, 2005. Held at The Eighties Restaurant, 110 West 14th Street (at Lonsdale) in North Vancouver.

"There are no rules (beyond the fact that the restaurant asks that anybody who comes orders some food, but as you can get something reasonable to eat for very little if funds are tight), and there are no membership fees or dues (although sometimes we ask for donations to cover some expenses), and nobody is in charge (things just sort of happen.)"

Every BIFF event typically has a theme, be it a particular film, panel discussion, guest speaker, etc. For Eg:

To find out what is currently planned for the near future (usually on relatively short notice), please check the BIFF web site at: < <http://biff.realityfree.ca/> >

FANCOUVER: VANCOUVER SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY MEETUP – Vancouver, B.C. Founded Sept 21, 2005. 118 Members. "Meet fellow Sci-fi/Fantasy Fans near you! Come to a local Sci-fi/Fantasy Meetup to have fun talking science fiction and fantasy in literature, media, gaming and art. Who knows, maybe we'll hit a convention too!"

For details & info: < <http://scifi.meetup.com/278/> >

F.R.E.D. MEETINGS – Every Friday @ 8:00 PM. F.R.E.D. stands for "F*** Reality, Everybody Drink", a weekly social meeting for SF fans, founded May 3rd, 1979. Currently held at Boston Pizza, 1333 West Broadway @ Hemlock (2 blocks East of Granville), Vancouver. Note: Ryan Hawe reports: "I am pleased to report that thanks to Jen, we now have guaranteed seating for FRED at Boston Pizza Broadway every Friday. A gift for local fandom, one might say."

For info see < <http://www.facebook.com/group.php> > or contact Ryan Hawe, Keeper of the FRED, at < luxdoprime@yahoo.com >

MONSTER ATTACK TEAM CANADA

"This group is mostly for members to keep up with the latest events and happening for the club. MONSTER ATTACK is situated in British Columbia's Lower Mainland, and while anyone is welcome to join to stay up with club events, the primary interest will be to members and those thinking of coming to a Monster Attack - Canada event in Vancouver B.C. or the Lower Mainland. At the same time, we want to answer as many questions as we can for people interested in SF, FANTASY, ANIME, and MONSTER modeling - and encourage people to use the site to pose questions about kit building. Think of this as an online clubhouse as well as an info site - and PLEASE ASK AWAY!"

For details & info: < <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MonsterAttackTeamCanada/?yguid=8788> >

MONSTER FIGHTERS ONLINE CLUB (of Monster Attack Team Canada)

"This Group is for anyone who wants to talk Science fiction and Fantasy films, Figure Garage kits, Monster toys, DVDs, up-coming films, and just plain cool stuff! PLEASE: this is a place to have FUN!!! It's about the love of the hobby, not about flaming someone who feels differently than you do. Please try to express your opinions in a way that is respectful of others' opinions. Let's talk monsters!"

Every month a MOTM (Monster of the month) topic is chosen. "Monster of the Month is designed to inspire Monster Fighters to study their enemies. Sometime during November watch the MOTM . . . then post comments, reviews, thoughts, or pictures to the clubhouse." The MOTM is announced at the beginning of each month. November's was MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (1961), Oct: IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA (1956), Sept: ATRAGON (1963), etc. "We're still hungry for info on models, toys, pictures and other cool stuff devoted to those monsters. Scan the web, search the world, and deliver the results of your searches back here!"

For details & info:< <http://movies.groups.yahoo.com/group/MonsterFighters> >

USS MAJESTIC NCC-78601 (REGION 10 STARFLEET)

This Star Trek vessel is the flagship for Region 10 Starfleet (see non-local clubs), and is based in Victoria, B.C. About 18 members listed.

"Like many ships, our crew is diverse and has a variety of interests, but for us on board USS Majestic our major activities include social events such as watching movies, hiking, games and short story writing."

Recently began publishing a monthly newsletter titled 'Majestic Mews' available online.

For details & info: < <http://www.uss-majestic.org/> >

NON-LOCAL CANADIAN CLUBS:

FREDERICTON SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY:

"Along with our official meetings, members of the group congregate on Monday Nights for a gathering at Tingley's Traditions/Quiznos on Dundonald Street, Fredericton, NB. The times vary, especially during the summer months, but generally anytime after 8:00pm until closing at 10:00pm."

"The FSFS also helps in the volunteering at [Communicon](#), which is a local gaming convention held the last weekend in January. Though it is a separate entity from the FSFS, it is run by two of the club members and many of the club participate in one facet or another."

