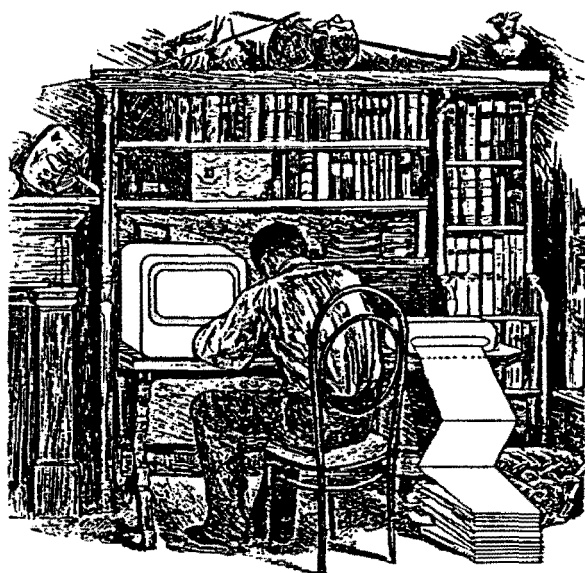


THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE

#4



THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE #4, April/May 1999, from Garth Spencer, P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O., Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1; email hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca or golem@direct.ca; posted eventually on <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn/fanzine/>. A personalzine with utterly irregular frequency and no particular subscription policy.

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Some of The Last Six Months' COAs

Bill Bowers' @dress is now outworlds@iname.com

You've never heard of the Canadian SF Resource Guide, have you? It is now at <http://members.xoom.com/cansfrg/>

R. Graeme Cameron's @dress is now rgraeme@home.com

Tommy Ferguson, Flat 4, 10 Arundel St, Nottingham, NG7 1NL, UK, 0115-941-4769, <http://websites.ntl.com/~tferg>, e-mail still <tferg@net.ntl.com> until further notice and he's working his way through the backlog of e-mail, honest

Jim Ferris' @dress is now jeferris@home.com

Victor Gonzalez lives at 905 NE 45th St. #106, Seattle, WA 98105, U.S.A. For some reason I have been using a *way* old address for him.

Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber, P.O. Box 640, Airlie Beach, Qld 4802, Australia; jean_weber@compuserve.com & jhweber@whitsunday.net.au

Richard and Nicki Lynch's address is: P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885-3120. Their new @dress is fiawol@cpcug.org.

John Mansfield has allegedly "moved" to 516 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB S3C 0G2; this is according to *Ansible* and *File 770*.

Murray Moore, 2118 Russett Road, Mississauga, ON L4Y 1C1, mmoore@pathcom.com (Now starting a new zine, *Aztec Blue*)

Nigel Rowe, 431 S. Dearborn #402, Chicago, IL 60605, U.S.A.; nigel@mwpsft.com

G. W. Thomas is **no longer** at ae160@pgfn.bc.ca or chucks@pgweb.com but **aa296@pgfn.bc.ca**

Can Anybody Give Me Addresses For:

Dan Cawsey
Jerry Collins
Linda Hardy

Editorial

Let's start with some apologies.

I apologize for quoting Earl Cooley III, Bill Donaho, Don Fitch, Watts Martin, Teresa Neilsen Hayden, Dick Smith, and Ted White without permission last issue.

I owe Clifton Amsbury some feedback on topics I let drop a few issues ago. For one thing, we talked about computer voice recognition & mimicry software; well, it now turns out that there is commercially available software for the purpose, retailing at under \$200 Canadian. Reality surpasses his expectations.

And I really ought to do something with the several articles Clifton has given me; probably in future issues. (Now, where did I file them ...)

All Right, Be That Way

I think you ought to know I've been chronically depressed.

Some of the reasons for depression are obvious: I'm a 42-year-old man living on secretarial work, with no savings and no clear plans for the future; I'm a single man, not enjoying being single, and attributing singleness to being ignored, more than having no visible prospects. But some reasons are less obvious. Paranoia about you humans, for one thing; and chronic rage.

Why paranoia? It's taken a few years for the reasons to emerge. A couple of recent incidents make me reassess my naïveté in my first twenty years, and the obtuseness of the people I had to live with.

For a long while, in my twenties, I thought I had a problem with communication. Maybe I had, but more likely some of the people around me had a much greater problem expressing anything they wanted in terms I could see. Now, I suspect that I need a previous experience of an implication, an allusion, or a connotation, in order to catch what someone means, but is not saying quite directly. Unfortunately, I had to grow up with people who normally communicated in this mode, didn't realize it, and didn't believe how much they were expecting me to know, already; even at fifteen or ten or, my God, five years old. (This inability or refusal to spit things out, I call "being English", even if it isn't an English fault. Here is one of the few prejudices I confess to, and since my family is allegedly English, I think I have earned a right to it.)

Perhaps there's a degree of this subliminal communication in everyone's language, no matter how direct and overt it is, but I have always been the last to get clued in. This is the reason for my mild paranoia – the sense that people play an unfair game, all the time, by keeping things from me that they pretend are obvious. Maybe I just didn't know early enough when someone was just an asshole, and when to blow them off.

There's a recurring friction at my workplace, between myself and one or two of my co-workers, and it comes down to what they say or write versus what they think they have communicated, about some work to be done. One of them is instantly exasperated when I refuse to guess, or make assumptions about what they meant; she gives up before she even starts explaining herself. This isn't a nebulous interpersonal matter, this is a concrete issue about what work has to be done on which trade mark files, and what tasks are implied by which items arriving in the mail.

I also thought I had a mild case of autism, or Asperger's syndrome, as I said in previous issues: some difficulty reading faces, gestures, postures, tones of voice, things like that. Now I wonder if I just need a previous experience of what faces mean, or tones of voice, before I can see what they suggest to other people. This week I had to deal with an irate (and stupid) client on the phone, and I was later told something or other about being patient with irate clients - which is what I *thought* I was doing.

I could go on. But it comes down to having my way to learn things, and I can't follow whatever other people are doing - playing guessing games, for all I know, or picking up and imitating other people's reactions. I will continue to insist on having things spelled out.

Anyone who won't communicate clearly can be damned.

And why rage? A number of reasons, some of them trivial, really.

As I get older, I realize, I am increasingly a language chauvinist. That doesn't mean I think one language or dialect is better than another, though that attitude has its fans, but that thinking clearly and speaking clearly, saying definite things about definite things, is better than much of the speech I hear, or writing I come across.

There's a scruffy character who has taken to planting himself at one of the café tables at Vancouver's main library; I think of him as *gomi-nonsense*, a Garbagemeister in William Gibson's sense, someone who takes discarded crap and turns it into ... well, perhaps art, perhaps something valuable, but at any rate *stuph*. His plan, apparently, is that by recycling bits and pieces of stuff, getting disadvantaged people to create little objects based on a circled length of coiled plastic or wire, he's creating a modest cash flow for them.

It's difficult to make out what the object is, though, because he *jabbers*. He talks constantly *around* his subject, what it's for, how it's intended to help people, on and on and on, without ever *making his point* - that is, saying in plain English what he and his disadvantaged people are making. He's also the kind of jabberer who doesn't *finish* anywhere, so you can get away.

That kind of speech is one thing that can make me feel enraged. Another is the kind of conversation that some telephone callers force on us, at work - people who just don't get the point, force wrong assumptions and misunderstandings on anything you say, cross-talk, that sort of thing - which I find painful merely to overhear. Maybe I just don't know when someone is being an idiot and when I can blow them off.

Yes, that should be trivial. But consider something more seriously engaging.

Over the past year I have had some rage reactions in the course of my on-line correspondence. Not least, due to my correspondence in and from the Timebinders listserv. Some of the issues have to do with fanhistory; some of them with the state of conrunning; and they come down to the same issues.

Ted White responded to some of my comments about past events, which had to do with conrunning in the Northwest, by labelling the parties involved “losers” and dismissing them as not representative members of fandom. I disagree. I think that the financial and manpower and reputation problems I have seen fans encounter, *problems often of their own making*, are inherent in the nature of fandom. After several years of stories about con fiascos, or near-fiascos, I have gotten to the point where I’m amazed that most conventions actually work out pretty well.

This has nothing to do with conventions, actually. This has to do with what I expect of fans.

Part of the English Disease, as I witnessed it, was that the people among whom I grew up seemed to think Real People didn’t make mistakes; knew everything; performed perfectly, first time, every time, no matter what they had to do. Naturally I got the impression I wasn’t a “real” person. But I was still obliged to live among the Real People. How I managed to maintain this impression in the real world, I don’t know.

