

WCSFAzine

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

#7

Mar 2008



LEGENDARY CANADIAN SCI-FI FANZINE OF THE 1940S/1950s

FAN-EDITOR: JOSEPH 'BEAK' TAYLOR

IMPORTANT STUFF YOU CAN SAFELY IGNORE

WCSFAzine Issue # 7, Mar 2008, Volume 2, Number 3, Whole number 7, 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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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:

Cover: Albert A. Betts.

Clip Art: 3.

Barry Kent Mackay: 19, 33, 35, & 37.

William Rotsler: 7, 18, & 29.

EDITORIAL

Great Galloping Ghu! A couple of days behind schedule with more material than I originally intended, and this after deleting several articles of minor interest. Still, I’m pleased, apart from whatever errors and mistakes remaining, I feel this is a good, meaty issue, something you can sink your teeth into.

The biggest delay was the writing of the ‘Walking With Dinosaurs’ article, which for some reason seemed to take me forever to write.

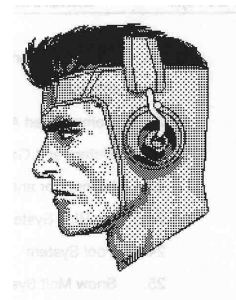
And of course, I had long ago promised my wife Alyx that I would review her fantasy novel ‘A Strange Place in Time’. Since it’s being published online at Torquere Press starting March the 13th, I didn’t want to miss bringing it to your attention at an opportune time. I recommend it of course, and not just because I’m married to the author! It’s a fine, evocative piece of work. Read the review, then consider checking it out (and buying the download) come March 13th at:

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

I am very proud of her. Both the Specialty Press Doppelganger Books and the E-Press Publisher Torquere have contracted to publish the remaining two novels in the trilogy, which is very cool. Very proud of her indeed.

I should have the next issue finished by April 1st. Many thanks to Bill Burns at < <http://www.efanzines.com> > for hosting. Please send me feedback! < rgraeme@shaw.ca >

Cheers! Ghod-Editor The Graeme



CONVENTION STUFF

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF VCON 2: Part Two

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

by The Graeme

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH, 1972.

At the convention itself, Dick astonished Mike Bailey, and damn near everybody else, with his energy. He apparently mingled madly, with particular emphasis on the women. Local fans were delighted, and responded accordingly. Said Michael Walsh:

"There was a certain dynamism. A bear-like presence with a beard -- in a ratty trench coat. Walk in some place where you are greeted jovially as Dick was at this convention and you'll respond to the general level of good will in a room. It never occurred to me that he wasn't doing anything other than reflecting back the good will he was getting from people who were really happy to get somebody with his reputation right here in Vancouver saying things that were, in their way, extremely his ideas, highly unconventional, in what at the time I regarded as a sort of Marshal McLuhan manner."

Unfortunately for myself, I didn't attend this convention. I had not yet read Dick and did not know he would become my favourite SF author. I do remember walking past the hotel while the convention was still on. I've been kicking myself in the butt ever since.

The program book (the only known surviving copy recently donated to the WCSFA/BCSFA archive by Michael & Susan Walsh) titles the convention the "Second Vancouver Science Fiction Convention" (not called VCON till VCON 3). The hosting organizations are listed as "SF3, the Simon Fraser University Science Fiction Society" and the "University of British Columbia Science Fiction Society, SFFEN". The BCSFA was somewhat dormant at the time, but had been a tri-sponsor of the first convention.

The program book begins with a somewhat surreal tribute to the GoH titled "PHILIP KINDRED DICK" by Ray Nelson; I assume this is the famous fanartist of that name who first introduced the propeller beanie to fandom circa 1947. It reads:

"The Philip Dick is a huge, shambling, hairy bear found only in the dismal, sometimes snowbound wilderness of the Skeebovian Alps, a portion of the San Francisco Bay Area that fortunately remains unexplored except by the braver sort of cute little Skeebovian teenybop girls. He has been known to sit for months in his lair, gazing with unfocused eyes through his cracked picture window, meditating on the remarkable speed with which the Skeebovian government reconquers back the land we futile humans attempt to civilize."

"Money runs out. Food runs out. His friends run out, carrying with them all of Phil's worldly goods, including his stamp collection and plastic model World War One planes, even his tear-stained photograph of Jean Harlow, but still he remains motionless in his chair. Wives leave. Children leave. Pet animals leave. Finally there is nobody left but his little dog, Mr. Sims, who licks his unmoving hand and whimpers. The faithful dog, too, might starve, except that it is able to kill an occasional beaver on the dam in Phil's bathtub."

"Nobody knows what it is that sets the process in motion, but finally the dull, stupid, opaque eyeballs begin to glitter with a faint trace of something – is it irony, or is it maniacal glee, or simple lust? – and his fingers begin to twitch, only a little at first, then more and more. Mr. Sims goes mad with joy, leaping up to lick his master's face. The Philip smiles, then slowly, slowly leans forward and takes a pinch of snuff, which he raises to his nostrils and inhales with a quick, brutal snort."

"He sneezes, and the sneeze blows the thick layer of dust off the typewriter that has been sitting in front of him all this time, waiting, the only possession his friends have not had the heart to rip off. He looks down, sees the typewriter as if for the first time in his life. He begins to type, and in an instant his fingers are flying. He wasn't a concert pianist for nothing! Page after page is filled with the mad dreams that flitted through his mind during his dormant period... short stories, novels, poetry in German and Latin (his favourite languages), letters to other writers' wives. It pours out of him in a torrent that seems endless as the water that pours over Niagra Falls. But is it endless? No, finally the river runs dry; the great hairy paws of the Philip Dick draw from the typewriter one last page on which is written the fateful words, "The End".

"Then his kindly agent, Old Uncle Scotty, who has been watching him all along on closed circuit TV, arrives in a helicopter and gathers up the pages that now surround Phil on all sides like a Skeebovian snowdrift. That's what an agent is for... to take these precious pages back to the outside world and see that they are published, so that every one can share the beautiful and terrible and funny dreams of the Skeebovian bear. Perhaps Phil makes a lot of money. Perhaps he is translated into a lot of different languages. Perhaps he gets a literary prize, like the Hugo or something. He doesn't care. He doesn't even know about it, for he has sunk once again into hibernation, the open-eyed sleep of a bear who just happens to also be a genius."

The following page in the program book was blank but for the question: "*Philip K. Dick: What is he really like? (A page for Sketches? Quotes? Notes? Schematics? Autographs? Etc.)*" This would seem to indicate an assumption that P.K. Dick was something more than a mere Guest of Honour, namely a curiosity worthy of intense scrutiny and study. Evidently his reputation for 'weirdness' had preceded him.

The convention began at 5:00 pm with a cash bar party at 75 cents per drink. At some point there was a masquerade of sorts, in which Bill and Bubbles Broxon (prominent American fans) won an award for a mad doctor and victim/patient skit.

Films were also shown, I assume in a separate room so as not to interrupt the cash bar party. **Things to Come** was the highlight of the showing (and remember, this is before video, we're talking an actual film, probably 16mm with sound). This, of course, is the renowned 1936 film directed by William Cameron Menzies, which was based on H.G. Wells 1933 novel. Unfortunately the version shown had been cut for television so it was likely a good deal shorter than the theatrical version. The program book devotes two full pages to a description of the plot and a cast list.

Raymond Massey, who played the dual roles of John Cabal and Oswald Cabal, is a Canadian. A footnote explains: "*Born 1986 in Ontario, brother of Vincent Massey, first native-born Governor-General of Canada, and of the famous international Canadian firm of Massey Harris and Massey Ferguson. Mr. Raymond Massey's son, Geoffrey Massey of the architectural firm of Erickson-Massey designed Simon Fraser University.*"

Of no interest to anyone, the grade school I attended in Ottawa in the 1950s was named after Vincent Massey.

Somewhat of greater interest, the concom invited Raymond Massey to be a Guest of Honour at VCON 2, but he was unable to attend. However he did send a thank you letter in which he commented "*Alexander Korda, who produced the picture at Denham Studios in 1934-5, gave Wells a contract unique in movie history. Besides writing the scenario, Wells was given absolute authority over every phase of production. On the whole, this unprecedented power in the hands of a man quite inexperienced in film writing, was exercised with discretion, even caution, but Wells' energy, imagination and wisdom completely justified Alex Korda's trust in him He contributed far more to the film than a shooting script.*"

Immediately after is a paragraph which might have been part of Massey's letter, but it is not set off in quotation marks, so I don't know. Unaccredited.

"*Sir Cedric Hardwicke was invited to replace an actor who had already filmed his part. Hardwicke had suggested that it would be more effective if Theotocopulous wore 1930 costume in the year 2055. But Wells would not hear of it. Hardwicke said, "I am sure that Wells, unread today because he grew too earnest in his old age, will come into his own again by reason of his sheer power as a visionary."*"

The article concludes with the following summing up: "***Things to Come** was often considered as a logical **Metropolis**, this film was written at the end of Wells' life reflecting his dogmatic vision of a technocratic future. It was intended as a discussion of the book but Wells soon found that all talk and no action made a dull film and so the directional factors helped. Wells still had a hand in every part of the production, sending notes to all departments constantly. Few technological advances were conceived nor were the views changed from those that Wells had held early in his life. But the movie was prophetic.*"

I can add that my mother saw the film as a teenager in the 1930s, and was quite terrified by the scenes depicting victims of 'The Wandering Sickness'. Furthermore, **Things to Come** begins with a hypothetical Second World War that lasts for generations, and such were the rising tensions of the day viewers like my mother were quite convinced they were watching their own future being played out. The film is still powerful today, if only because of its imagery, but when it first came out it reflected the contemporary fears and paranoia of the generation witnessing the rise of Hitler and consequently had an immense impact on the audience probably impossible for a later generation like ourselves to fully comprehend.

Oh, and Wells' opinion of **Metropolis**? "Quite the silliest film", he is recorded as having commented.

I would have liked to have heard what Dick's comments were on that film, but Dick didn't see it -- according to Michael Walsh -- because when not actually lecturing, Dick was too busy charming the women at the con to bother with scheduled events....

Before the first day of the convention was over (according to Michael), Dick announced he was going to live in Vancouver from now on. This made for the following headline in the Vancouver Province: "CANADA GAINS A NOTED SCIENCE FICTION WRITER." One possible explanation for the sudden outburst of energy could be the methanol nose drops (it is alleged) he was constantly inhaling. They supposedly contained Speed. However, this is somewhat contradicted by the reasons he later gave for his decision to live in Vancouver:

"*After the convention I decided to stay in Canada, feeling I had nothing to go back to in California; I had lost Kathy, most of my friends had become drug addicts (I had gotten deep into the drug subculture, but seeing the fast deterioration of young addicts, especially the girls, I had changed my whole basic view towards drugs and become strongly anti-dope), my house was gone, and bitter memories of my wife and child leaving me would be revived if I returned.*"

And then there's Michael Walsh on the subject of Dick's drug-taking:

"*...He was constantly snorting what he purported to be snuff. To this day I've got no reason to believe otherwise....*"

TO BE CONTINUED

VCON 32 -- OCTOBER 21st, SUNDAY, 2007.

Have no idea how long this entry will be since memory is fading fast and my handwritten notes become more indecipherable every day. Still, I want to convey something of the 'flavour' of this last day of the convention.

Once again I get up around 8:00 AM and haul myself down to the hospitality suite for breakfast. The guy in charge appears a bit distraught. Seems the crowd last night 'pillaged' the stock and there's virtually nothing left to eat, pending an emergency food run by the concom, who are mostly still asleep. What to do in the meanwhile?

I go back to my room and retrieve two cartons of fruit juice, a package of hotdogs, several boxes of crackers and some Pocky candy, and donate them to the hospitality suite. Breakfast not quite what I had anticipated but at least I get to sit with others and share in their conversation (which I could have done alone in my room of course but I try not to tell people about my imaginary friends as this tends to leave a bad impression....).

Someone tells me that the hotel's attitude has lightened considerably, that the staff even went so far as to congratulate the concom on how well last night's masquerade/dance was run. Excellent news if true. Always best to leave the host hotel feeling good about the convention. Makes talking to the next hotel so much easier. (Hotels in a given locality do talk to each other, you know. It's best to establish and maintain a good reputation if at all possible.)

At 10:00 the CSFFA (Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Awards) business meeting starts. These are the people who oversee the Aurora Awards, accept bids from conventions to host, and change the rules and procedures as required. Anyone attending a host convention is entitled to attend, so I sit in.

(Already reported on the results of the meeting in WCSFAzine #3, Nov 2007 issue, so here will concentrate on what it was like being at the meeting. Once again, for the record, Those present included Michael Walsh as Chair, Fiona Kelleghan as Secretary, and participants Robert J. Sawyer, Clint Budd, Peter Jarvis, Murray Moore, Jean-Louis Trudel, Fran Skene, David Strang, Christian Sauve, Hayden Trenholm, R. Graeme Cameron, Randy McCharles and at least 2 or 3 others whose names I failed to record.)

The first motion is to establish the domain name for the new official website, namely < <http://www.prixaurorawards.ca> >. To tell the truth, there is very little to say about this since Clint has already set up the site, registered it in the name of the CSFFA, and paid for it to boot. No doubt much to his relief the proposal is passed unanimously. Would have been rather awkward had the motion been defeated!

The second motion produces the most fireworks. It is in two parts: the first proposal is to enlarge the Permanent Standing Committee to include members from coast to coast, and the second is to appoint the Webmaster as Chair.

As to the first, it quickly settled down to a rather pointless discussion as to just how many members were we talking about. At one point I blurted out my observation that we seemed to be implying there should be a single member from each Province and Territory "of the Dominion" as we used to say back when I was a kid.

Rob Sawyer, who is seated in front of me, turns around in his chair and informs me we can't indulge in the luxury of an 'artificial' fixed representation, our main problem is finding enough volunteers from anywhere. We have to take what we can get, and as a consequence only the few highly active centres of fan activity are worth targeting for publicity and membership drives. Common sense dictates this. Even if we do get a 'Rep' working for us in one of the more obscure regions, it makes no sense if there are no other active fans in that area of the country. What would be the point? Everything he says makes sense to me, so I have no problem agreeing.

As for the second part of the motion, which in effect appoints Clint Budd as both Webmaster *and* Chair of CSFFA, both Rob and Clint speak to this. The essential idea being that, members being so far flung, actual meetings can only be held via email and perhaps a forum attached to the website, and that it only makes sense that it would be more efficient to combine the two positions, leading to faster responses and decisions taken, etc. Besides, there's the old bugaboo of getting enough people committed to being active on a day-to-day basis. No need to split up tasks and multiply the number of people required. And anyway, Dennis Mullin has effectively been both for ages, so it would be defining a situation that is already standard practice.

The motion passes unanimously. A rider is added that the Permanent Standing Committee can be increased in size from 3 to as many as 8 members, including the Chair/Webmaster. At the time of this meeting the three current Committee members are Dennis Mullin, Ruth Stewart, and Dennis Valdron, all I believe of Ontario, and none of them able to attend the current Convention.

A motion to include on-line nominations and voting, and on-site voting, in addition to the mail-in ballot, at least on a trial basis, passes with one objection. And then a housekeeping motion defining various duties of the Committee, like keeping the website up to date and such.

Next comes discussion concerning Convention 2008 and where is it to be held? David Strang presents a bid on behalf of Keycon 25 which will be held in Winnipeg, May 16-19, 2008. No other bids are offered, so Keycon is quickly accepted. It is now official.

See < <http://www.keycon.org/index.php> > for latest info.

Last but not least Robert Sawyer rises to propose a Lifetime Achievement Award to be presented to Dennis Mullin at the next Convention in tribute to all the years of hard work he has put into maintaining and promoting the Auroras &

Convention. Jean-Luis Trudel wonders if this is within the purview of the Committee, Rob points out the Constitution allows for it, and Clint adds that although the Lifetime Achievement Award has fallen into disuse it had never been officially withdrawn as a category. Previous winners were A.E. Van Vogt (1980), Susan Wood (1981), Phyllis Gotlieb (1982) and Judith Merril (1983). So why not revive it? Passes unanimously.

(I didn't mention this in WCSFAzine #3 because I thought it was supposed to remain a secret, but I see it was posted on the official CSFFA Aurora's site so I guess it's okay to let people know. Rob Sawyer proposed Dennis stand for 2008 CUFF winner election and I agreed to be one of the West Coast nominators, but alas Dennis turned down the nomination citing various appropriate reasons. I do hope he makes it out to Keycon to accept his award in person.)

The meeting adjourns only seventy minutes after it begun. I thought matters had clicked along very quickly and very efficiently. I had anticipated it would drone on forever, but in fact it was very fast-paced. All business meetings should be like this!

At noon a Convention banquet begins but I was unable to afford a ticket on my budget and so hang out in the dealer's room till the banquet ends and the hall opens for anyone who wants to attend the Aurora awards.

(I list the results in WCSFAzine #3).

Robert Sawyer acts as overall host who introduces the various presenters. For instance, Peter S. Beagle presents the 'Best Long-Form Work in English' Aurora Award to Dave Duncan for his novel 'Children of Chaos'. Dave is quite delighted. He says something to the effect that "If you keep giving me awards I promise to practice writing" ... till he gets it right? Or is he saying the thrill of winning an Aurora is sufficient motivation for him to continue? Alas, my notes are incomplete. At any rate he is definitely very pleased to win.

So too Robert Sawyer, who wins 'Best Short-Form Work' for his story 'Biding Time'. Elizabeth Vonarburg then wins 'Meilleur Livre en Francais' which causes Robert to comment wistfully: "For a few moments I was leading the pack with the most Aurora Awards won over the years, but now Elizabeth and I are tied again."

Like the Oscars (and the Hugos?) the presenter tears open an envelope, pulls out a slip of paper, and reads out the name printed thereon. A classic mistake occurs. The wrong piece of paper has been inserted and the name read out is *not* the actual winner. Michael Walsh intervenes to correct the mistake. Fortunately the 'false' winner is not present and thus does not undergo a boom/bust response to winning and losing. The correct winner enjoys a bust/boom experience instead. I choose not to name anybody or even the category in order to spare the 'false winner's' feelings. To sum up, an amazing mixup.

Afterwards comes the CUFF (Canadian Unity Fan Fund) panel. It is well attended... by the panelists that is, CUFF winners and/or administrators all, namely myself, Fran Skene, Garth Spencer, Murray Moore and Peter Jarvis. We outnumber the audience which consists of Steve Forty, Christian Sauve and David Strang. No sense in explaining the history, meaning and purpose of CUFF since we are all familiar with the phenomenon. (Though Peter Jarvis is relatively new, being the current winner. I give him copies of both my CUFF trip report and my history of CUFF to further his knowledge.)

We start off by sharing amusing anecdotes from our CUFF experiences (none of which I remember, alas) and then get down to the serious business of figuring out how to promote CUFF (obviously holding a CUFF panel at a convention doesn't work). In effect, we turn a panel discussion into a working seminar. Various ideas are tossed about. Establish a wikipedia style website? All agree that would be a disaster. Perhaps a blog? A dedicated website? What kind



of computer geek technical knowledge is required these days? Who among CUFF activists has the requisite skills? Or the time to monitor such a site? Unresolved questions. (Robert Runte later establishes a CUFF Facebook site, though so far it has remained largely inactive. See < <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6119342503> >)

Then we get down to the nitty gritty of promoting the next CUFF election. Have to move fast. Only 7 months till the winner attends Convention at Keycon 25. The consensus is that we should concentrate on networking to establish a general awareness among fen till the end of the year, then slip into a publicity frenzy come the new year, building on the foundation we've already established. (Am not positive we've actually done this – I put info re the nomination process last issue -- but by the time you read this the nominations will have closed and hopefully, if not traditionally, at least *one* candidate will have been nominated.)

