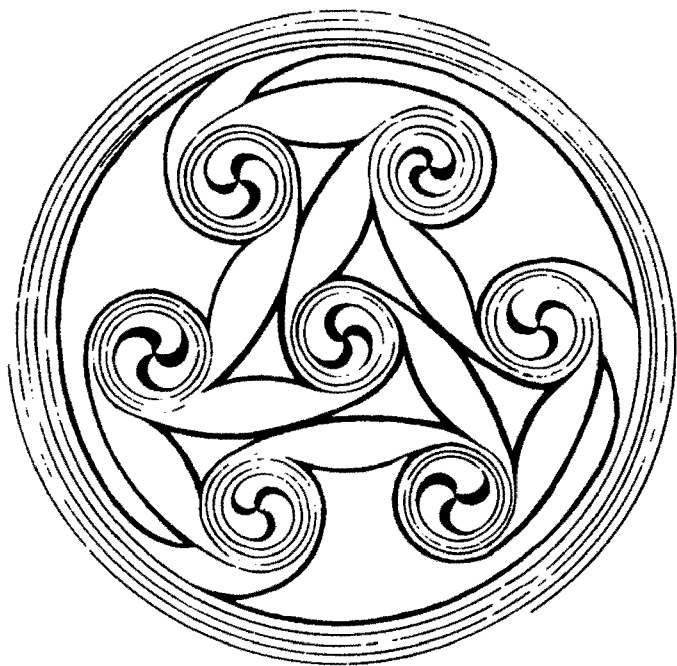


**THE ROYAL SWISS  
NAVY GAZETTE**

#5



THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE #5, April 2000, from Garth Spencer, P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O., Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1; email [hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca](mailto:hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca); to be 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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## COAs

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I got **Bill Bowers'** email COA wrong. He is now at [Bill@Outworlds.net](mailto:Bill@Outworlds.net).

**Tommy Ferguson** registered another COA last summer: **90 Carnhill,**

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**David Malinski**, c/o #3426 - 333 Hunt, Courtenay, BC, V9N 9B8, [murdock@axionet.com](mailto:murdock@axionet.com), , Apr. 2000

**Mary Malinski**, [gwend@axion.net](mailto:gwend@axion.net), [www.ina.net/ebiz/malinski](http://www.ina.net/ebiz/malinski), Apr. 2000

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*Tickled by Thunder* (Larry Lindner ed.), 14076 - 86A Ave., Surrey, BC V3W 0V9

**The Continuing Adventures of**

## **GARTH SPENCER**

**across the Fandomension**

### **Too Much Fanac Man**

I love starting new fan projects, it's following through that seems to defeat me. Which sort of explains why this quarterly perzine tends more and more to annual appearances, now doesn't it? (I keep being surprised by the decrease in my bank account, that's the other reason). Here's a partial list of things I piled on my plate:

- Regularly updating and completing the Canadian fandom information on the RSN page, including a Canadian SF market list
- A *new* Web page, featuring a draft Canadian fanhistory, and my Canadian Unity Fan Fund information (at <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~brothgar/>)
- Condensing and updating my address database
- Inventorying & selling books
- Inventorying my various possessions and files
- Inventorying and condensing disk files for project documents
- Finishing off some Sfinal Essays, as on planetology (like as if we needed this), on SF societies and my crank theory of sociology, on making up languages, and on the plutocratic powers that seem to threaten everyone's livelihood (when am I going to do something original?).
- The *Royal Swiss Navy Handbook*, including urban survival, life skills for the socially retarded, and intelligence tradecraft for fanboys who want to play James Bond
- Finishing fannish essays I want to do, for instance on SF worldbuilding (as if the world needed any more material), on fannishness and on conrunning (as if anyone were interested)

Sometimes I look at the various piles and snowdrifts of paper I build up, and see a trail of broken promises, failure and malfeasance going back twenty years. (And I don't even have Uncle Duke's résumé to show for it.)

I well realize I wanted to give a sense of wealth and richness to an otherwise bare and squalid existence; but trying to be a one-fan maelstrom of publications and fanactivity is just silly.

Would anyone like to take over anything they see here?

Let me digress, about those last few projects. I was planning to make a series of personal chapbooks, mainly to get some fannish subjects off my mind; later it occurred to me, selling chapbooks might benefit CUFF.

I thought of topics like "Garth's Notes on Fanpubbing", "Garth Spencer on Congoing", "Garth's Collection of Stories about Conrunners": anything that might conceivably be a current topic of interest, and fun to read (but not legally actionable, I hope), and even maybe useful information, for some people. **If somebody else has done these subjects already, or has more useful manuscripts to offer - or if you want to suggest a topic to add to these suggestions - please stop me before I go further.**

My concept for the fanpubbing chapbook transmogrified after it was first conceived. Most fans, faced with a discourse on how to pub your ish, will simply wonder "why?" Most people who hear of "zines" today will not think of fanzines as amateur publications, without fiction or price, produced for the sake of publishing yourself.

I think the real need is to acquaint contemporaries, fans and mundanes alike, with *fannishness*. I think the majority of contemporary fans *really don't know* what this is.

I invite your input on this concept, as it may depart from my doubtless naïve and eccentric idea: that "fannish" really means an attitude to life, sort of "He was born with the gift of laughter and the sense that the world is mad"; an attitude which, presumably, you can get if you read too many science fiction novels, one after another. (Each set in a different story universe, that is. Before Star Trek, every story used to be in a different story universe. I guess I have to tell some people that, nowadays.)

My idea of "fannish" is the sort of person who conceived of Pie-Kill, or founded the Rhinoceros Party and the Monster Raving Loony Party, or the Kingdom of Talossa, about which more below.

### **Fannishness in Mundania**

Several months ago I went online, at an Internet café, and discovered the Kingdom of Talossa - a sovereign and independent nation invented about twenty years ago in a boy's Milwaukee bedroom, and now incorporating eighty-plus on-line citizens and its own language - and then, five minutes after discovering the Universal Life Church page, I was an ordained minister.

Now let's see if that means I can get away with anything in Canada, or only south of the border.

## Notes on VCon 24

### The Get Naked for Richard Society

We held a memorial service for Richard Wright at VCon 24 (May, 1999). Mr. Wright, for those who didn't know him, is one of the many Baby Boomer fans appearing in recent obituary columns in fanzines; he had much to do with the Seattle and Portland SF communities, and worked on a good many Norwescons. He was an active member of the Northwest SF Convention League. Right after a VCon, he suffered a heart attack, and had to undergo quadruple bypass heart surgery. He died just before Christmas Day in 1998.

