

THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE #8 & 9

September 2002



THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE #8 & 9, September 2002, being an occasional yet generally belated personal fanzine by Garth Spencer, produced in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, available either through P.O. Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, BC CANADA V6B 5B1, or via e-mail from the editor/publisher at garthspencer@shaw.ca, or downloadable from his website at <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn>

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ANOTHER OPINIONATED EDITORIAL



Two, no three months have passed since the deadline I set for RSNG #8; I guess that's not too many ...

Stories about Work

Since December 2001 I have worked as a temp, mostly not worked, worried about money, slept a lot, tried to restart the coffee group on Thursdays that used to compete with the long-established FRED gathering for Friday attendance in local fandom, and generally wasted time.

In May or so I was approached by one of the people I used to work with, at Coastal Trademark Services, about maybe coming back to work there. Turns out that after I "left", the person who gave me the boot also left; in her absence my credibility gained points, and the firm also found itself shorthanded.

Stories about Fandom

I've also talked with fans here about a faanfiction anthology, about a club member's handbook, even about reviving BCAPA, the local apa that regional (mostly) members used to maintain. Response has been so low that I had to think I had discovered a new superpower: the opposite of charisma, the power to lose or destroy people's interest in anything. Is it something in the way I put things?

In mid-August my friend in Portland, John Bartley, approached me about doing the fanzine room for the upcoming Orycon. I've done fanzine rooms before, which is why he thought of me; equally, I've run into the obliviousness and apathy of everything other than fanzine fandom. Maybe some actual promotion is called for, these days.

Anyone want to send me fanzines for display, sale or free distribution? My deadline is November 1, 2002.

*With a host of furious fancies,
Whereof I am commander,
With a burning spear and a horse of air
To the wilderness I wander.*

Tom o'Bedlam's Song

(Note: parts of what follows were originally editorial columns in recent BCSFAzines. – Ed.)

Was Jerry Mander right? Should we abolish television? In fact, should we outlaw the film industry?

What led me to this conjecture was one of my occasional ruminations about popular nonsense. Some kinds of popular nonsense, like the idea that Elizabeth Windsor is the worldwide mastermind of narcotic drug traffic, are obvious losers. But other kinds, such as popular American paranoia about the American federal government, actually seem to have started from a few historical facts. The problem is that *the most popular paranoias seem to be conditioned by popular TV or movie images*, far more than facts.

Consider: our popular myth about alien abduction seems to be conditioned by widely-known images of alien spacecraft, and alien ghoulies, and aliens doing weird and high-handed and legally actionable things ... all deriving from scores of B-movies.

Consider: since at least the 1970s, and the admission in mainstream news media that major public authorities had engaged in illegal plots and conspiracies, *wasted lives and treasure*, and covered up their actions ... any number of movies and TV series have revolved around illegal plots and conspiracies within public authorities. There followed, or so I infer, an ever-growing number of conspiracy theories and subcultures that cherished them.

Consider: since an absurd little miniseries titled *Amerika* aired on TV, starring Sam Neill and Kris Kristoffersen and a lot of unmarked black helicopters, a popular paranoia has been incubating in the States that a police state will be imposed in America, or that rogue intelligence operations are conducted in America, or that military/scientific operations that mutilate cattle are carried on in America ... all featuring black helicopters.

I could go on. Personally I'd like to embroider a paranoid fantasy about the alleged Free Trade acts, multinational corporations, the evil sinister globalist movement and the Chicago School of Economics; but I'm not ready to name names yet.

The point I'm driving at is that otherwise normal, intelligent people seem to build their version of reality on *the images broadcast repeatedly* by popular media, not by reading and research. *It is as if movie screens and TV screens were hypnotic mind control instruments.*

That itself sounds like one of those paranoid conspiracy theories. But keep reading.

Some of you know that I've had a lot of fun playing with silly ideas, some of them paranoid, some of them conspiratorial, and some of them just flat-out schizophrenic, if I took them seriously. The point, of course, is to demonstrate that some things cannot and should not be taken seriously.

So why do more than a very few people take seriously notions like the American Police State, or Alien Reptoid Rulers, or Kingdom Identity, or the Aryan Nations agenda?

I put it to you that the strength of our communications media is also a weakness, maybe a fatal weakness. Repeating messages and images over and over, as broadcast media do, is precisely how people get brainwashed.

So: who else wants to set up an Amish colony in British Columbia?

Am I Insane?