For some reason I still think fans should be above the level of performance that, well, so many of us descend to. And I get just as enraged whether fans who are trying to set up a convention shoot themselves embarrassingly in the foot, as when fans have their reputation smeared and destroyed by someone else’s fiasco, that just happened to be held in their town.

So maybe I don’t have a communication problem, after all. Maybe I don’t have mild autism, or Asperger’s syndrome. But I do have to get over the English Disease; someone else’s snotty superiority complex; someone else’s neurosis. I need to know when I am dealing with an idiot, or an asshole, and I should just blow them off.

Maybe I’m just pissed that I didn’t bargain for the incomprehension and lack of community I get from local fandom. I was led to expect more.

Garth: The Continuing Adventures

So, in a mood that swings between whimsical despair and cycles of exuberance, I embarked on a course of deliberate absurdism. Instead of making a five-year career plan I invented the Royal Swiss Navy, kept on doing a fanzine, kept up a correspondence with fandom, and last year I started going to out-of-town conventions again.

So one payday I took the first steps on-line to become a member of the Kingdom of Talossa (which is bounded on three sides by the States and on the fourth by Lake Michigan, except for the parts near France and Antarctica), and became a newly ordained minister in the Universal Life Church. Next step: offering the Royal Swiss Navy to promote the Talossan Science Fiction and Whiskey Society at conventions, or to embark on intelligence missions for King Robert. Or not.

Mundania Invades Our Consciousness

I was a bit peeved, or at least nonplussed, when the recent horror in Littleton, Colorado dominated recent Timebinders exchanges. In fact I found myself ranting a bit, as witness the following ...

I'm beginning not only to accept, but to rejoice in being cut off from newspapers and most television channels. We started out talking about the history of SF fandom a while ago – which, to some extent, is deliberately cloistering ourselves, away from mainstream events – and now we're talking about a massacre in Colorado, after it's been pushed in our faces for several days.

There are a few facts of life involved here, only some of which have been acknowledged, and most of which, of course, have been ignored or distorted by the media.

First fact: the kind of shunning – social abuse, I should call it – which the murderers in Colorado experienced is **normal** high school behaviour. The pent-up rage and fantasies about revenge are also normal behaviour. (I would cheerfully have blown up my elementary and high schools, with the students and staff inside, and pissed on the smoking ashes, **when I was attending those schools**. At this remove I think I can judge my teenage self to have been mentally ill, and to have recovered by sheer passage of time.)

The murderers in Colorado were sociopaths. Obviously, other humans just did not matter to them, except as targets. Had they made somewhat different choices they might have developed into crack dealers or used car salesmen or recovered-memory therapists or Chicago School economists or, who knows, elected representatives. **The only reason we're discussing this is that they became public spectacles**, and not something we take for granted. Well, there are a hell of a lot of sociopaths out there, that we **do** take for granted. They're part of the normal range of human diversity, that we see in every high school population. (I wonder how the parents and teachers and newscritters and all seem to forget this?)

It's also normal for parents and teachers to ignore the signs of catastrophe – their kids actually implementing plans for wholesale killing, say, that require preparations sustained over months – and to abuse the uninvolved and harmless – computer geeks, say, socially hapless nerds, or easily targeted bright kids who happen to speak their minds. I'm not surprised that you've cited examples of this sort of harassment across the U.S., following the Colorado incident.

In fact, I would be surprised if any teachers or parents behaved **differently**. (I learned early and thoroughly that I could not expect acceptance, support, even attention from my family. Comprehension was **right out**. I also learned that was just the normal human background environment.)

In a reasonable world, parents and teachers would now set time and attention aside to spot *and help* problem children in their communities; they would make a distinction between sociopaths and high-school geeks, and provide effective interventions where they are needed. This is not a reasonable world. Humans don't behave this way.

In summary, what we see here may or may not be a rise in sociopathic outbursts of teenage violence. Probably, it's just the news media doing their thing, playing up any and all spectacles and scandals, in order to fill the space between advertisements and incidentally draw more viewers to them.

I'm only surprised that I have to point all this out. To SF fans, forbye!

(to Timebinders, April 27, 1999)

But perhaps I spoke out of turn. The good lady who edits *DarkEcho*, an online writers' market newsletter, recently pointed out that "There has been a rash of expulsions, harassment, and worse targeting kids all across the U.S.," and lists the following Web sites:

Gothic Scouts" State of the Nation Page

(<http://www.gothic.net/~mage/goth/scouts/state/index.html>)

Slashdot

(<http://slashdot.org/articles/99/04/25/1438249.shtml>)

Carrie Carolin's Dark Side of Net

<http://www.darklinks.com/news>

"... Last week I noticed that the "Goth" section of HorrorOnline.Com – where I edit the literature section – had suddenly disappeared. Here's a place where your voices – if there are enough of them – will be heard. You can email them via <http://www.horroronline.com/email.html> and wonder yourself why the section has disappeared."

(DarkEcho V.6 #18, May 6, 1999)

Silly Ideas Department

On the Continuing Rise in both Adult and Infant Diabetes

White sugar causes diabetes. Pass it on.

(Seriously speaking: I used to have this regular customer, when I worked at a word-processing storefront shop, who had a massive graduate thesis on infant diabetes. It seems that more and more people are now developing diabetes, and at younger and younger ages, than in any generation before the Second World War. I have a nasty suspicion this has something to do with the amount of processed food now in our diet.)

Conspiracies are Passé

Have you ever wondered why people sometimes fall back on conspiracy theories to explain things? Personally I am beginning to feel that conspiracies are ... well ... outmoded. Passé.

Now that I've got a copy of Robert Anton Wilson's latest doorstopper, *Everything is Under Control*, I have read his theory: conspiracy theories are a habit of thought encouraged by the structure of language (mainly the "is of identity" use of the verb "to be"), and impossible if you try to think and write without that structure.

And a correspondent writes:

"Love conspiracy theories? Convinced the Black Helicopters are after you? At Blackops (produced by sci-fi author Robert Anton Wilson) you'll find a comprehensive A to Z list of links to conspiracy theories, from the fluoride-in-the-water scare to the UN's plans for world domination -- as well as a form for adding your own conspiracy theory."

(<http://www.cruzio.com/~blackops/>)

(contributed by Al Macintyre)

Evil Sinister Mind-Control Plots

Back in September, *à propos* of nothing, I wrote to the Timebinders listserv: "And another thing: mustard and mayonnaise are Evil Sinister Mind-Control Plots!"

So then Rich Brown wrote:

"Close, as the saying goes, but don't go trying to light up just yet.

"In any event, after careful consideration, it is the choice between mustard and mayonnaise which is really at fault. Why offer the choice when it's obvious that mayonnaise is for tuna and chicken salad and 'light' meats like turkey, whereas mustard is for the 'hard' and 'dark' sandwich meats like salami, bologna, salami, bologna — or maybe a slice of both — and hot dogs, of course.

"There are, of course, the 'East Coast' and 'West Coast' Hamburgers at the very heart of the dichotomy, but what I'm saying here is (in effect) damn the torpedoes, just go ahead and put mustard (or mayonnaise) on everyone's filet mignon whether they want it or not."

Wow, I thought. I did not know all that stuff.

Ted White replied: "And do you want red or white wine with that?"

Later I tried to persuade the members of a Northwest fandom listserv that sports – all sports – are Evil Sinister Mind-Control Plots, but this didn't seem to go over. Maybe it was because I wrote that real fans don't **do** sports? The chairs of the upcoming Baka-con wrote huffily, well, I guess **we're** not real fans, then.

(I tried to persuade them that con chairs are fans by reason of doing a fan activity, and they can still be cured of Sports.) Other members wrote:

Though I tend to hate football, basketball, and baseball, I know for a fact that there are some science fiction / fantasy fans who consider themselves "real" fans, and do play and watch sports. Now that it's spring, you can find one of my best sf friends on Monday gaming, Tuesday at softball and Wednesday at SCA fight practice.

My point is that over the years people have defined "real" fans or 'true' fans as what they think it ought to be. In truth there is no real definition.

Also, so many fans are out of shape that we need do something. Thus for a programming item for a convention years ago, I wanted to take eight Star Trek fans and eight Dr Who fans, eight Star Wars fans, and have them battle it out in games of volleyball. I think that now, we can add Bab 5,

Animé, furry and goths, and we'd have a great match. (Though, do you think we could get eight goth fans to wear tennis shoes? And would the furry fans wear fuzzy slippers?)

It could happen....

(Michael Citrak, Citrak@aol.com, May 99)

Don't forget to find eight Con Chairs for another team.

(Daniel Pawtowski <dpawtows@halcyon.com>, May 6, 1999)

(Yes, guys, I will be sending you copies of this here fanzine.)