Somehow the remembrances of Richard Wright and the example he set -- basically "Do good, have fun and throw great parties", in a nutshell -- transmogrified into a resolution to hold clothes-optional hot-tub parties, as (we hope) at Westercon 52 in Spokane, this July.

Only later I reflected that this really requires a non-liability agreement with the hotel, or convention, unless it is understood this is in the nature of a private party. I suppose that prevents holding a clothes-optional party as a benefit fundraiser, doesn't it?

### Vampire Assistance/Anonymous

There was a panel on vampires at VCon 24, basically inveighing against the trivialization of a figure of horror into a figure of soap-opera romance; and it dawned upon me, while listening to this, that there must be several dozen breeds of vampire running around; in fact, many different predatory critters all going by the same name, when they're utterly unrelated.

The oldest vampire stories feature a walking corpse, ravenous for the blood of the living, that destroys its victims and spreads plague. The latest vampires are more or less imitations of one Hungarian actor. Transmogrification happens; and it leads to confusion.

If any vampires are reading this (I presume you know who you are), may I suggest you get in touch with each other? Hold a convention, if in fact you can stand to be with each other, and compare notes? Because I think some taxonomic exercises are called for, just to clear up some confusion.

Some vampires, I suppose, mainly need blood and could just as easily subsist on warm-blooded animals as on humans. Problem solved. Or some vampires *filter* blood for nutrients, *a la* Spider Robinson, and could even offer a social service to people who tend to overweight. Or they could take night shift at blood banks. Case closed. A case could be made for ... oh, say, equal rights to employment by the Canadian Blood Society.

There may be other vampires who necessarily kill while feeding, or others who really are horrible walking corpses that spread pestilence; there we have a real social problem, except maybe in places like India or the former Yugoslavia.

You might think that I wanted to offer a twelve-step program for recovering vampires. Not really; I suppose we need vampires, werewolves, manitous, used-car salesmen and other predators, to keep down the human population.

Or else these myths are elaborate symbols for other human predators. In that case you should disregard all of the above.

### **Westeroon 52**

I went to the Spokane Westeroon with a whole gang. I had some laughs, some drinks, some difficulty sleeping on the floor. One of the new faces in Northwest fandom, Jacqueline Passey, had her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. We improvised a hot tub party.

Can you tell I don't really focus on cons? More on the people to meet and the things to learn, or say, while you're there.

### **Running for The Canadian Unity Fan Fund**

Once upon a time (1979/80), some fans out in Halifax instituted the Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards. Thus the title "Convention" evolved, for whichever Canadian convention hosted the awards.

Also once upon a time (1981), some fans in Toronto instituted the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, to facilitate Well Known Fans travelling back and forth across this country. This lapsed until a Convention chair revived it, in 1987; Mike Wallis' concept, when he won Ad Astra '87's bid for Convention, was to tie CUFF in with the east-west alternation.

And now, after enjoying several adventures over the years, the Canadian Unity Fan Fund happened to me. Well, actually I threw my hat into the ring this summer, and won by acclamation.

### **Just My Opinion**

In the past I've felt free to criticize the promotion, and general level of awareness of these institutions. The history of the award *seemed* to indicate that we've never advertised, nor motivated people, particularly well. When I say that, I'm not denigrating the efforts of the many people who have worked hard, for years, to promote the Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards; and the Conventions that hold them; and the Canadian Unity Fan Fund. I'm saying that we still must be *missing* something, if these national fan institutions fail to win the participation, even the *attention*, of Canadian fans.

So: *are* we missing something? Are we missing some form of promotion? Are we missing some fact about contemporary fandom?

Are we neglecting to tell Canadian fans, directly, that their participation is expected and even required? There is some evidence to this effect; responses to the Mansfields in 1998/99, for instance, that at least a few clubs and newsletter editors *did not realize* the Aurora ballots had in fact anything to do with them, or in fact solicited their response.

This sounds pretty familiar, doesn't it? Probably the same thing is happening to every fan fund, right?

Since I wrote the above, I have found that mailouts and broadcast e-mails don't elicit response.

To my mind this narrows down the missing element to *import*. Contemporary Canadian fans simply don't know a reason to be interested. Which may mean that a fan fund is an idea whose time is past; or that it has to reinvent itself. Fan funds were conceived in the heyday of fanzine fandom, when fans had some sort of stake in fans outside their immediate circle.

What would make a fan fund important to *contemporary fans*? Discuss.

### What I Did On My October Vacation: Convention 1999

*(The following is largely the same trip report I have posted on my CUFF Web page, and circulated to Canadian fanzines, but I have added some opinionated comments.)*

In 1998, inCONsequential II (Fredericton, 1999) bid for and won the Convention for 1999. By mid-1999 the incumbent CUFF administrators, Lloyd and Yvonne Penney, had declared the CUFF race open to all nominees across Canada, not just fans west of Ontario. In August, I volunteered to run. I conducted a last-minute online campaign, and obtained more than enough nominations, from both East and West, in less than two weeks. Nominators from the West included Randy Barnhart, Graeme Cameron, David Malinski, Andrew Murdoch, Doug Finnerty, and Clint Budd. Nominators in the East included Murray Moore, Simon Parkinson, Brian Davis, and Will Straw.

I have a history in Canadian fan issues generally. I started up a national fan newszine in 1983 partly because I hadn't heard from the preceding national newszine in a while, and partly because I wanted to know what the score was with CSFFA and CUFF. It took about *five years* – no kidding – and gathering a lot of collateral fanhistory, to track down even part of the story.

### October 14, 1999:

In a way it was inconvenient that I could only book a flight as far as Halifax, and that on Thursday; the room reservation I obtained at

inCONsequential's venue began on Friday. In a way, though, it was just as well – a flight across the whole continent, and four time zones, takes six or seven hours, and then I faced another six-hour bus ride to Fredericton.

*(I nearly halved the cost of cross-continental travel by taking a flight with Canada 3000. Just a note for future reference.)*

So I got a room for Thursday night at Keddy's Halifax hotel. Amusingly enough, inCONsequential's venue, the Lord Beaverbrook, is also a Keddy's hotel.