Afterwards I rest for a while in my room, then hang out in Hospitality. I miss the 'Bitch' session, so don't know what complaints there were, though I imagine the Hotel's room party policy was front and centre. Not our fault. We did our best to work around it.

Another possible complaint may have been the fact that complimentary tickets to professionals had been reduced to 'only' 50 individuals this year. We gave out 150 last year! Way too many. And since we had roughly 500 members both years, it means we had approximately 100 more paid memberships this year than last, 450 instead of 350! Surely we at least broke even?

At any rate, the Hotel insisted that all convention space be paid for up front, and this was done. That's one bill we don't have to worry about. And we did make our room-booking number, so there will be a discount which I assume will be reflected in a deduction to the remaining outstanding bills. If there is a loss, it must be rather small. I will report on the final results when I hear of them.

At 6:00 PM the closing ceremonies begin. For some reason I fail to take notes, and it's been so long that my mind is now a complete blank, can't remember a thing. I assume we followed our usual practice of final comments by the chair, followed by introductions of all the Guest of Honour who have not yet flown out of town, their final statements, and finishing up by singling out members of the concom (department heads anyway) and asking for a quick impression of how things went and the foremost highlight they cherish. Usually Michael Walsh carries out this task. Did we do that this year? Don't remember.

Then comes time for my Elron presentation. Conditions are optimal. I am seated at a table on a podium, so every one had a clear view of the assorted 'customized' Elrons I hold up, and a good microphone and speaker aids my presentation greatly. In fact, afterwards Mr. Science congratulates me on being audible for the first time in living memory (I tend to be way too soft spoken when speaking before a crowd, which is odd, as I do have some theatre experience, I used to be able to project my voice).

Note: I listed the Elrons in WCSFAzine #3. Check it out.

I am basically working from a multi-page script, though this year I've become familiar with it to the point I can spend more time looking at the audience rather than down at my script. So a more 'spontaneous' presentation this time.

My method is a bit unusual. For each category I announce the winner right away, followed by a short synopsis of why they are worthy, and for the punch line state the hopefully humorous or at least ironic title of their Elron, holding up a 'customized' Elron for emphasis to strengthen the 'punch'.

I'll quote one example:

"To **FRANK MILLER'S FILM '300'** and it's curious inversion of historical reality with 'manly' skimpy briefs (as opposed to the 'unmanly' armour they wore in battle?), 'straight' Spartan Warriors (yeah, right, Spartan brides wore false beards on their wedding night to make their hubbies feel comfortable), 'evil Persians' (whose regime was far more liberal and prosperous than Athens ever was, never mind the Spartans), and worst of all, 'democratically-minded' Spartans (who ran an absolute totalitarian state perpetually crushing the Helots – the majority of the population -- with terror and violence)."

"To FRANK MILLER'S FILM '300' goes 'The Special "Persian War Rhino For Historical Accuracy" Elron Award' (not the usual plastic lemon painted bronze, nor a model Rhino, but a plastic Triceratops, the accuracy of the award in keeping with the accuracy of the film)."

This gets a good, strong reaction from the audience, much hearty laughter, as do most of the Elrons. Good results. I'm pleased.

One thing that surprises me is that, after introducing me, Michael Walsh sits down beside me and interjects commentary into the proceedings. I had not known this was going to happen and was somewhat taken aback, since I prefer to work solo because my presentation of the Elrons is very much a comic act depending, for better or worse, on my written script, sense of timing, and style of speaking.

However, unlike certain members of the audience who can always be counted on to knock me off my stride by shouting out witty comments during the course of the presentation (all part of the fun, audience interaction, etc.), my only comeback usually being a brief, awkward pause, Michael lets me run through each category to its 'boffo' finish, and only then makes his comments, for all the world like a Shakesperean sidekick making humorous asides while the 'main' actor pauses. This seems to work quite well, "almost as if we had rehearsed it" as Michael later comments.

At the conclusion of the Elrons Michael briefly recaps the awards in the form of a one-man skit in which, drawing on his past experience, he plays a reporter shouting over the phone to the copy desk of a newspaper, reporting the awards and his impression of them, only to be told he is now obsolete and has been 'retired', thank you very much.

I have the last word and congratulate Michael "for this remarkable insight into your professional career."

Upon leaving the ballroom I am informed by Operations they want my walkie-talkie and the TV returned to Ops *now*. I had planned to show films till 11:00 PM, but am very tired and am very happy to be given an excuse to end my ConCom duties.

Not so tired that I retire early from the Dead Dog party. Far from it. I stay until 2:30 in the morning. A fine tradition, Dead Dog Parties. The convention is over. The ConCom is finally able to relax. Diehard fans are determined to make the afterglow last as long as possible. Great fun.

Let's see. I remember talking to Chilam, who very kindly offers to drive my luggage to my home on Monday (thus freeing me up to return by bus and Skytrain at my leisure), but only after he completes his University midterm exam on Quantum Thermodynamics! Extremely gutsy of him to stay partying nearly as long as I did. As he put it, "If I don't know the subject by now, there's no point trying to cram it all into my brain in the few remaining hours, I'd rather party." Hope his theory proved correct.

I talk to the conspiracy guy again, this time regaling him with accounts of TV news footage I saw decades ago re the Vietnam war, various assorted Dictators, etc., which has never been shown since that I'm aware of, yet would be valuable insights into the mood of the time. Indeed, he's somewhat flabbergasted by what I'm telling him. "I had no idea," he says.

At one point I tell the anecdote about the Calgary (?) Edmonton (?) hotel hosting both a Sci-Fi Convention and the Young Tories League, the punch line being that at the end of the weekend the hotel apologised to the Sci-Fi 'geeks' for the irresponsible behaviour of the 'politicos'. Billie Mcleod interjects "It wasn't 'The Young Tories', it was 'The Young Liberals'. Kathleen Moore-Freeman wrote a comic Filk song about the experience. You should ask her about the experience." I mean to, but forget. I am drinking rather a lot of Raven Dark Ale alternating with Sun God Cream Ale, so perhaps I can be forgiven. At any rate, so much for relying on oral history. Seems I had been passing on misinformation all these years. Oh well.

Felicity gives me a copy of her zine ISH #3, which I promise to review (this issue if I have time, if not, next issue. Must *find* the time!) as well as a DVD "for the archives" of comic skits performed by the court of the Emperor Moebius, of which she is a member. "They're rather like Monty Python skits but with more swearing," she explains. I haven't watched it yet but intend to review it soonest. A public showing was given yesterday by the Emperor in his palatial hotel suite. Fannish creativity in action.

In fact the formal invite card, (which Felicity also presents to me for inclusion in the WCSFA archive) features an impressive crest – crown above Moebus strip above letter 'A' combined with an incomplete circle – and the motto "PRIMATVS ET TERMINVS VOX INFINITVS EST" (meaning: "Infinite death to the primate people" (?) or maybe "Infinity first and last always" (?) as in "Boredom eternal" (?)). I don't know. The only Latin I know is "Cameronius erat hic!", which means "Cameron was here!"). The card reads:

"His soon to be most Imperial Majesty demands the pleasure of your audience at the occasion of his investiture as most regal Emperor of the Moebus Dominion, to be followed by a retrospective of Moebeus propaganda thus far. Beverages and possible cake to follow. Ceremony to be held 10/20 at 10:20 in room 1020. (Please present invitation at door for admission) Signed: HRRH EMPEROR MOBEUS 1."

Some time during the evening Pauline Walsh begins to gasp and choke. It transpires she accidentally inhaled some of the beer she was drinking.

"Pauline", I say, "It's all very well to inhale beer, but remember not to smoke it, that's way too dangerous."

"I like Graeme. He's funny!" says Chair Danielle. Well, sometimes, after I've had a few beer. Fortunately Pauline recovers quickly.

Meanwhile a fan suffers a physical and mental crisis quite alarming to those trying to help. Happens every once and a while at Dead Dog Parties, at Conventions, at any kind of party, or anywhere anytime for that matter. Not a problem unique to Sci-Fi fandom, but a real-life crisis intruding on the festive atmosphere. Not sure that it got resolved so much as petered out.

Despite the one downer event, it is a very good Dead Dog Party. I am one of the last to leave, well satisfied. A good conclusion to a good convention.

The next day, as I'm leaving the card key at the front desk, I experience a brief flash of nervousness when I smile innocently and blithely comment that the Convention Committee had already paid for my room (hoping like Hell this was actually true).

The desk clerk, frowning slightly, consults her computer screen. Then she brightens and says, "Yes, sir! That is correct." Thank Ghu for that.

Then home to Alyx who, as it turns out, had been having a great time (despite not feeling well physically and therefore unable to attend VCON this year) writing up a storm without having me underfoot as a distraction. She had creative fun. I had fun. It was a good weekend.

Thus endeth my account of VCON 32. Onward to VCON 33 this October!

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 >

FANATICAL FANAC FABLES

RETRO FANZINES: CANADIAN FANDOM #5, NOV 1943

Faned: Joseph 'Beak' Taylor

FANED BIO:

Joseph 'Beak' Taylor was the first of four editors -- **Joseph W. 'Beak' Taylor** (1943 to 1949), **Edward 'Ned' McKeown** (1949 to 1951), **Gerald A. Steward** (1953 to 1954), & **William D. Grant** (1955 to 1958) – of CANADIAN FANDOM, probably the most important Canadian genzine of its era. Joseph started it while a student at St. Andrews College, in Aurora, Ontario. It was quickly accepted by fandom as a major publication, became a member of CAFP (see below), and later functioned as the clubzine for the Toronto Science Fiction Society, otherwise known as The Derelicts. There were 37 issues in all, of which Taylor edited the first 15. (Note: the first three issues were titled "EIGHT-BALL", or possibly "8-BALL".) CANADIAN FANDOM was very well mimeographed and illustrated, with a maximum print run of 200, and was affectionately known by its readers by the shortened name CAN FAN.

As faned Beak contributed an editorial every issue titled "Beak Broadcasts", as well as the occasional story or article. For example, CANADIAN FANDOM #11(July 1946) included Beak's humorous account of a rare visit by legendary fan Leslie A. Crouch of LIGHT fame, titled "Aaaagghh!!!", which reveals something of Beak's lifestyle:

"...then the thunderous footprints were rocking the house upon its foundations. The obese doorman had arrived."

"This was at 11 O'clock. I led Les into my bedroom which also serves as a sort of workshop, study, and isolation ward, and became deeply involved in gab. Les sat on the bed, which rested on the floor, which rested on the cellar, and earthquakes occurred in British Columbia. He sat in the chair first, but it didn't have the necessary endurance."

"...at three of the clock, the stage was set. Everyone had arrived."

"No notable first words were recorded, with one exception. Jack Sloan's opening remark was, as he blotted up a few blobs of sweat, "I'll drink anything you've got, Beak. How about some ginger-ale?"

"Mason and Croutch then carried the conversation, while Thomas Hanley and myself made bright remarks, it sez here, and Sloan tried to look as if such sordid details were beneath his notice. After we had thoroughly covered the field of books, pornography, comic books (Mason being the managing editor of one), pornography, CanFan, pornography, Mason and Croutch, Croutch and Mason, pornography, we settled down to a few rounds pf puns and a bit of pornography. Parry Sound's Portly Pornographer himself starred in this endeavour. Mason then briefly outlined his newest character – a hermaphroditic misogynist."

"Then Mason attempted to inveigle Croutch into a spot of supper down in Chinatown, Croutch footing the bill, of course. Amazing how quickly Les lost his appetite."

Probably a good sampling of Beak's dry sense of humour.

In CANADIAN FANDOM #10 (May 1946) one of a series of CAN FAN PERSONALITIES articles appeared, labeled "No. 3" and featuring Beak Taylor, along with a photo or drawing of same:

"Presenting in profile that genial and pun whacky individual, Joseph W. 'Beak' Taylor Jr., known affectionately as "Beak". He is the owner, editor and publisher of that sterling fanzine Canadian Fandom, "still the biggest nickel's worth in fandom". (Quote used without the permission of Poll Kat Art Widner.)"

"In the pic, ye ed is smiling because, in spite of many delays and set-backs, he has managed to publish no less than ten issues of CanFan since his initiation into the Fan Publishing field in February '43."

"Beak has varied other interests outside of fandom, and not the least of these is athletics. He is a great sports enthusiast and holds many cups, trophies and ribbons won on the athletic fields these past years at St. Andrew's College. He is now a freshman on the Arts course at the University of Toronto. Beak is also an avid record collector and owns stacks of jive, boogie and blues disks."



Beak Taylor

"Statistics: Height – 5' 11 ½", Weight – 155 lbs, age – 20."

The 1947 Worldcon was held in Philadelphia, and became known as "the first real Worldcon, because Beak Taylor, Ned McKeown, and John L. Millard showed up from far-off, exotic Canada." No doubt the trio were representing the upcoming 1948 Worldcon in Toronto.

According to Harry Warner Jr., 'Beak' quit fandom after reading Francis T. Laney's "Ah, Sweet Idiocy" expose of Los Angeles fandom serialized in FAPA beginning in 1948. Given that Edward 'Ned' McKeown was being groomed as Beak's successor in the early months of 1948 (taking on the roll of assistant editor in #14 Feb & #15 May issues, then taking over 13 months later when issue #16 came out in June #1949) it is more likely that Beak had graduated Toronto University and was devoting his efforts to whatever career he was attempting to establish. He may, however, have remained in touch with his fannish friends and expressed a negative reaction to "Ah, Sweet Idiocy". Indeed, presumably he was a member of FAPA in 1948, and perhaps, as part of running down his fannish activities – FAPA deadlines can be quite demanding – he quit FAPA and gave Laney's 'blow-the-lid-off-fandom' articles as an excuse. Then again, his leaving CAN FAN and fandom may simply have been part of the Toronto Fen post-Torcon 1948 Worldcon mass burn-out.

I have no idea what career Beak went into, but in 1946 he was living at 9 MacLennan Ave in Toronto, and in 1952 was still in Toronto, but at 118 St. George St. After that?

DIGRESSION: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 'C.A.F.P.'

Sources vary as to what 'CAPF' means. According to Harry Warner Jr., Jack Bowie-Read, & John Robert Columbo, it stands for 'Canadian Amateur Fantasy Press', but CANADIAN FANDOM #22 has the heading 'Canadian Amateur Fan Publishers' flanked by tiny maple leafs with the letters CAFP inside the outline of each leaf. As well, several issues of CANFAN also make reference to this or that zine as being a member of the 'Canadian Amateur Fan Publishers'. Perhaps the meaning of the initials was adjusted or reinterpreted at some point in the history of the CAFP, maybe more than once.

In any case the CAFP was founded by Fred Hurter Jr. in 1942 and originally consisted of just 3 publications: LIGHT - (Faned: Leslie A. Crutch), CENSORED - (Faned: Fred Hurter Jr.), and, beginning in 1943, CANADIAN FANDOM - (Faned: Beak Taylor). The purpose of CAFP was to unite and promote Canadian fanzines and its emblem was indeed the Maple leaf. By 1948 the CAFP was affiliated with the Canadian Science Fiction Association and its CSFA NEWSLETTER (Faned: Chester Cuthbert), and had added the Montreal SF Society publication MOHDZEE (Faned: Fred Hurter Jr.).

Jack Bowie-Reed noted in his history that the CAFP "which at its peak in 1949 had seven member fanzines, had dwindled back down to its original three..." by 1951. Five of the seven are listed above. I wonder what the other two zines were? Possibly MEPHISTO (Faned: Alan Child), and maybe MACABRE (Faneds: Jack Doherty & Don Hutchison), or ?

Tara Wayne wrote: *"In fact, the CAFP never amounted to more than a notice on the covers or in the colophons of all 3 fanzines. There was no formal organization at all. Though I have come across references to printing a small press edition of something or other, it was never done as far as I can tell. Curiously enough, some years after the CAFP faded from the picture, Gerald Steward took over CANFAN and re-established the CAFP logo in his personalzine GASP!, but not in CANFAN... Quite clearly the CAFP is a pretense by a small number of friends who saw each other regularly, not the organization of national scope that Jack Bowie-Read makes out"* [in his HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN SF ASSOCIATION]

However, by 1954 the roll of publication members had expanded again to include: A BAS - (Faned: Boyd Raeburn), DAMN! - (Faned: Norman G. Browne), DEJU VU - (Faned: P. Howard Lyons), ESCAPE - (Faned: Fred Woroch), FIE - (Faned: Harry Calnek), FILLER #2 - (Faned: Norman G. Browne), GASP! - (Faned: Gerald A. Steward), IBIDEM - (Faned: P. Howard Lyons), & MIMI - (Faned: Georgina Ellis).

It should be noted that ESCAPE's publication was aborted, and that FILLER #2 probably never appeared either.

REVIEW OF CANADIAN FANDOM #5 (November 1943)

This isn't actually a review, since the WCSFA/BCSFAarchive does not possess this issue of Can Fan, but courtesy of various sources I can at least summarize the contents. It was definitely a CAPF publication at this time (note the statement "a CAPF publication" under the title on the cover, and its symbol, a maple leaf, lower right), was still being pubbed out of St Andrews, and featured a cover by Al Betts depicting an agonized melting giant (reproduced on the cover of this issue of WCSFazine). This was the first lithographed cover for CANADIAN FANDOM.

Also included were cartoons by Bob Gibson (profiled in WCSFazine #6) & Jack Sloan, plus Beak Taylor's editorial 'Beak Broadcasts', an article titled 'Sic Transit Gloria Monday' by Forrest J. Ackerman, an ongoing opinion column 'Light Flashes' by Leslie A. Crutch, a loc column titled 'Cooking Wit Gas', a fannish gossip column 'Stuff & Such' by Fred Hurter, and three short stories: 'The Unclean' by Shirley K. Peck, 'The Weeper' by Leslie A. Crutch, & 'Man in the Mountain' by Beak Taylor.

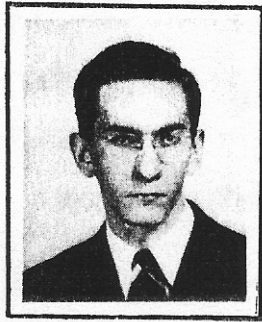
Plus 'Our Pet Author' (a biography of sorts? Maybe concerning Canadian A.E. van Vogt who had moved to the States from Toronto?) by Alan Child, the Vancouver, B.C faned of MEPHISTO, and a 'Cues From Science' article, subtitled 'Glastonbury's Temple of the Stars', reprinted from the American fanzine PLUTO, a fanzine put out circa 1940/41 by the

'Decker Dillies', a 5 person fan club outside Decker, Indiana . (Note that PLUTO was renowned for being the first fanzine to feature multicolour mimeography.)

Anyway, even a brief and bald summary of the contents indicates the wide variety of material and huge number of contributors that made CANADIAN FANDOM well known and popular not only among Canadian Fen but American and British fans as well.

ALBERT A. BETTS: CANADIAN FAN ARTIST

Albert A. Betts and Nils Helmer Frome (Canada's second Faned, of SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES fame) were the two cover artists most often utilized by Beak Taylor during his editorship of CANADIAN FANDOM in the 1940s. For instance, in addition to the cover of CAN FAN #5 (described above), Al also drew covers for issues #9 (July 1945) and #11 (July 1946). In the latter issue also appeared NO. 4 IN A SERIES OF SHORT SKETCHES OF CANADIAN FEN – ALBERT A. BETTS:



Albert A. Betts

"Toronto fan and one of Canada's foremost fan artists. Readers will know him in this latter capacity from the work he has done in the past, and on the present issue, for Canadian Fandom. Largely self-taught, Al has built himself an enviable reputation as one of Fandom's better artists."

"Although 18 Wascana Ave. is his address, it is seldom that he is to be found there for any length of time. Al is probably the most widely traveled of Canadian fen. His excursions in the Merchant Marine have carried him far and wide over the face of the Earth. In addition to this, he spent some time in British Columbia, and is at present in Kapuskasing, northern Ontario. His ambition is to someday reach, and live, in Los Angeles."