Some science fiction fans make up elaborate fantasies, either for story universes, or (more pathologically) to live in. I seem to be elaborating a fantasy world involving the Royal Swiss Navy, its international humour underground, its Intelligence Branch and its arch-nemesis the Circle Jerks, the same jerks who brought us the worldwide international cutbacks conspiracy.

If I'm not insane, then does anyone want to join in any of these activities? I can't tell. Is my secret superpower acting up again?

Taral Wayne, who contributes cover art to *BCSFazine* and other zines while pursuing a professional graphic arts career, created at least two story universes for graphic-novel or cartoon series. One involved furry humanoids called "Kjolas". Another involved little rodent-like humanoids called "house gamins". I only wish we had managed to see more than occasional scenes from these story universes. Warren Oddsson, the artist who departed the local fannish community (and our planet) in 2001, had ongoing characters called Chucky the Beaver and Marcel the Frog, but again, we only got to see occasional outtakes from the story universe.

(The implication I'm making is that a fan like me, outside of comics-oriented fandom, heard only sporadically about these story universes. Warren and Taral both seemed unaware how rarely their story universes appeared, at least on this horizon. Was there a more complete story at comics conventions, or in apas like Rowrbrazzle?)

Taral also sent me some material about less than stable fans, among his fanhistory materials. I keep thinking about the fellow who wrote stories about a world where the survivors of a fallen civilization lived a hardscrabble nomadic existence in the barren wastes ... which lay between the distant towers where prodigious, immobile minds, "entities vast, cool and unsympathetic", remained lofty and alone ... and the writer finally descended into a schizophrenic fugue, not unlike one of his immobile minds.

Now, I've engaged in occasional flights of fantasy myself, as with the absurd theories I put forward in the *Royal Swiss Navy Handbook*, or in this fanzine for comic effect. But some of these fantasies are the kind of thing a psychologist might take for mental pathology. Where do you draw the line?

As you might expect, I've done this before. Over twenty years ago I made a rather tasteless joke, confessing "all right, I shot John F. Kennedy." The fact that I was only five years old, and living in Victoria, when the unfortunate president was shot in Dallas, was half the point of my joke. When I came up with my fantasy about organized toddlers working as trained sharpshooters for Murder Inc., there were so many parties alleged to have potted the president, they could have filled a small town. Or at least our local convention centre.

Then there was my Christian Anarchist Party gag. (Have I told this before?) Somebody sent me an invitation to join the Progressive Conservative Party (that's right-wingers to you), at a point when I was campaigning for the New Democratic Party (that's liberal-pinko-socialist to you). To scare them off I pulled this absurd title from an H. Beam Piper novel, and invented a Pythonesque platform. Any form of political organization, I wrote solemnly, could work if only a sufficient level of solidarity, unity of social spirit or action, is manifest in the society at hand. (This was a good decade before anyone heard of the Polish political movement called "Solidarity".) Solidarity, I went on, is an outward and visible sign of the Holy Spirit and the action of God in human affairs. So let's dispense with reliance on particular political forms, they're diversionary, and rely entirely on solidarity. (The Conservatives never bothered me after that.)

So I make up comedy routines; so what? The Royal Swiss Navy and its enterprises can serve to send up royalty, the Swiss, navies, the neoconservative (or neoliberal) campaigns of the last thirty years, NAFTA, *maquiladora* industries, and everything that's going wrong with fandom in Western Canada. There should be a successor to the famous Rhinoceros Party.

But what I'm actually doing with RSN material looks sometimes like a self-referential, endlessly elaborated fantasy ... rather like a lonely child's fantasizing about imaginary friends, or rather like the schizophrenic writer's fantasies. My various stabs at popularizing the RSN look like my idealized vision of hypercompetent, comic-book-hero, SF-fan-group-cum-James-Bond-like-progressive-activists. A send-up, in short, of everything that fandom in my experience *failed* to be.

If I'm liable to go off the deep end with this stuff, I could resolve to give up embroidering these fantasies. I could, in fact, give up everything fannish, and commit

myself entirely to ... well, a course of action leading to trademark agent certification; or chartered accountancy; or some other prosperous and soul-destroying mundanity.

If I'm not liable to go off the deep end, then I could just as well buckle down, and devote my imagination and sense of humour to professional writing.

If I were serious about progressive activism, I could grow up, join an activist organization, and dispense with the eccentric comedy routines entirely.

Then again, I could go ahead and launch a war of comedy; start a successor group to the Rhino Party, and wage publicity wars with our political Philistines.