For details & info see < <http://www.celtic-dragon.ca/fsfswebsitemain.html> >

K.I.D.C. – KLINGON IMPERIAL DIPLOMATIC CORPS:

"World's largest & most popular Klingon cultural website... dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Klingon culture and society here on Earth. On this award-winning website, you will find over 225 pages of Klingon data; info on the KIDC, Klingon rituals, ceremonies and traditions, intergalactic cuisine, Klingon fashion and costuming, ships and weaponry; as well as popular discussion forums, numerous Klingon-related mailing lists, and more..."

"The KIDC is an independent and neutral Klingon organization that does not get involved in intra-club political disputes or disagreements. We believe that a Klingon is a Klingon, no matter what organization, club or group they belong to or are affiliated with. We hope to serve as a central resource of Klingon cultural information to all Klingons, regardless of their background."

"Our headquarters is the *Klingon Imperial Embassy*, based in the Montreal Sector of Canada... The KIDC has many different departments and sections; one of which you will be assigned based on your qualifications and your career preference. Each of our members chooses a Klingon name and puts together a character or persona that fits plausibly within the generally accepted view of the Klingon Empire within the period of The Grand Alliance."

"Depending on your location on the globe, there are many different ways of participating in the club. We highly encourage interaction between member's characters both through role-playing and through real-life communications via regular snail mail, e-mail and participation in our many Klingon related mailing lists as well as our [Klingon Imperial Forums](#). Members can also become involved in Klingon cultural research, assisting with website maintenance, recruiting

and promotion, organizing display tables at conventions, club fund-raising, and organizing or assisting in charitable events.”

For details & info: < <http://www.klingon.org> >

MARITIME SCIENCE FICTION MODELERS:

“The Maritime Science Fiction Modelers consists of about 20 model builders who enjoy the realm of Science Fiction model subjects. We now have members in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario.”

“Formed in 1993 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the group gathers once a month to discuss the sci-fi modeling world, talk about new science fiction movies and television, and swap model building techniques. At our meetings, we are able to work on our latest model, or we can show off our most recent modeling triumph.”

“Many members of the group are involved in promoting the model building hobby, and we have had models in several model contests, museum exhibits, science fiction conventions, local television and movie theatre lobbies.”

“It wasn't until 2002 that we finally put a website together so that more than just the Maritime provinces of eastern Canada could see what we were up to. Enjoy your visit!”

For details & info see: < <http://msfm.seryan.com/> >

MonSFFA – THE MONTREAL SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY ASSOCIATION:

“MonSFFA a club for fans of the science fiction and fantasy genres. We are your connection to the SF/F community, local, national and international. We have been active since 1987. Our areas of interest span the full spectrum of the SF/F universe: literature, movies, television, comics, gaming, art, animation, scale-model building, costuming, memorabilia collecting, film/video production and more!”

MonSFFA is probably the most active SF club in Canada, with a healthy membership base, event-packed club activity, the monthly newsletter IMPULSE (available for download) and a quarterly clubzine WARP (members only download, or discretion of editor). Their website is well worth checking out for the downloadable fan films BEAVRA, MOOSE MAN, and THE SIMPLETON'S LIFE.

For details & info: < <http://www.monsffa.com/> >

OSFA – THE OTTAWA SCIENCE SOCIETY:

“The Ottawa Science Fiction Society is an organization of fans of science fiction, fantasy and other speculative fiction in its various forms, whether in prose novels or comics, television or motion pictures, hardcopy or software. OSFS is the oldest operating science fiction club in Ottawa: Founded in 1977 and incorporated in 1979.”

“Our regular monthly meetings are usually held at the Dalhousie Community Centre at 775 Somerset St. W. at 2 PM on the last Sunday of each month, except during summer hiatus.”

“Our regular newsletter, the OSFS Statement, is published monthly. OSFS members receive hardcopies by mail.”

For details & info: < <http://osfs.ncf.ca/> >

SFL - SCIENCE FICTION LONDON:

“Science Fiction London (SFL) evolved out of an earlier club called Star Trek Ontario, founded in 1980 by a group of Star Trek fans. Science Fiction London (SFL) is a group of science fiction enthusiasts living in and around London, Ontario, Canada. We meet monthly in London to discuss science fiction. We also get together occasionally for social events like movie days and barbecues.”