"Statistics about AL are not available. He is dark, quiet but interesting and easy to get along with. He's fond of music, especially boogie, and in Toronto, a fan gathering without Al, if he's available, is definitely not a success. His only known alias, and one which has not been seen much of late, is "Alabe". He confines his collecting activities to Astounding and Famous Fantastic."

Taral Wayne writes of Al: *"He was one of the two who alternated covers for CAN FAN for all the copies I have seen of the first dozen issues. Of the two [Nils Helmer] Frome was the better, in my opinion, having a better grasp of anatomy and exhibiting better draughtsmanship.... [In reference to the No. 4 Canadian Fen article] nothing is said about his artistic background. I think it is safe to say, though, that it could not have been profound. Although his work is not altogether ineffective, it is crude in comparison with Frome's, though in much the same style. It is darker, using solid black backgrounds in all three examples of cover art available to me, and in two out of three cases actually trite. A devil and a seductress in a pentagram, surrounded by eyes piercing the dark in one case (#11 July 1946), a spaceman in vacuum bell helmet and jodhpurs on the moon, earth in back, in the other case (#9 July 1945). The third is surreal. A tallow-creature (?) is clutching a candle and men in its hands. Lightning bolts, mountains, and stars are almost abstractions in a flat background. Betts was not without talent, but it was either undeveloped or modest. There is no way to know, of course, what became of his abilities after he drifted out of fandom, sometime before 1948."*

MURRAY MOORE CABAL FORMING!

Murray Moore sent me a most interesting invitation:

"I am the '09 Worldcon Programming Fan Track Head. I hope you will accept my invitation to be a member of the team which will suggest Fan track program items."

Apparently fandom gets an entire program track reserved to itself, with up to 40 panels, events, lectures, demonstrations, individual presentations, or whatever to be slotted in. Seems the head of programming, Farah Mendlesohn, is looking for as wide a variety of programming as possible, with both 'serious' and 'non-serious' items in order to maximize the appeal to attendees *and* be informative and entertaining both. Where possible, Guests of Honour (if willing) are to be included. Sounds like a good plan!

Murray further writes:

" Here is an example of the power of brain storming. Me to Taral: 'I liked the Chicago Fan Apartment in Exhibit space during the 2000 Chicon. You have a great living room. Lend it to Anticipation for the Worldcon.' Taral: (not completely won over) 'How about taking photos of the wall, section by section?' Me: 'I have a camera with a wide angle lens. If we can't take all of your living room we could, using a projector, project the image of your living room wall onto a flat surface and have some of your real stuff too'. Like that, and etc."

"Here is your chance to suggest those fan track items that you can't believe previous Worldcons have ignored; also items that you loved at a regional or local con that should be offered at a Worldcon. Think of this exercise as a warm up to the Vancouver Worldcon."

"I am aiming for a team of contributors representing the variety of fannish viewpoint and experience."

I like the reference to a "Vancouver Worldcon"... maybe someday. As for the proposal to display Taral's living room wall (or photo facsimile of), it's a great idea. I believe we're talking wall-to-wall floor-to-ceiling milk crates of fanzines here!

At any rate, I replied with the following:

"Absolutely! What I can offer in terms of useful ideas I have no idea as yet. But I'm willing to give it a try. Will take a while to wrap my brain around the task, but eventually I may come up with something."

In return, Murray commented:

"Excellent. I am aiming for 12 contributors and you make 10 contributors in hand."

Hmmm, the twelve Apostles of Fandom! I like it!

STAY TUNED. MORE INFO COMING AS THE CONSPIRACY DEVELOPS!

LLOYD PENNEY ON THE RAMPAGE!

Lloyd writes: "For the record, I have been confirmed to be running the fanzine lounge at the Montreal Worldcon." Way to go, Lloyd! Congratulations!

LATEST C.U.F.F. NEWS!

There isn't any, mainly because no candidate has come forward as yet, and the Feb 28th deadline is now past.

If you are an active Canadian fan living in Eastern Canada, and the idea of going to the May 16-19th Keycon 25/Convention 33 convention -- your travel expenses paid -- appeals to you, contact Current Administrator Peter Jarvis at < pjarvis@nas.net >.

See the article "2008 Cuff Delegate Nominations Now Open" on page 16 of WCSFAzine #6 for details.

C.U.F.F. FUNDRAISING IDEA: 'TORONTO THE GHOD'

In 1988 Taral Wayne published '*Toronto The Ghod*', an anthology of fanwriting by fans living in or near Toronto from the 1940s thru to the 1980s. This included articles by: Beak Taylor, P. Howard Lyons, Boyd Raeburn, Peter Gill, Susan Wood, Rosemary Ullyot, Mike Glicksohn, Victoria Vayne, Bob Wilson, Janet Wilson, Phil Paine, Taral Wayne & Bob Webber. It was 43 pages long.

In 2000 Taral gave me, as editor of The BCSFA Press, permission to publish a reprint edition in order to raise money for C.U.F.F. It suddenly occurred to me that I still have a few copies left, so why not remind people it's still available? CUFF can certainly use whatever money the fund can get.

Here is my Canfancylopedia article on the zine:

-- Faned: **Taral Wayne**. A one-shot anthology of Toronto fanwriting which Taral put together for the first Ditto Convention, held in Toronto, Ontario, in 1988. Wrote Taral: "This collection was edited, typed, designed, illustrated, and electrostenciled by Taral. Mimeography was by Mike Glicksohn, who battled valiantly against the deadline. TORONTO THE GHOD is dedicated to the memories of Susan Wood, Bill Grant, P. Howard Lyons, and Les Croutch: Ghod Torontonians all. As a Ditto publication, proceeds from TORONTO THE GHOD will first be applied to convention losses. In the event there are no convention losses, profits will be donated to the fan funds deemed advisable by the Ditto Masters."

"This collection celebrates a fandom that is probably under-recognized, but has much to be proud of. Our fair city is the home of the man who was accused of sawing Courtney's boat, (falsely!). A Toronto fan enriched fanspeak with the word "sercon". The first Worldcon in Canada was held in Toronto, and debued the first propellor beanie to be worn by a fan. To the everyday world, "Toronto The Good" meant exactly the opposite -- blue laws and dour working class values. But to fandom Toronto has been genuinely GHOD. Let us drink to the memory."

Contained the following articles:

- "*Casting in the Time Pool*" - Editorial by Taral Wayne.
- "*Aaaaaagghh!!*" - by Beak Taylor - from CANADIAN FANDOM #11 - 1946.
- "*Chain Letter*" - by P. Howard Lyons - from IBIDEM #3 - 1955.
- "*Derelict derogations, #8*" - by Boyd Raeburn - from A BAS #10 - 1957.
- "*Straw & Cold Cuts*" - by Boyd Raeburn - from LE MOINDRE #30 - 1973.
- "*Fans and the Future*" - by Peter Gill - from ENERGUMEN #1 - 1970.
- "*My 2 cents Worth*" - By Susan Wood - from ENERGUMEN #4 - 1970 & #6 - 1971.
- "*Kumquat May & Coddled Eggs*" - by Rosemary Ullyot - from ENERGUMEN # 15 - 1973.
- "*In The Glicksohn Vein*" - by Mike Glicksohn - from KARASS #2 - 1974.
- "*Killer Fudge*" - by Victoria Vayne - from NON SEQUITUR #9 - 1976.
- "*Das Boots & A Dialogue*" - by Bob Wilson - from EINE KLIENE BOTTLE, MUSIK I & CALICO BELLY - 1976.

- "But What About Photosynthesis" - by Janet Wilson - from SIMULACRUM #7/8 1977/78.
- "MSS From a Tobacco Factory" - by Phil Paine - from FOOTWEAR FOR ACHILLES - 1976.
- "I Can Always Dream" - by Taral Wayne - from THE MONTHLY MONTHLY #9 - 1981.
- "Here And Back Again" - by Bob Webber - from FISH BELOW ICE #1 - 1988.

Also contains a number of "CAN FAN PERSONALITIES" (articles profiling Canadian fans) which first appeared in issues of CANADIAN FANDOM. These include: #3 -- Beak Taylor, #4 -- Albert A. Betts, #6 -- Ned McKeown, #8 -- Bill Grant, #9 -- John Millard, #11 -- Gerald A. Stewart, & #12 -- Boyd Raeburn."

So I think it would be a good idea to offer it again to anyone interested in Canadian Fannish history and raise some money for CUFF. Trouble is, I don't know how much it will cost to mail and how much on top of that I should charge in order to cover mailing expenses and earn some money for CUFF. I'll figure it out by next issue.

In the meantime you can always email me at < rgraeme@shaw.ca > to reserve a copy in your name.

Hmm, I should check and see if the archive still has any copies of the BCSFA Press edition of Murray Moore's 'Harry Warner, Jr. Fan of Letters' tribute as well.

Plus, I'm toying with the idea of putting together a 'Vancouver The Wet' anthology of local fan writing to raise money for CUFF. Hmmm, could be fun. Stay tuned.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO CANADIAN ONLINE FANEDS!

By Act of Parliament Library and Archives Canada demands the 'Legal Deposit' of two copies of every conceivable Canadian publication, with very few exceptions (no need to deposit blank diaries, for instance, or calendars). This in order to preserve our written brilliance for untold generations of bored Canadians to come, especially researchers looking for obscure topics to generate government research grants.

For general info, check out: < <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/legal-deposit/index-e.html> >

Then there's Faneds like me, who produce strictly online publications because I can't afford to print out copies. Not because of the cost of paper, but the cost of replacing the printer ink. Ounce for ounce, I believe printer ink costs more than gold! A modern Urban Myth perhaps.

Lo and behold, Library and Archives Canada has now put into place a mechanism to download online zines into the archive: < <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/electroniccollection/003008-220-e.html> >

It's called the 'Electronic Collection, A Virtual Collection of Monographs and Periodicals'. Since they began accepting electronic publications in August 2007 they have so far collected 3.18 million megabytes of electronic format periodicals, books, etc. "*This process ensures [publishers] a convenient site where they can deposit their electronic files for archiving.... ensures their internet publications will be stored, preserved and available now and to future generations.*"

So I promptly uploaded all six issues of WCSFAzine. I couldn't find any info as to what format they require or prefer, so I simply uploaded the PDF versions. I have some questions about electronic documents being preserved for 'future generations', given how quickly computer technology goes obsolete rendering information irretrievable, but I'm willing to give the archive the benefit of a doubt. Perhaps they employ elderly bureaucrats to transcribe each online zine onto imperishable papyrus scrolls with quill pens & squid ink. I wouldn't be surprised.

Nor have I yet figured out how to access any of the electronic zines in the archive, but apparently you can, if the publication has been designated 'Open Access' rather than 'Restricted Access'. Definitions follow:

OPEN ACCESS: "*By selecting this option publishers are giving Library and Archives Canada permission to provide open access to their publications to anyone who is connected to the internet.*" Not sure if this means anyone can download the entire document, or merely look up its existence in a catalogue, but I assume it implies you can actually read said document online. The general print collection has severe guidelines re copyright, copyright, citation & so forth, though it does allow much material to be copied for personal use only. I am unable thus far to find out specific details re their electronic collection.

RESTRICTED ACCESS: "*By selecting this option publishers are restricting access to their publications to Library and Archives Canada staff and to onsite clients using designated computers in LAC's reference room in Ottawa. These computers are not equipped for printing or downloading.*" Restricted indeed! Researchers will just have to take notes.

In order to upload your zines to the archive, you must first REGISTER (which you can do at the electronic collection site link above). They ask for: 'Organization Name', 'Publisher Type' (Government, Commercial/Non-Govt, University, or Individual), 'Publisher's Web Site' (Optional), 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Telephone Number', 'E-mail' Address, & proposed 'Username' & 'Password'. I assume they require the telephone number to determine if you are in fact a Canadian publisher. Anyway, you get a confirmation by E-mail, and it takes mere seconds.

Also available at the same link is the UPLOAD site. After you log in with your registered username and password, you get the 'Upload Publication' screen. First you browse through your own computer files for the one to upload (maximum size 10 MB), and click on it to establish the connection for upload. Then you click on a number of mandatory items: 'Title' (I put 'WCSFAzine #1', or 'WCSFAzine #2', etc.), 'Creator' (I was tempted to put in 'Zeus' but opted for 'Editor: R. Graeme Cameron), 'Date of Creation' (I was tempted to enter '14,000 BC ala Bishop Ussher', but of course I put in month/day/year), 'ISBN' International Standard Book Number or 'ISSN' International Standard Serial Number (I don't

have any), 'Publication Type: Monograph, Serial or Web Site' (and since WCSFAzine is a monthly unprinted 'paper' zine hosted on a web site, rather than a dedicated web site zine -- if you see the difference -- I clicked on 'Serial'), and 'Open Access' or 'Restricted Access' (I chose 'open'). Then click 'Submit' and off she goes! Again, you get confirmation by email.

There is a waiting period before any submitted zine is listed in the online catalogue search function, let alone become available for perusal. For example, my six issues of WCSFAzine are confirmed as received, but I am unable to look them up. Apparently it depends on how soon one of the staff examines the material and enters it into the database. Considering the gazillions of items in the archive, I'm assuming it could take days, weeks, even months, maybe even years.

At any rate, I am tickled vermillion that WCSFAzine will now be preserved as long as Canada exists (hopefully longer). Next best thing to being pickled in a man-sized jar cemented to the courthouse steps. Maybe even better!

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)

And you're saying, "Wait a minute! That's what you printed last issue!" Yes indeed, but unfortunately I neglected to transfer my cable modem from my PC in the living room to my IMac in the den to upload the above material to the Canfancyclopedia web site. So anyone looking for the additions couldn't find them. Corrected now.

Garth Spencer donated more material to the WCSFA/BCSFA archive, including a set of his early zine 'SCUTTLEBUTT'. I really have no excuse for not adding more 'stuff' to the site, except for the amount of time spent working on this issue. Really must try and find the time to devote some effort to the Canfancyclopedia.

LATEST ZINES ADDED TO EFANZINES.COM ARCHIVE

The Graeme's *WCSFAzine* #6, Bob Sabella's *Visions of Paradise* #125, C.J. Garcia's *Little Thing*, Jean Martin & C.J. Garcia's *Science Fiction/San Francisco* #59, C.J. Garcia's *Drink Tank Third Annual*, Mike McInerney's *Number One* #12, Nic Farley's *Tits, Sausages and Ballet Shoes*, C.J. Garcia's *The Drink Tank* #161, Robert Lichtman's *Trap Door* #24, Jean Martin & C.J. Garcia's *Science Fiction/San Francisco* #60, C.J. Garcia's *The Drink Tank* #162, Heney Welch's *The Knarley Knews* #128, & February 2008 issue of *The Banksonian*.

ZINEPHOBIA

Ghu throttle it! This is the best I can do! Some quickie reviews!

ISH Volume 1, Number 3, October 2007, Faned: Felicity Walker. Write to Ish, c/o #209 – 3851 Francis Road, Richmond, B.C., Canada, V7C 1J6, or email < felicity4711@hotmail.com >

Digest-sized 36 pages done for VCON 32 last October. Very fannish, as in the following tradition: "I had planned to finish, print, paste, photocopy, and staple ISH *before* VCON 32; instead, I'm typing this editorial on the Friday night of the convention." Also fannish, having the guts to title the loc column "Call Me 'Ish' Mail" in homage to the novel *Moby Dick*.

The bulk of the issue is taken up with the plot of the 1993 Roger Corman film *CARNOSAUR 2*. As Felicity explains: "I had planned to rewrite my *Carnosaur 2* review into something pithier and wittier; instead, I'll have to go with the long, blow-by-blow recapitulation..." Nevertheless fun to read, full of good description, and if you haven't seen the movie, probably more entertaining than the film itself.

Also of interest, fellow BCSFAn Julian Castle's con report of CANZINE WEST 2006.

"Canzine West divided into three main areas: (1) zine fair; (2) event stage (which I ignored) – Canzine website says they were food events; (3) balcony (which I also ignored), where people could do some art (collage?)."

"My best Canzine experiences were with Colin Upton. I happily bought some new Colin Upton comics and later on in the day laughed out loud at some of the one-panel comedy comics Colin had drawn (including one that wondered if raw-food cookbooks existed)." Note that Colin Upton is a long-time local comic artist who tends to self-publish a kind of 'guerilla street' comic art, often quite self-deprecatingly hilarious and whimsically observant. The WCSFA/BCSFA archive has some of his work.

The rest of Julian's article is mostly a listing of zines purchased or picked up for free. This appears to have been a comics/radical/mainstream fanzine affair, with nary a sign of genre zines. Still, I'm all in favour of self-published zinedom no matter what the theme. Individualism strikes again!

All in all a worthy fannish effort. Pity we'll have to wait till VCON 33 for the next issue. I would encourage Felicity to publish more often, seeing as how ISH is available at Efanazines.com she could publish one or more online issues, saving a paper version to be handed out come VCON... just a suggestion.

BCSFAZINE #417, February 2008, The Newsletter of the B.C. SF Association, Faned: Garth Spencer, P.O. Box 74122, Hillcrest Park, 4101 Main St., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V5V 3P0 or email < garthspencer@shaw.ca >

Great cover by Taral Wayne titled: "Why We Don't Hire Sasquatches at Whistler." Said giant beastie is picking up a struggling, squirming skier by the skull (Whistler being a famous ski resort).

Garth wonders about fannish apathy and the impending unknown fate of BCSFAzine in his editorial, prints numerous locs, including one by Lloyd Penny who mentions recently seeing "INCUBUS, an Esperanto movie starring a young, unknown William Shatner, and prints a glorious picture of Jeanne Robinson and her dancer Kathy floating in zero G, Jeanne clinging to the wall intent on observing Kathy's dance moves. Quite a striking photo.

Calendar of events & news, articles on Star trek & Harlan Ellison by Felicity Walker, and The Okal Rel Universe by Linda Williams, plus a column by Cosmic Ray Seredin about his upcoming trip to Seattle and ideas re the Hollywood writers strike round out the issue. Available online at < <http://Efanazines.com> >

Oops! I'm way past my self-imposed deadline. I promise a better Zinephobia effort next issue!



ASK MR. SCIENCE!

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

Ms. NB, of Richmond, B.C., asks: What does my bank teller mean when she says "The computer is down?"

What most people think this means is that the computer is located in the basement. This is not correct. When people first started inventing computers they did not realize that they were creating silicon based life-forms. Like other living things, those made of silicon are very temperamental and inherently unreliable. Computers, for instance, 'crash' all the time (this is why programmers 'boot' them). A computer with a hard disk is said to be 'up'. A computer with a soft (floppy) disk is said to be 'down'. Your teller doesn't know any of this, of course. What she means when she says the computer is down is "go away, it's my coffee break time".

Mr. PS, of Campbell River, B.C., asks: Why does the smoke from a campfire always follow me, no matter which side of the fire I go to?

All smoke, whether from campfires or cigarettes, is attracted by the homeopathic diamagnetism emitted, in one degree or another, by almost all people. If you and a friend stand on opposite sides of a fire, or cigarette smoker, the smoke will seek out the one of you with the stronger personality. Genghis Khan and Adolph Hitler were well-known smoke attractors.

FAN AWARDS

RETRO 1978 ELRON AWARDS

Presented at VCON 6 by Ed Beauregard.

There was no VCON in 1977, as local fans were busy putting on Westercon 30, at which no Elrons were presented.

1. Most Rapacious Author: **Stanislaw Lem.**
2. Conspiracy Behind Every Plot Award: **Close Encounters of the Third Kind.**

3. Elron Hall of Shame: **John Norman**, for Self-plagiarism.
4. Latent Degeneracy Realized Award: **BCSFA**, accepted by Hen Flanders.
5. Bombcon Award: **Prunecon**.
6. Where No Rip-Off Has Gone Before Award: **Star Wars Concert**.