*October 15-17, 1999: Convention 19/inCONsequential II at the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel, Fredericton, New Brunswick. Guest of Honour: Tanya Huff. Master of Ceremonies: Robert Sawyer. Also featuring Donna Barr (author of drawn books), Mary Ann Bramstrup (New Brunswick SF & F writer), Beverly Richardson (Gothic historian), K.V. Johansen (New Brunswick fantasy writer), and Garth Spencer (CUFF winner).*

*That Sensitive Fannish Face:* Almost as soon as I went looking for registration I ran into one of the potential consultants on Maritimes fanhistory, John Mackenzie from Halifax. Shortly I met some more fans from Halifax, Fredericton, and the inCONsequential committee. By the time the first panel was running that I wanted to see, I had handed out cards and some fanhistory drafts to John Mackenzie, Mary Ruth on the committee, Brian Davis (the chair), André Lieven of Ottawa, and famous writer types like GoHs Tanya Huff and Robert Sawyer. (Sawyer immediately spotted an error in one year's list of Aurora awards. Good, this is the sort of feedback I'm asking for.)

*(Say what? you may ask. Well, I'm still operating on the theory that you got responses from fans by showing them what information you've got, sometimes in the form of an article.*

*(Only one fan in North America, to my knowledge, thinks that something written down is automatically in final, inalterable and unanswerable form; every other fan is only too willing to respond with their opinion. Or so I gathered from seeing letters of comment, over a good many years.)*

Robert Sawyer also immediately enlightened me about some SF writers, and an SF market update – *Transversions*, for one thing, is now edited by Marcel Gagné and Sally Tomasevic. Jean-Louis Trudel, representing the National SF & Fantasy Society at the Convention, updated me on the Quebec milieu: one of the SF revues, *imagine ...*, ceased publication last year.

*(I'm talking about Canadian SF publications, here. We've gone from a phase, back in the 1960s and 1970s, where domestic SF/F publishing was a hit-or-miss affair – an irregular series of one-shot book publications or abortive two-issue magazines – to a phase now, in*



*which there are several small-press quarterly SF/F magazine and a few domestic SF/F book imprints, in English. French-Canadians got on with this at least a decade earlier.)*

*Con survival panel* (6 pm Fri): at the point when I did catch up, this panel was discussing how a number of guests of honour, such as artists, have visited the Maritimes again. Some background to inCONsequential was covered (I had to be told why the consuite was called the "Elysian Fields 'uest House", after something in one of Tanya Huff's recent novels); the chaos that was the last Halcon; and the continuing problem that Maritime conventions have, making back their costs on T-shirts.

*Opening Ceremonies* (7 pm Fri): The usual welcoming remarks and introduction of Guests of Honour. I knew Robert Sawyer and Tanya Huff were listed, I had met Jean-Louis Trudel before, but I was surprised to meet artist Donna Barr again – I didn't recognize her in her new long-haired look, or in this East Coast context.

*Fanhistory panel* (8 pm Fri): My concern in hosting this panel was to ask questions. Does any contemporary fan, chosen at random, know something about the history of fandom, or even care? Does any such representative fan realize there are some interesting, amusing or even practical things to get out of fanhistory? Or would he or she reflect that history is what we're doing right now?

About a dozen people showed up. We rambled, as panels often do, but I think it was established that there is a history in fandom, it bears on what we do right now in clubs and cons, and I even stayed away from my tendency to focus on the negative. It may have helped that I started by setting up chairs in an oval, and offered some printouts of my Convention and Maritimes fanhistory materials.

Evening events were pretty much limited to the consuite; there were rumours that somebody might host a Toronto in 2003 bid party, but this didn't materialize. As it happened there were no room parties at inCONsequential II.

It is of interest to note that inCONsequential's consuite is a "dry" consuite. Apparently, this is a general policy for Maritime conventions, ever since Halcon 10. (The story I got is that Maritime fans experienced a phase when university students discovered their cons, and the students perceived them as a cheap place to get drunk and weird. Also, Maritime fans are generally concerned to present their fandom as a safe place to bring kids.) I commented that other cons in North America have similarly found reason not to serve alcohol.

October 16, 1999

Saturday morning I wandered outside and found a sort of farmer's market, a few blocks away, and had something for breakfast. My impressions of Fredericton were limited to the downtown area where the Lord Beaverbrook is situated. I was strongly reminded of Victoria, particularly the James Bay suburb around the provincial government buildings.

*(What I mean by this is that I saw the same sort of quiet, residential, leafy-green part of town. I gather that if anything, Fredericton is smaller than Victoria – and maybe that means it has even less industrial, or economic base – but I can stand to be corrected.)*

Back at the con I sampled the Robots East and World Building panels, but found them very modestly attended. There was also supposed to be a presentation on the Kingcon SF society on Saturday afternoon, but no-one showed up.

The artshow and dealers' room were limited to rather small rooms, but the level of artwork seemed to compare favourably to artshows at other North American conventions. I never did get to the dealers' room while it was open, heaven knows why.

*Buffet dinner (6 pm) and Aurora Awards presentation (8 pm Sat):* For whatever reason, we presented the Aurora awards this year in reverse order. Robert Sawyer served as MC; Jean-Louis Trudel, Paul Valcour, Donna Barr and I took turns presenting the awards; I had agreed to present two of the fan awards, so to my dismay I was up first. I pray I didn't butcher the French translation too badly. Everybody but Donna Barr and myself accepted awards for winners who could not be in attendance.

(Dennis Mullin posted a list of this year's Aurora Awards at <http://www.sentex.net/~mullin/auroras/> before the month was out. I have included the list in the version of my trip report I have posted at <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~brothgar/cuff/triprep.htm>, and the report has also been submitted to other zines, e-mailed to Canadian fans, and offered as a standalone publication.)

*Costume contest (9 pm Sat):* Mary Ruth recruited Donna Barr and myself and the representative of the Tanya Huff fan club to judge the costume masquerade contest. I think I was pretty useless at this exercise, partly because I can't distinctly remember the costumes or how they were judged, and partly because I didn't learn to judge costumes. I need some remedial education or something.

There was a dance, but at that point I was wilting. I don't remember anything more from Saturday.

October 17, 1999

*CUFF presentation (10 am Sun):* After more than half an hour, perhaps a dozen people showed up, which supports my conviction

that *you do not* schedule anything before 11 a.m. To my dismay I found all my chapbooks on CSFFA/Convention/CUFF had gone, so I extemporized on fannish fanzine fandom, fan funds, the history of the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, and the topic of Getting The Word Out.