“To get the most out of the meetings, you should read the book that we will be discussing prior to the meeting, assuming that the topic is a book. The schedule of upcoming meetings can be found in the [Meeting Topics](#) section of this Website. Please note that if the topic is a film, the meeting will include a showing of the film prior to the discussion so you won't need to prepare ahead of time. If the topic is a theme, there may or may not be reading that you should do before you attend the meeting; in that case, the details will be displayed in the [Meeting Topics](#) page.”

“Our meetings take place at the Central Branch of the London Public Library at 251 Dundas Street between Wellington and Clarence Streets. Meetings about books will be held in the Tonda Room. Meetings about films will take place in the Stevenson and Hunt Room, which is beside the Tonda Room. Both rooms are on the first floor of the Central Branch.”

For details & info: < <http://sfl.london.on.ca/> >

STARFLEET REGION 10:

“Starfleet was founded by Star Trek enthusiasts in 1974 and has become an international fan organization whose members (4000 +) are united the world over in their appreciation of Star Trek. Hundreds of chapters worldwide link members into local fandom as well as the international organization.”

“Region 10 encompasses the geopolitical areas of Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Yukon.

Includes Starships: USS Majestic (Victoria, B.C.), USS SOL (Alaska), & USS Bondar (?).

For details & info: < <http://www.10thfleet.org/> >

CANADIAN SCI-FI FACEBOOK SITES:

CANADIAN FANDOM:

You guessed it! A Canada-wide Facebook devoted to Sci-Fi fans, actors, artists, authors, concon, costumers, panelists, sfx people, fan writers, zine editors and all kinds other imaginative people. 143 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=3198365242> >

CANADIAN UNITY FAN FUND (CUFF):

A discussion group for fen who want to promote CUFF, the Cdn fan fund which sends an Eastern fan to a Western con/Convention (Aurora Awards) & West to East in alternating years for sake of Cdn fannish unity. 10 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6119342503> >

F.R.E.D. (FORGET REALITY ENJOY DRINKING):

This is a Facebook for a Vancouver centred social club which has been meeting weekly at local watering holes since 1979. Sci-Fi orientated. (See also F.R.E.D. under Local Clubs.) 56 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2351668529> >

MONTREAL FANDOM:

"A celebration and gathering of all past and present members of Montreal Fandom, as well as their many friends throughout the world." 35 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=3433145295> >

OTTAWA FANDOM:

A Facebook for Ottawa fans & anyone interested in keeping in touch with them. 28 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=3254325206> >

SCI-FI ON THE ROCK II:

A Facebook for concon, attendees & fans of SCI-FI ON THE ROCK, Newfoundland's annual Sci-Fi convention, founded 2007. 76 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4107298179> >

VANCOUVER FANDOM:

A Facebook for Vancouver & Lower Mainland fans & all those interested in knowing them. 33 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2399759573> >

VCON:

A Facebook for concon, attendees, & fans of VCON, Canada's longest-running ongoing Sci-Fi Convention (founded 1971). Held annually Vancouver/Lower Mainland area. (Next VCON will be #33 in October 2008.) 96 members.

< <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2315972840> >

CANADIAN SCI-FI WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

CANADIAN FANCYCLOPEDIA:

This is a 'work in progress' project I've been working on for more than a decade. Essentially my working notes for an A to Z 'Incompleat Guide to the History of Twentieth Century Canadian Science Fiction Fandom'. It is my intention to list and describe every Canadian Sci-Fi fanzine, club & organization since the 1930s as well as explain and detail fannish slang, custom, lore and legend. Granted, most of the traditions which form the underlying infrastructure of 'fandom' originated in the United States and Great Britain, but I include as much Canadian material as possible as I stumble across it in my research. For example, only Canadian zines are described. Don't have the time or space to detail foreign zines. So yes, a world-wide Fancyclopedia, but focused on Canadian fannish history.

NOTE: Sometimes people visiting my site, instead of finding the latest A-Z version, hit upon an earlier version that is merely A-C. Don't know why. Solution is simple. Click on 'C' to get the page dealing with 'C' subjects. At the top of the page where it says "Go to [E](#) or back to [Main Page](#)", click on 'E' and it will take you to the 'E' page and also magically jump to the latest A-Z version so that you can now jump to any page. Weird. So rest assured, the Canadian Fancyclopedia is *NOT* stuck in limbo but is in fact updated on a quasi-regular basis. On the Main Page just click on 'Info on Updates' for a list of the latest addition.