Notes on #1: I have no idea why this brilliant Polish science fiction author was awarded an Elron. What does “Most Rapacious Author” mean anyway? My dictionary says ‘Rapacious’ is the same as ‘grasping, extortionate, predatory’. Are they calling him greedy? Perhaps because he wasn’t published in English till 1970 (*Solaris*), after which the floodgates opened and virtually everything he wrote became available? Or did he perhaps protect his copyrights to the point of confronting publishers of unauthorized translations with ‘excessive’ payment demands? Or was it his self-publicized contempt for Western science fiction (and Soviet science fiction) for their hackneyed themes and techniques, combined with his willingness to nevertheless accept Western (and Soviet) money, which earned him an Elron? All of the above? Did one incident or situation in particular ‘trigger’ an Elron? I’d like to know.

Come to think of it, I read quite a bit of his stuff when it first came out, but found him poorly served by his translators who churned out mostly boring, plodding versions of books that are said to sparkle in the original Polish. Perhaps he complained about this to the point of seeming churlish? Hmm, I find that my ignorance is a wonderful spur to my imagination. The positive aspect of ignorance....

Notes on #2: *Close Encounters* is a brilliant essay on contemporary paranoia and conspiracy theories. Let’s face it, it wasn’t really about ‘aliens’ so much as ‘ourselves’. Plus awesome special effects for its day, which helped disguise a weak ending. I mean, come on, the ‘Greys’ show up, say hello, release a bunch or people they kidnapped earlier, then ask for volunteers for yet another round of anal probes. Justification enough for paranoia I say. Still, it was fun watching Richard Dreyfus slowly go bananas because he was the only one who knew the ‘truth’ – which, by the way, proves that truth is much over rated. But, I can see that if you failed to buy into the premise of the film, after a while you might get nauseous from the layer after layer of conspiracy being troweled on most thick. So, yeah, I can see how you might view this film as outrageous manipulation of the audience (in which case *E.T.* probably gave you a brain embolism) but hey, that’s how films work. This is just a particularly transparent example.

My favourite bit remains Dreyfus parked on the highway at night, waving traffic past him, the 3rd set of lights in his rearview mirror going straight up in to the night sky rather than drive around him. A brilliant, chills up the spine, sense of wonder moment.

Notes on #3: Presumably given to John Norman for his 11th Gor novel, ‘Slave Girl of Gor’ published in 1977. By now he’d settled into a predictable routine, giving his readers yet more of what they expected and craved, hence the self-plagiarism award. One of these days I really must read one or more Gor books and perhaps review them, just to explain what all the fuss is about. Trouble is, I don’t want to.

Notes on #4: Now why would the British Columbia Science Fiction Association be awarded an Elron for “Latent Degeneracy Realized”? I was a member in BCSFA’s first two years, circa 1970/71, then dropped out and didn’t rejoin till 1983 or so. Missed just over a decade. I never knew Hen Flanders though I’ve seen photos of her dressed like Dr. Frank N. Furter in Rocky Horror. Vivacious. Quite the party animal, as were BCSFAns as a whole in the 1970s, or such was their reputation. In fact, I seem to recall one VCON shortly after I rejoined which featured an ‘Adults Only Orgy Room’ which I didn’t have the guts to enter. And I know of one well-known fan who slept through a private orgy at a VCON, waking just in time to see everyone putting on their clothes and going for breakfast! I could name several of the participants, but I won’t. Alas, I was not one of them. Fact is, everyone was a lot younger back then. And the times were more open, more experimental. The rise of AIDS and the passing years have wrought massive changes in the local fannish life style, not to mention Western civilization. I assume the Elron was awarded for a particular reason, happening or instance, as opposed to mere generalized ‘degeneracy’....hmmm, just remembered, I *did* participate in an orgy at one of the nude hot tub parties...funny how memory plays tricks sometimes...but then, it was only a *small* orgy... two women and three guys, locals fans all...no wonder it slipped my mind...

Notes on #5: This is driving me nuts. Somewhere in the WCSFA/BCSFA archive is a single-sheet advert for Prunecon, but Ghu blast me if I can find it. It was held in Toronto early in 1978, or at least earlier in 1978 than VCON 6 obviously, and I seem to recall it didn’t do very well, might even have been cancelled, might even have been a hoax. Even the histories I have by Taral Wayne and Garth Spencer make no mention of Prunecon. Someday the truth about Prunecon will be revealed to all! If I can ever find it....

Notes on #6: Star Wars Concert? Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops? Nope! The Star Wars Symphonic Suite was first performed (somewhere) by John Williams (the composer) in 1978. The original program is quite a collector’s item now, as is the poster by the late John Alvin depicting C-3PO and R2-D2 as a two-droid band, C-3PO with tuba, clarinet, drum and violin, and R2-D2 outfitted with snare drums, a little horn, and organ pipes. Very cute. John Williams has performed

the Star Wars symphony many times, from Toronto to Rome, and I gather it gets updated every time a new film (and score) comes out. Why not? Stirring music indeed. This Elron a little bit unfair, methinks.

FAAN AWARDS VOTING EXTENDED!

For a number of reasons the voting deadline has been **extended to Sunday, March 9th**! Yiu still have a chance to vote for your humble Ghod-Editor The Graeme, the Canadian Fancyclopedia web site, or Garth Spencer, Taral Wayne, Dale Speirs, Lloyd Penney and numerous other Canadian (or American, or worldwide) fans, fanzines and other neato fannish worthies and phenomena!

For details see the article "2008 Fan Activity Achievement Awards Open For Voting" on page 20 of WCSFAzine #6, and download the ballot from < <http://www.corflu.org/pdfs/2008fandomfaanawards.pdf> > and email your choices to < corflu25faan@yahoo.ca >.

Or you could take your chances time-wise and snail-mail your choices to Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Road, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, L4Y 1C8.

DUFF (Down Under Fan Fund) WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

From: "Joe Siclari" <jsiclari@gmail.com>
Date: February 1, 2008 7:33:18 PM EST
Subject: DUFF Winners

Congratulations to Steve and Sue Francis! They have won the 2008 Down Under Fan Fund.

They will attend Swancon 2008, the 47th Australian National Convention and the 33rd annual West Australian Science Fiction Convention.

We had well over 200 ballots this race - that's a pretty good show of interest for DUFF.

We would like to thank Jean Weber for setting up the first online voting site for DUFF. It allowed fans to vote right up to the very end deadline. We received 38 votes online. A detailed voting breakdown is attached.

The Australasia Administer Norman Cates and I know they will have a great time greeting old friends and meeting new friends.

Total Ballots Received: 218
Votes for Sue & Steve Francis: 163
Votes for Murray Moore: 48
No Preference: 2
Other: 5

Two people received 3rd place write-in nominations:
Andy Hooper & Dick Spelman.

Joe Siclari, DUFF North American Administrator
Received 177 ballots
Francis: 142 Moore: 28 No Pref: 2
Donation only OR No vote indicated/counted: 5

Norman Cates, DUFF Australasia Administrator
Received 41 ballots
Francis: 21 Moore: 20

Voting Analysis:

193 North American votes (175 to Siclari + 18 to Cates)

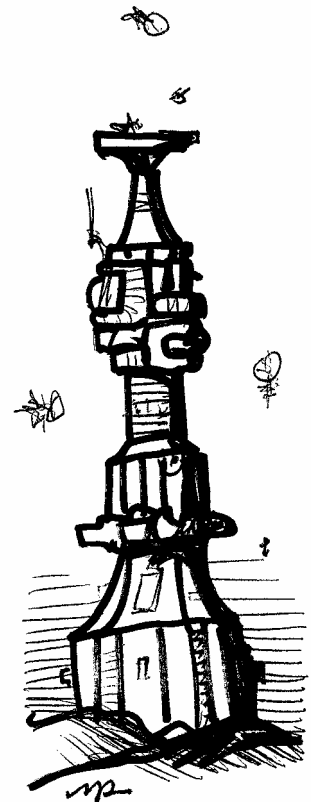
16 Australasian votes (1 to Siclari + 15 to Cates)
Francis: 11 Moore: 5

185 ballots from United States of America (168 to Siclari + 17 to Cates)

15 ballots from Australia (1 to Siclari + 14 to Cates)

8 ballots from Canada (7 to Siclari + 1 to Cates)

18



7 ballots from UK (7 to Cates)

1 ballot from New Zealand

1 ballot from Holland (1 to Cates)

1 ballot from Sweden (1 to Siclari)

-- Joe Siclari

DUFF Administrator, North America



I sent condolences to Murray, saying: "Congrats on getting 48 votes for DUFF. In fannish apathetic terms that is quite a significant level of recognition. Of course, it sucks to lose, but the wonderful thing about fandom is that losing can be every bit as much fun as winning, in terms of writing humorous articles, adopting a public stance, etc."

Murray's reply stated, in part: "Gross generalization: I was the choice of Fanzine fans and the Francis' were the choice of SMOFs. I thought, I might have won if three SMOFs had run and the SMOF vote had been evenly divided in three. But not even then would I have won: I would have finished fourth of four with 48 votes!"

Once again, congratulations to Murray for getting so *many* votes! Fannish apathy not quite so triumphant after all, it would appear! Huzzah!

FILTHY PRO NEWS

AUTHOR HAPPENINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

(New information highlighted in violet.)

DON DEBRANDT < <http://www.sfw.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 'Ectectives' (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."

“Originally from Scotland, Dave Duncan has lived all his adult life in Western Canada, having enjoyed a long career as a petroleum geologist before taking up writing. Since discovering that imaginary worlds are more satisfying than the real one, he has published more than thirty novels, mostly in the fantasy genre, but also young adult, science fiction, and historical. He has at times been Sarah B. Franklin (but only for literary purposes) and Ken Hood (which is short for "D'ye Ken Whodunit?"). “

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: **“Milgrim is a junkie. A high-end junkie, hooked on prescription antianxiety drugs. Milgrim figures he wouldn’t survive twenty-four hours if Brown, the mystery man who saved him from a misunderstanding with his dealer, ever stopped supplying those little bubble packs. What exactly Brown is up to Milgrim can’t say, but it seems to be military in nature. At least, Milgrim’s very nuanced Russian would seem to be a big part of it, as would breaking into locked rooms.”**

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: **“I’ve checked the nomination tallies on the members-only portion of the SFWA site, and the latest tally shows my Guth Bandar novella, "The Helper and His Hero," has received twelve nominations from fellow SFWAns. That means it has qualified for the preliminary ballot for the Nebula awards. When the ballot was first compiled, the novella had only six noms, and was included in the prelim because no work had actually met the requirement of ten nominations.”**

“The other names on the ballot are stellar: Gene Wolfe, Nancy Kress, Bruce Sterling and Lucius Shepard, so I’m not preparing an acceptance speech. But I guess I can now call myself a "Nebula-nominated" author.”

“Speaking of awards, we’re now in the nominating period (ends March 17), for the Aurora Awards, Canada’s answer to the Hugos. I have works that are eligible in the Best Long Form (English) and Best Short Form (English) categories”.

“Any Canadian can nominate a work for inclusion on the final ballot and the nominations can be made online or by snail-mailing in a form. For more information, look [here](#). And that’s all I’m going to say about it. In other words, no campaigning.”

“Mr. Google tells me that noted Jack Vance scholar David Mead (author of *The Jack Vance Encyclopedia*), has reviewed ‘The Spiral Labyrinth’ for the March issue of David G. Hartwell’s < [New York Review of Science Fiction](#). Prof. Mead kindly sent me a copy of the review, in which he says the book is a "a witty, clever and pleasant fantasy adventure...fun to read," and likely to appeal to readers of Vance and Gene Wolfe.”

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.”

A review states: “The Sarsen Witch is a memorizing reading experience that depicts life in the bronze age of what will eventually become Britain...It is fascinating to observe how Ricca holds the various horse tribes together using threats and gifts...”

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.

Glimpse of the plot: “Young Klale Renhardt chafes at the confines of life in the Fishers Guild in her north coast town. But when she flees to Vancouver, Klale discovers that survival is bitterly difficult on the half drowned, ungoverned island of ‘Downtown’, where beggars line the streets and every type of trade is controlled by tongs and gangs. When she finds a job through Toni, the tough, beautiful bartender at the famous KlonDyke nightclub, Klale begins to feel safe – until she hears that Toni may have once been a torturer for the tongs.”

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?’

“Guess what? My book, [Darwin’s Paradox](#), has been nominated for the Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Aurora Award for 2008! I am so jazzed! I should be... This is a prestigious award, basically Canada’s top prize for science fiction writing. And I’m honored to be among some of the giants of the SF & F craft in Canada. People like Robert J. Sawyer (Rollback), Guy Gavriel Kay (Isabel), Robert Charles Wilson (Axis), Dave Duncan (The Alchemist’s Apprentice), Tanya Huff (The Heart of Valor), and others in a sea of powerful literature.”

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.

Speaking of which, “Spider has just been awarded the "Audiofile Earphones Award for Excellence" for his Blackstone Audio recording of VARIABLE STAR, presented by Robin F. Whitten, editor of Audiofile magazine, "The Magazine For People Who Love Audiobooks." Spider writes "I'm dead chuffed by the news, for myself and for Robert, and I thank Ms. Whitten most kindly." This is Spider's first audiobook award, although he was nominated for an Audie Award last summer for his Blackstone Audio reading of CALLAHAN'S LEGACY.”
[VARIABLE STAR](#) An audio book read by Spider Robinson.

“At his death in 1988, Robert A. Heinlein left a legacy of novels and short stories that almost single-handedly defined modern science fiction. But one of Heinlein’s masterpieces was never finished. In 1955, he began work on Variable Star, a powerful and passionate tale of two young lovers driven apart by pride, power, and the vastness of interstellar time and space. Then he set it aside to focus on other novellas”.

“The detailed outline and notes he created for this project lay forgotten for decades, only to be rediscovered almost a half century later. Now the Heinlein estate has authorized award-winning author Spider Robinson to expand that outline into a full-length novel. The result is vintage Heinlein, faithful in style and spirit to the Grand Master’s original vision.”

"VARIABLE STAR is a novel that was outlined by the late Robert A. Heinlein in the early phase of his career. Spider Robinson, who offers full details in the afterword, used that outline to create this novel, which reads in equal parts like the works of both authors. Robinson narrates as well, and a better choice couldn’t be made. He’s got a pleasant, inviting tone that makes his narration feel like a friend telling you the most incredible story about where he’s been the last few years. The novel is full of philosophical insight, exploding things, and space travel. It’s everything you could ask for in a visit from an old and dear friend. Spider Robinson is a top-notch narrator, and this audiobook is a whole lot of fun." --signed “S.D.D.” in AudioFile, February/March 2008 issue

<http://www.audiofilemagazine.com>

Winnner of the 2008 Audiophile Magazine Earphones Award for Excellence

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.

Also check out Spoder’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*’: “**A novel of human rejuvenation and alien communication... of bridging decades and light years.**” “**A main selection of the Science Fiction Book Club, A SciFi Channel “SciFi Essentials” book, on the preliminary Nebula Award Ballot.**”

“Rob recently signed a six-figure deal jointly with Ace Science Fiction (a division of Penguin USA) and Penguin Canada for a new trilogy about the World Wide Web gaining consciousness.”

“The three volumes have the working titles of ‘Wake’, ‘Watch’, and ‘Wonder’, and collectively will be known as the ‘WWW’ trilogy. Read all about the deal in this entry in Rob’s blog.”

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 < <http://alyx.wozupdoc.net/> >

(See also her live journal at < <http://alyx-j-shaw.livejournal.com/> >)

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 13th 2008** from Torquere Press: < http://torquerebooks.com/zencart/index.php?main_page=index > and **she will be listed as “Featured Author of the Month”**. **Alyx writes: “OMFGWTF FLAIL!!! I just got a letter from Torquere Press. Guess who is their featured author for March? Screams like a teeny-bopper at a Beatles concert then proceeds to run all over the LJ community, getting inky prints everywhere.”**

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.

“Alyx J Shaw is an irritable rantaholic who enjoys writing, making medieval honey wine, smoking, tarantulas, and raising strange and toxic plants. She shares her seedy apartment with a cat, two tarantulas, three guinea pigs, and pet duck named Master Erester. She’s pretty sure there is a husband in there somewhere as well, and expects she will find him buried under the laundry the next time she feels like doing a washing.”

“Alyx has worked for newspapers and news radio stations, and has been a practicing Wiccan for ten years, and is one of the few people in Vancouver, British Columbia who actually enjoys the rain.”

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: "**VALHALLA'S GATE: An original tabletop miniatures skirmish game by Lisa Smedman.** From his throne in Asgard, the god Odin looked down upon Midgard, Alfheim and Nidavellir, the lands where humans, alfs and dvergar dwell. Many were the battles fought in these lands, and great were the feats of bravery and skill, but who among the mortal warriors should Odin send his Valkyries to claim? Only one more warband could be admitted to Valhalla, the great hall of warriors..."

"'Valhalla's Gate' pits warbands of eight or nine humans, elves or dwarves against each other in a race for the rune stone that will admit them to Valhalla. Designed for 25mm or 28mm miniatures, it features 25 different runic spells, stats for 12 monsters drawn from Norse mythology and 25 different scenarios."

"If you like easy-to-learn rules that offer fast-paced play with the option of either a one-night game or full-on campaign, this is the game for you."

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> >

A STRANGE PLACE IN TIME

BOOK ONE OF: THE RECALLING OF JOHN ARROWSMITH.

A TOTALLY BIASED BOOK REVIEW

By The Graeme, husband of the Author Alyxandra J. Shaw.

The first hardcover version of this Book was published by the limited edition specialty House Doppelganger Press of Tuscaloosa, Alabama in 2006. The one I've been reading handmade end papers, is handbound with French Style sewn on cords, and covered with crimson Japanese book binding silk. A grey on-lay features a black & white linoleum block relief print of a black banner pierced with swords, the emblem of 'Marakim The Dawn Thief' as drawn by the author. Within the book can be found the emblem of Hercandoloff, god of majik (a raven within a circle overlain by lightning), also drawn by Alyx. And there's a striking pen and ink frontispiece of a 'Black Dragon' drawn by the late S.H. Desjardins.

Also available is a version with crimson Nigerian goat skin with leather on-lays, aluminum tooling, and Italian G.G. marbled endpapers.

You can find out more by going to the Doppelganger Press website at < <http://doppelgangerpress.com/> > (Sometimes clicking on this doesn't work for some reason, in which case just google 'Doppelganger Press' and you'll find it.)

And beginning March 13th, it will be available for download from Torquere Press at < http://torquerebooks.com/zencart/index.php?main_page=index >.

And now to the nitty gritty.

First of all, let me tell you the book is well written, even though it is virtually all first draft material. I don't know how she does it, but just like the work of famed fantasy & SF writer Theodore Sturgeon (as he confirmed at VCON 12 in 1984), it pours out in its final form, almost never requiring revision.

Another similarity to note is that Sturgeon preferred to write while listening to music. Alyx is the same.

One difference, though, is that Sturgeon also preferred to write in the nude. Alyx does not, if only because she sits next to the picture window with curtains pulled back, the better to keep an eye on Errestor the Duck and Gnu, Hawthorne and Toky the Guinea Pigs as they gambol about on the lawn. I confess I do not know how Sturgeon felt about Guinea Pigs, or Ducks for that matter. I forgot to ask.

Isaac Asimov once said there were two kinds of writers, those who write like a clear pane of glass, you see right through the glass (technique) and observe the world beyond (characters, events, etc.,), and those who write like a stained glass window (think Samuel R. Delany), kind of hard to see through, but the stained glass colour and imagery (technique) is worthy of admiration in itself. Alyx's style is a bit of both, but with the overall practical effect of bringing the story vividly to life.