One local fan, Corinne Lewandowski, wanted to know how you apply to be nominated? I answered in a long-winded and roundabout fashion. (I think I needed more coffee that morning.) Perhaps I should have set up the panel room today the way I did for the fanhistory panel, as no-one made offers for the sample CUFF sale items I displayed.

*CSFFA Business Meeting* (noon Sun): A number of items were raised, discussed and settled at this meeting, with Paul Valcour chairing the meeting and Dennis Mullin serving as chair. Two hours were budgeted for this business meeting, but it actually went on for three. Things kind of dragged after thirty to forty-five minutes, or maybe the panel room was a little close and crowded for the number of people there. Robert Sawyer later said it was a good, productive meeting; but I got really fed up after nearly two hours and left, because I thought it was getting bogged down.

*(In fact some pogue from Toronto kept holding things up by asking for explanations of the Auroras, the association constituting the meeting, and everything that should have been explained beforehand, outside the meeting. He should have been given a FAQ sheet. Just a note for future reference. I frankly think the chair should have exercised some control over the meeting, too.)*

It was finally decided, though, that **TT2000 (formerly Toronto Trek) will host Convention 20 (in July 2000)**. The chairs are Katherine Cheng and Kimberly Nash.

There was also supposed to be a slave auction on Saturday, but practically no-one showed up.

*Closing Ceremonies* (3 pm Sun): All the guests expressed their appreciation of Fredericton, and of the hospitality they received at inCONsequential II. Brian Davis mentioned that inCONsequential I had been a good con, inCONsequential II had been even better. I was asked to say a few words, stood up and said "A few words!" and sat down to equal applause. (Hey, it worked for Robert Runte in Victoria.)

*Dead Dog*: this was mostly fun, and intimate, since perhaps two or three dozen people were left out of 78 or 79 attendees.

I'm not real proud of my exhibition of temper at Robert Sawyer; I was really appalled at the CSFFA meeting, and kept saying so, heatedly. But Sawyer, and Tanya Huff, and Patricia Evans all assured me that meetings usually *are* slow, and inefficient, even in professional associations and conferences.

I guess it's just as well, for me and for you, that CUFF is not run by a committee.

*(The following is intended as a constructive note for future reference: if you want to hold a meeting, you want to get some business done. If you really want to get some business done, especially with volunteers and amateurs, provide a FAQ sheet, don't cram a small room with too many people, don't let things drag on while the room gets stuffy and overheated, don't wander all over besides the point at hand. It's tough enough to get and hold people's attention and participation, without challenging their patience.*

*(If this is tactless, fine. It seems to be my inescapable fate to be tactless.)*

### Home Again, Home Again, Jiggedy Jig

In 1996 I submitted a chronology of the CUFF winners to the FANAC fanhistory site; this is mirrored on my <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~hrothgar/cuff/> site, with minor corrections, but I still have to make post-'96 updates to both sites.

### **Vikingoon and VCon 25**

Crowning the sin of folly with the sin of pride (or is it the other way around?), I then joined the VikingCon and VCon committees.

VCon will be held at the Days Hotel Surrey City Centre (1-800-663-0660), with GoH Robert Sawyer, FanGoHs Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, Fan Artist GoH: the late Shane Desjardins; ArtGoH not yet confirmed. Toastmaster: "Mr. Science". Memberships C\$40/US\$27 through March/April, C\$45/US\$30 through May up to the door. Cheques payable to VCon 25, Box #274, 1857 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., CANADA V6J 1M4. Tel. (604) 731-7553. Email [rgraeme@home.com](mailto:rgraeme@home.com). The Chair has asked me to head up the fanzine lounge/ would any of you care to exhibit or sell or give away fanzines?

VikingCon will be held at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. Science Guest of Honor: Freeman Dyson. Author Guest of Honor: Larry Niven. Artist Guest of Honor: Julia Lacquement. Special Guest of Honor: George Dyson. Fan Guests of Honor: Paul Carpentier, Julie McGalliard. Memberships: write to VikingCon, Viking Union 202, Box V-1, Bellingham, WA 98225, U.S.A. Email [vikingcon@sfnorthwest.org](mailto:vikingcon@sfnorthwest.org). The Chair has asked me to take care of the progress reports.

## I Think You Ought to Know I've Been Terribly Depressed

Lisa Gemino bounced up to me at VCon 24, after I mailed out RSNG 4, saying "Gee Garth, you're really fucked up!" Um. Nice to see I'm getting known.

One day last fall I got to the Friday gathering – the coffee gathering, not FRED – and I was feeling so low when I got there, someone asked how I was and I actually told them. "I feel like crap. I've been thinking about suicide all week. How are you?"

Lisa Gemino (again) told me later I was coming across as sort of hostile in recent weeks. Well, actually, I was quite serious. I really just felt that bad, and I really just meant to say so.

## Modes of Discourse

It's become hard to communicate sometimes.

I think I speak and write clearly, in plain English. So I get silence, from any of the fans around me, or blank incomprehension, or bizarre misconceptions.

Tim Smick (a man of many names) pointed out to me, in a conversation about fannish community (or the lack thereof), that when I'm faced with someone like the excellent Steve Forty, he'll be talking about one subject, where I'm talking about the metasubject.

Tim is the only person who's appreciated this.

If I were to start a conversation observing, say, last year's ruction in Vancouver between factions in the Sikh community, Steve would think I was complaining about Sikhs. *In fact*, I would be talking about the potential for violence between *all* the different ethnic groups in Vancouver ... especially since half of Asia seems to be represented here, after the late-80s influx of immigration.

I'm not slanging Steve, by the way. I'm not even particularly talking about him. I'm talking about the difficulty I have had with a *lot* of people, trying to communicate at all. It's as though I were raised to speak another language, or what others speak just *seems* to be English.

Maybe all my mail is going to a universe next door, and my correspondents in this universe are getting mail from a Garth in *another* neighbouring universe.

Or maybe the people around me are just not very bright.

## **Silly Ideas Department**

### Imperial Anarchist Party

When I applied for Talossan citizenship and started chatting on Wittenberg, their on-line discussion group, I realized that I could get totally involved in this micronation, even to the point of starting my own political party. The above is one of the titles I suggested. (I also

suggested the Alien Civil Liberties Union, I think; I'm pretty sure I suggested the Neanderthal Anti-Defamation League.)