< <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html> >

CANADIAN SF -- THE CANADIAN SPECULATIVE FICTION FORUM:

"Fans, publishers, and authors of Canadian SF are welcome to join the discussion of speculative fiction. Log on and chat about science fiction, fantasy, alternate history, or any combination of the genres that make up the varied landscape of speculative fiction in Canada."

- Know of a convention, reading, or other event? [Post it on our coming events board.](#)
- Have you just published or discovered a new [science fiction](#) or [fantasy](#) story? Announce it [here!](#)
- Want to discuss Canadian [science fiction](#) or [fantasy](#)?
- Chat about [science fiction](#) and [fantasy](#) literature for children.
- Or [click here](#) for an overview of forum topics.

For details & info: < <http://www.pippin.ca/cgi-bin/YaBB/SF/> >

FANDOM.CA:

"Before Fandom.ca was a website, it was a protest. In 2000, a company calling themselves Fandom, Inc. attempted to register a trademark on the word "fandom". Their application was denied, as "fandom" was a word in common usage since its first appearance in Webster's Dictionary in 1903. Despite not actually having a trademark, Fandom, Inc. began legal proceedings against a fan who owned another website... The fraudulent legal exploits of Fandom, Inc. caused Science Fiction fans all over the world to begin registering domain names with the word "fandom" in them to keep those domain names out of unscrupulous corporate hands. Seeing such a need, I registered Fandom.ca with the [Canadian Internet Registration Authority](#)."

"Then, in February 2002, the development started, and here is the result. Like all good websites, it's a work in continual progress. I hope to make it part information resource, and part weblog. In either of these areas, if there is some information I have missed, that should be known to all fandom, please feel free to [contact me](#) with links to information of interest. With help from fandom at large, this will hopefully become one of the better fannish resources available."

Andrew C. Murdoch < <http://www.fandom.ca/> >

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Sources < <http://www.locusmag.com/Conventions.html> > & < <http://www.sfnorthwest.org/northwestcons.html#cons> >

WEATHERTOP 2008 – (Feb 29 – Mar 2, 2008) at the Days Inn Surrey, 9850 King George Hwy, Surrey, B.C. Canada, V3T 4Y3. (Near King George Skytrain station.) Phone 604-588-9511 for hotel info, 1-800-663-0660 for room reservations. Hosted by Vancouver Gaming Guild. Ticket price: \$40.00 for the 3 days, or \$15 single day pass. Advance tickets available at some local Gaming stores. "Will feature a broad selection of gaming events, including the first chance to try the D&D 4.0 Playtest in Canada!" Includes video games, board games, card games, miniature games, demos, anime, workshops, LARPing courtesy of the Camarilla, Gaming Pentathlon contest, vendor space for dealers, one-shot adventures, door prizes, raffles, Golden Goblet two round survival contest, and much else, including swag for volunteers.

POTLATCH 17 – (Feb 29 – Mar 2, 2008) at the Hotel Deca, Seattle, Washington. Definition: "a small, discussion-oriented, literary SF convention held regularly in Seattle, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Portland. Reservations: \$119.00/single or double occupancy; \$134.00/triple; and \$149.00/quadruple, plus tax. *Rates include parking and continental breakfast daily.* HOTEL DECA, 4507 Brooklyn Avenue NE, Seattle, Washington 98105; Phone: 206-634-2000; Fax: 206-545-2103; Toll Free Reservations: 800-899-0251; reservations@hoteldeca.com. To Register on-line, go to the Hotel Deca reservations page ("Book a Room") and enter the dates you are booking and our Group/Event Code: 00034491. See < <http://www.hoteldeca.com/> >. General memberships: \$50 (through December 31, 2007); Student memberships: \$35 (with valid student ID at the door); Ages 6-18: \$20; Supporting: \$20. Potlatch 17, c/o Suzanne Tompkins, PO Box 25075, Seattle, WA 98165. Website: <http://www.potlatch-sf.org/> Kate Schaefer, chair@potlatch-sf.org