On Fulfilment

You start to question some basic life assumptions about my age. I don't know what objectives you assume are basic to living, but I think I've figured out what you need to keep breathing. Something more than water, food, money, and a sufficient partial pressure of oxygen; something fulfilling.

I'm sorry, but anime and role-playing games and models and special-effects films and action-adventure television and costuming do *not* fulfil me. In fact I'm hard-pressed to say what I *do* find fulfilling, not only in local fandom, but also in Vancouver as a whole. If I *wanted* to be vaguely bored and embarrassed all the time, as the price of not being alone, I'd go back to church, or start going to rock concerts and hockey games, or join a political party.

Where can I go to *play with words and ideas*, in local fandom? Or in the Northwest, for that matter? Where did fannish fandom go; are there really only three fan publishers in the Lower Mainland, and just six in western Canada? Who else does travel writing and personal journalism and scurrilous fiction about their friends, and shares the jokes about Courtney's boat and Death Will Not Release You, and makes up their own recipes for blog? (That's not too many in-jokes for you, is it?)

I thought I wanted to join fanzine fandom, when I joined fandom. Unfortunately I got a picture of 70s fanzine fandom when I became involved in the 80s, and through the 90s I realized that subculture was gone, or when I tried to attend Potlatch and Corflu, I didn't fit in even there.

Thoughts about Time, Personal Energy, and a Dysfunctional Society

Question for you: do you generally find yourself overloaded? Overbooked? A bit overcommitted with things to do, and under-resourced with time or money or – let's face it – plain old personal energy and motivation?

I had one of those minor-grade *satori* experiences a while ago, and conjectured that *everybody and everything* in a modern urban industrial society – from working stiffs like you and me, to major institutions ranging from welfare services to hospitals to public utilities – gets overloaded.

It doesn't have to be anyone's fault, or anyone's intention. It doesn't have to benefit anybody particularly. It doesn't have to be a universal fate of civilizations; and it doesn't have to be a chronic situation that will go on unendingly. Maybe it just doesn't have to be.

For my part I decided to list all the things I do, or think I should do, or daydreamed about doing ... originally, just to try and measure how thin I spread myself. Later I had more or less given up on trying to measure how I allocate time, and just wanted to control and reduce and organize all the papers and files I've got, which I keep losing track of.

I'll spare you the complete list of all the personal, and fannish, and other things I put on my plate. Suffice it to say that I came up with over two dozen projects, or categories of projects ... and I pretty well ignore *everything* but the fannish projects, to the prejudice of social or even mundane needs. I can't always keep track even of my fannish files and projects. (By mid-September I started to organize things rationally and

find things I was looking for; but I still had 15 or 20 paper-case-size boxes full of disorganized papers, books, fanzines and magazines.)

Obviously the foregoing is kind of insane.

What I really wanted to define, though, was what it takes to do this stuff, and how much I've got to give. Call it man-hours of time, or people points; or more importantly, *sustained attention, or personal energy.*

Whenever I brooded about the complications of running SF conventions, I kept running across this overlooked factor. At least, the fact that you just don't *get* quite the sustained attention to all departments, that even your average convention requires, seemed frequently overlooked to me. In consequence, a certain level of screwup seems inevitable.

Likewise in our personal lives, or at least in mine. Something there is that requires not only time, but attention or energy ... rather *more than we've got to give.* Especially given modern distractions.

One Step Behind

Have you ever had a waking nightmare? Mine goes like this: I get this great idea for a novel or a non-fiction project, just a bit big and nebulous but with hard work and application I can see it through to the end ... and before I fairly get started, find out that *someone else beat me to it.*

A little over twenty years ago I was ready to sum up some conclusions about the last popular efflorescence of New Age, mystical, and occult publishing, just based on reading popular published work ... and ran across *The New Nonsense* by Charles Fair. Later I was working my way through popular articles on astrophysics, and planetology, and realizing that someone could sum up this stuff for the benefit of writers and fans alike ... and discovered that writers like Poul Anderson, Stephen Gillett, and others had already done so, several times. More than once I have started out to finish off my notes for a fandom guide, or a con calendar, only to find out this was an invention whose time is past; fans who want this sort of information get it from the Internet, and most fans don't even bother. Most recently I was finally focusing some nebulous, long-term concerns I have, particularly for fiction purposes, with the way the human mind works, or more often doesn't work, particularly in family or workplace situations. Then I ran across a book review in Cheryl Morgan's *Emerald City*, in which a science fiction author has already covered the concept of a technology to "map and edit the human mind".