Allow me to digress. I once harbored visions of becoming a sci-fi novelist. I kept getting rejection slips however, my favourite being one from the Lester Del Rey imprint of Ballantine Books which commented "We don't like your main character and don't think anyone else will either." Not only that, but even I admit my description tends to be that of the minimalist school. Consequently, despite my dormant ambitions and not-so-dormant ego, I have absolutely no hesitation in stating that Alyx is a far better writer than I am and that I stand in awe of her talent.

Now, getting back to the subject of technique, whereas Asimov also belonged to the minimalist school, concentrating more on dialogue than on description, Alyx's writing has a vivid cinematic quality, partly through an unerring eye for detail, that gives what she is writing about an immediate and powerful impact on the reader, conveying a larger-than-life sense of reality.

In fact, I'd go so far as to accuse Alyx of channeling Salvador Dali's 'Paranoiac Critical' method of painting into her writing. You see, Dali liked to paint seemingly ordinary objects and endow them with such detail and realism as to force viewers to pay more attention to them than they normally would and see them from a fresh perspective. There is something of this in Alyx's writings.

Or to put it another way, the cumulative effect of Alyx's style is to invoke what I like to call 'The Wind In The Willows' effect.

You are probably familiar with this classic 1908 children's book by Kenneth Grahame (with its equally classic illustrations by Ernest H. Shepard) if only from the 'Toad of Toad Hall' subplot filmed by Disney. The latter is quite wonderful, but so too is the book as a whole.

Fact is, 'The Wind In The Willows' is as comfortable as a pair of old shoes once you accept the premise of little English animals living better and rather more civilized lives than the average Englishman. The reader gets caught up in the friendly charm of this alternate reality.

Incidentally, my favourite line in 'The Wind In The Willows' is uttered by the Water Rat: "*Believe me, there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.*" Exactly. I emphatically agree.

This is the effect Alyx has on her readers. She creates (until now mostly in her fan fiction posted online) a sense of reality so strong her readers are sucked right into her imaginary worlds and wind up begging for more. This is why her fan fiction website EX LIBRIS gets 30,000 hits a month. This is why two worldwide fan clubs devoted to her writings spontaneously appeared much to her amazement. Truth is, she developed a huge fan base *before* her first novel was published. Now that it is going online I can hardly wait to see how her fans react.

I confidently expect that Torquere Press is going to be pleasantly surprised by the strength of the demand for the 'first novel' if their 'new writer'. If enough downloads occur, they will print a paper version to be sold through Amazon books. Good things are going to happen, and all because many people enjoy what Alyx writes.

Okay, fine, you say. But what the heck is 'A Strange Place in Time' all about?

The main character, John Arrowsmith, is not your usual sort of hero. For one thing, he's a biker, raised by bikers, namely 'Mother' and 'Popsicle': "*Mother had gained his name because of his huge beergut. He looked like he was carrying twin baby hippos.*"

John looks a trifle better, as seen through the eyes of a middle-aged woman: "*She had to admit he was handsome. No, that wasn't the word. He was beautiful, in a masculine way. It was hard to tell what colour his dark, wet hair was, but his eyes were a warm golden-brown. He had a strangely aristocratic face, arched cheekbones, long straight nose, well-spaced eyes. It was the face of a young god. She thought she could like a young man with a face like that. Then he turned around to face her husband as he spoke, and her blood went cold. Stitched on the back of the jacket was a flaming motorcycle, backed by a burning gold sword. Across the top was written 'Satan's Own'.*"

Having been abandoned by his original mother, also a biker, "*He was pretty strange guy for a biker, a fact that earned him his own handle 'Spooky'. He got it on one of his midnight sleep walking sessions.*"

He didn't feel like he belonged with his biker family and biker friends. In truth he didn't feel like he belonged with anyone, or anywhere for that matter. This often drove him to ride his custom-built Harley on long trips that were part escape, part quest, and wholly impulse.

Thus at the beginning of the book we find him riding through the Fraser Canyon approaching the narrows known as Hell's Gate.

"To his right, sheer grey cliffs rose high above his head, a slightly darker shade of grey than the dimming November sky that threatened to drop rain on him. The walls were jagged, as though chiseled by some disinterested god, counting on rain and wind to smooth his work. To Arrowsmith's left, the Fraser river crashed and writhed within its deep canyon like a muddy brown dragon, reminding him that this was a road to be careful on."

Well, not careful enough. Through no fault of his own he and the Harley plunge into the canyon:

"Arrowsmith saw the river appear beneath him, and he knew he was going to die. He had absolutely no say in the matter, and as a result, he felt only an odd curiosity. He wondered if he would know he was dead. Then he closed his eyes."

"He struck something, but it wasn't water. It wasn't even cold, it was repulsively warm and extremely thick. It caught him gently, and he felt himself begin to sink into it. He clawed and struggled to get out of the mucous, feeling himself beginning to strangle in the goo. An overwhelming panic gripped him as he writhed and struggled like a netted fish. It was one thing to die suddenly. It was quite another to slowly choke in this strange matter..."

Arrowsmith awakes. "*Wherever he was, it was not at the bottom of the Fraser River, for which he was grateful. But still, where was he? The air was cool, and smelled of fall. That was right enough, but as he slowly raised himself, he saw that he was on a mountainside. Below him was a fantastic waterfall of gold and red trees, falling gently away down the slopes. It was beautiful, but it wasn't the Fraser canyon.*"

Having set up his little tent, he spends the night there, resting and puzzled that he couldn't recognize any of the constellations above. Come the morning he discovers the carcass of a deer nearby.

"The deer was lying on her side, and at first, Arrowsmith thought her back end was covered in branches. But, as he drew near, he saw she didn't have a back end. Something had bitten it off, and by the look of the clean, crescent-shaped wound, had done it with one bite."

"He stared at the deer, knowing that what he was looking at could not possibly be. Nothing was that big, not bears, not wolves, shit, not even Bigfoot. But judging from the huge tracks all around the deer, Bigfoot was the one who'd done it."

This is his first real intimation that he wasn't still in good old "Super Natural British Columbia" to quote an old Provincial Government slogan. Then again...

Rather understandably he gathers up all his stuff as quickly as he can and starts driving down the slope. He discovers a dirt road, and starts following it.

"One moment he was in the middle of no-where, the next, he was on Main street Hicksville...He had been in little tourist trap towns before, but nothing like this...little houses were intermingled with little shops, their signs dangling in the wind, but their style was wrong...The shops were flat on the ground, no steps or porches. There weren't even any sidewalks, just paths worn in the mountain dirt..."

"It was all so cute, he thought, so very picturesque. There was only one problem. It looked just a bit too authentic. Where were the placards? The little gift shops? The friendly people in period costumes to explain how life was lived in the middle ages?"

"Where the fuck am I?" he muttered."

Another clue he is not where he should be is when he enters The Galloping Troll Tavern and is mistaken for "a really big half-Elf."

He asks if they have a map of the locality and is presented with a wooden cylinder.

"Arrowsmith pulled out a roll of what seemed to be animal skin and laid it on the counter, opening it. It was a map, all right. Of what country, he didn't know. The worst part however was gazing at the ornate and unfamiliar written language and understanding it."

It takes quite a long while for Arrowsmith to realize that he has finally arrived where he really *does* belong.

In the meantime, he works his keep at the tavern as he tries to figure things out.

This being but book one of a trilogy, Alyx devotes most of this volume to introducing the principle characters, their background culture, and the nature of this world at large, all the while dropping strong hints as to what is actually going on, who Arrowsmith really is, and the terrible dangers and tasks to come.

Yes, it is a world of Trolls and Ogres, Fairies and Gnomes (though even these 'standard' mythic figures are depicted with unusual and original aspects), but it is also a world inhabited by Dragon Hawks, fierce little predators that prey on Dragons (Dragon Hawks are affectionate and can make good pets, apart from the fact they are bloody dangerous), fish-eating wolf-humanoids called Mycinocroft, and the Crucib, horse-headed humanoids with horse tails. The latter two critters are Dream Creatures, the Eldest races conjured in the Dream Time before the coming of Elves and Humans, hence their air of unreality and their unusual powers. This is a self-contained and original fantasy world complete unto itself.

As for the main characters apart from Arrowsmith, they include: Monshikka, an albino and a Crown Prince no less; Infamous, a Master Thief and High Priest of Marrakim, the god of thieves; Wess, who seems to be nothing more than a quiet antiquarian at first (appearances deceive), and Misty Foxsworth, a fair-skinned, sapphire-eyed half-Elf with golden hair and a lust for honey muffins.

Lord Sylvannamyth is a rather formidable character:

"Lord Sylvannamyth prowled into the kitchen like a left-over nightmare and began tossing sausages into the frying pan. He never seemed to eat anything other than meat, Arrowsmith noticed, lamb and mutton especially, but at least he cooked his. He never spoke either. He scared Arrowsmith, who could smell 'crazy' on the man like an open sore."

"Finally everyone was assembled, and they ate their breakfast in pleasant semi-silence. Except for Lord Sylvannamyth, who ate like a demented Jaguar. Arrowsmith was not sure he liked the way the man's eyes whirled counter-clockwise in his head."

"He was not truly a Lord, but the title was given out of respect for his parentage. He was the offspring of a Human and a Mycinocroft, which is why he was a little unbalanced."

Then there's Blackbird, a diminutive Wizard and Priest of Hercandoloff, who happens to be the husband of The Moonhound.

Ah yes, the Moonhound. She is one of the Holy Warriors of the Moon Goddess, and can be considered a bit of a predator in her own right, fully capable of taking on even an ogre with her bare hands and teeth. You don't want to mess with The Moonhound.

"The Moonhound had never been trained in non-lethal combat. The purpose of battle was not to subdue, it was to kill and bring flesh to the table. Warriors of the Goddess ate what they killed, regardless of what it was, and the Moonhound had eaten everything from rats to grave robbers."

No shy, retiring heroine this girl!

All these characters are drawn together for a higher purpose, part of which involves 'The Recalling of John Arrowsmith' to his *true* world. Each of the characters, as they take on their destined roles, are revealed to be far more than they first appear.

At the same time they are a playful lot, most of them fond of humour, and sex. Some are heterosexual, some homosexual, some bi-sexual, but this is by way of background to their individual characters, an aspect all the others think nothing of, in the sense that they do not think it out of the ordinary. In this novel you'll find nothing of the Brokeback Mountain eternal angst, no self-absorbed narcissistic whiners. All the characters are what they are, and waste not so much as a second anguishing over what they 'should be' in the eyes of others.

This refreshing approach to sexuality and flirtation appeals to very many of Alyx's readers. Readers like the fact that her characters like to have fun, and take pleasure from many things, simple things, anything. Never mind that The Moonhound is a sort of Berserker, that Arrowsmith is a biker, and Infamous an incredibly skillful thief; they are all fundamentally good people well worth knowing and calling 'friend'.

But there *are* dark forces in the world of Dargoth, and Book Two, 'The White Palace Awakens' will witness the beginning of the confrontation which will decide the fate of this fascinating world.

'A Strange Place in Time' will be available from Torquere Press beginning March 13th. Check the e-address < http://torquerebooks.com/zencart/index.php?main_page=index > to order, or check out Alyx's new website at < <http://alyx.wozupdoc.net/> > for the latest information.

COMMENTS ON COMICS

CELEBRATING CANADIAN GRAPHIC ARTIST DARWYN COOKE

By James Bacon

It's always a strange feeling that when someone I know well and respect recommends a comic book. The hunt is on, but also one can be assured of a decent read, and today there is so much chaff amongst the decent ripened and golden wheat that you could spend a fortune on comics and never read anything that shouldn't be pulped.

So it was even more interesting that as soon as I had finished reading *Batman Ego*, a chance buy, I spoke to a good friend and we both simultaneously recommended this comic to one another.

That was in 2000 and I must admit that I yearned for more work by Cooke. *Batman Ego* is just brilliant, really bringing the art form to its fore. As I wrote for Banana Wings in a recent article recommending comics to the readers of the zine:

"Darwyn Cooke is perhaps an heir to Frank Miller, again the skills of storytelling and artistry are impressive, a distinctive style apparent. His take on Batman in BATMAN EGO is quite unsettling and certainly unnerving as he slowly unfolds the concept and mythology of the vigilante. Our hero, Bruce Wayne has a blue moment as he comes to terms with a suicide and its consequences, that he is responsible for, as he stupors in his Batcave he is confronted by a vision of himself, the Batman, in a psychiatric episode gone mad where this analyst with all the answers rips into Bruce, with knowledge and innuendo that push the boundaries and question what the hell is this man all about. Definitely the thinking fans comic."

I love this comic so much. The vision of Batman really gets into some gritty subjects, questioning the whole logic behind a costumed hero. Concurrently as the story proceeds, we are presented with some very interesting sequences, which to the wide-eyed reader possess a certain double meaning, innuendo even. His style, very square jawed in a classic Pulp style, yet fluid with the use of large splash pages and sweeping curves, is quite distinctive and pleasing.

As those of us who read comics chatted about this comic at First Tuesday meetings held in a Dublin pub, some had more knowledge of this fellow Cooke. A background in the animated business became apparent from some investigative reading of his bio in the comic, and made sense. I hate comparing artist to other artists (what's the point, either allow the images to speak for themselves or be descriptive), yet I must give a nod to the creators of The Animated Batman series who gave Cooke work and obviously that Dini and Timm style permeates his own style and was an influence.

I was pleasantly surprised to find that he had done the artwork on *Legends of The Dark Knight*, an episode in *The New Batman Adventures*, season two, which aired in 1998. This episode is a pastiche of very famous styles as three kids describe the exploits of three very different Batmen. It's one of my favourites, up there with *Girls Night out* and Joe R Lansdale written episode *Showdown*.

It has three kids telling three different versions of Batman, the first is the eighties Frank Millar Version, then there is the 50's version in a Dick Sprang style. Although many also see this as homage to the Adam West version on TV, it depends on ones cultural background. Finally we have the animated series version. It's a neat episode and I was well impressed to hear Cooke had been involved.

It wasn't long after EGO that that he got work drawing an Ed Brubacker version of *Catwoman*, which is where Cooke's unique art style coalesced for me. Brubacker did a good job and I was pleasantly pleased as this is not a character I would normally get into. He returned later to do a *Selina Kyle*, the alter ego of Catwoman story, set at some stage before his run on *Catwoman*. This showed that Cooke could easily insert stories, without that jarring effect many of us get when someone rehashes a good idea badly, which unfortunately a few prequels seem to do.

Then there were odd pieces here and there and I wondered when I would next get my fix of Cooke. I was not to be disappointed and I soon heard that he was working on a huge project that would appeal to a number of my interests. Released in six issues, this is a story consisting of over 400 pages.

New Frontier is mostly set in the fifties and accurately so and is Cooke's vision of what happens between the Golden Age and Silver Age of Superheroes. It is not only well researched and lovingly crafted; it's a smart look at what could have been.

This simple story, that brings so many characters into interaction, has Superheroes outlawed, which isn't hard to imagine given some of the things that occurred in the cold war. Some Heroes fight on with permission and some without, new Heroes come to light, and all the well known tropes and themes of the time are cleverly brought to bear upon the DC world. It's impressive.

An invasion by alien beings brings everything to a climatic and rewarding end, and Cooke manages to bring quite a number of well known and some lesser known characters into the fray.

I am a big fan of Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff* and there is a big correlation between the activity of the Superheroes and also the technological advances in flight. One of the main characters, Hal Jordan, is a test pilot and as such we get some wonderful images of cold war styled planes, all shining, polished aluminum.

The art work retains a certain aged look, again that pulpy style that along with the accuracy of fashion, hair and machinery, gives one the perfect feeling that it's the late fifties all right. Kirby and Eisner would both get nods I expect, but again I feel Cooke has his own style which, although embodying some of the classic lines, features female characters especially deliciously drawn.

I went a bit mental and even though I have the original comics I bought the absolute edition, a version of the comic that is hardbound, oversized and has an extra forty pages or so and it cost extra too, but cost is irrelevant, compared to this fantastic story, which one can have quite cheaply in graphic novel format.

In 2005 the series won the coveted comic industry Eisner Awards for Best Limited Series, Best Colouring, and Best Publication Design. Cooke also won Harveys for Best Artist, Best Colourist, and Best Continuing or Limited Series. Finally his own native Canada recognised him with a Shuster Award for Outstanding Canadian Comic Book Cartoonist (Writer/Artist)

But more of the Shusters later.

Cooke produced a comic in the SOLO series for DC which was an anthology series with each issue featuring the work of individual comic artists, who were given fairly free reign with the DC world and subjects. The series ran to twelve issues featuring the best artists of the current generation although I personally feel it was ended way too soon. Cooke's issue: number five. He told a number of different stories, utilizing different art styles for each one. This comic went on to win an Eisner for best single issue in 2006.

Cooke was then allowed to play with one of the greatest comic characters ever. Will Eisner created *The Spirit*, a masked crime fighter, in 1940, which has had a lasting influence on comic writing ever since. Comparisons are often made between Batman and *The Spirit*. Cooke recently did a cross over between the two characters, and his version of *The Spirit* captures something quintessentially 30's and 40's: the fedora hat, the gloves, the simple mask and the dames.

The cross over was written by Batman stalwart Jeph Loeb with J. Bone doing the inking of Cooke's pencils. This comic was a delight and the perfect jumping on point. Cooke has gone on to write and pencil the ongoing *Spirit* series. It is wonderful to see this Will Eisner character in such careful hands, the clean cut style being spot on for the character.

I have been enjoying this series. Unfortunately the twelfth issue is Cooke's last for a while as writer and penciller, which is disappointing, but he seems to be using the time to come up with something else that will entertain as much.

Justice League: The New Frontier is a direct to DVD animated movie adaptation of *DC: The New Frontier* limited series. The film is written by *Justice League* writer Stan Berkowitz, and thankfully Darwyn Cooke is serving as story and visual consultant. The DVD was due for release in February of this year, so perhaps Cooke will be working on that, helping with PR etc., or perhaps he has other projects in the mix. One waits with baited breath. I was especially pleased to hear that Kyle MacLachlan is playing Superman, not the character I would expect.

Thus in March we will have *New Frontier: The Lost Chapter*, written and drawn by Cooke with J. Bone and David Bullock assisting. This collection coincides with the DVD and according to DC 'This tale provides a first-hand look at Faraday's quest to outlaw masked vigilantes, culminating with the day Superman goes to Gotham to bring down Batman. Also included are two back-up stories featuring Wonder Woman, Black Canary, Sgt. Rock and others, as well as behind-the-scenes bonus material from the movie!'

So it's going to be a good time I reckon.

But what of the Canadian connections? Well Cooke was born in Toronto, and although there are no shortage of comic creators hailing from Canada, Todd McFarlane, Dave Sim, Ty Templeton, and Gerhard, one of the most famous must be Joe Shuster who along with Jerry Siegel created Superman. Cooke is my favourite of the bunch.

To honour Mr. Shuster and of course to recognize achievement by current creators from Canada the Shusters were created and initiated created in 2005 by the Canadian Comic Book Creator Awards Association. Although only in its third year Cooke has already bagged four Shuster's, quite deservedly.

Canada has contributed hugely to the comic book mythology. The list of inductees in the CCBAA Hall of Fame is staggering. The idea that an award is presented to the best retailer is quite different and nothing really like that exists here.

The recognition that comic creators receive is warm and of course the altruistic effort on behalf of the organizers is to be commended. It's interesting that Canada can look inward, yet do it so well and honour their own with such dignity.

So miles and miles away, I bear in mind that when I look at Canada, which like Ireland has produced its own band of writers and artists in the industry, I see some of my favourite creators, and perhaps my favourite of all.

(For info on the Shuster Awards, see < <http://joeshusterawards.com/> >)

'JUSTICE LEAGUE: THE FINAL FRONTIER' TO BE FILMED LIVE ACTION!