NORWESCON 31 – (March 20 – 23, 2008) at the < [DoubleTree Hotel Seattle Airport](#) >, 18740 International Blvd, Seatac, Washington. Tel: 1-206-246-8600 (to reserve a room). Click here to make a < [reservation online](#) > Fax: 1-206-431-8687. Flat Norwescon room rate of \$105.00 per night for up to four (4) people. These rates are available for up to 3 days before and after the convention. A daily charge of \$10.00 for a 5th additional person. Five (5) people maximum per room. Parties are allowed only in the party wing (Wing 5b). If you're planning on hosting a party, request a room in the party wing when making your room reservation. Convention theme: "Bell, Book and Dragon". Host convention for annual P.K. Dick Award. Writer GoH: Dan Simmons, Artist GoH: Ciruelo, Special Guest: Naomi Novik. Memberships \$50 US till December 31st, 2007. < [Online registration](#) > is now available (PayPal) or < [Registration via postal mail](#) > (Check or Money Order - U.S. Funds Only). For info such as party rules, programming, other guests, check out the Norwescon 31 home page at < <http://www.norwescon.org/default.htm> >

AD ASTRA 2008 – (March 28-30, 2008) at the Crowne Plaza Toronto Don Valley Hotel, 1250 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3C 1J3. Call 1-877-227-6963 or 416-449-4111 to reserve, and be sure to explain it's for

the Ad Astra Convention and mention the reservation code 'ADS'. Room rates: Single or double: \$119.00. Guests of Honour: Yvonne Gilbert (Artist & Illustrator), Howard Taylor (Schlock Mercenary), Christopher Golden (Author), Rebecca Moesta (Author), & Kevin J. Anderson (Author). Fan/Special Guests of Honour: Dr. Shelly Rabinovitch (Cultural Anthropologist and founding (co) vice-president Ottawa Science Fiction Society, Glen Loates (Artist), Wayne Brown, Ed The Sock & Liana K, co-hosts of 'Ed's Night Party'.

Ad Astra will feature an anime room, Saturday Dance, Dealers Room, Gaming Room, GoH Dinner, & Masquerade. Interestingly, Ad Astra will also feature a 'juried' art show, with categories: 1) Best Monochromatic Work, 2) Best Colour Work, 3) Best Three Dimensional or Mixed Media Work, 4) Best Science Fiction Work, 5) Best Fantasy Work, 6) Best Historical Work, 7) Best Contemporary Work, 8) Best Game-Related Work. Unusually, the Con Suite will not be run by the convention, but will be divided into four time blocks, each to be run by a different organization, each – in effect – throwing a room party. For more info see < <http://www.ad-astra.org> >

SCI-FI ON THE ROCK – (April 19-20, 2008) 9AM to 6PM each day, at the Holiday Inn, 180 Portugal Cove Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 2N2, Hotel Reservations 1-888-465-4329, Hotel Front Desk 1-709-722-0506, Reservations Manager Patricia Martin 709-722-0934-ext 6. Fax 709-722-9756. Email: < pmartin@fortisproperties.com > web site: < <http://www.holidayinn.com> >. Admission \$10 per day, or \$18 for a weekend pass. Guests include Jeremy Bulloch (Bobba Fett), Kenneth Tam (The Rogue Commodore), The Vader Party Star wars Group, Paul Tucker (The Underworld Railroad), Shannon Sullivan (The Dying Days), & Matthew LeDrew (Black Womb). Events include Robotics demo, Masquerade, Model Building Contest, Charity Auction, Dinner with Jeremy Bulloch, Geek Survivor Contest, & Quidditch Match, plus panels & workshops on Fanfilm Making, Dr. Who, Movie Makeup, Remote Control Toy Basics, Stage Combat, Miniature Figure Painting, Video Gaming Strategy, Lightsaber Techniques, Comic Drawing, etc. Email con at < contact@scifiontherock.com > or check website at < <http://www.scifiontherock.com/> > or their facebook site at < <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4107298179> >

CORFLU SILVER / CORFLU 25 – (April 25-28, 2008) Plaza Hotel, One Main Street, Las Vegas NV 89101. Membership Rates: \$60 US / £35 UK attending. Hotel info: < <http://plazahotelcasino.com> > Make checks payable to Joyce Katz and mail them to Joyce Katz 909 Eugene Cernan St. Las Vegas, NV, 89145, USA You can also register through [PayPal](#) by sending the appropriate amount to < JoyceWorley1@cox.net > please follow up with an email to confirm. More info at < <http://www.corflu.org> >