This idea didn't actually spring fully-formed out of my head. Nearly twenty years ago, in a spirit of seeing how the other half thinks, I subscribed to *Canadian Business*. In the fullness of time I somehow received an invitation, blown into one issue, to join the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. I wrote back saying no thanks, I'm forming my own party; borrowing a title from H. Beam Piper, I called it the Christian Anarchist Party, and I made up a straight-faced, very logical, and completely absurd theological argument to support its ideology; and then I asked, did they have any flaky members they wanted to unload?

I've never been bothered by the PCs since.

Instituting an Imperial Anarchist Party could introduce some levity and confusion to Talossan proceedings, if ever the members start taking their politicking too seriously.

### Alien Civil Liberties Union

If Americans and Canadians have civil liberties, and they are willing to defend them (well, Americans anyway), why not institute civil liberties protection for aliens?

At present I know of no legislation on Earth that protects any aliens' civil liberties. And they're going to *need* such protection, if we make overt contact in the near future.

Consider, first, the growing mythology of alien abduction ... let alone the mounting air traffic violations they have incurred.

Consider next that the U.S. actually has legislation on the books forbidding or restricting contact with aliens ...

This does nothing to protect anyone's civil liberties, of course, be they American, human or alien.

Consider finally that, if the foregoing has been established, aliens of many descriptions have to toe the line when they come to visit Earth. We have laws and customs and traffic regulations here. We have such rules for many reasons, not least to limit traffic fatalities.

### Neanderthal Anti-Defamation League

Have you noticed how public sentiments or opinions seem to swing back and forth between two poles, in a number of subjects? When I was studying linguistics and anthropology and so on in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the general sentiment very strongly tended to the position that your genetic inheritance makes very little difference to how you think, behave or perform, no matter your gender, breed, or national origin. Already, though, we had heard of B.F. Skinner, and since about the time E.O. Wilson emerged into visibility there has been a shift to consider genetic inheritance as

having some relevance to what you do in life, or how well. The period of this cycle seems to approach a twenty- or thirty-year iteration.

In about the same time period, I think there's been a shift in professional opinions about Neanderthals. If I recall correctly – and my education about this is dated – the archaeological evidence for modern man goes back about 50,000 years, perhaps 100,000 or longer if you include some archaic forms of *H. sapiens*. There's always been some disagreement, though, about Neanderthal Man. Was this breed a localized "race" or breed of archaic *H. sapiens*, disappearing about 40,000 years ago, or a separate species? Were Neanderthals capable of fire, speech, clothing, invention, or were they as speechless and limited as we think *H. habilis* was?

Partly because of the time period in which I received my education, but partly because of the evidence and the profile of my high school science teacher, I'm inclined to think of Neanderthals as a European race of *H. sapiens*, one that blended in and was absorbed by the increasing Cro-Magnon population. And I don't think there's any mileage in labelling any human breed as inferior. The history of this century has attested to where that thinking leads.

So I propose that the Royal Swiss Navy members establish a Neanderthal Anti-Defamation League. On behalf of our departed ancestors and distant cousins – ultimately on behalf of all the breeds who get denigrated unfairly – we can argue and show that this inferiority/superiority argument is unfounded, unscientific, and never held water anyway.

Also there are a lot of people like me who could be classified as mongrels, and I don't know when they'll be coming for me next.

### Wholly Unorthodox Church

You've probably noticed a behaviour I call One True Right and Only Way-ism, on the part of most organized religions. An insistence on their worldview/paradigm, and a condemnation of anything different.

At VCon, listening to a panel on Tarot cards, it occurred to me that all the people present were members of a subculture that accepted fortune-telling as a grown-up practice; the panelists were pretty balanced and good-humoured, and quite prepared to debate the position, but nobody rose to the challenge. The closest I came to challenging them was to ask whether there was really anything "iconic" or archetypal about Tarot or other divination symbols, or whether it was all arbitrary. The answer I got was that I should probably go for the Jungian Tarot deck.

For Talossan purposes I would like to propose the Wholly Unorthodox Church, with a smorgasbord or loose-leaf-notebook approach to life. Different religions seem to be basically about

different things, and offer different activities, so ultimately the issue may be choosing deliberately what you're trying to do, and how you're doing it; and being aware, at the same time, of the consequences.





## **LoCs**

**Eric Lindsay, June 16, 1999**

Thanks for RSN#4. To decide if the problems you experience with other people are something for which you are to blame, I would think you need to look at your co-workers' relationships with these people. If others have problems understanding what they are to do, then obviously instructions are being given in an unclear manner. If it is only you, then perhaps you are not listening carefully enough.

*((I do listen carefully; that's my problem. And no, I'm not the only one having a problem. If contextual information isn't enunciated specifically in spoken words, then I'm really not going to get it; and I really can't make automatic assumptions like everyone else, because sure God they're going to be wrong. I'm damned if I do, and damned if I don't. Is life like this in every intellectual-property office?))*

I don't see why fans should be any more or less competent, on average, than any other group. Some convention fans just don't seem to understand what it is they are doing, and in such a case, I'd have to agree with Ted that they are losers. It doesn't mean they are unworthy; it just means they can't cope.

*((Nobody's ever answered my real question, so I'll pose the question again: why is it that every decade, a few people who can't cope even with normal tasks jump into convention-running – and further, why do they predictably want to hold the biggest, snazziest conventions, right away? Why have fans not evolved mechanisms, after lo these many years, for forestalling these people, just as a matter of defending their own reputations?*

*((Anyway, we weren't talking about losers, the subject was people who hold sensibly limited local conventions.))*

I am not at all sure that pie-kill will work. It didn't seem to against Bill Gates.

*((My favourite TV show last summer was Vengeance Unlimited. I wish it had been scheduled for regular programming. It was far more to my taste: offering to reduce deserving people to public and irredeemable humiliation. Maybe I should pick up ideas from TV Nation, too.))*

**John Bartley III, July 21, 1999**

Re "A Reign of Humour" (tilting against secret government, and other windmills)

Stumbled across the RSN4 file while cleaning out other stuff, and I liked your insights on Those People Who Run Things (or is it Those Things Who Run People?)

> *Maybe founding international humorist organizations would be a suitable response to the War on All of Us, conducted by Powers Beyond Our Control ...*

Party on, Garth – but whatever you do, DON'T take Demopublicans or Republicrats at face value, even that most Noble of Republicrats, Abraham Lincoln. AL uttered 'government of the people, by the people and for the people' as a speech, i.e., Personal Global Warming. Many people have taken to it, but it certainly is at odds with what Jefferson, Madison et al. had in mind for this 'Great Experiment' (as RAH termed *Los Estados Unidos in Glory Road*).