George Miller is filming Darwyn Cooke's 'Justice League' on Australia as a live action movie starring Hugh Keays-Byrne (who played 'Toecutter' in the original MAD MAX) as the Martian Manhunter, Megan Gale as Wonder Woman, Adam Brody as the Flash, Rapper Common as the Green Lantern, and Armie Hammer Jr. as Batman.

ANIMATED 'JUSTICE LEAGUE: THE FINAL FRONTIER' DVD NOW AVAILABLE!

By Stan G. Hyde

Produced by Michael Goguen, animated by Bruce Timm, written by Stan Berkowitz, with voicework by David Boreanaz, Brooke Shields, Lucy Lawless, Neil Patrick Harris, Miguel Ferrer, Kyra Sedgewick, Jeremy Sisto & Kyle MacLachlan. Focuses on the founding of the Justice League, the coming together of Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, the Green Lantern, Martian Manhunter and The Flash to jointly combat a particularly nasty monster.

The official site is here if people want to take a look: < <http://www.warnervideo.com/jlnewfrontier/> >

MEDIA MADNESS

RETRO FILM REVIEW: MARS NEEDS WOMEN (1966)

By The Graeme

This is a delightfully demented 1966 made-for-TV film which was scripted, produced and directed by Larry Buchanan.

We see exciting footage of a bored couple playing tennis. Through the miracle of editing, the woman suddenly disappears. The man, still bored, yet puzzled, looks about, bored.

We see a couple sitting in a nightclub. The man goes to a cigarette machine and seems to pause (almost as if he were waiting for the camera to stop) while the girl disappears.

We see (chastely) a woman in a shower. Suddenly, she's gone!

I think we're all beginning to get the idea by now.

Next we follow Colonel Bob as he's chauffeured to THE UNITED STATES DECODING SERVICE - NASA WING (evidently back in the days when NASA had a BIG budget). Colonel Bob strides through the halls. He walks funny. Like a stiff automaton with a demonic frown and a glazed expression. Guess that's why he never made General. Or won an Oscar. He wants to know if they've deciphered the message. They have....

MARS NEEDS WOMEN!

Cut to credits rolling over shots of a finned Flying Saucer with square windows. Kind of cute, actually.

Next we see a reporter by the name of Simmons being briefed by Colonel Bob. I guess the military don't think much of reporters. Simmons is in a padded room on the other side of a glass partition. Communication is by intercom, and since the Colonel won't tell him anything, somewhat pointless.

But then, the Colonel is a man of few words, as witness this briefing of the Secretary of Defence:

"The code is broken", announces the Colonel.

"Trouble?" asks the Secretary of Defence.

"Big".

"Security?"

"Tight".



"Take the lid off for me".

"Mars needs women".

"It's a gag! It's a fake!"

"It's not a distress signal. It's intermittence is perfect!"

And I always thought Government/Military types pontificated. These guys are laconic.

Suddenly Tommy Kirk, former Mousketeer, materializes in the centre of the room as Doppler, a Martian wearing a wetsuit. He admits the kidnapping of the three earth girls by "transponder" didn't quite work out, so five Martians are coming in person. Quote:

"We are not hostiles. We are medical missionaries. We seek five female volunteers, unmarried and in good health."

(Seems on Mars the ratio of females/males born has become untenable, they need fresh breeding stock.)

Colonel Bob reacts in a manly fashion, "You have committed an overt act of abduction and war! Abort your mission!"

Doppler refuses. "You will not hear from us again until our cargo is secure!" he says, then winks out of existence. The human race is horrified.

"The capital is stunned," intones a TV reporter, "paralyzed by five men in a space cylinder hurtling toward the approximate vicinity of Houston Texas." Yes, stunned no doubt because the Martians believe Texan women are more desirable than Washington women, a blow to Yankee pride.

Instead of beaming down (as they seem capable of doing) the Martians somehow land their saucer inside an abandoned ice plant. We see them emerge one by one, all wearing wetsuits with red plastic ear-protectors and antennae. One carries a red plastic flashlight, another a spear gun. High tech, these Martians.

"Our first concern is chemicals," says Fellow One (Doppler). "Brine, salts, sodium..." Hmmm, isn't that all the same thing? They're in luck. The ice plant is full of salt! Now they're ready for operation Sleep-freeze.

"Fellow Three, you will acquire currency and a city map."

"Can I employ violence?"

"No."

Fellow three materializes outside a filling station, karate chops an attendant into oblivion and steals what is required. So much for Martian discipline in obeying orders.

The Martians also steal clothes and a car. As they're struggling into identical charcoal-gray business suits, Fellow 3 mutters, "These ties serve no functional purpose. Red Planet Mars abandoned ties fifty years ago! It's obvious Earthmen are environmentally naive!" Seems Martian super science enabled them to discover some deadly environmental threat hidden in the wearing of ties that we Earthlings are even now unaware of.

The Martians drive off into the big city. Doppler and Fellow 2 check into a hotel which just happens to be crowded with reporters and scientists waiting for the Martians. They see TV news footage of the arrival of Dr. Margorie Bowlen who -- according to the announcer -- "turned out to be a stunning brunette and found it hard to conceal her charm behind horn-rimmed glasses." The Martians observe she is "well-versed in genetics and well-endowed physically, at least anatomically speaking." Martians, it seems, have one track minds. Male Martians anyway.

Meanwhile, Fellow 4 is crouching in a glass telephone booth in the middle of a busy airport lounge talking into his wristwatch. Evidently he has not been well briefed on modes of behaviour unlikely to illicit notice. "Calling Red Planet Talk Com, I have an excellent lead under surveillance!"

"Does she conform?" Doppler inquires.

"Subject meets physical specs, at least superficially." Which is all that matters, after all. Closing in! Fellow 4 is after a stewardess!

Dr. Bowlen is attempting to hold a press conference. But the reporters (all men) are joking about the Martians.

"Martian women have it great, 100 men to every woman, har, har." "No, you got it all wrong," says another. "Like WW2, 20 girls to every man, har har." Bowlen is miffed and threatens to call off the interview unless someone asks an intelligent question.

Immediately Doppler pipes up: "There's a lot of talk about breaking the DNA code, about non-chromosomal molecules, does this suggest what happened on Mars could happen here?"

Well, it's not an intelligent question, but Dr. Bowlen falls in love anyway. She must have, for why else would she say. "It's presumptuous of us to think the Martians are any different than we are"? Obviously she must have been distracted by Cupid to say something so stupid. I mean, this gal is smitten.

She goes up to Doppler and declares, "After my flight and a million jokes about sex in space, I'm bushed." She wants to go somewhere different, it seems. Doppler catches on, finally, and agrees.

But first they go to the local planetarium to see a show titled "Trip to Mars." They're alone, till a horde of screaming kids flood in. Doppler looks at them fondly, a poignant moment. No kids on Mars. This is what his mission is all about. Breeding. Kids. Hordes of screaming kids. Brawling, fighting, yelling kids. Before Doppler can pursue this line of thought further (and perhaps lose faith in his mission), the show begins. The narration tape breaks. Doppler fills in. The kids are enthralled. But a bit of a giveaway when Doppler comments, "The temperature on Mars varies from 100 degrees below zero to 55 above, except on the Cerataya plateau where it often seems much warmer."

Hmmm, seeds of suspicion are planted in Dr. Bowlen's Mind. "Let's not go back to the hotel", she suggests cautiously. "When was the last time you took a pretty girl for a walk, I mean a pretty girl with a PHD?" Well, maybe she's not all that cautious...

Meanwhile Fellow 4 has finally hypnotized the Stewardess into following him (took him hours). Fellow 5 has acquired a stripper. Fellow 3 is attending a football game. He looks acutely uncomfortable, as well he might, every other male in the stands is wearing a sports coat, a brush cut, horn-rimmed glasses (remember, this is 1966) and a tie! The Dreaded Tie! No wonder he's worried. But a homecoming Queen is selected and soon falls under his spell. And Fellow 2 snares a female landscape painter. This leaves only Doppler without booty to bring back to the ship.

Doppler? Simmons, the reporter, is impressed with his scientific knowledge (Hah!) and is sharing the responsibility of the press pool with him. They sit in on a war conference with Colonel Bob and Dr. Bowen. "All lovely, all built like Goddesses, and none married?" puzzles the Colonel. "Who's next? If only there was a pattern." He stares at a city map. "Within the primary perimeter, there's only a lake, and, what else?" (At this point Doppler and Simmons, stuck in the padded room, are cut off from hearing the conversation.)

"An ice factory," mentions Dr. Bowlen.

Colonel Bob smiles. "I'm no scientist, but I feel better knowing where the enemy is." He's not much of a Colonel either.

Simmons suspects something is up. He asks Doppler to take Dr. Bowlen into his confidence. Instead he takes her to a family planning museum to peruse life models of childbirth and such. (Boy, when he takes a gal on a date, he really shows her a good time!) She kisses him. He asks her what time it is, then runs out the door. She runs after him. Together they stare fixedly at the road as he drives like a maniac to get to the Saucer before it takes off. Meanwhile Colonel Bob and soldiers are creeping up on the ice plant.

Doppler and Bowlen arrive first. She sees four guys in wetsuits standing atop a flying saucer. Her suspicions deepen, approaching conviction.

"Abort the mission!" commands Doppler. "A raiding party is on the way! Please leave before they arrive."

Bowlen spots the recumbent forms of four frozen women yet to be loaded aboard. "What happens if you go without the women?" she asks. First of all, the Martians become extinct, you dummy! Secondly, the trip would be much duller than planned. And third, what do you mean, "The" women? Haven't you noticed by now you're on the cargo manifest too? Dr. Bowlen may not be so bright after all.

Fortunately for her, neither are the Martians. "To abort the mission is bad enough," hisses Fellow 2. "If you stay, we all die!"

"Why not take both of them? We can freeze her en route?" suggests Fellow 3 hopefully.

"To be a test case for insemination?" asks Doppler bitterly. I guess he was no longer inclined to share.

"One of you must go! You must decide now!"

Doppler turns to Dr. Bowlen. "The word 'love' went out of the Martian vocabulary 100 years ago..." (What? Love disappeared 50 years before ties? What kind of priorities do Martians have?) "...but whatever love is, I know it must be what I feel for you!"

Suddenly bullets are zipping about the ice plant as the soldiers outside open fire. No fool he, Doppler hotfoots it to the Saucer and closes the hatch. So much for love. The Martians take off. Bowlen runs outside and stares into the sky. The Colonel runs up. "What were they like? Will you be able to describe them? Can't you tell us anything?" This is rather odd, as the good Colonel has already met Doppler at the beginning of the film. Remember?

Anyway, Dr. Bowlen just stands there crying as the credits roll, knowing there will be no more pay cheques for this shoot, and once it's been on public view, not likely very many paycheques to come, at least not in the moving picture business.

The final credit is the famous quote from the works of Konstantin Tsiolkovsky: THE EARTH IS THE CRADLE OF MANKIND, BUT MAN CANNOT LIVE IN THE CRADLE FOREVER.

This is a great quote. It has nothing to do with the plot, but it's a great quote.

UPCOMING NIFTY FILM PROJECTS:

DASEPO NAUGHTY GIRLS is a 'zany' Korean comedy taking place in a High School, said to have Loony Tunes/Benny Hill/Rocky Horror style fast-paced action, with a Cyclops, a Dragon, & a Sailor Moon cross dresser?

A sequel to **CLOVERFIELD** is under consideration with director Matt Reeves hinting it would cover the same period and action as the first film, but as seen by a different group of people. Hmm, original, but not too exciting.

Shades of the Id Monster! A mysterious transmission unleashes fear and desire AKA murder and madness among good citizens of Terminus on New Year's Eve in **THE SIGNAL**. Sounds like *any* New Year's Eve actually.

TYRANNOSAURUS REX is the working title of a film Rob Zombie is currently developing. He is also said to be working on an animated film called **THE HAUNTED WORLD OF EL SUPERBEASTO**. Two films? Or a name change?

Meanwhile it has been reported that Rob Zombie will direct the new **CONAN** movie to be filmed by Lionsgate. While I'm sure the result will be vivid, if not visceral, I can't see Zombie doing justice to Robert E. Howard's intentions.

Universal is remaking **THE WOLFMAN**, set to star Benicio Del Toro as the title character (Lon Chaney Jr. in the original), Anthony Hopkins as his father (Claude Rains in the original), and directed by Joe Johnston (**HIDALGO**).

The Sci Fi TV channel in the US will air 13 episodes of **SANCTUARY**, based on the 8 episodes previously released on the internet. Being touted as the first live action against virtual sets TV show, but what about **THE STARLOST** of 1973?

CATACOMBS from Lionsgate is going direct to DVD. Said to be unbelievably bad, with endless glimpses of the heroine running through the catacombs of Paris, screaming, gasping, changing direction, etc., on a mostly black screen.

Wes Craven is up to something with **25/8**, about a bad guy who returns 15 years after his death to kill a bunch of teenagers who were born the night he was supposed to die. Sounds lame, but who knows?

Paul Bettany will star as the Archangel Michael in **LEGION**, his job to defend the human race from God who has apparently ordered all the other angels to exterminate humanity. Sounds lame *and* stupid, but original concept at least.

Alexandre Aja is going to direct a 3-D remake of Joe Dante's **PIRANHA**, featuring scores of *prehistoric* Piranha no less! Aja promises it will be "Very much a popcorn film that's really scary." Sounds good if he can deliver.

LAKE PLACID 2 went direct to DVD. Stars Cloris Leachman. Features a white bunny rabbit, a *terrifying* white bunny rabbit. And giant Crocodiles – crocodiles so terrifying a guy up a tree falls asleep, falls, wakes up *on* the croc. What a croc.

SAUNA! Is a Finnish horror film directed by Aj Annila. Something about two brothers haunted by a young girl they left to die who find a sauna said to wash away all sins. Stepping into the sauna turns out to be a mistake.

Faye Dunaway stars as a one-armed Memphis cop in **FLICK**, tracking down an undead rockabilly teen hiding out in Wales. I'm sorry, but this sounds absolutely fantastic to me; the undead rockabilly teen bit, not sure about Faye.

TOKYO GORE POLICE is a Japanese splatter film directed by the effects guy who created drill bras and breast guns for other films. I list this film only because I wonder how it will affect the Tokyo Police recruitment program.

Anchor Bay will distribute a produced-in-Ottawa film **JACK BROOKS: MONSTER SLAYER**, starring Robert Englund as a plumber who "awakens an ancient evil and must do battle with a horde of monsters". Very cool.

GHOULISHLY YOURS is a planned Biopic of William M. Gaines, the original publisher of MAD magazine. The film will concentrate on his zany crew of E.C. comics artists and their battle with censorship. John Landis will direct.

You are not going to believe this, but Katsuhiro Otomo's **AKIRA** is going to be remade into a live action film produced by Leonardo DiCaprio, written by Ruairi Robinson and taking place in 'New Manhattan' instead of 'New Tokyo'.

And I know you'll watch for **ULTIMATE WEAPON HIGH SCHOOL GIRL: Rika**, "another Japanese sword-wielding, zombie-slaying, school girl flick".

And Malaysia's **ZOMBIES OF BANANNA VILLAGE** sounds like a hoot!

ODD BITS

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

ANCIENT FAN PERSONALITY NUMBER ONE: JULIUS CAESAR

(I dig the oddities of so-called 'great' men & women of the ancients. Find them hilarious. So, unless I can think of another Sci-fi angle re the Romans, I'm going to indulge myself by letting you know what the Romans thought of themselves. As always, Hadrian's secretary Suetonius provides the juicy bits.)

JULIUS CAESAR:

DESCRIPTION: "Said to have been tall, fair, and well built, with a rather broad face and keen, dark-brown eyes. ... He was something of a dandy, always keeping his head carefully trimmed and shaved; and has been accused of having certain other hairy parts of his body depilated with tweezers. ... His baldness was a disfigurement which his enemies harped upon, much to his exasperation, but he used to comb the thin strands of hair forward from his poll..."

HEALTH: "His health was sound, apart from sudden comas and a tendency to nightmares...he twice had epileptic fits while on campaign."

FIRST SCANDAL: "Caesar first saw military experience in Asia...When Thermus sent Caesar to raise a fleet in Bithynia, he wasted so much time at King Nicomede's court that a homosexual relationship between them was suspected... Licinius Calvus published the notorious verses 'The riches of Bithynia's King / Who Caesar on his couch abused' ... Dolabella called him 'the Queen's rival and inner partner of the royal bed', and Curio the Elder: 'Nicomede's Bithynian Brothel'...One Octavius, a scatter-brained creature who would say the first thing that came into his head, walked into a packed assembly where he saluted Pompey as 'King' and Caesar as 'Queen'... Cicero wrote: 'Caesar was led by Nicomede's attendants to the royal bedchamber, where he lay on a golden couch, dressed in a purple shift ... So this descendent of Venus lost his virginity in Bithynia'... Lastly, when Caesar's own soldiers followed his decorated chariot in the Gallic triumph, chanting ribald songs, as they were privileged to do so, this was one of them: "

“Gaul was brought to shame by Caesar;
By King Nicomedes, he,
Here comes Caesar wreathed in triumph
For his Gallic victory!
Nicomedes wears no laurels,
Though the greatest of the three.”

EARLY FANNISH WRITINGS: “It is said that in his boyhood and early youth he also wrote pieces *called In Praise of Hercules and The Tragedy of Oedipus*, and *Collected Sayings*; but nearly a century later the Emperor Augustus sent Pompeius Mercer, his Surveyor of Libraries, a brief, frank letter forbidding him to circulate these minor works.”

ODD HABITS: “...he carried tessellated and mosaic pavements with him on his campaigns...he once put his baker in irons for serving him a different sort of bread from that served to his guests... So high were the sums he paid for slaves of good character and attainments that he became ashamed of his extravagance and would not allow the sums to be entered in his accounts...”

HAD SEX WITH: Male lover: King Nicomedes? Wives: Cornelia & Pompeia. Other men’s wives: Postumia, Lollia, Tertulla, & Mucia. Mistresses: Servilia, Eunoe, & Cleopatra. And let the last word be another ribald verse sung by his legions during his Gallic triumph:

“Home we bring our bald whoremonger;
Romans, lock your wives away!
All the bags of gold you lent him,
Went his Gallic tarts to pay!”

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS: THE LIVE EXPERIENCE

By The Graeme

Ya gotta love dinosaurs. I do! I sat through the show grinning from ear to ear.

But Murphy’s Law is especially attracted to fans and their expectations. My variation of good old Murphy’s contribution to civilization is: “Everything that can go wrong will go wrong, but in the end it will all work out.” I keep repeating this in my head like a mantra. Only thing that keeps me sane. To explain:

The show in question features life-size animatronic quasi-robotic dinosaurs inspired by the 1999 WALKING WITH DINOSAURS TV series filmed by the BBC. Oddly enough, THE LIVE EXPERIENCE version originates in Australia, through an outfit called ‘Bruce McTaggart’s Immersion Edutainment’ (last word not a misspelling, it stands for ‘educational entertainment’), with a brand new company, ‘The Creature Technology Company’, being created in a Melbourne warehouse to conceptualize and construct the life size critters in question.

No way were my wife and I going to miss a spectacle like this. Having seen – on TV -- some scenes from their exhibition in Las Vegas (January 9-13), my wife says to me, “If they ever come to town, get tickets!”

The very next day, Wednesday January 30th, I see an ad in the paper announcing the show will be at General Motors Place (a modern hockey arena) starting Thursday! After work I hotfoot it to the nearest Ticketmaster outlet and ask for two tickets. Best seats in the house, for two adults. How much? Answer: over \$200.