KEYCON 25 – (May 16 – 19, 2008) at Radisson Skyview, 288 Portage Ave, Winnipeg MB. All rooms are \$86.00 per night, plus applicable taxes, and are available at that rate from May 14 to May 21, 2008 Call the hotel at (204)-956-0410. Mention Keycon to get the special rate!! Registration: Before Dec31st 2007 = \$45 Cdn. Then \$55 Cdn till April 30th. At the door TBA. Child 5 to 12 years \$35 Cdn. Mail in < [Registration Form](#) > and mail to: Keycon, PO Box 3178, Winnipeg MB R3C 4E6. Money orders and cheques accepted. Please make payable to: Keycon Mail in registrations accepted until April 30/2008 (by post-mark). Author GoH's Eric Flint & Jane Yolen, Artist GoH: David Mattingly, Gaming GoH: Jamie Chambers & parody/filking GoH: Luke Ski. For more info see: < <http://www.keycon.org/> >

DENVENTION / WORLDCON 66 -- (Aug 6 – 10, 2008) at the Colorado Convention Center, Denver, Colorado. (It's gigantic! 6 exhibit halls total 584,000 sq ft, 62 meeting rooms total 100,00 sq ft, 2 ballrooms total 85,000 sq ft, one 5,000 seat theatre! You'll need a GPS thingie to find your way around!) Entire Mark Adam's Hotel designated for party suites. 250 room block contracted for the Hyatt Hotel which adjoins the Convention Centre. PR2, hotel information and Hugo nomination ballots will be available no later than January 2008. Author GoH: Lois McMaster Bujold, Artist GoH: Rick Sternbach, Fan GoH: Tom Whitmore; Ghost of Honour: Robert Heinlein; Toast Master Will McCarthy. Current membership rates (good till Dec 31st, 2007) are Attending: \$175 US, Supporting: \$40 US, Child: \$45 US. For online membership: < http://www.denvention3.org/wcdb/member_main.php > or for mail in form go to < [membership form](#) > For more info see website < <http://www.denvention3.org/> >.

ANIME EVOLUTION -- (Aug 22-24, 2008) at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby B.C. "Vancouver's Japanese Animation Convention And Asian Cultural festival" with amv room & contest, cosplay & cosplay contest, industry guests, industry panels, live concerts, video rooms, art gallery, karaoke, video games, dealers room, charity auction, game tournaments, and more! For info: < www.animeevolution.com >

VCON 33 -- (Oct 3-5, 2008) Vancouver, BC. Canada's oldest ongoing Sci-Fi convention (VCON 1 was held in 1971). Author GoH: Patrick Rothfuss (author of 'Name of the Wind'), Artist GoH: Lisa Snellings-Clark. Gaming GoH: James Ernest (of Cheapass Games). Current pre-registration membership price: \$45 Cdn. Make out cheques to 'VCON' and mail to VCON, c/o Box 78069, Grandview RPO, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V5N 5W1. 85 members pre-registered so far. Details re hotel, rates, dates, more GoHs, etc to be announced. If you'd like to help VCON 33 write: < vconchair@gmail.com > For updated info: < www.vcon.ca >

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION 2008 -- (Oct 30 - Nov 2, 2008) at the Hyatt Regency Calgary Hotel, 700 Centre Street SE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 5P6. Tel: (403) 717-1234. Fax: (403) 537-4444. Web site: < <http://www.calgary.hyatt.com> > Room Rate: CDN \$165 Single/Double Please mention "World Fantasy Convention" to receive the convention group rate and to properly credit our event. The group code that you want to use is WFCC or G-WFCC. This will give you the preferred rate of \$165.00/night. This rate expires October 1, 2008. Author GoH's David Morell & Barbara Hambly. Publisher GoH: Tom Doherty. Artist GoH: Todd Lockwood. Toastmaster: Tad Williams. Current Membership rate: \$125 US or CDN. Supporting: \$35 US or Cdn. Register on-line (via Pay Pal) at < <http://www.worldfantasy2008.org/ro.html> >, or to register by mail, go to < <http://www.worldfantasy2008.org/reg.html> > & choose appropriate form. For more Info check the convention website: < www.worldfantasy2008.org/ >.

ANTICIPATION / WORLDCON 67 -- (Aug 6-10, 2009) Hotel: Palais des congres de Montreal. GoH: Neil Gaiman. Invitee d'honneur: Elisabeth Vonarburg. Fan GoH: Taral Wayne. Editor GoH: David Hartwell. Publisher GoH: Tom Doherty. MC: Julie Czerneda. Contact address: Anticipation, C.P. 105, Succursale NDG, Montreal, QC, Canada H4A 3P4. For info: < info@anticipationsf.ca > or < www.anticipationsf.ca >

OOK, OOK, SLOBBER, DROOL!