*((I'm a Canadian, I can't tell your political parties apart. Can't tell ours apart these days, either ...*

*((I think your reply should more properly have been directed to my correspondent, not to me; I thought I made it clear when I was quoting him. He was going on about representative government; Canadian practice has pretended to be representative, but that is not a part of the written plan. It's much more bare-faced a plutocracy, sometimes.))*

Oh, Robert Frezza revealed this to be true in Japan in his trilogy about off-planet unconventional warfare (*A Small Colonial War, Fire In A Faraway Place, Cain's Land*); he noted the Japanese commonly call their PM and Emperor 'portable shrines', someone to 'respect' until the corporations replace them with another 'shrine'.

*((I don't follow the reference?))*

> *I believe Mark Twain said the unstoppable weapon is laughter.*

Oh, yes. Once we can consistently see Norte Americanos laughing at an idea, the entrenched interests see it's a dead horse, and stop beating it with the media and politicians they own. For a while there, Yankees even stopped believing in the Logic of Empire and we had a few years of peace there, until Bubba got caught with his fly open and decided it was time to Wag the Dog.

**Clifton Amsbury, July 31, 1999**

*Re the Littleton shootings:*

I differ (as very often). The shooters at Littleton (as other places) were suffering from a social disease, indeed, but they were blowing

away, curing in the only way possible, the actual bearers of that social disease. ...

The key time is fourth grade. Back in the Seventies teachers were bewailing that creative students did not remain creative. "The fourth grade; that's where we lose them," one teacher was quoted, and it rang bells immediately. I found that many science fiction fans of my generation had responded as I did. The best description I've seen is in Asimov's biography. The first book, I believe.

I'm the only one I know of who recognized the situation and deliberately chose my reaction. It is in the fourth grade that the schoolyard bullies organize sports (in my school it was baseball) and form their teams. Some years back there was an Orson Wells picture about the effects of this "team spirit" sickness and its carrying over into the adult world. Its name was *I'll Never Forget What's His Name*.

Anyway, in fourth grade I recognized it for what it was and purposely withdrew. And so did a number of other people I later met as science fiction fan.

And you're correct, human beings don't behave reasonably. We were well on our way to doing so, but that was cancelled by the "Cold War" and its accompanying hot aggressions. The irrational behaviour, after all, is the basis of military organisation and we have been for the last four centuries rebelling against and slowly emerging from the old society, which is best described as peasant-based, military-administered, dyadic patron-client societies.

*((Ah. So that's what the Circle Jerks want us to go back to.))*

Conspiracy? We think of conspiracies because we live in a mesh of them. This is a business (capitalist) society. The higher you go in business, the more people behave as if they are a conspiracy against employees, customers, competitors, taxing authorities, regulatory agencies (and trying to eliminate the latter two), and everyone else. Meanwhile you may have wondered why the Bush-appointed judge in Arkansas kept the Paula Jones case alive so long, then finally dismissed it on the basis of conditions specified in the original complaint. In other words, it should never have been accepted as a case. It was kept going long after it had served Ken Starr as an opportunity to accuse Clinton of lying. And now she (the judge) has (a year and a half after Starr's manoeuvre) slapped Clinton with an outrageous fine for contempt of court for evading the question in a trial which should never have been held. ...

*((Ah. I missed that news item, but it doesn't surprise me.))*

*Re mustard and mayonnaise conspiracies:*

The choice is not just between mustard and mayonnaise. It's between when to use both and when to use just one.

**Scott Patri, August 1, 1999**  
**<real\_headhoncho@yahoo.com>**

Sorry I haven't been in contact for a while. Of all the things that I have been doing, my fanac had been sorely neglected.

What have I been doing? Writing mostly. I've been cranking out the fiction, but I also have been putting my own philosophy into words. ...

*((What's more important: saying what you believe, what your convictions are, what you've decided ... or what the real questions are?))*

And when I haven't been writing or seeking mundane employment, I've been drawing. ...

*((Scott's work has been showing up in a number of fanzines. The more practice, th better.))*

Then there is the Internet ... talk about a black hole for productive time! ...

*((Yeah. Tell me about it.))*

**6 Nov 1999 "Rykandar Korra'tl"**  
**<rayek@anwllite.murkworks.net>**

Gosh, I wish RSN published pictures. I'm quite a bit more fond of sending pictures than art, because I like doing art more, and because it doesn't make my hands hurt so much. Even with the more-successful therapy. (Tho' I do have to admit that this didn't stop me from doing - preen time - my first professional writing in eight years. It's nonfiction, of course; I've never been good at selling fiction. I'm pleased, though.)

*((Um. I do have to improve the layout of the Gazette, don't I, and include more graphics.*

*((My condolences on the problem with your hands.))*

Anyway. Chronic depression is no fun at all and you should see whether you mightn't have some sort of physical issue. A former housemate (and fan) I knew several years ago had wild bouts of depression followed by more "up" periods of normalcy - and it turned out to be a thyroid issue. I don't mean to be annoying or pretending to be qualified to prescribe anything, but it can't hurt to check it out a bit.

*((This is the sort of thing I thought genealogical research was meant for; I mean, you have to plot medical histories in your extended family, including a few generations of ancestors, to track down possible inherited factors. And as I suggested to you, my family, at*

*least one side, may have some history or predisposition to depression. I really must follow this up.))*

*As for the subconscious/nonverbal communication issues ...*

I know from experience how extremely difficult the nonverbal portion of communication can be to understand, but I also know from experience that it can be learned. It takes years, though, of conscious effort - but it's a survival skill, so I made myself do it. It helps, I think, to study people who only understand - or "speak" - part of it. The stereotypical engineer-type - those with better communications skills than most - may be a good place to start, particularly if you can watch and listen to them communicate with those who have poor nonverbal skills. They've learned to communicate both nonverbal and explicit-verbal communicators - like you (and me), more or less. You can learn, in turn, from them.