Either I'm cursed, or I just never get cracking fast enough.

The most recent instances of my having a minor revelation - thinking "Yeah, I should write about that", and then realizing somebody did more and better work on it earlier - were both fannish and mundane. For one thing, the Swiss Imperial Navy (SWIM'N) seems to have come up with more ideas for interesting activities than I ever considered for the Royal Swiss Navy.

For another thing, the quixotic crusade against the forces of globalization seems to be carried on in capable hands already, as witness the recent published works of Naomi Klein.

There's a serious movement out there. It's worldwide. It's questionable whether they really need a corps of clowns.



CONTRIBUTIONS TO A THEORY OF FANDOM (part V)

by Jacqueline Bartels

I have a couple theories on "fannishness" and why it is lacking in younger fans these days:

1. It used to be if you liked science fiction, fantasy, gaming, computers/technology, etc., you were considered "weird" and frequently ostracized by your peers (especially as a child and young adult). So when you met other fans,
 - a. You were very relieved and excited to finally find someone who shared your common interests, and,
 - b. If you were both ostracized and tormented as children, you also shared similar psychological trauma and the resulting effects to your thinking, reactions, social skills, interactions with other people, other behaviours, etc.

I think those two factors probably contributed to stronger bonds being formed between fans of yesteryear.

2. There is more science fiction and fantasy being produced today than anyone can keep up with. Hundreds of novels, dozens of magazines, dozens of TV shows, usually a dozen or so movies, plus thousands of fan fic stories and web pages on the Internet -- new every year! When there was less SF&F stuff available, it was much more likely that the fan you met had read many of the same books and magazines/fanzines and watched many of the same shows and movies as you. Now it's extremely unlikely. So fans today have much less common material to talk about (and to shape their thinking) than fans of yesteryear, unless they are specialized. I think this trend is likely to continue.

*Jacqueline Passey Bartels <jacqueline@alt.net>, 30 Dec 2001
(Jacqueline Bartels lives in Washington State and is active in the Libertarian Party.)*

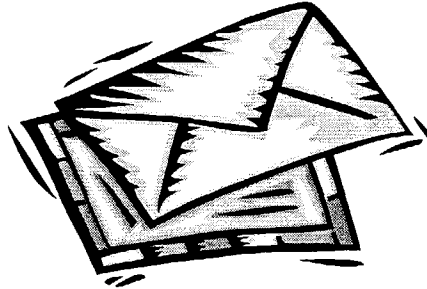
(Editor comments:

A lot of people have made similar comments, Jacqueline. A few fans have gone further, and asked why it is that fandom today is so fractured, being in effect not one fandom but many subfandoms.

(There was a time when people like Gary Farber, or was it rich brown?, could actually write formal theses on fandom as a subculture.

(Personally I suspect this is another case of fandom mirroring society at large - fracturing into many subcultures, because the people in any given city or nation do not all have compatible values, beliefs, and customs, or because there is just too damn much conflicting news, and too damn many people, to relate to.

(What can we hold in common, most of us?)



LETTERS FROM MY FRIENDS

Brin McLaughlin, <BrinInSF@aol.com>, 30 Dec 2001

You wrote:

>Conferring with Earthquakes #7 and #8, spring and November 2001, Brin-Marie
>McLaughlin, 247 19th Avenue Apt. 19, San Francisco, CA 94121-2353

This should read Apartment #6. :)

Cuyler Brooks <nedbrooks@sprynet.com>, 30 Dec 2001

You wrote:

> It Goes on the Shelf #23, Oct. 2001, Ned Brooks, 4817 Dean Lake, Lilburn, GA
> 30047-4720, nedbrooks@sprynet.com. I'm still deciding how to evaluate this.

I had no idea I was so difficult!

From: Eric Lindsay, 31 Dec 2001

You wrote:

>COAs: New email addresses (up to this fall) for
>David Levine: david.d.levine@intel.com (ditto)

Hasn't David left Intel?

(Your intel is more current than mine. I am so not with it.)

Robert Sacks died about a year ago, I think November 2000 (couldn't locate the announcement). That is if you mean the Worldcon business meeting guy.

(See what I mean?)

> Maybe I would like to be an independent researcher; a freelance researcher, if students or educators avail themselves of such a resource.

Lots of them around. The problem is I suspect most don't get paid.
Sorry to hear of your father.