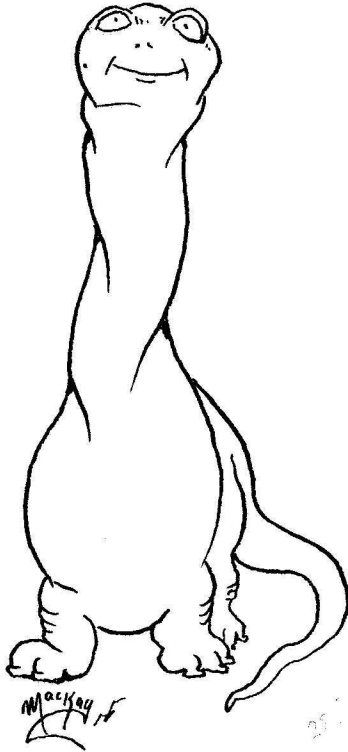
After I pick my jaw off the floor, I settle for some not-quite-so-best seats in the house, still comes to \$111.50 though. That’s just about how much we spend on food every week. But what the heck, once in a lifetime experience. I can start saving for the next VCON (in October) next month.

The logistics are quite simple. Ten minute walk from our apartment to the Surrey Centre Skytrain Station, thirty minute ride to the Stadium station, five minute walk to GM Place, and let the show begin.... which it will, at 3:00 PM on Saturday February 2nd. I figure, if we leave at 1:30, we’ll get to the Stadium station with well over half an hour to spare. What could go wrong?

We settle into our seats on the Skytrain after it pulls in, and excitedly wait for the doors to close and the train to zip off to the next station, Gateway. And wait. And wait. Just as I start to say: “The reason I like to leave early when traveling by Skytrain is just in case something goes wrong...”, the station loud speaker springs to life and mumbles incomprehensibly for several minutes.

Just when I start to say: “Why can’t they also transmit over the train loudspeakers...” the latter opens with a hissing, not-undinosaur-like roar and states rather firmly “This train will NOT be moving. We have an emergency situation at Gateway. A shuttle bus will be provided for you to reach Scott Road station. There will be no transit through Gateway.”

Extremely mild expletives blurt out all over the train (the source being numerous parents with kids in tow also heading for the dino show, thus heartfelt but mild expletives in the presence of the young ones). Families exit the train in a streaming mass and collide with the newly arrived families racing for the train before it leaves. High anxiety is in the air. Is it fear of missing the show and disappointing the kiddies? Or fear of wasting money spent on high-priced tickets? Bit of both?



Alyx and I join the tumbling masses flooding the bus loop below the station. I spot a guy in a transit uniform. "What's wrong at Gateway?" I shout. "Will it clear up soon?"

"No. We got a jumper on the roof of the station, threatening to leap onto the tracks when the next train comes. They're trying to talk him down. Could take hours." I sense less than a wave of sympathy in the crowd around me.

"When will the bus come? Where will it stop?" I demand compassionately.

Transit guy stares off into the distance. "Hmmm... I don't know. Best stand here. I'll let you know when I find out." For five minutes or so the transit guy endures the beady-eyed intensely-focused stares of the crowd around him. "I'll go find out," he says suddenly. "Wait for me here, I'll be back", and wanders off.

For another five minutes the people in the crowd stare fixedly at each other, then explode in all directions in quest of the mythical shuttle bus. I spot the transit guy in the distance. Run up to him. Same questions. Same answers. Same routine, even to his wandering off. It is to arrrgh! Getting mighty worried now.

A bus pulls in on the other side of the loop, its sign reading 'Special'. I weigh the possibility that it is merely a case of an unusually egotistical driver, then conclude, as an amoeba-like blob of people gather around the bus's door, that it is the shuttle bus! Alyx and I join the mob.

As the bus fills, and we inch slowly toward the door, I begin to worry even more. The bus is filling up fast. Just as I step up into the bus the driver says, "Sorry sir! No more room! Stand back! Get off! I have to be able to see. Step down, sir!"

I shove forward and start screaming, "Come on, People! Move back! Plenty of room! MOVE! MOVE!" Not unexpectedly the people

immediately in front of me shrink back in terror against the others jammed in like sardines, creating a few more inches of space, just enough to allow my wife to hop sprightly aboard, the door closing in the face of the extraordinarily angry guy just behind her, his face flushing beet red.

We pull out of the loop, the driver muttering ghod-knows what under his breath, and slowly drive toward the King George Highway. I say slowly, because the traffic is very dense. But eventually we turn left on to the highway and I sigh with relief. In no time we'll have zipped down to Scott Road and be on our way!

Except for some insane reason there is a car double-parked (or stalled) and two lines of traffic merging at a creeping pace trying to get past the obstacle. I try to remember if I have taken my heart pill or not. Seems like I'm going to need it.

Then we inch past the car blocking traffic, speed up...and screech to a halt. Red light. Red light. Still red. And red again! The traffic light is stuck on red! "Must have something to do with the Gateway situation" declares the bus driver cogently. Just when the collective frustration of the crowd threatens to burst open the roof of the bus, the light turns green. We lurch forward. The passengers begin to calm.

Then a little old lady rings the bell. "Next stop please."

People howl in response: "Express bus! Special! Express! No stopping! NO STOPPING!" I am proud to say I am not the man shaking his fist in front of her face, but then I wasn't close enough to reach her. She pouts a bit, no doubt wondering why her normally sane bus route has entered the twilight zone, but elects to subside demurely in her seat and keep quiet. Good thing too. Lynching not permitted in Canada. Bad form.

The next hurdle is Scott Road station. Somehow the platform is already jam-packed. Will the next train be a five-car or a two-car? With my luck, it'll be a two-car. I plan accordingly.

I grab Alyx's arm. "There!" I declare, pointing. "That's the best spot!" And begin shoving my way to the front of the platform (fervently hoping that I don't annoy anyone I'm elbowing past to the point where they shove me OFF the platform once I get to the front).

A two-car train pulls in. Door opens in front of me. I spread my arms wide to prevent anyone darting past me (generating more expletives behind me, though not mild ones this time), jump in, grab two seats.

"You do this a lot, don't you," comments Alyx as she settles into her window seat.

"Every working day." My heart begins to slow to a normal beat. We might just make it! A dozen or so stations to go before we reach our destination. I amuse myself by watching the faces of the people on the platform at each succeeding station as they discover the train is too crowded to allow anyone to get on. Very amusing indeed. I try not to laugh. I am giddy with smugness. We made it! We're on the train!

To make a long story short (after I've told the whole thing already), we get to our seats one minute before the show starts, one freaking minute! Man! Maybe a fourth of the seats are still empty, but fill up over the next ten minutes – I figure

with families late because of the 'Gateway situation'. I hope all of the families made it. Nothing worse than denying a little kid the opportunity to see life size dinos in action. Stealing lollipops pales in comparison. I know if I had missed out on a show like this when I was a kid I would have been inconsolable for months, if not years. In fact, come to think of it, as an adult spending over a hundred bucks I would have the same reaction now upon missing the show, possibly even more inconsolable. No matter. We made it. ON WITH THE DINOS!

Exactly at 3:00 PM there is a spectacular play of coloured lights, rip-roaringly loud music, then an announcement the show will begin five minutes from now. Oh well, I relax a bit and take in my surroundings.

GM place is a typical oval Coliseum-like roofed amphitheatre (though, regretfully, the gates are not called 'Vomitioria' as in Roman times, a reference to how quickly the crowd poured out after shows), but only half the oval is available for spectators. The reason for this is that the life-sized dinosaurs require a huge backstage area (understandably), so half the arena is hidden by walls and curtains, and the tiers of seats rising from that half closed off and empty.

What arena space is available is surrounded by a horseshoe-shaped section of seating, the arena itself covered with a grey stone-like flooring, surrounded on three sides by tooth-like 'stone' slabs (I suppose to keep the dinosaurs from stumbling into the audience) which block the view from the first three rows of seats, which are consequently empty and covered with tarps. The fourth side of the arena consists of curtains and film screens hiding the dino 'green' room, framed by enormous teeth for all the world like the entrances to certain Aztec and Maya temples atop pyramids (in the latter case the teeth representing the maw of Mother Earth into which you descend as you climb the pyramid – the Mesoamericans loved complex symbolism). But I digress. To continue, the only feature within the arena is a complex of artificial rock. Above the arena is a formidable array of catwalks and lights suspended from the girders above by distressingly few wires.

The lights dim, then flash on again, revealing a lone figure resembling Indiana Jones (from the way he's dressed), but in this case a 'typical' paleontologist. He blathers on about the wonders of evolution, geologic time, etc., then points at the rocks in the arena and declares it to be the world-girdling single continent Pangaea! (Bit of a stretch, that.) And how did formerly amphibious life survive at the beginning of the Triassic period? The miracle of the hard-shelled egg! Spotlight picks out nest of eggs on one of the rocks. Puzzled audience oohs and aahs. Then a couple of the eggs crack open and cute lizard-green hand puppets – I mean dinosaur babies – writhe about making mewling sounds. Public issues even more heartfelt oohs and aahs.

Next the spots light up a Liliensternous stalking forward. Never heard of this critter, but it's a raptor-like two-legged predator 2.3 m high with a blister-like bulbous nose and two reddish crests on the top of the skull. In colour it appears tannish yellow with dark green stripes. Very cool looking to see it approach the narrator and observe him sidle out of the way. Nasty-looking beast. (Not the narrator! The Liliensternous!)

I say two-legged predator, but actually it is four-legged. You see, it's basically a body suit, with the operator engulfed from the waist up within dino's body. From the waist down his shorts and naked legs are visible, albeit painted a ghost-like grey. The feet of the dino are hooked to his feet. So as the operator runs, crouches, turns, etc., so moves the dino. All the smaller dinos in the show are so constructed, and apparently weigh about 100 lbs each, being built of metal frame, foam, and extensive electronics. (So-called 'voodoo operators' offstage control the head in the 'man-dinos' and the body & head movements in the larger dinos.)

Anyway, the movement and activity of the 'man-dinos' are so lifelike and fascinating that you soon forget completely the 'extra' pair of legs. Sounds silly, but in very short order you only 'see' the dinosaur and not the operator.

The Liliensternous approaches the eggs, nuzzles the babies, then chomps on one youngling in particular and hauls its limp body out of the shell. Screams of horror burst from the lips of at least a dozen of the younger children from all over the arena. You hear them crying, a sad sound fortunately soon swamped by the amplified voice of the narrator as mother arrives to protect her remaining babies. Mummy turns out to be a 9.3 m long Plateosaurus, kind of a stumpy sauropod with a turtle-like head.

It's a four-legged beastie, light green with tannish yellow chevrons on its back, and moves via a method used for all the four-legged dinos no matter how big or small, and also for the biggest two-legged critters. The legs move, it appears to walk, and the legs swing appropriately to the speed of the dino's progression, but in fact the critter is suspended on a thick metal pole projecting from a long and very narrow 'rock-log' between its legs, actually a powered vehicle with an operator peering out of a shallow turret midway along its length. The vehicle is disguised as a nondescript rock, and again, in a mere matter of seconds you stop noticing it. The illusion of the dinosaurs walking independently by themselves is complete, and quite amazing. After all, the eye is attracted to movement, and it's far easier to watch the leg and body movements – heads tossing, tails swinging, bodies shaking, etc – then to stay focused on a barely visible 'ghost of a rock' gliding along largely hidden beneath the dinos.

It occurred to me after the show that in fact the moving 'rock logs' are not visible at all to those in the seats closest to the arena, because the 'saw tooth' upright 'rock' slabs block the vehicles (and feet) from view, thus for these lucky audience members the illusion of life is complete, the larger dinosaurs seemingly moving about on their own accord.

Anyway, after strutting their stuff the Triassic dinos withdraw, and I'm thinking, so far so good. Quite nifty in fact. What next?

With earth-shattering crunching and roaring the mighty continent of Pangaea splits into three parts, each resembling nothing so much as a slab-sided giant armadillo, or perhaps what a tank would have looked like on the 'Flintstones'. Very cute, actually. We are entering the Jurassic period, dominated by ferns, horsetails, cycads, club mosses and conifers. To illustrate this the black boxes lining the outside of the arena boundary slabs sprout metre-high luminescent-green inflatable condoms...er, I mean very attractive plant thingies. And palm trees rise out of the 'continents' sprouting more of the green thingies in all directions. The effect is appropriately lush and exuberant. Very pretty.

Although, these plants definitely block the view for those seated closest to the arena, at least to some extent, but I suppose that adds to the dramatic effect, glimpsing the dinos through lush, vibrantly coloured vegetation, very much the perspective of one of our diminutive shrew-like ancestors hiding in the grass and hoping not to get stepped on.

Then the Stegosaurus walks out. I always thought the size of the one in the original KING KONG was grossly exaggerated for dramatic purposes, always figured they were sized roughly between a rhino and an elephant. Dead wrong. This beastie is the size of a house! I am absolutely staggered! (Well, 5.6 m high and 12.8 m long anyway, big enough.)

Mind you, from the 2nd row of the balcony at the end of the arena, Alyx and I have a fine view of everything, but from a vantage point at least 60 or 70 feet above. So, unlike the people at ground level, I am not looking up at the dinosaurs, but down at them. I can only get a sense of the true size of these beasties by comparing them to the narrator, or the people in the audience. And I tell you, until I saw the Stegosaur 'in the flesh' I had no idea. Pictures and movies give you an impression of size, but not the 'reality' of the size. The concrete dinosaurs in Calgary (if they're still there, haven't seen them in forty years) help considerably, but it takes a 'living' dinosaur stomping around in front of you in all its shifting, heaving three-dimensional bulk to convey the true sense of just how massive these creatures actually were. The show is worth the price just for that revelation alone.

The narrator describes the Stegosaurus, a dull reddish-tan and yellowish beastie with green mottling, and speculates on the purpose of the plates jutting from the spine: Sexual display? Protection? Cooling? (Sorry Stan G. Hyde, he doesn't mention the scene from one of the Tarzan books where a Stegosaur spreads its plates flat and glides off a cliff... One of Stan's favourite bits in his dinosaur lecture for conventions...) Then he draws attention to its spiked tail. What would something this big fear?

Enter the Allosaurus, light green with spots of dark green and reddish brow ridges, essentially an early prototype trending in the direction of the T-Rex. It has arms proportionally small, but no where near as tiny as the T-Rexes will be. Its head is also smaller in relation to its body than a T-Rex (I guess you could say a T-Rex is an exaggeration or a distortion of an Allosaurus), but it's still a formidable beast to look at.

One thing it definitely shares with T-Rex is binocular vision. When it glances in your direction the effect on you is chilling. Imagine the effect on the audience members on the 'ground floor' when the Allosaurus strides to the edge of the arena, its body looming over the 'toothed slabs' edging same, and fixes some poor sap with its intense, hungry eyes, then opens its jaws wide and roars. Even from my vantage point high above I could see people gripping their seats. Talk about interactive!

Another similarity to the T-Rex is length, almost 13 m, but the Allosaurus is only 4.4 m high, just over half the height of T-Rex, and no where near as bulky, maybe a quarter of the body mass. Still not something I want to meet, though.

The two dinos begin sparring. Basically the Stegosaurus keeps its back to the Allosaurus, swinging its spiked tail lazily back and forth, while the predator weaves and ducks in a quite convincing way. The operators are quite good at creating near misses without actual impacts; after all, wouldn't want to damage the machinery.

I'm startled to suddenly note the yellowish-tan plates on the spine of the Stegosaurus begin to glow red. Shades of Godzilla! Stan would be pleased. The narrator explains an increase in blood flow through the plates of an agitated Stegosaurus may serve as a threat display. Maybe. Then again, it is being very active once in defense mode and maybe it just needs to radiate more heat lest it collapse from heat prostration. Theories 'R Us.

Frustrated, the Allosaurus wanders off into a sound and light display while the Stegosaurus trundles off stage in the dark. The latter is now extinct, but the former hangs on with minor changes, surviving as a species long enough to discover some new potential meals. Enter the sauropod Brachiosaurus!

Or rather, a teenage Brachiosaurus. It is only 9 m high and 14 m long. Still bloody huge. It's shown as predominantly greyish-blue with yellow and brown throat markings. This is the critter whose forelegs are much more massive than its rear legs, the better to carry the weight of its enormously long neck. The nostrils located on a bulge atop the head is a curious touch. Not for breathing while submerged though, water pressure would prevent the critter from drawing breath (even a whale has to curve its body partly out of water in order to breathe), maybe it had something to do with the muzzle being



buried in the branches and leaves of conifers when munching away but leaving the nostrils mostly free of being poked with a stick? Okay, lame theory. You try thinking of a better one.

So naturally the Allosaurus gets ambitious and starts following Brachi-baby, snapping at its tail & such. Bear in mind these animatronic critters don't just do broad motions, like swinging head from side for example, but more subtle movements as well, like changing the angle of the head, cocking it to one side, or altering the whole stance of the body, lunging forward, rearing back, and such. Add the impression of muscle movement (courtesy of stretch mesh bags filled with foam balls under the skin) and powerful ligaments (bungee cords under the skin), and more than 80 different sounds per critter being blasted out of powerful speakers, and you have an exceedingly life-like bunch of beasties making it more than easy to suspend disbelief. These dinos are VERY cool!

Enter mommy to the rescue. She's 11 metres tall (roughly 33 feet) and 17 m long. Huge. Brobdigian. When she stretches her neck over the audience everybody in the front row is looking straight up at her head, quite obviously awestruck. So too the Allosaurus, who keeps backing away as the Brachiosaurus lumbers forward. In the movie JURASSIC PARK these creatures are shown rearing up on their hind legs to get at the leaves at the top of tall trees. If it were indeed possible for Brachiosaurs to do this, I imagine they could rise up and then bring their massive weight crashing down on a predator, or rather, on the space which the panic-stricken predator has just vacated at speed. At any rate it's a good lesson in the advantage of size. Exit slinking Allosaurus.

Mom and kiddy linger, neck rubbing in affection (or recognition, or scent marking, or...?), then traipse around the arena once or twice to draw more admiring glances. Fade to black and an intermission.

Alyx and I stay in our seats. We've had enough of navigating in dense crowds. I spot movement in the darkened arena. Men dressed in black are working their way along the slabs stuffing the now deflated plants back into their boxes. A few kids wander forward and toy with the now banner-like plants, shaking them, testing their weight, but no one seems to mind, no one chases them away. The men in black simply go about their methodical work till it's done.

Dry ice fog begins to fill the floor of the arena. An announcement brings people hurrying back to their seats. The lights come on. The narrator comes out, but I can't say 'again', because even though it's the same character dressed as before it is in fact a different actor. Seems dodging dinosaurs is exhausting work!

The narrator comments that "thirty million years have passed, so quickly that it didn't seem any longer than a twenty minute intermission!" This is an example of the sort of humour to be found in the script. Not rip-roaringly funny, but amusing.

We are told we are now in the Cretaceous period, and that the mist represents fog over the young Atlantic ocean. Suddenly, silently, the Pterosaur Ornithocherus lowers from the lighting rig above, dropping silently on a series of wires, its 11.6 metre wingspan outstretched. It begins computer-controlled gliding and flapping motions, all the while remaining stationary, but with a backdrop projecting the view behind it as if it were gliding along a seashore similar to the cliffs of Dover. Other screens project a live view of the creature flying 'within' the background scene, but this is hardly necessary as staring at the actual dino against its backdrop is convincing enough.

The Ornithocherus is basically grey in colour, though its fur-covered wings are striped grey and white, with a bit of rust along the leading edge just behind the 'arms'. The jaws are very long, putting me in mind of some bizarre cross between a pelican and a crocodile, with rudder-like extensions above and below the snout. In fact the critter appears to use its 'beak' as a rudder when it banks. This is in accord with the latest thinking on the creatures.

And again, it takes the actual 'presence' of one of these things to convey a 'true' impression of its size. One enormous 'birdie' indeed.