A Reign of Humour

Maybe founding international humorist organizations would be a suitable response to the War on All of Us, conducted by Powers Beyond Our Control. (I will expand on that subject in a future article.)

One of my correspondents wrote to me recently:

"A political theorist said: 'Do you really think it was designed to be a democracy? Don't be ridiculous. It was to be a republic, a system where the most capable represent the desires of the rest - whether the rest realizes what's good for it or not.' Obviously I am not the only person who has heard these words. But I ask: what about 'government of the people, by the people and for the people' ..."

I wanted to point out to him something attributed to Edmund Burke, when I was taking occasional Poli.Sci. classes. (In the States there is the John Birch Society; in Canada there is the Edmund Burke Society. Evaluate the distinction.) Edmund Burke, a 19th century British MP, is known among other things for pointing out that he would represent his constituents' interests - not, necessarily, their *opinions*, or demands, but their *interests* as he interpreted them, on the spot, in Parliament. Maybe that made sense; maybe it still makes sense, but apparently the point isn't established, not so everyone accepts it. Is that a fair statement?

"... I suspect what really stirs me is knowing that the figures we see are cardboard. I have known for some years about what amounts to a *shadow government*. There are individuals whose names are not generally recognized who control incomprehensible fortunes and the attendant power. ... Only recently have some of the lesser lights of this group been visible. There is a Mellon heir. Do you recall a more-than-generous offer to Ken Starr at Pepperdyne? Are you aware of the source of funds which enabled Paula Jones to pursue open-ended litigation? Recent circumstances have necessitated that activities be more overt. Do not ask for specifics or proofs. Even if I had them, I would be afraid to raise them. My very few encounters with this world have convinced me these people are serious and dangerous. Indeed, encounters with 'organized crime' were less frightening. ..."

One of the facts of life, both acknowledged and taken for granted in the Poli.Sci courses I occasionally took, was that the major institutions (in Canada) were controlled by a minority of top executives or officials, "elites"; and that they were generally out for what they could get; and that when you compared the elites of several different institutions, you discovered that they

overlapped significantly in membership (this was established in the 1950s - see *The Vertical Mosaic*); and that if anything, this minority became more concentrated from the 1950s to the 1970s (see *The Canadian Corporate Elite* and *The Continental Corporate Elite*).

I assume that this sort of minority appears in any country - and I feel that the members usually work to accrue all the rewards, and avoid all the costs and responsibilities, of our society's mode of production; but that's just my feeling.

"A blueprint has been drawn whereby those who are 'in' can trample those who are out of power. A whole new minority has been identified.

"Even though it is optimal to attract 'good people' for public office, the best people will not volunteer for what holding office will entail."

I'm pretty sure that the shadow government, the continental corporate elite, or whomever the circle of jerks are, can be identified and mocked. And mockery is the new frontier of political discourse.

People have *done* terrorism, as a last resort, and we have seen just how much - and how little - it can accomplish. Even with Moscow gold, and secret training camps in various countries, and an international network of hate groups and terrorist organizations, there's a limit to what you can accomplish.

But with a humour campaign - an international humorist network, even - what could you not accomplish? Think of it: Pie-Kill goes to Washington (again)! Whoopee cushions in the House of Lords! Someone hacks into the United Nations Security Council database, and inserts Serbian jokes into top-level position papers! Someone hacks into the Serbian database, and makes Slobodan Milosovic's toilet flush backwards! Or something.

I believe Mark Twain said the unstoppable weapon is laughter.

(On the other hand, the Devil cannot endure to be mocked. Maybe I had better start worrying about my own security ...)

The Royal Swiss Navy Threat Assessment Branch

A while ago I wrote to various friends, including Al Macintyre:

"In recent months some educational channels here have been running rather frequent documentaries on exotic threats to our peace and security: alien invasion, the Earth being hit by an asteroid, new mutant plagues, disastrous earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in our own backyard, floods and mudslides and long-run-out rockslides, and more El Nino fallout."

"I finally decided the Royal Swiss Navy had to act.

"We may, if we choose, summarize the information on these threats in a 'Threat Assessment Branch' page. And you are best placed to summarize the Year 2000 thing."

The short version of my risk assessments runs like this:

ALIEN ABDUCTION. Risk assessment: Don't lose sleep about it.

ALIEN INVASION. Risk assessment: As above.

AVALANCHE: A distinct possibility, if you live near mountains.

BIOLOGICAL WARFARE: A distinct possibility, in war zones such as Iraq or the former Yugoslavia.

CHEMICAL WARFARE: As above.

COMET/METEOR STRIKE Risk assessment: Stop worrying; it is later than you think. (If we have no more than five years' advance warning, that is.)

CONTRACT KILLING: Imponderable.

CYCLONE/HURRICANE/TORNADO: A distinct possibility, if you live in or near Tornado Alley, the Caribbean, or certain parts of the Pacific.

DEPRESSION/MARKET CRASH: What, you mean we aren't living with the effects already?

DROUGHT: Already a recurring reality in Australia, equatorial Africa and parts of North America. Desertification is an ongoing worldwide crisis right now.

EARTHQUAKE. Take some precautions now, if you live near a fault zone, like I do.

EL NINO/LA NINA: What, you mean we aren't living with the effects already?

EPIDEMIC/PLAGUE: What, you mean we aren't living with the effects already?

ERUPTION: Take some precautions now, if you live near a fault zone, like I do.

EXTINCTION: We've been extinguishing other species since before we developed speech. It would be nothing unusual if we became extinct ourselves, in a few decades or centuries. We are arguably living in a Great Extinction event right now, largely of our own making.

FAMINE: What, you mean we aren't living with the effects already? – In many parts of the world, that is.

FIRESTORM: Imponderable; we have to ask bush pilots and forest firefighters what to expect in the bush; in cities, only carpet bombing or nuclear-grade explosions create firestorms. Do you expect this, in places like Canada?

FLOOD: We expect this, in places like Canada. The Red River and Fraser Valleys, that is.

GLOBAL WARMING: What, you mean we aren't living with the effects already?

HACKER SABOTAGE: Only a matter of time.

ICE AGE: We could get this before, or after a phase of global warming. In other words, it's imponderable.

INFORMATION WAR: Only a matter of time.

LAND/ROCKSLIDE: see Avalanche and Earthquake.

LIGHTNING: Imponderable.

MUDSLIDE: see Avalanche and Earthquake.

NUCLEAR WARFARE: see Firestorm.

OZONE LAYER DESTRUCTION: What, you mean we aren't living with the effects already?

PERMANENT POWER OUTAGE: Imponderable. See *The Trigger Effect*.

TERRORISM, domestic or foreign, political or religious or racial, nuclear or chemical or biological

VOLCANIC ERUPTION: see Earthquake.

Al Macintyre wrote back:

"In the commercial world of Disney, and other non-disinterested parties owning TV News Channels; and Syndicated Science Fiction

Shows being bought up because there is money in it, by Business Interests whose management do not have the foggiest notion what is Science Fiction, and [who] could care less; and various enterprises, offering stuff at low cost to the schools, in which they have some agenda other than altruism; I do not believe that any of the traditional LABELS have much correlation with their former identities.

"I really like the DISCOVERY CHANNEL, but sometimes it seems to me like they got a politically motivated show on the Environment and cannot tell the difference between Science and Politics."

I wasn't clear on the "politically motivated" reference, but then I'm unfamiliar with the lobby groups that influence TV programming. I'm out of it, that is.

Year 2000 Computer Meltdown:

AI went on:

"I wrote a short summary piece a while back for N3F, most of which got published by the *Personal Computer Columnist* (which I will try to dig up), that tries to put in perspective for the non-technical person something about the total scope of this thing – the corporations and government agencies of the world are not run by total idiots, as much as the media would sometimes portray them, and programmers are not some Illuminati conspiracy of Pyramid UFOs who secretly planted booby traps to cause computers to have unsolvable problems. But there IS both a collection of Y2K problems caused by some of the stupidest collective mistakes in all of human history, and an enormous collection of urban legend stories that either allege that there will be particular problems that are grossly overblown, or that there is no problem in a particular area, when in fact there are problems there. Then I try to put in perspective what the situation is, and where you can go to get the facts."

AI later wrote to his local paper (Sunday Soap Box, for May 16, 1999) about measures to bring American county services into Y2K compliance. I quote:

"Y2K Brainstorm Survey reported by Year2000.com e-newsletter predicts about 60% of America's 3,067 counties will get their computer systems Y2K compliant in time - 40% won't. Of the 60% on top of their computer needs, 55% are also working on embedded chips like traffic lights & police radio, and half have a plan to protect the whole county. There's other statistics, but the critical question is which group we are in. Congressional hearings shared through itaa.org weekly outlook found that only 15% of the nation's water supply will be Y2K ready due to embedded chips that are supposed to filter out pollutants. There's lots of other evidence for concerns about the possibility for local disruptions 200 days away..