I read quite a good article on how people who consciously learn the intricacies of such non-verbal discourse end up communicating for those by whom it was learned so early that it may as well be instinctive - but unfortunately I can't remember either the name of the article or even where I read it. It was part of a larger article on various "types" of intelligence, and how a fair percentage of engineers may be attracted towards that classification of career specifically by the precision and explicitness of the language necessary in engineering. The idea was that people have a tendency to go where people talk like they do, more or less. Sorry I can't give a reference. The article didn't attempt to judge either way whether such approaches to communication are "good" or "bad" - but people in engineering tend to do fairly well in life, in a lot of ways. At least in this culture.

*((That's a more substantive and practical response than many I get. You may have given me enough clues to go on, for a library or Internet search.))*

By the way, have you ever wanted a map of the RSN world? I just finished a commission a map, for an online game. You can see it at <http://www.murkworks.net/~rayek/map2.jpg>, if you're curious.

The whole issue of quasi-retaliatory expulsions and other forms of mundane abuse against the vaguely unusual teenager has attracted attention from more than just a few fans. Rod Smith (a Kentucky fan) offered a web page called Nerdhaven, <http://www.dcr.net/~stickmak/Word/>, and has gotten a fair amount of positive reaction from those who have found it. It also has links to a variety of other web sites.

Thanks for the kind mention of my old 'zine, *Low Orbit* - but I do want to mention that 1) I never declared it a semiprozine, so it

wasn't, and 2) while it certainly won't continue in its current form, I may revive it as a pure perzine. My personal letters are already hellishly overlog and tend - in paper form - to include photocopies of artwork; I might as well go all the way, come up with a bannerhead, and staple the fool thing together. Of course, what I'd really hoped to do for a perzine was something called *Leaf*, which I still hope to do next year. (I need the studio finished for that one, as I'll need to set up my feeble but functional screenprinting equipment. And while said studio is finally almost finished, it's taken longer than I anticipated to complete, and it'll be too late by the time all is said and done to get issues out this year. Which is a fair amount of hint about its MacGuffin, isn't it... hm...) But *Leaf* would be quite short, and more about art than about publishing. Or, arguably, about communication. So.

**Harry Warner Jr., 423 Summitt Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740  
(Nov. 26/99)**

If you have a good memory, you might possess at least a faint recollection of having published the fourth issue of *The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette* a long time ago and also of sending me a copy and further, hearing nothing for month after month. I'm very sorry about this long silence. It has been a bad year for me (and, in fact, a bad century). In the spring my non-electric typewriter broke down and it took me a month to find another non-electric typewriter, this one, in good operating condition. In the summer I fell ill not once but twice and didn't snap out of the bad health for what seemed an eternity. All the gains I made last winter toward *Catching Up* were wiped out. Your fanzine turned up when I was sorting out a large grocery bag of fanzines that should have been commented on long ago (one poor thing had arrived in 1995). ...

*((Sounds sort of like me. I am 43, living in shared accommodations like a student, and the place is overstuffed with disorganized piles of papers and zines and books, for numerous half-started, half-completed projects. I am also finding a bunch of fanzines I should have loosed or traded to over at least the past year.))*

I felt when I first read this issue that you were being too hard on yourself ... The problems you described impress me as those that are common to most of us who have a mentality superior to the really stupid class ... Somehow, long ago acquired the ability to simmer inside but maintain a hypocritical placidity on the exterior. Some people have told me that they have learned how to recognize an extreme temper fit on my part, only by the fact that my face goes deadly white. Before retirement, when I was putting out the Saturday

morning newspaper each week with very few staff members on duty, one of the reporters confided in me that she like to work on those nights because I was so calm. Actually I suffered from an urgent need to scream and kick unbrokenly from around 3 p.m. when I went on duty ... I don't know how I did it.

*((And now I ask myself how much that repression of emotion had to do with your later ill health.*

*((Not that I should talk. I now find myself behaving at work as though my attention or memory were failing, and that scares me.))*

The apparent increase in diabetes among extremely young individuals may be part of a series of changes in the human body since technology began to change life for almost everyone more than two centuries ago. My own pet theory is that the whole population suffers hearing loss in the first months or years of life and that he adult today who is shown by tests to have perfect hearing is actually much less capable of perceiving faint sounds than the normal person was in 1699 or thereabouts. ... There are so many references [in nonfiction, historical sources] to the noise of a battle being audible an improbable number of miles away in the 18<sup>th</sup> and even 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, to Indian fighters telling the buglers not to use their instruments because Indians are visible on a ridge two miles away and might hear it, and orators being understood ... when speaking to a crowd of 30,000 or so spread out over a large area.

*((In summary, our senses and our metabolisms alike are not as robust as was the pre-industrial norm. I take your point.*

*((Taking another point about the general level of hearing, I think that since the balance of industrial populations have moved to cities, our normal practice of attention is to block out most of the stimulus around us. The effect is that we have blinders on. This may have something to do with my almost-autistic zeroing-in on one detail of a file, to the exclusion of everything else, and my apparent forgetfulness of more than one task to perform on a job ... For other people, does it have anything to do with the boredom and restlessness and attention-deficit disorder now proverbial for anyone under 25?))*

I have some doubt that there is any effective action humanity could take at the present time if a large meteor should be found heading for a direct hit on earth ...

*((All depends on early detection. There are far more amateur astronomers than professional, and modern communications and information technology offer some solutions for collecting and collating their observations. It may be that neither nuclear warheads, nor UN oversight is either necessary, or indeed desirable.))*

The letter from (I presume) Peter Motte is another reason why I feel happy to be isolated from computer communications. The organization he is blamed for assisting may have been nothing more than a misunderstanding about a drive to keep Babylon Five in production ...But it might also have been a deliberate effort by some unknown person to get him into trouble. Maybe I would be interested in computers if the rules were revised to attached the identity of the sender to every message, instead of the anonymity that exists today.

...