From: JOHN PURCELL, January 5th 2008

Graeme,

You keep on producing bigger and better issues. Fantastic job here, and I really liked that reproduced cover of *Supramundane Stories #1* from 1936. It is my impression that a lot of people are unaware of how far back Canadian fandom goes. Harry Warner's *All Our Yesterdays* and *A Wealth of Fable* devoted some space to the development of Canadian fandom, but they seemed incomplete. Your Canadian Fancyclopedia might help illuminate some of the dark corners of this subject. I look forward to the project's completion.

((Thank you. Canadian Fancyclopedia an ongoing hobby, life-long it seems.))

Once upon a time - namely, the 1970s when I was mailing out lots of copies of *This House* to various Canadian locales - I used to get locs and zines from Chester Cuthbert, Robert Runte, Garth Spencer, Michael Hall, Garth Danielson, Mike Glicksohn, and many others. So it is not surprising at how much I am digging your historical look at older Canadian cons (like V-Con) and fans/zines from north of the border. This is all very interesting, so keep it up. I am learning a lot from your efforts. As they say, "All knowledge is contained in fanzines." A truer statement has never been uttered.

((I have met and/or corresponded with five of the 1970s Canadian fans you mention above. Only Garth Danielson remains as someone I've read about but never actually contacted.))

About the only other thing that struck me as commentable were the two *Stardance* articles, especially in light of that hoax article Chris Garcia ran in *Drink Tank* a number of issues ago. To think that there is an actual *Stardance* movie website coggles me. I wonder what Chris thinks of this. At any rate, it is good to know that Spider and Jeanne are doing well and enjoying themselves.

((See my **AUTHOR HAPPENINGS** article for latest info))

I am still impressed by all the stfnal doings up in your neck of the woods. It makes me a bit envious of y'all up there. Then again, much can be said for good, old peace and quiet; without these, I couldn't read zines and comment on them. Things are about to heat up down here since AggieCon is now two and a half months away, followed by Corflu the following month. Lots of other activities coming up down here, too; when the next *Askance* hits the electronic newsstands in a few day's time, you will see what I mean.

((Yes, there are a fair number of active groups in the Lower Mainland. I'm generally too tired and home-loving to do more than attend VCON meetings and the occasional BCSEA meeting. WCSFAzine is my primary fanac.))

So therewith, another loc is done. Have fun, and don't let this zine take up too much of your time, even though doing zines is a lot of fun. I think they can be rather addictive, don't you agree?

((Yes indeed, and exhilarating, thrilling...I find my thoughts - wherever I am, on the bus, commuting, coffee breaks at work - churning over what aspect of the upcoming zine I should work on next. (Great for the old brain cells. Purposeful, enthusiastic mental activity is the *true* fountain of youth, methinks.) In fact, I get so excited I can hardly wait to post the current zine to get it out of the way. For example, I'm writing this on the 6th of January, and already 21 pages of the February issue are complete. The advantage of doing the bulk of the work upfront is that there



is less and less work to be done as the deadline approaches, thus reducing production stress *and* freeing up time for planning the next issue. Clever lad I am.))

All the best, John Purcell.

From: LLOYD PENNEY, January 20th 2008

Dear Graeme:

Thank you for the fifth WCSFAzine...I'll try to buck precedence, and get this in to you on time. Stranger things have happened.

Great cover from the old Frome fanzine. I wish there was a way of letting Canadian fandom know about our own fannish history...it might create more of a feeling of community. However, most of fandom seems more concerned about catching a particular episode of any given SF show...the mindless adulation alluded to in the Vancouver convention report. Then again, I might be nostalgic for a time that never existed... We need more articles like the one on Frome, but sometimes, I wonder if there is anyone new to care about fanhistory any more. I guess gathering it for ourselves will have to do.

((There is always the hope some retrograde independent-minded rebel will be attracted to our cause through simple exposure to our efforts, and will carry on as the next generation...))

Barry Kent Mackay...now there's a name I rarely see these days. I gather he's still around as a wildlife artist. For some reason, one of Mackay's wildlife art peers, Glen Loates, will be the artist GoH at Ad Astra this March. Not sure why, but the art at the con should be at least a little different. I gather that Loates is an SF reader, but has never been involved with fandom.

I hope Peter Jarvis was a good CUFF candidate at VCon. The decision was actually hard to make, given what had happened, but I hope he'll carry through on all commitments, and produce a trip report. Was Athena and the family there with him, or was he there by himself?