"Will the school systems have to shut down first few months of year 2000, because heat not working, or teacher payroll, or other issues, and will small business disruption add to unemployment with a state safety net malfunctioning? ..."

Clones:

"I had also promised to do a piece on Clones, but Nancy Low outdid me with her 'Clones are People Two'.

Asteroids:

"On the Earth being hit by an Asteroid, it is the same kind of scenario. There is a problem, but not how it is portrayed.

"Approximately 200 or so asteroids and comets have orbits that cross the Earth's orbit, and are of such magnitude that, should they happen to cross our orbit at the same time as the Earth happens to be at that point in our circumference of the Sun, the damage will be rather serious. These Asteroids are sometimes labelled as being in the Dinosaur Killer Class. We have had a risk for the last 6 million years (*sic*), since the Dinosaurs were around, of being hit by one of these Asteroids – think of it as a form of Russian Roulette in which the odds are extremely low, but not non-existent.

"Due to how multiple orbiting bodies affect each other's paths, we do yet not have the ability as humans to positively predict future orbits long in advance; so the way we find out one of these things is headed close to us is by a series of photos of the night sky that, over a period of several nights, might show something moving from one picture to next or getting larger. But this is not science paid for by government or industry; rather, it is a bunch of part-time academic volunteers, and *generally the rocks in our sky do not get spotted in a timely fashion [My emphasis –GS]*. The last two to come real close to us were at a distance [of] approx. about as far way as the Moon, at their time of closest passage; which, in astronomical terms, is a near miss – very near. One was first spotted *4 days [My emphasis –GS]* before it came past, and the other was spotted 6 days after it had passed us ... or was it the other way around? Anyhow: we have the science to spot this threat in ample time to do something about it, but the science is not funded.

"There have been some famous strikes of lesser proportions than the Dinosaur Killer (which left a crater that is now known as the Caribbean), such as the one that hit in Siberia and levelled forest for 30 miles around. Scientists estimated that if it struck 6 seconds later or 6 seconds earlier (I don't remember which) due to the rotation of the Earth rearranging targets, it would have demolished the city of St Petersburg, which was in direct line of travel. What is unique about our times is that, finally, the human race has the scientific ability to do something about this risk.

"The US Air Force budget requests for the last several years has requested an effort to study this stuff and figure out how to defend the planet, as part of their mission to protect the nation. The US Congress went so far as to authorize expenditure of a space mission to visit one of the Asteroids that cross Earth orbit and do some experiments to figure out structurally what it takes to protect us. But El Presidente vetoed this because there are people in

Washington, DC who think the whole subject is a big joke. Now, I do not know what other nations might be doing on the topic; but often the USA seems to set an example for other world leaders.

"I recently saw something about the First Lady of Hungary, whose treatment by the News Media seems to parallel the worst examples of the media in the traditional west.

"I can do something on this topic also for you, and cite various Web places for authoritative information from the astronomy and space science communities. It sure sounds to me like the subject has been studied to death, with the TV Hollywood crowd on another planet that is ignorant of what we know, and national decision-makers knowing even less on the topic, unless there is some ammunition for the paranoid regarding secret government actions (you know, like the *X-Files*)."

Alien Abduction:

"I don't want to touch Roswell or Alien Abduction with a 10 foot pole."

El Nino:

"Nancy Low gave me a Web site eons ago, that I never did visit, on El Nino. What I remember was that there are various kinds of weather patterns that our planet experiences, one of which is El Nino. Populations of various places get accustomed to a particular NORMAL kind, and along comes an occasional BAD YEAR that they are not equipped to handle – except that *what is normal is changing [My emphasis –GS]*. El Nino is not a new phenomenon, just as Earthquakes are not a new phenomenon and have been around for all of human history; it is only in the last century that scientists have been tracking this kind of thing, and only in the last few years that TV has woken up to the fact that phenomena ha[ve] scientific labels."

I actually contacted a Canadian society of actuaries, to see if they had a better idea of where I could look up the odds on some of the above listed threats. Mostly, they say, they haven't. Although the local Geological Survey people have some good on-line advice articles about earthquake preparedness.

Orycon 20 Report

I went to Orycon in November 1998. I had fun, mostly. Renewed some friendships, went out to dinner with Portland fans, manned the fanzine room for a while, got some new addresses.

One of the reasons I'm barely writing anything about my first out-of-town convention in years is that I didn't write a conreport at the time, and I really pick and choose what I attend. No gaming, for instance, and no costuming or dancing, this time out. Tried to make all the parties I could, and found myself getting a Westercon 52 membership. Indeed do many things come to pass.

continued on p. 25

LoCs

Van: Vertaalbureau Motte <peter.motte@skynet.be>

Datum: woensdag 23 September 1998

A strange message reached me from a correspondent in Hungary, in which you are involved – or seems to be involved.

A Hungarian called Mihaly Bartalits told me something about receiving a message from my talking about a secret organisation dealing with science fiction.

I didn't know what he was talking about and contacted him for more details.

It seems that I sen[t] him a scheme for an organisation which had to bring together science fiction and fantasy fans, to bind together their efforts into something which was directed against big companies like, I suppose, 20th Century Fox and the like.

Although I agree with the necessity of freedom of speech and with the principle that freedom of speech is worthless if the speaker is not heard, I would not organise a secret organisation like the one the Hungarian hinted at, especially because there was a certain ring of extremism in it, and of deliberate antagonistic and even aggressive action against big publication and media companies.

I repeat that I have my doubts about the implications of media-concentrations, but nevertheless I also have my doubts about the means the Hungarian was talking about. Unfortunately, he never send me the complete message I would have send to him, and when I tried to contact him for a second time, it was totally impossible to trace him back. I opened up all information which I found in the messages I got from him, but the final sources were always non-existent.

In short, I do not know what happened. It seems to me that somebody used my name and even my e-mail address. That is not completely inconceivable, as my e-mail and internetconnection was installed by a third party, and not by myself. Moreover, the people working at my provider, Belgacom, have access to very valuable information. It is not impossible that someone wanted to blacken my name. After all, my magazine *De Tijdlijn* isn't the only one in Dutch, nor is it the only one in Flanders.

He also claimed to have been in touch with you, and that you would have provided additional material. Do you know Mihaly Bartalits?

((Thanks for the warning. No, I don't know a Mihaly Bartalits, or indeed any fans in or from Hungary.

((Actually, despite my demurral last issue, I find myself thinking from time to time of putting together a selected group of fans ... mainly so I have people to talk to who get the point, or who give me something interesting and stimulating to think about. The time is past when you might generally expect fans to meet that criterion.

((At first I thought you might have here an example of something we call "Egyptian telephone" in English. There's a children's game where you whisper something to a friend on your right or left hand, and they to another friend, and so on around a circle, and by the time the message comes back it will be completely indecipherable. We can expect that sort of thing to happen with any messages, news, or information on the Internet, it's just part of the deal.

((Then I thought, as you suggest, maybe someone is taking your name and email address in vain, and abusing your reputation. Spreading deliberate misinformation strikes me as remarkably malicious; but where's the motivation? If it were a simple misunderstanding, I could understand how it might arise, as the subject is ... umm ... fraught with emotion, attributed to your ostensible organization.

((But this is all hypothetical. Just to add to the confusion, I raise another alternative, that someone is launching a hoax at your expense. Hoaxes, if they're amusing, are a fannish thing to do. Sometimes people grasp the concept of a hoax, but take a while to grasp how to be amusing.

((This sort of thing happens. Just take it like a good sport and try to see the humour in it. [Unless you find your phone tapped and plainclothes police asking questions about you at your workplace; in that case, you will have reason to claim harassment ...])

14 Oct 1998, Bill Bridget <bbridget@mail.cha.bellsouth.net>
- Re "Steampunk" (an article on my Web page):

I am a great admirer of the Moriarty stories such as *The Infernal Device*, and so I was drawn to the Steampunk section like a magnet.

Weng Chiang of the Doctor Who show was not the only Oriental master of arcane magics and futuristic technologies in the Gaslight Age, of course. I'm currently reading Fu Manchu reprints that Joe Major wrote about in the reprint of his FOSFAX material, which appeared in *MSFIRE*.

Some of the material which Dale Speirs brings out in his zine, about the Golden Age of the Papernet, would indicate to me that a variant of cyberpunk fiction might work in a gaslit setting.

But for folks like me who are too impatient for steam-powered entertainment to wait for such tales to be written, I'd recommend a trip to their local comic shop where they can browse on NINJA HIGH SCHOOL and some of the other titles offered by Ben Dunn, his contributors and collaborators (including fandom's own Jerry Collins).