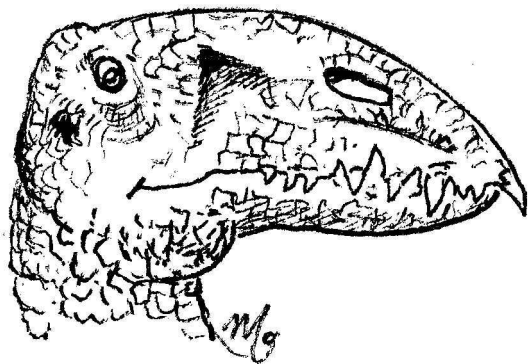
(And now my memory gets a bit shaky as to the sequence of introduction for the remaining dinosaurs in the show, but I'll relate events as best I can remember.)

Three Utahraptors stride into the arena. They're 2.4m high and 4.2m long, and evidently they're hungry, as they rush the Pterosaur when it swoops low. The point is made that the flying dinosaurs had nothing to fear while they were air-borne, but landing put them in peril of any predator that could grab them before they got off the ground again. (Studies have shown that the wings acted like sails, and that simply stretching the wings wide would enable the Pterosaur to take flight as long as there was even the slightest breeze. Dead calm air, however, would likely mean munch time for a lucky predator.)

The Pterosaur soon tires of being snapped at and retires high into the lighting rig above. The dry ice mist dissipates, and we are now treated to a display of pack interaction as the three Utahraptors establish a pecking order over the carcass of a similar-sized dinosaur (evidently dragged onto the floor during the intermission and until now largely hidden by the dry ice 'fog'). The feeding is quite convincing, what with jaws lifting high with entrails dangling and such. I gather the jaws of the predator 'robots' actually possess a certain amount of gripping power.

Oddly enough, these Raptors remind me of Halloween candy, as they are mostly an orange-tan in colour with narrow black stripes. (Aha! Dinosaur candy! What a concept! Play with them, then eat them! Pretend they're eating each other! Cool! My fortune is made! But enough exclamation points already...)

The narrator talks about likely pack behaviour, hunting techniques, etc., and their probable ability to warn each other of impending danger. Two of the Utahraptors suddenly become skittish and stride toward the exit, gronking all the while at the third who seems reluctant to leave its meal. Finally it looks about in alarm and runs off as fast as it can go ... or as fast as a man burdened with a 100 lb body suit can run -- his head is stuck inside the hips just under the spine, how the heck can he see where he is or where he's going? A teeny, tiny TV monitor inside the suit? Where's the camera? Tis a mystery.



In strides a Torosaurus, a beaked three-horned four-legged beastie rather like a Triceratops, only bigger; roughly 4m high and 9m long. The gigantic frill 'shield' extending from the top of its head and curving over its back gives the Torosaur the largest skull of any land creature that ever lived. It certainly is massive. Question is, what was it for?

The narrator mentions protection from predators, but concentrates on display, perhaps to attract mates, but more likely to threaten rivals. To emphasize this point, in strides a second Torosaur, evidently a young bull challenging the master of the herd for his harem. We are treated to much tossing of heads and sudden lunges and equally quick retreats, complimented by much bellowing and dramatic light effects, and no doubt much beak gnashing.

The Torosaurs are mostly yellowish tan in colour, but I seem to recall some reddening of the frills during battle, something more subtle than the colour change in the plates of the Stegosaurus, but still noticeable.

At any rate the old bull retreats off stage and the younger now dominant male stomps around in triumph, presumably tossing its head in delight. Then it shakes its body for all the world like a soaking-wet dog shaking the water from its fur. The spotlight picks out a medicine-ball-sized ball of brown dung (possibly tossed out from one of the nearby 'rock tanks'). To the laughter of the audience the narrator puts his foot on it in a typical hero pose and explains that where you have super sized animals you gotta expect super sized poop. He then kicks it hard enough to send it rolling into one of the rocks (and I do mean 'into', there must have been an open hatch waiting for it...).

At some point, I have no memory of exactly when, the glowing inflatable plants inflate once more, this time joined by massive 2 metre high brilliant orange, red and purple 'flowers'. I don't think flowers were literally this big back then, that it is just a dramatic way of representing the fact that flowering plants first appeared in this era. And pollinating bugs of course. And come to think of it, the narrator mentioned Dung beetles were also already present, no doubt pleased as punch to have such a massive supply of poop readily available. Dung beetles must have shed many a tear when the big dinosaurs went extinct.

Next an Ankylosaurus lumbers out, the most heavily armoured dinosaur of all time. It's mostly dark green in colour with hints of yellow and rust, the armour bumps being rather whitish. I always thought of Ankylosaurs as being relatively small, but boy, was I wrong. At 4m high and 9m long it isn't quite as big as a Stegosaurus, but still seems unbelievably huge. Wider than a Stegosaur for one thing. If anything ever represented a living tank it would be this critter.

I can't remember if the Torosaurus interacted with the Ankylosaurus or not. I don't think so. I believe the Torosaurus stood motionless in darkness while the narrator stood beside the spot-lit Ankylosaurus and explained its structure and likely life-style, concluding by drawing attention to the creature's massive bony 'club' at the end of its tail.

He turns and strides toward backstage, his voice rising in volume, "What could possibly threaten an Ankylosaurus? Why did it need such a powerful weapon?"

He sweeps his arm in a dramatic gesture. "BEHOLD! ... THE MIGHTY TYRANNOSAURUS REX!"

The audience collectively leans forward in anticipation, then roars with laughter as a man-sized baby T-Rex pops out squeaking mightily. Even though armed with a formidable array of teeth, it appears, and behaves, like cuteness personified. Children, especially, are delighted. It is essentially dark green in colour with splashes of yellow and a reddish throat patch, and moves about very energetically, much as you would expect from a youngster.

More merriment ensues as the baby gets overly ambitious and stalks both the Ankylosaurus AND the Torosaurus. Much rushing forward and darting back as the club swings or the horns threaten. But then the baby T-Rex gets into trouble, gets trapped at the end of the arena with no-where to run, hemmed in by its prey. It raises its head and gronks out cries of alarm.

Enter big momma, head low to fit through the entrance, then rearing up as it strides toward the beasties threatening its baby.

Great galloping Ghu! Imagine a Greyhound bus with legs. Or a walking whale. This thing is gigantic! At 7m high and nearly 13m long it's bigger than everything we've seen but for the two Brachiosaurs. I had no idea Tyrannos were this huge. It is no where near as streamlined as the Allosaur, in fact it's far more bulky than I anticipated, with obviously incredibly powerful legs and enormous jaws. Calling it a land shark doesn't even come close. It's frigging terrifying. Jurassic Park nothing! Seeing it in the round, moving about in front of your eyes, is far more awesome than images on a screen. Definitely the highlight of the show.

And I guess the designers figured they didn't need any colour to bring it 'to life'. It is an overall slate green in colour, its 'personality' conveyed strictly through its size, shape, stance, and intensely focused stare. I thought the Allosaurus stare was chilling enough, but when this monster glances in your direction all your most basic early mammal instincts tell you to run away and hide in your burrow. This is one scary nightmare.

(Speaking of which, one of the earliest dreams I can remember had me trapped in a highchair peering out the tiny window of the back door in the family house in Ottawa. I could see lions running through back yards from house to house

looking in various windows. I dreaded the moment when a lion would look through the door window at me. Well, something filled the window and fixed me with its hungry eye. Not a lion. A T-Rex no less. Scared the hell out of me. I awoke screaming.)

Well, big momma soon chases the other dinosaurs offstage. Then it nuzzles its baby, presumably being affectionate. Were T-Rex's capable of parental affection? Unknown. But it did have a rather large brain for a dinosaur, and casts and cat scans of the brain space within the skull indicate the parts of the brain most developed were those parts devoted to sight, hearing, and smell. Obviously useful attributes for the greatest apex predator of all time. And binocular vision don't forget, just as good and possibly better than ours.

And those tiny forelegs everyone makes fun of? Tiny relative to the rest of the body, yes, but nearly as long as a man is tall, and certainly strong enough to do something or another. Latest theory postulates a T-Rex resting on its belly, then using its forelegs to hook into the ground to prevent it from sliding forward as it uses its rear legs to push itself up into a standing position. Far fetched? Who knows?

To give the audience their money's worth big momma leans out over the upright slabs, stares down at some lucky family, opens its jaws wide and roars as loudly as the stadium amplifiers can handle. Not a good show to attend if you are on drugs. LSD and a 'live' T-Rex looming over you would undoubtedly be a very bad combination.

Big momma works her way around the arena 'attacking' as many people as possible. Very hard on the ears. But exciting.

Then the narrator discusses the extinction of dinosaurs brought about by a comet strike in the gulf of Mexico. Dramatic lighting effects amid a hideous cacophony of dinosaur roars and rumbling explosions shake the arena. The two T-Rexes watch the explosion projected on the big screen behind them. From our perspective Alyx and I see them silhouetted against the blindingly brilliant light of the explosion, their heads raised high and jaws gaping in protest. Suddenly everything is roiling images of fire and red light... quietly fade to black. Dramatic as all hell.

The narrator comes out 'centre stage' and tells people not to worry, all is not lost, the dinosaurs are still with us, only nowadays we call them 'birds'. Images of assorted feathered chirping beasts fill the screen. (All this in accord with the latest discoveries of feathered dinosaurs & such.)

When the house lights come on full the narrator makes a bow and accepts applause. Then strides toward the back stage. Just before he gets there he turns and bows again, and in a really cute touch, he's joined by a couple of the Raptors and, if memory serves, the baby T-Rex. They all bow in unison, accepting the accolades of the crowd. Then they retreat off stage, only to see one Raptor coming running out for one last bow and bout of applause. The narrator comes back and drags the reluctant ham Raptor back stage. End of show. Great, light-hearted finish.

All in all a fantastic 'circus'.. Vast amount of fun. Very satisfying. Like I say, I grinned from ear to ear throughout.

Was it worth the cost of admission? Almost a separate matter. Apple and oranges. I recommend this show to everyone. Well worth seeing if you get the chance.

According to the program book this was the only Canadian 'gig', at least for this year. But they're in the second year of the two year tour, so maybe they visited Canada in 2007. I don't know. But if you live in Ontario or Quebec, you might want to catch one of the June 18-22 shows at the HSBC arena in Buffalo, New York State. Other cities they'll be visiting include Houston, Baltimore, Des Moines, Kansas City, St. Paul, and Cleveland, to name a few. One heck of a show. Really cool.

Alyx and I stay in our seats for a while, allowing the stadium to empty out so we wouldn't be part of the 'crush'.

Suddenly startled to see a woman dangling from the lighting rig. She's sitting in a tiny 'boson's chair', winching herself down on a single, flimsy wire. What keeps her from spinning around like a frantic fly trying to escape from a spider's web, I don't know. She looks worried. I certainly would be.

I can see other light operators winching themselves down. You couldn't pay me enough to work their job. Nerve wracking just watching them descend. Scary. But before they reached the floor and safety we noted the stadium was now largely empty so we get up and leave, talking about what we had seen all the way home.

I found out later that at a performance the day before one of the raptors fell over and the 'men in black' emerged from the rocks to help its operator back on his feet. Even worse, from the point of view as them as paid for the high-price tickets, the T-Rex malfunctioned. Not sure how exactly, but I didn't hear of any audience members being eaten so I guess all it did was freeze and refuse to respond to commands. Pity. The 'living' Tyrannosaurus Rex stalking the audience is absolutely the highlight of the show. Worth the price of admission all by itself (almost).

I lived my childhood nightmare. I'm happy.

P.S. I also heard they talked the Gateway station 'jumper' down safely. Thought you might like to know.

LOCAL EVENTS:

FREE COMIC BOOK DAY:

May 3: Free comics available at participating comic book stores. More info at < <http://www.freecomicbookday.com/> >

KRAZY! THE DELIRIOUS WORLD OF:

May 17-Sept. 7: KRAZY! The Delirious World of Anime + Comics + Video Games + Art, at Vancouver Art Gallery, 750 Hornby Street, Vancouver, BC.

Admission (plus tax): Members Free.
Tuesday Evenings (5pm-9pm) by donation.
Adult \$15. Senior (65+) \$11. Student (with valid ID) \$10.
Children (5-12) \$6. Children (4 and under) free.
Family (max 2 adults + 2 children) \$40.
More info at < http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/the_exhibitions/exhibit_krazy.html >

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 March 15 (?) @ 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 March 27 @ 7pm at the "Our Town" café, 245 East Broadway, Vancouver. The topic book will be ‘STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND’ by Robert Heinlein.

NOTE: ROYAL SWISS NAVY DISORGANIZATIONAL MEETING (DISCUSSION GROUP): Saturday March 8 @ 8 pm (?) at Garth Spencer’s place, 82 East 40th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. Phone him at (778) 865-2372 for directions, and to find out if it is being held at his home, or – depending on the number of people who pledge to come, at The Grind Coffee shop at Main Street near King Edward.

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 Example:

“Eleven BIFFatics turned out for our latest Gaming Night. Out of the games on offer, the two which were chosen were Buffy: Top Trumps, which led to much hilarity and insulting various characters, and Sets, which led to much frowning in concentration, trying to shuffle four sets of parameters in players’ heads at once. The Buffy players insisted that they were having more fun, because we weren’t making any noise. All of this, of course, was in addition to the usual conversation. (And food. Don’t forget food. I definitely didn’t forget food, because I was starving when I got to the restaurant.)”

“On February 29th, we will be holding another People’s Choice night. Bring out a video (or several, if you like) that you’ve always want to show at BIFF, and the Members of BIFFliament in attendance will vote on their preference of what to watch. Me, I’ll be bringing War Games and Shaolin Soccer to give them one last chance to shine on the silver screen, after various events have conspired against them. Val suggests that we might want to watch Robot Chicken: Star Wars on Teletoon at 9:00.”

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](http://www.celtic-dragon.ca/fsfswebsitemain.html), 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 'Incomplete 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> >

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 Dec 31st 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: 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: LLOYD PENNEY, February 16th 2008

Dear Graeme:

Many thanks for the sixth WCSFAzine. Time to see if I can bash out something intelligent with not much time.

Great cover to LIGHT. Canadian fandom truly knows little about its own history, and it is great to see repros like this. More and more! Con goers and other fans need to know more about Les Crouch, and this research contained here is a good start. Maybe we need a Lan's Lantern-style issue focusing on Les Crouch and his life and achievements. Maybe this issue will do just fine for that.

Ah LAN'S LANTERN...I have a few in the archive, but since I moved all the zines are piled in disorder on various shelves, with the exception of the Canadian ones, neatly arranged in alphabetical order, so I am unable to grab a 'Lantern' at short notice, but I recall it had some cool stuff. However WCSFAzine retrospectives focuses entirely on Canadian zinedom, though should I win the lottery I might put out a separate zine devoted to 'other'. Meanwhile I shall press on with nifty repros like the current Al Betts one, which I think is very cool, in a creepy sort of way.

As for Les Crouch, the archive contains but four of his zines, so there's not much more I can add. I'd like to check out the collection of LIGHT in the Merril Library in Toronto someday. In any case, YEARS OF LIGHT: A CELEBRATION OF LESLIE A. CROUTCH by John Robert Columbo (Hounslow Press, 1982) will undoubtedly remain the definitive study.

As a consumer of fannish publications, and one who's been getting them for over 25 years now, I like paper zines. You can relax with them and lovingly peruse them. They can be true relaxation and enjoyment. However, I also know that fans aren't rich, and neither are clubs, and the main thing in getting the message out is speed and thrift. So, e-zines are the best. I've felt like a freeloader for getting so many clubzines over the years, and not being a member. Receiving an e-zine makes me feel a little better, and I still get the zine fix I need. I see there is now a BCSFAzine page on eFanzines, so perhaps the decision has been made. Maybe a member should pay more money than the usual membership to get the paperzine.

Everything still up in the air, no firm decision having been made, but at least BCSFAzine is online. I confess I regret my era as BCSFAzine editor is not preserved in electronic form, so am unable to post my golden-oldies to efanazines. I've tried scanning, but the resulting files are way too gigantic to utilize. Sigh.

Unfortunately, Murray Moore did not win DUFF, but I hope he'll try it again. I have a copy of Taral's CD, given to me by Mike Glicksohn himself, and it is a true time trip. I think I did receive a paper copy of the last XENIUM.

You refer to XENIUM #15 dated January 1990? The archive has that, as well as XENIUM #2.7 February 1978, with the wonderful Norman Rockwell style cover by Derek Carter of the Devil doing a self-portrait as Mike Glicksohn. Twas Mike himself who sent me these two issues after meeting me at Primedia when I was present as the current CUFF winner. I had shown him an earlier print version of my Canfancylopedia research project, a version entirely devoted to Canadian zines, and I remember him leafing through it and commenting, "I didn't know there were so many". I derived much egoboo from that, and was subsequently very pleased to receive the XENIUMs in the mail. I will eventually do a retro article on No. 2.7, but am concentrating on earlier zines at present.

Taral's compilation CD is fantastic. I dream of his doing more CDs re the early zines in his collection, MACABRE for instance. But I know it hasn't moved well, and I guess more hard work for small result seems out of the question. Pity, because it's a damn fine project. Excellent way to preserve zines for posterity. Ghu only knows what will happen when our current generation of collectors and fan historians passes away. A temporary glut of paper in the recycling depots? Sigh.

Ad Astra is coming up in about six weeks...Yvonne and I are throwing a party there, just to throw a party, and she is in charge of the space, science and technology track of programming. The convention will be surprisingly alcohol-free because someone who worked the consuite in the past suddenly got a case of the guilts and tattled on everyone. No matter, the convention will be a great time, and we are heartily looking forward to it. Then, we've got a single day at Eeriecon Ten in Niagara Falls where I'll be moderating a fanzine panel, and then it's off to Corflu in Vegas. Can't wait!

Aha! You have stirred my predatorial faned instincts! I would *kill* for a con report from you on Ad Astra, and *kill* again for a Corflu con report! Make me a serial killer! Submit both please! Doesn't have to be any larger than you're willing to write, so feel free to write what you chose. Of course, I realize this threatens to use up material you intend to mine for numerous locs, you being a first class letter hack and all, but think of these con reports as a 'best of' compilation of your locs, even if 'compiled' before the locs themselves are written... just a suggestion...but seriously, am very keen on the idea of your submitting these two con reports at your convenience.

CUFF...I gather that Dennis Mullin was approached to run for CUFF, and he unfortunately refused, citing poor health and finances. Still, I hope he knows that there will be a shiny Aurora waiting for him should he get to the Convention. Dennis has worked hard over the years to make the Auroras work; he's given away plenty of them, and should finally get to keep one for himself.

I totally agree. It was very good of Robert J. Sawyer to come up with the CUFF proposal. I was one of the Western Nominators, so was a tad disappointed by Dennis' decision, but remain quite content that he will receive a well-deserved Aurora. Meanwhile, if Peter Jarvis can come up with an alternate candidate... winning by administrative fiat is a CUFF tradition...sometimes the winner didn't even know he was in the running... so confidence is high someone will be found.

Bless you for your FAAn Award vote! I've won a number of them, but have never been at the announcement. I hope I might win again in Vegas, and accept it in person. We've also nominated for the Auroras; now to see how far afield the word got.

Up for the Auroras? Well, you'll get my vote for that too!

My loc...there are plenty of talk radio stations here, but to the best of my knowledge, there are no stations where I could make my own show for a half-hour slot of anything like that. The university stations are too busy playing the newest music to allow any amateur broadcasting. This coming week is my last week at Panasonic...they keep trimming the time they want me. I plan to take a break for a while, and still work evenings at the Globe and Mail. This will allow me to catch up on my sleep, and get some more writing done, and also redo my resume, and get myself registered here and there. I must renew my efforts to network; just re-joined the Editors' Association of Canada.

Editor's Association of Canada? Strictly professional? Or is there room for faneds?

Thanks again for the issue, and here's more to fill the column-inches. Take care, and see you then.

Column inches? More like column feet. This issue is ballooning out of hand! Next issue will be a single-sheeter to restore balance to the universe....just kidding!

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