((As far as I know he was attending alone. I look forward to his trip report. No word on its progress as yet.))

You're very lucky to have SF radio shows in Vancouver. There's no such thing as community radio in Toronto, and while there are talkshows on local radio, there's no way to discuss SF.

((No community radio? Not even from the University? Sad.))

Fanzines are ephemera, to be sure, but so many of us collect ephemera, and more and more universities collect it for psychological and sociological studies of human behaviour and habit. I have about 20 to 25 Banker's Boxes of fanzines, and I intend to put several years of e-zines on a single CD.

((Excellent! Something I should think about doing. I hope Taral continues producing CD versions of some of the rarer, earlier zines. Course, he hasn't sold many. Sigh. Ultimately, posting complete zines on the web would at least make them available to fhistorians and the curious.))

Yvonne and I have sent in our DUFF ballots...I think Murray Moore will win. We're two of his nominators, so I'd better say that, hadn't I? Also, the FAAn ballots are now available. Have a look at <http://www.corflu.org/pdfs/2008faanawards.pdf> for the ballot. If you could pass this along to Garth and anyone else who might like to vote on this, by all means. The more people who vote on this, the better.

((Yep! Already voted for Murray. Hope he wins!))

The sky is blue so you'll know where to stop when you're cutting the grass. I thought everyone knew that. I'm sure Mr. Science knows that, and is just testing all of us.

((Yes, but for devious reasons of his own --- something to do with his planned ending of the world in order to create a better one -- he's trying to suppress the forbidden info you write about...))

Well, Peter Diamandis is a little egotistical, but at least he's giving (or has given) Jeanne Robinson a chance to float in a Vomit Comet. I should take a peek at the blog listed, and see how it went. I'd love to be in Courtney to see Spider on stage with Harry Shearer.

((The flight went very well. Be sure to check out the blog AND the movie site for the video clips.))

After seeing the trailer for the second Narnia movie, which I am looking forward to very much, I see that Peter Jackson will at least have something to do with filming The Hobbit. I got the extended DVD box set of Lord of the Rings for Christmas, so eventually, it will have its right companion beside it.

((I hope the final result will match Peter's vision. Hope he has final approval.))

So many sites on line, so little time. I am scaling back my own Facebook site, and continue to use my LifeJournal to archive my locs, which is what I'll do as soon as I've finished this one. I'd love to go to SciFi on the Rock...my relatives are originally from Newfoundland, but I've never been there! Laard T'underin' Jaysus, you bunch, c'mere 'til I tells ya...

((My wife grew up in Newfoundland. When she's had a bit to drink, her accent comes out, along with an assortment of Rocky & Bullwinkle voices, oddly enough.))

Some speculation I will throw out into the wilderness, and see what response it gets... with Calgary being the site of a successful Westercon, and an upcoming site for the World Fantasy Convention, how long will it be until someone (probably the Mansfields) floats a trial balloon for a Calgary Worldcon bid?

((If they could just get some of that Calgary Oil Money for patronage!))

Have a look at < <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-2315-e.html> > for information on Amor de Cosmos. He was the premier of BC from 1872 to 1874, and eased BC into Confederation. Actually, if you Google him, there's a myriad of sites to read about one of BC's most colourful characters ever.

((Haven't had the time to check it out, but I will. Thanks for the link.))

The job front...the CNIB let me go just shy of my three months' there, citing things not working out and financial stresses. Uh huh... I am currently about a month into a three-month assignment at Panasonic Canada in Mississauga. Yvonne start a one-year maternity leave assignment at DuPont Canada tomorrow. Why can't we just win 6/49 and be done with it?

((I'm really sorry to hear about the CNIB job. I imagine it has nothing to do with you, but rather the technical aspect of applying for grants from the government. Something along the lines of what happened when I worked for Canada Customs years ago. I got hired as a 'temporary' worker, and worked full time for a year. Then they told me they were going to lay me off after a certain date, so I promptly went out and got myself another job (one much worse). Found out later that at the going away party for all the laid off 'temporary' workers, they were rehired by Canada Customs. Seems laying them off allowed the local branch to claim to Ottawa they had cut their budget significantly, and as a result they were rewarded with incentive extra funds, which allowed them to rehire. They did this every year. I hate bureaucracy! If I had known that I would have stuck with the job at least till I found something better, instead of panicking and grabbing the first job I could find (which turned out to be a BIG mistake!))

All done and off it goes into the ether, so does it resonate. Take care, and see you in February!

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

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