((Jerry Collins?! Can you trace Jerry Collins? I have some of his old fillos ...))

14 Oct 1998, john herbert <jherbert@direct.ca>

Q: Why is a duck? A: Because one of its legs is both the same.

Q: What do you get when you cross a lawyer with The Godfather?

A: An offer you can't understand!

Henry L. Welch <Welch@admin.msoe.edu>, 26 Oct 1998

Thanks for the latest issue of the *RSN Gazette*.

Lack of documentation is precisely why so many who think they are good con runners will always fail to be great con runners in my estimation. They make little or no effort to record how, why, or what was done and consequently are doomed to repeat their failures and lack the ability to easily pass on their knowledge. This is, of course, much of the basis for ISO 9000 where the goal is to create the paper trail so that you can review what happened (if you so desire) and thus provide a built-in mechanism for improving from iteration to iteration.

Until next ish...

((At least that's how it looks from your neck of the woods, I take it? For my part, generally I assume other people know what they're doing, or at least that they know more than I do.

((And still, every year sees some cons, somewhere, getting into situations they know better than to create. Is this because we don't think to set down or pass on critical steps? Forget something crucial? Or is something always beyond a committee's control?))

Dec. 14, 1998, Rodney Leighton

You want a community and live in a big city. I can't stand cities and have no interest in any sort of community. ... You are correct that I want stimulating company in the sense of providing fodder for my mind. But I like it at a distance. That's one of the things I like about fanzine fandom. I love certain aspects of FOSFAX, for example, because it is just like a big party, with a lot of conversations, but there is no one closer to me physically than I wish and I can respond to all the people and comments I wish to, as I wish to, at leisure. This is love of locs and SF fanzine fandom. It is a metaphorical social life, which is something which suits me wonderfully.

Harry Cameron Andruschak, Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309, U.S.A.
Jan. 10, 1999

The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette #3 arrived a few days ago, making me wonder if #1 and #2 are buried somewhere around here in the many piles of unanswered correspondence. 1998 has been a year of mixed blessings. Due to the shortage of GOOD technicians at the Post Office, I have been working 6 days a week all year, except for December when I worked 7 days a week. Mind you, the overtime money was nice ...

[W]hat spare time I have left over is often [spent] on social activities with Scottish groups, from country dancing to fairs. I also date the women ... I also spend two nights a week at the local AA office as a phone volunteer, 4-7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays ... So I still do not have a TV set or Internet access.

I read the rest of the zine but cannot comment on most of it, as it has to do with fandom and fanzines. And really now, I have been mostly gafia for the last 5+ years, and it has been longer than that since I published a zine, and I am not likely to do so in the near future. But thanks for sending your zine anyway ...

Harry Warner Jr., 423 Summit avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A.
Jan. 16, 1999

Many thanks for the third issue of *The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette*. ...

I also appreciate the document attesting to my modest duties in the RSN. If possible, I would like to serve on Lake Geneva, which a Fodor guide assures me is busy enough to keep me interested with its "fleet of smart, white paddle-steamers, diesel motor boats and even a 45-mph hydrofoil, which ply busily around and across the lake".

You may have company in this apparent debit situation with respect to fannish energy, and the demands on it. For many months I've been struggling with the fact that I simply don't have enough physical and mental capabilities any longer to cope with my fannish obligations, even though these have shrunk to little other than loccing fanzines and maintaining membership in

two apas. I would probably be happier if I gafiated completely. But I keep worrying over the possibility that fandom is a major reason I haven't succumbed yet to serious softening of the brain. ... You're young enough to keep going as long as you don't forget that fandom is, after all, a hobby, and nobody can compel you to do anything in fandom you don't feel like doing.

(the missing "l"'s in last issue)

Your typography problem puzzled me at first because I thought those strange markings were some kind of mathematical symbols or part of the arcana of Canadian fandom I hadn't heard about. But now I assume that your harsh Canadian winter simply caused L to freeze over.

((Oh, very good, Harry!))

I must admit that all those quotations from the Internet impressed me mainly as reasons I should continue my abstinence from computers. Most of the quotations seem awfully theoretical with little or nothing that can be backed up or disputed by concrete evidence. Some of the contributors to this section displayed an idea or two that might have been expanded into a fanzine article with further consideration and thought, but in this form they remind me of the things you hear if you listen for a few minutes to one of the talk shows that are everywhere on the AM dial in United States radio: just opinions expressed too briefly to permit anyone to understand the reasoning behind them or the sources from which they were thought up.

(Peter Motte's 'critical intelligent' fandom)

Peter Motte sounds a bit too elitist for me to sympathize with, in his proposal for a highbrow and exclusive spinoff from fandom. Isn't it much simpler and kinder to follow the course most of us have pursued: choose our apa memberships or draw up our mailing lists for our fanzines on the basis of fans we feel have the most to offer, associate with favourite fans at conventions, correspond with certain fans if they aren't in fanzine fandom or convention fandom, and remain civil and non-superior in attitude to the other fans whom we necessarily encounter in print, or in person? Fans change, just like mundane people, as they grow up and the fan in his teens who may seem unworthy of our attention often becomes a much better and sympathetic fan when he gets into his thirties or forties. Of course, semantics can be blamed for part of the problem Peter writes about: nowadays, anyone who watches sci-fi movies or goes to a media-aimed large convention in his home town is considered a fan. This designation used to be reserved for people interested in science fiction who did something about that interest, like collecting, publishing, going to lots of conventions, corresponding, or whatever.

10 Mar 99 George Laskowski <george_laskowski@cc.cranbrook.edu>

I know this is late, but I figure that a loc is better late than never.

You have a divided life. I do too. In the past I was living something like 4 or 5 separate lives with the activities I was in, but now, with my diagnosis of inoperable cancer over a year ago, I have compressed that to three: Life with my wife and family, teaching, and fanac.

((Inoperable cancer?? Jesus Murphy. I'm impressed at the way you're living with that.

((You've just dissuaded me from a project I was contemplating - deliberately cultivating multiple personalities to get more done. Probably wouldn't have worked, anyway, until I could also clone myself...))

The first two take up most of the time. I still go to school and teach every weekday, and many times when I get home I have lots of work to do to prepare for the next day of classes - especially since we changed textbooks for 4 of the five classes I am teaching. What has compounded the problem is that the printer of the computer I had all my worksheets and quizzes and tests on died, and it would cost too much to replace it. So I have been manually transferring files from one to the other - they are non-compatible, a Mac Classic and a Packard Bell - which takes a lot of time. But I manage to squeeze out time to be with my wife Kathy and with my stepchildren when they are at home (both are away at University).

Fanac includes the bulk of my fiction reading, writing locs, and working on my fanzine *Lan's Lantern*. I just finished an issue devoted to Poul Anderson, and am very pleased with the outcome, as he was. The next special will be on Gordon R. Dickson.

((Got your issue, and I was impressed. Don't know quite what I can say about Gordon R. Dickson, except I've grown up on his various novels, and I'm not sure he's one person, let alone that his being born in Canada has any bearing. He writes serious/mystical novels, on the one hand, and comic novels with Poul Anderson, on the other. Poles apart.))

Anyway, I know how fast such timespans go when working on any segment of my many lives, and it is hard to believe that time goes so fast. I wish you luck setting up your Web page. That's something I have thought about, but given the short amount of time left to me, I will just continue doing things as I have.

As for movies, I could probably add that as a separate activity, though I have usually included that under my fanac. I have, however, been interested more recently in the popular films from the 30s and 40s (and some into the 50s and 60s). The cable channel AMC has been showing some excellent films, and both Kathy and I have enjoyed them immensely.

You comment on how the films differ from the SF books and stories from which they originate. For the most part that is understandable, since trying to translate all the details of a novel onto the screen would make a film too long. Some editing needs to be done, and indeed some re-writing is also necessary. However, there are different ways of doing this, and depending on what kind of film the producer/ director wants to make, those things are the ones emphasized in the script; too many times, to the detriment of the book. So we fans end up disappointed, and we return to the printed word, rather than trust to what filmmakers try to put across to us.

((I have Opinions about the kind of people who produce films and movies in the American industry.))

Well, I'll close this off now. Gotta run to class and get ready to teach some trigonometry.

Thanks for TRSN Gazette #3. I really like the cover. I haven't got *Dewachen* 2 ready yet; no time, no money, and tonnes of real life weirdness. ...