*((Giving your name, or even giving your right e-mail address, is an option, not a matter of the rules of the software; but I take your point, if self-identification were obligatory, e-mail senders might be rather more careful about the messages they put out.))*

*We Also Heard From: Bernie Evans, David Malinski, Syd Spencer, Tom Terashima, Harry Andruschak, Murray Moore*

### **Zines**

*BCSFAzine #315 - 321 (Sept. 99 - Feb. 2000), c/o #110 - 1855 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1J1. In these I see the Penneys' CUFF announcement, the announcement of Con Spec in mid-September '99, and the fact that Frank Skinner and Craig MacIachlan, two local fans, were holding a limited-membership con in Tsawwassen, "Retreat to Risa" (sic), in October 1999. (I still haven't seen any reports.)*

*Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi - Andrew Murdoch (current address listed in COAs).*

*CRAPA: the Maritime apa. OE Mary Ann Bramstrup (Box 1010, Nackawic, NB. E-mail: shareen@nbnet.nb.ca) has given me some back issues; members seem to be focused on workshopping amateur fiction.*

*Dataphile Fall 1999 - BSSFC (Bellingham, WA) - a one-shot, now defunct.*

*Derogatory Reference 92, 94 - Arthur Hlavaty: 206 Valentine Street, Yonkers, NY 10704-1814, U.S.A. A zippy little personalzine, always thought-provoking and witty.*

*Emerald City 45, May 99 - Cheryl Morgan: email cmorgan@ceres.wallis.com, URL <http://www.emcit.com>. Book reviews, conreports, and the Hidden Truth about Popeye.*



***Ethel the Aardvark*** - MSFC - POBox 212, World Trade Centre,  
Melbourne, Vic, 3005, Australia

***Past Forward***, Oct 99 - FSFS - only address is by email:  
corydog@nbnet.nb.ca

***File 770 ##124*** - 132 (Sept. 99), Mike Glycer ed., 705 Valley View Ave.,  
Monrovia, CA 91016, U.S.A.

The Penneys' CUFF announcement appears here, among other fan fund and convention news. Glycer appends a helpful list of past winners of the Canadian Unity Fan Fund.

I also see Yvonne Penney's announcement that a regular pub gathering in Toronto fandom has had to move (my first notice that there was one); the First Thursday gathering moved in August to the Hothouse Café on Front St. downtown. Glycer gives notice that Yvonne circulates an e-newsletter, *Pubnights and Other Events*. (Again, it happens this was my first notice. Yvonne? Lloyd? We've got to do something about this communication thing.) Glycer also reprints Dale Speirs' Con-Version 16 report, also appearing in *Opuntia*. I learn just all kinds of things about Canadian fandom in *File 770*. ☺

In other news, John Hertz reports on the Spokane Westercon I also attended, Mike Glycer reports on NASFiC, and just a whole bunch of people write in.

***FOSFAX #194*** (Feb 99), 196 (Aug 99), 197 (Nov 99) - FOSFA, Box  
37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, U.S.A.

***Gegenschein*** 84, February 1999. "A science fiction fanzine from Eric Lindsay, who moved to PO Box 640, Airlie Beach, Qld 4802 Australia." Eric complains that Jean stole borrowed first his phone, then his fax, then his modem, and he hopes his computer is safe. ...

***Geis Letter*** 50, 59-69 - Richard Geis has recently suffered reverses which force him to cease publishing. A shame; although I never quite bought his conspiracy worldview, he sparked a few thoughts.

***Green Stuff*** 8, 9 - Murray Moore (current address and e-mail among COAs). A one-sheet apazine.

***Halcyon Days*** 82, Oct 99 - Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court,  
Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023, U.S.A. His letterzine, since input sort of overflowed his main genzine.

*International Revolutionary Gardener* - Joseph Nicholas & Judith Hanna, 15 Jansons Road, S. Tottenham, London N15 4JU, England.

*It Goes on the Shelf* 21 - Ned Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn GA 30047-4720; nedbrooks@sprynet.com

*Janthology* - Janice Gelb, 1070 Mercedes Avenue #2, Los Altos, CA 94022, U.S.A. On the occasion of Janice Gelb's fan fundery.

*The Knarley Knews* 76, June 99; 77, Aug 99; 78, Oct 99; 80, Feb. 2000 - Henry Welch, 1525 16<sup>th</sup> Ave., Grafton WI 53024-2017, U.S.A.; welch@admin.msoc.edu

*MimeMeow* - Bill Bridget: 4126 Mtn. Creek Rd., Apt. #6, Chattanooga, TN 37415-3427, U.S.A. Email: bbridget@mail.cha.bellsouth.net. This is ... um ... challenging. Not only do some of his anime clips exceed the broad boundaries of what television will broadcast, but his layout is, um, hard to read. What is this thing, Bill?

*Opuntia* 43.1B, 43.5, 44, 44.1A, 44.1G - Dale Speirs: Box 6830, Calgary, AB T2P 2E7. Dale's personalzine/letterzine/reviewzine/historyzine.

*Out of the Kaje* #3, 4, 5 - Karen Johnson, 35 Mariana Ave., S. Croydon, Vic. 3136, Australia; An interesting new zine from a new faned.

*Outworlds* 70 - Bill Bowers: 4651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45238-4503, U.S.A. (current email listed in COAs) My only example this year of a classic genzine.

*Sansevieria* 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31 - and *Sempervivum* 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 - Dale Speirs (address above). Demonstrating the breadth of Dale's interests, from linguistics to alternative history.

*Smidgen* 111, July 99 - Clan Burnout: A newsletter I picked up at Westercon 52 in Spokane.

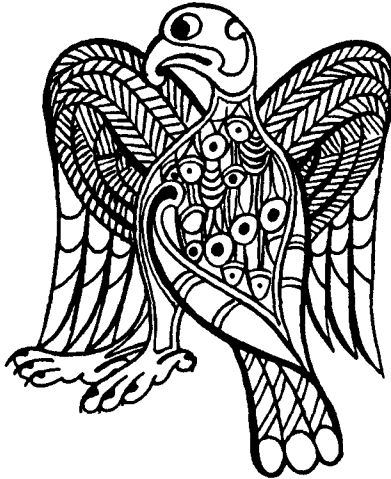
*Thyme* 126, Mar 99, 127, May 99 - Alan Stewart: POBox 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Vic. 3005, Australia; email fiawol@netspace.net.au. So similar in size, layout, contents, frequency and address to *Ethel* that I keep confusing the two.

*Twink* 14, 15, 16, 17 - E.B. Frohvet, 4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott City, MD 21042, U.S.A.

*Vanamonde* 322-337 - John Hertz: 236 S. Coronado St. #409, Los Angeles, CA 90057, U.S.A. John's apazine for APA-L

*Visions of Paradise* 81, 82 - Robert Sabella (address above). His main genzine.

*Xenolith* #43 - Bill Bowers (address above).



ILLUSTRATIONS ON COVER, P. 14, AND P. 25

FROM 'SYMBOLS FOR DESIGNERS'

AND FROM AIDAN MEEHAN'S

'CELTIC DESIGN' AND 'ANIMAL PATTERNS'