I'm glad to see you having fun with UFO theories ... (sigh, wouldn't you love to pass them some air traffic tickets!? It'd be FUN!) I recall, ever so vaguely, a short story wherein the "grey aliens" are actually the many-generations-removed descendants of the abductees. The basic concept was that, due to some disaster (nuclear, pollution, too much exposure to space-time extremes ... or whatnot) that humanity's fertility was vastly reduced, resulting in a need to time-travel to restore genetic material to the species. Sorta *Mars Needs Women* on heavy drugs. ☺

((Funny, that sounds just like the plot of John Varley's Millennium, except that was a novel, and the descendants were not very grey-alien-like. I think ...))

(On my remarks about a science of behaviour:))

Due to variations in culture, subculture and individualism (sic), In My Humble Opinion it's never going to be reliable to predict human behaviour with a high 90% success rate.

Just the same, people really have the same basic needs and desires, no matter what, and generally the same motives, even if the outcomes are all over the place.

Don't try to figure out much more past that, since you'll just drive yourself crazy. (All beings seek feeling good/having needs met and avoid pain/not having needs met; in most cases.)

((Oh, really. I repeatedly find dealing with people a Kafkaesque experience; less so now than twenty years ago, but still, when I least expect it, painful and embarrassing and infuriating. Or just incomprehensible. If there is no pattern to be found, then I can't learn to cope with people at all.

((I'll probably update and reprint an essay next issue that I published in 1991, surveying SF novels that used a predictive science of behaviour as their plot maguffin. I surveyed everything from Asimov's psychohistory to the game theory in The Moon Goddess and the Son, but I left out Michael Flynn's The Country of the Blind and Gordon Dickson's Wolf and Iron. There's lots of room for expansion in the essay, and I intend it for Web posting sometime, whenever I dig it up and get it finished.))

I kinda like the zine reviews in zines. I discovered *MSFire* almost by accident (friend of friend thing ...) through their review "received in trade" pages, and those in other zines provided me with the mailing list for my issue #1.

((Once you find a fanzine with reviews, you can find all sorts of other fanzines, I agree. But did you find it hard to find an entry point? This has been a topic of discussion on a listserv I'm on, and not a point of general agreement.

((Next page - my fanzine reviews. A lot of these are reviews previously appearing in BCSFazine this spring.))

We also heard from: R.K. Hinton, Lyn McConchie

More Stuff I Get in My Mail

Some of the fanzines that teach me the most about good content and layout are not, perhaps, the best examples. I was thinking about this while re-reading a few issues of *FOSFAX* the other day, and wondering why I find the fanzine alternately irritating and absorbing. Not very much later came *Mainstream*, a Seattle genzine from Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins, famous in its day as well-regarded fanzine, both for its content and its layout and reproduction.

FOSFAX is the bimonthly clubzine of the Ohio SF Association in Louisville, Kentucky. It comes across as two dense columns of almost unbroken photoreduced type, with articles on conventions, political issues, fannish issues, humour and letter-column departments. Recent issues have run up to 84 pages. Despite my impressions, the text is broken up with interior illustrations, and the fanzine regularly features original cover art by a variety of fanartists.

Editor Timothy Lane, among other contributors, will often pick up a subject and start editorializing on it, without properly introducing the subject so you know what he's on about. To take just one example from the August 1998 issue:

"The June 17 [1998] *Conservative Chronicle* included a cartoon suggesting the next campaign: angry figures calling for higher taxes on Twinkies, banning ads by Little Caesar and Pop'n Fresh aimed at the young, a warning label on burritos, reimbursement of medical costs by McDonald's and Sara Lee, no-snacking areas ... but maintain subsidies for sugar and dairy farmers."

I sort of worked out what Lane was saying here, only because I remember hearing about the "Twinkie Defense", and the outbreak of *E. coli* poisoning from improperly cooked hamburger (not at McDonald's, but at Jack-in-the-Box outlets, in Washington state). And I gather that Lane is satirizing the double-think people practice about smoking hazards, versus the tobacco industry.

An average *FOSFAX* may run to 35 pages of locs, from about 30 readers. This is absorbing and irritating reading, for much the same reasons: on the one hand, an exchange of information and ideas and a (varying) level of reason that I missed more and more, in my local fandom, even with insults; on the other hand, a repetition of usually conservative, often unsupported beliefs and opinions – and, um, not everyone here has grasped the art of a graceful **transition** from one subject to another, so that you even *know* you've moved on, or where to.

Ah, well. Maybe that's the human Default Mode. Maybe this is a price I have to pay, for getting any text worth thinking and writing about. I keep promising myself I'll go through my back issues of *FOSFAX* with a stack of 5" x 8" file cards at hand. Real Soon Now.

Mainstream #17 arrived recently, which is a welcome surprise. When I first encountered *Mainstream*, it was a semi-quarterly general-interest fanzine from Seattle; well-known fans Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins featured a variety of articles, reviews and letters from fans and SF pros alike, which often showed little connection with SF, or even fandom, but always featured the attitude I came to recognize as "fannish". An offbeat, good-

humoured approach to just anything in reality, in other words. This, despite the fact that Jerry disclaims ever producing a truly fannish fanzine, "in the sense of being about fans and fandom."

Unlike previous issues, *Mainstream #17* is photocopied; previous issues were very nearly masterpieces of mimeograph craft. Like previous issues, the cover and interior pages feature art from a variety of fans, including Stu Shiffman, the late William Rotsler, Teddy Harvia, Steve Stiles and Anita Rowland. Jerry writes about poetry and a con game bringing on fits of nostalgia; Stu Shiffman presents his Baskervilles play in which Sherlock Holmes meets the Goon Show, as performed at the International Holmesian Games in Vancouver in 1995; and other fun stufh.

Jerry writes that this will be the last *Mainstream*, for a number of reasons, not least the increasing lapses of time between issues. It will be missed.

Addresses, and more fanzines received:

2 Loonies and a Soft Toy: a handwritten FFANZ '98 trip report from "Renaldo" (the soft plush toy lamb), Frances and Phil; available from Box 33, Seville 3139, Australia.

Ansible #140 and #141, March and April '99, from Dave Langford at 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, U.K., or ansible@cix.co.uk; via Janice Murray in Seattle. I'm sorry, Janice, but I just couldn't afford to participate in the Down Under Fan Fund by deadline, and besides, I don't know any of the nominees from Adam! I am really out of it!

Arcadian Guild Crier, c/o David Malinski at #115 - 720 6th St., New Westminster, B.C. V3L 3C5, or murdock@axionet.com. A local gaming newsletter.

BCSFazine #300 - 311. I got 3 copies of #311, but none of #303 to 307, or #309. C/o R. Graeme Cameron (#110 - 1855 West 2nd Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1J1). Editor: John Wong (woolf@vcn.bc.ca).

I don't know why but I'm having real trouble accessing the e-mail version of *BCSFazine*, in Adobe Acrobat format. Since May 1998 we learn that OSFCI (Portland, Oregon) started offering the Endeavour Award, for the year's best SF or fantasy novel by a Pacific Northwest Writer (NW being defined as Oregon, Washington, Alaska and British Columbia); editor John Wong offered a cunning plan for the Canadian Unity Fan Fund; Jon Gustafson in Moscow, Idaho started Fat Puppy Press, which offers SF/F clipart in CD format; The National SF & Fantasy Society held a very successful fund-raising auction in June at Ad Astra; and for some reason, one of the more prominent columnists was a furryfan. Is this really a prominent fandom, though?

(Vancouver fandom originated a science fiction radio show on a community-supported station, which has now expired. The last hosts were a pair of furryfans. Does this mean anything?)

Bento IX (Orycon 1998), David Levine and Kate Yule (1905 SE 43rd Ave., Portland, OR 97215; davidl@co.intel.com, kyule@agora.rdrop.com). A neat little pocket-sized zine from a fun couple in *fabulous* Portland

fandom. I particularly enjoyed articles like "Just Another Day on the Microsoft Barney Helpline" and Kate Yule's "Better Living through Brain Chemistry". As David Levine writes, I feel like I fall between the Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers (and I'm four years older).

Bob #14 and #15 (also titled "The *Bob* without the Jim Barker cover" and "The Full *Bobby*"), from Ian Sorensen (7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton ML3 7HY, U.K.) Ian discourses about trends in TV as evidenced in advertising, in the one issue; a Corflu UK report, in the other, with the continuing misadventures of Ian's brother, the minister.

I'm STILL waiting to see the best bits of Ian's zine *Conventioneer* posted on the Web!

The Bulletin #13, winter '99, newsletter of the National SF & Fantasy Society, Jean-Louis Trudel, chair; see their Web page at www.salmar.com/nsffs. No postal address listed, though I got this by mail. Evidently the NSFFS has been doing things - this is just the first word I've gotten. Mainly they hold book launches, and auctions at conventions (the proceeds going to the Canadian Unity Fan Fund and the Multiple Sclerosis Society). Publications like *Northern Fusion* and *On Spec* have helped publicize the society. To announce events to them, e-mail Mici Gold at charme@interlog.com. To convey news to the Bulletin and Web page, e-mail Trudel at jltrudel@torfree.net. Cliff Stornel has masterminded an online Canadian-SF discussion group.

CANFAPA #2 and #3, dated May and July 1998, from R. Graeme Cameron; Followed by *Canfandom* (#4, January 1999, same address as *BCSFazine*.)

This former apa, now fanzine, is dedicated to the proposition that Canadian fanzine fandom is worthy and should be promoted. (John Wong's cunning plan was reproduced here.)

Since this winter it has been retitled *Canfandom*. This issue is distinguished by reprints of the late Vincent Clarke's articles on indexing fanzines, and the cover from Taral Wayne's early-1980s attempt to provide an index of Canadian fanzines.

Conferring with Earthquakes, spring, winter and summer 1998 issues, from Brin-Marie McLaughlin (247 19th Avenue, Apt. #6, San Francisco, CA 94121-2353, U.S.A.). The discovery that fanzines can contain utterly non-fannish personal writing. Sports news for SF fans, and other impending signs of the apocalypse. Fabulous Rotsler illustrations: they keep going, and going, and ...

Con-TRACT #11:2 & 11:3, April & May 99, John Mansfield (alleged COA listed), pgh@pangea.ca. "A bi-monthly newsletter primarily aimed at Convention Committees (ConComs) and exhibitors (dealers/artists) of Canadian SF/Media & Gaming conventions. *Con-TRACT* is mailed free to all known Canadian ConComs, providing they are still putting on cons. It is also available by subscription (6/\$10.00) or to all other interested parties for the usual." Covers some Canadian fan news.

John - there's a little problem that you might want to fix. Sometimes you make an allusion, or you hint at something, without quite coming out and saying what you mean. Like, in the May issue, you mention the fact that you hadn't heard anything about CUFF, and then you say '-guess who's going to win the fund next time.' What is that supposed to mean?? In any case, it was

just the next week the Penneys broadcast an announcement about CUFF for 1999. When did you expect the news should come out?

You should maybe just ask people what's the score, John. You don't want to come off as snide, or over-imaginative, or too mim-mouthed to come right out and say what you mean. Now do you?

The Debauched Sloth ##1-4, from

<http://www.imi.gla.ac.uk/corflu/newsletters/>

A Corflu UK convention daily zine in Web page format, distinguished by photos of the congoers and Naomi Saunders' décolletage.

Derogatory Reference ##90-92, a semi-quarterly personalzine from Arthur Hlavaty, 206 Valentine Street, Yonkers, NY 10704-1814; or hlavaty@panix.com.

In #90 and #91, Arthur paints a concise, cogent picture of what is wrong with the current business religion by describing his former employers, as well as offering witty takeoffs on recent books, the Republican Party, and Ken Starr's "Spermish Inquisition". In #92, Arthur reviews *Sewer, Gas and Electric* as a fit companion volume to the *Illuminatus!* saga, and describes the 1999 International Conference on the Fantastic.

Dick and Leah's Skiffy Calendar, January 1999, a fannish calendar from Dick and Leah Zeldes Smith, 410 West Willow Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070-1250; rhes@enteract.com / lazs@enteract.com. The year in fannish/Sfnal events, at least from the Smiths' perspective, including a selection of American, Australian and British conventions and anniversaries.

Emerald City 33-44, an e-zine from Cheryl Morgan (e-mailed from cmorgan@ceres.wallis.com; she's just returned to the U.S.). Fan news, book reviews, and personal views on various conventions.

Empirecon/Westercon 52 progress report #3, Jan. 1999, P.O. Box 7477, Spokane, WA 99207.

Ethel the Aardvark #79-83, from the Melbourne SF Club, Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Vic. 3005, Australia. Now edited by Karen Pender-Gunn, since well-known fanartist Ian Gunn passed away. (Not to be confused with *Thyme*, the fan newsmagazine published by Alan Stewart from Box *222*) Club news, book and series reviews, some articles, and a letter column. This issue: the members discover Leo Frankowski's Conrad Stargard novels.

File 770:126-128 from Mike Glycer, 705 Valley View Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016, U.S.A. Formerly a general fan newsmagazine, but more and more it now tends to be about American conventions, especially Worldcons and Westercons. In these issues: the evaporation of the Seattle in 2002 Worldcon bid; the Penneys succeed R. Graeme Cameron as CUFF administrators (I thought there were administrators in each of Western and Eastern Canada?); Glycer asks, "Is Your Club Dead Yet?"; Jerry Pournelle invents noonday desert hiking, out of necessity; David Bratman points out some fan shibboleths.

FOSFAX, Nov 98 & Feb. 99, P.O. Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281; reviewed above.

The Geis Letter, Nos. 54 - 62, Richard E. Geis, Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211-0408; news, views and reviews from one of the most pessimistic philosophers in fandom today.

International Revolutionary Gardener #2, from Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU, U.K. Read and Enjoyed But No Comment. The only impression I have of these interesting but baffling people is how I got to be Politically Incorrect by sending them **one** trade zine when their zine was titled FTT. Joseph, am I supposed to send you each a copy, in one envelope, or a copy in a separate envelope to each of you? And **why** do I have to?

The Knarley Knews #74, Feb. 1999, from Henry Welch (1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017, U.S.A.; welch@msoe.edu), a personalzine from Wisconsin. This issue: Alexander Bouchard writes a parable about a fan discovering fanzines; Don Pattenden continues the chronicle of his Australia bicycle tour; Charlotte Proctor, onetime editor of the famous fanzine *Anvil*, reviews *Mathemagics* (a "Chicks in Chainmail" light fantasy novel), and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"; E.R. Gene Stewart ponders whether fandom can survive; and lots and lots of locs.

Low Orbit 2:48, summer 1998, R'ykandar Korra'ti, lately of 5038 20th Ave. NE Nr. 1, Seattle, WA 98105, email REFRACTIONS@murkworks.net. An occasional glossy-cover personal/semiprozine, with some fiction, and articles by, to and about mainstream and small-press writers, and gaming/media-inspired art, including this waycool cover with like this totally buff babe and her circus cats ... er ... sorry. There go my hormones again. R'ykandar writes that this will be the last *Low Orbit*.

Mainstream #17, Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins, 3522 N.E. 123rd Street, Seattle, WA 98125; jakaufman@aol.com or suzlet@aol.com; reviewed above.

Mimosa #22, June 1998, Nicki and Richard Lynch, P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885; lynch@access.digex.net. A variety of fan and pro articles, letters and art, with some fanhistorical emphasis.

Opuntia 41 to 41.1C, up to March 1999 Dale Speirs ed., Box 6830, Calgary, AB T2P 2E7 (with *Sansevieria*, *Senpervivum* and *Canadian Journal of Detournement*); letters, historical articles on small interest groups, and zine listings.

Ottawa SF Statement #255, Oct. 1998, and #258, Jan. 1999, c/o A.G. Wagner, 251 Nepean St., Ottawa, ON K2P 0B7. Newsletter of the Ottawa SF Society, with Janet Hetherington cover cartoons.

Out of the Kaje #3, the "Martian Edition", Karen Johnson, 35 Mariana Ave., Sth Croydon, Vic. 3136, Australia; karenjoh@hotmail.com. More remembrances and regrets for Ian Gunn's passing; a vast letter column;

Karen's attempt at a Fannish glossary, which I found interesting for some things she knew she was vague on. "Fan lounge", for instance, she experienced as a term for the consuite or hospitality suite, and she wasn't too clear on "crifanac"; this, despite some significant research on her part.

Maybe fandom doesn't communicate its customs and usages as clearly as we assume, over time or distance; what do you think?

Pinkette #16d, March/May 1998, from Karen Pender-Gunn; P.O. Box 567, Blackburn, Vict. 3130, Australia. A digest-sized (5.5 x 8.5) light, generally humorous personalzine, with many letters.

Since Ian passed on, Karen has sent out a few e-mails that indicate where she is in her grief process. Were people not keeping in contact with her, for a while? It sounded like it, at one point. (On the other hand I thought at one point I might have offended, by trying to say something consoling ...) Write to her; at least inquire about getting Ian Gunn's SF comic novel, *The Space-Time Buccaneers*.

Reality Break 5.1 from Dave Slusher (dave_slusher@sff.net), a very brief e-zine from a man who produces an SF-theme radio talk show. (Hey, we BCSFAns did something like that once, now didn't we?) *Reality Break* has its own Web page and is soon coming to RealAudio. This edition: an upcoming live interview with George R.R. Martin.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin, May 1998; The Southern Fandom Confederation, c/o Tom Feller, P.O. Box 68203, Nashville, TN 37206-8203; a sort of monthly clubzine, with complete listings of clubs and conventions in each issue.

Space Cadet #10, Oct. 1998, from R. Graeme Cameron (postal and e-mail address as above); this time, an 8.5x11 rather than digest-size personalzine.

Thyme #123-124, September & November 1998, from Alan Stewart; PO Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Vict. 3005, Australia. The conclusion of the *Space-Time Buccaneers* graphic novel, and more doings of a science fiction club Down Under.

TommyWorld 29-42 (COA listed), an e-zine from Tommy Ferguson (previously of Belfast, now relocated in Nottingham, England; emailed from tferg@net.ntl.com); news and views from a scion of *fabulous* Irish fandom, plus locs from around the globe.

Trash Barrel, Aug. 1998, from Don Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91606-2308; one-sheet collections of one-paragraph zine reviews, from a mainstay of the National Fantasy Fan Federation.

Twink #12, Feb. 1999, from E.B. Frohvet, 4725 Dorsey Hall Drive, Box #A-700, Ellicott City, MD 21042; a mystery fan is at last unmasked!

Vanamonde nos. 297 - 302, apazines from John Hertz (236 S. Coronado St., No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057, U.S.A.). Witty and informed comments on a wide variety of subjects. I keep reminding myself I ought

to reply and keep forgetting. Maybe I'll just send him a *Royal Swiss Navy Gazette* and see how he responds.

Visions of Paradise #78, Robert Sabella (24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023, U.S.A.; bobsabella@nac.net). Notes on "The Passing Scene" from July through September 1998; an article on "Defining Science Fiction"; book reviews under "Wondrous Stories"; fanzine reviews, and locs.

Weber Woman's Wrevenge #52, June 1998, and #53, Feb. 1999, from Jean Weber, P.O. Box 640, Airlie Beach, Qld 4802, Australia; jean@wrevenge.com.au; an irregular personalzine from a Well Known Fan.

Westwind #234, Nov. 1998, NWSFS (P.O. Box 24207, Seattle, WA 98124, U.S.A. Newsletter of the Northwest SF Society.)

I picked this up at Orycon in Nov. 1998. News about movie outings and socials, discounts for members, future club activities, a con calendar, and reviews. This issue is distinguished by an interview with Neil Gaiman (author of *Neverwhere*, which is worth getting!).

Widening Gyre #4, March 1998, from the recently-famous Ulrika O'Brien, 123 Melody Lane, #C, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, ulrika@aol.com or uaobrien@uci.edu. Ulrika wins TAFF; pigs fly on her front cover; Ulrika tells us how narrow and crazy Irvine, California is; Bill Rotsler and Brad Foster cartoons; Maureen Kincaid Speller on "Simply Having a Convention"; and a wide range of thought-provoking articles and letters from thought-provoking fans. I really, really have a big apology to make to Ulrika O'Brien for not getting out my zine and sending a copy to her, much sooner.

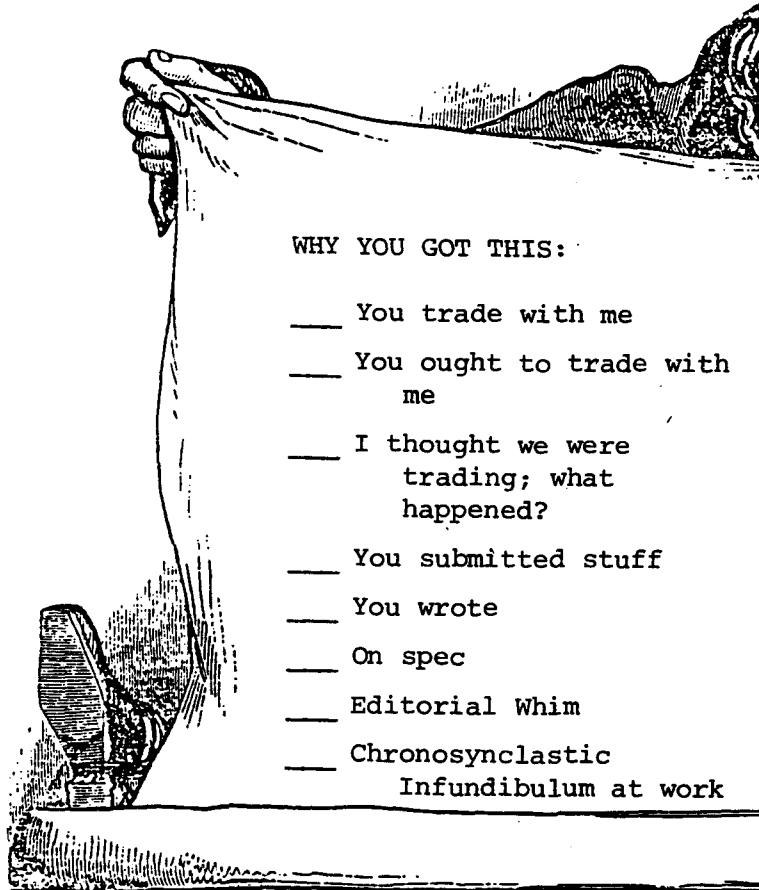
Xenolith #42, Bill Bowers, 7651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45238-4503, U.S.A. or Xenolith@iname.com. Bill's apazine for FAPA.



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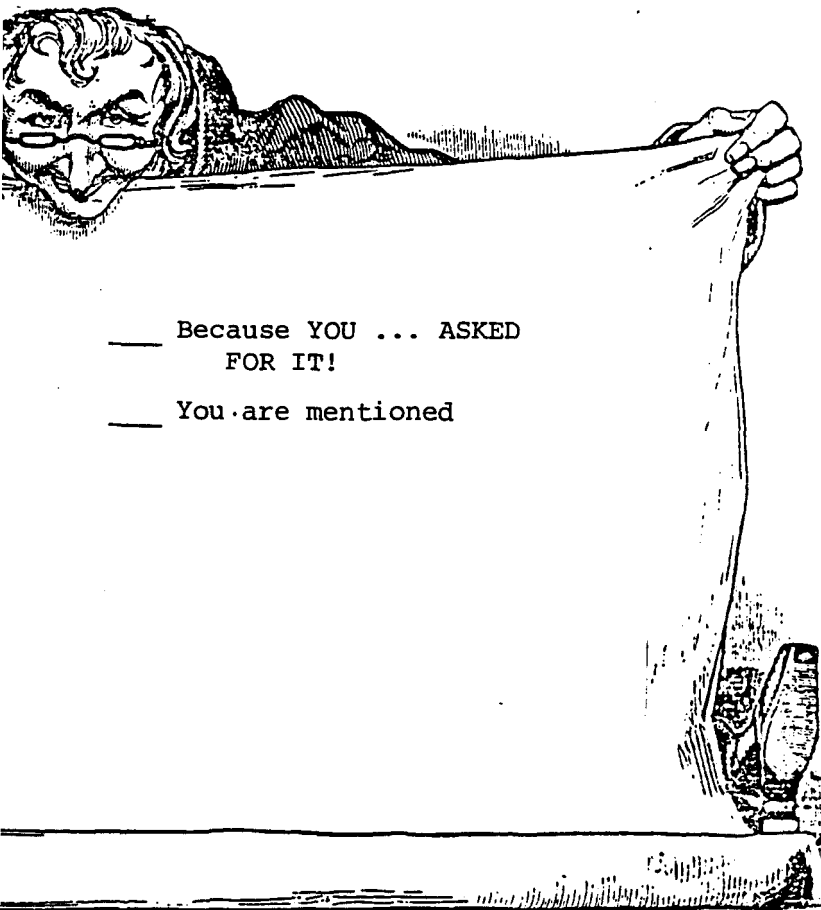
One of the points of interest at Orycon was a new organization, growing out of the Society for Creative Anachronism. "**The Holy Order of Our Lady of Debauchery**" held "services" and "ordinations" at Orycon; has a Web page at www.hoold.org; and can be contacted c/o Linda Wolfe at 5026 NE 14th Ave., Portland, OR 97211 or LFWolfe@hoold.org.

Clearly, Royal Swiss Navy Consciousness is pervasive and is spreading. We have fellow travellers we don't even know about!



WHY YOU GOT THIS:

- ___ You trade with me
- ___ You ought to trade with me
- ___ I thought we were trading; what happened?
- ___ You submitted stuff
- ___ You wrote
- ___ On spec
- ___ Editorial Whim
- ___ Chronosynclastic Infundibulum at work



— Because YOU ... ASKED
FOR IT!

— You are mentioned