>(Then the Vancouver CommunityNet crashed in August, so I am reconstructing everything.)

Don't you have backups of your Web pages?
(On disk somewhere ...)

> High speed Internet is coming to my area so I looking into getting a Firewall. It is simply amazing to me that the vast majority of Firewall products are INCOMPLETE such that hackers know how to circumvent them, very few are certified, and there are a huge number of computer article writers giving extremely dangerous advice.

People don't want to spend the time and effort understanding how to set up their computer safely. They want a Firewall to be a Magic Bullet, and then get upset when it isn't. When some simple virus eats all their files, maybe they will decide to try harder.

> Question: Is the "War on Terrorism" in fact a war, and in fact directed against terrorism?

Still has more to do with oil than terrorists. As long as the USA keeps propping up non-democratic regimes in Muslim countries, I suspect more terrorists will keep appearing (not propping them up doesn't mean terrorism will disappear, of course).

In the long term I think the USA should covertly encourage its propaganda machinery (like Hollywood) to encourage doubt about religion (not just the Muslim faith, although heavier on that). Getting religious fanatics to kill themselves is harder if they have doubts (which may be why many of the hijackers apparently weren't told they volunteered for a suicide mission).

("Should"? Now let's see what actually happens.)

In the shorter term, encourage separation of religion and state everywhere, and encourage democratic institutions throughout the Muslim world (which has virtually no democracies at all). If you are going to interfere in the internal affairs of countries, at least have some aim more moral than just protecting oil company assets and the right to drive SUVs.

> The most relevant public statements quickly connected the atrocity to an extremist group in the Muslim world. Very quickly, when you think of it, al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden, were understood to be sheltered by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

There were already UN sanctions against Afghanistan to try to get them to hand bin Laden over for previous acts. You can find the text of them online at the U.N.

From: "roger wells" <rwells@whitties.org> 30 Dec 2001

... Carolyn [Ibis was] down in the States. I had a great time showing her around Portland today. The address from emails she has sent me is Carolyn_Ibis@telus.net
According to the latest Fantasy Amateur Press Association, Arnie Katz's current email is crossfire@lvcm.com.

Enjoyed the *Royal Swiss Navy Gazette*.

"Lloyd&Yvonne Penney" <penneys@netcom.ca> 30 Dec 2001

I've got here issue 7 of RSNG. ... 'Tis the night before New Year's Eve, so I thought I could get a few things done, such as a loc, so here it is.

New e-mail addresses...actually, Christina Carr and Martin Hunger are in Vancouver Right Now. They are looking to meet some of the fans locally, and perhaps spend the New Year's Eve with them. ... try Akatz@aol.com. And as for Robert Sacks...he died some time ago. I cannot remember if he died before the Chicago or Philadelphia Worldcons...my brain's a little fried right now.

(I really have neglected my own correspondence ... I should have said quite a while ago, we got in touch with Christina and Martin, they showed up at least once at FRED, and they showed up semi-regularly when I tried to restart a local coffee and conversation group. In fact I helped them unload a U-haul full of their stuff, in the latter part of August.)

I never did get anything ready for *Confabulation*...I regret that. And, I should go and have a look at the finished product.

It is a shame about the death of Cliff Kennedy, but I think you might have him mixed up with Crad Kilodney, quite alive, who used to sell his books on the streets of Toronto. I haven't seen him in quite a while, but he still writes profusely, and on the website www.jagular.com/crad.

I wish there wasn't so much geography between here and Vancouver, for I'd like to come back to VCon. I see I did very poorly for voting in the Auroras past...I think I'm pretty well done for my usefulness in local fandom at least. Not only are we not on the Torcon 3 committee, but the Ad Astra BoD used some politics to keep Yvonne off the concom. I left the committee in protest, and in so doing, wound up a 20-year career with Ad Astra. It's not as painful as I thought it would be.

Literacy is in general decline, partially because of governmental attacks on education, and partially because of the costs of reading materials. I find that as a professional proofreader, most people don't care if words are spelled incorrectly or not. They won't be reading the stuff, anyway. I find more and more typos in paperbacks, newspapers and even on television. I guess giving a damn is just too anal retentive, but at least, I make a living at it ...

I have the same problem that Paul Carpentier does...I'd rather take my time to read, reflect and respond to fanzines, instead of the instant response that the Internet demands. I enjoy writing these letters of comment, and I write about 200 or more a year without getting anyone unduly upset over what I've written. And, if I do make someone upset, they have the time to reflect and understand that offence was not intended. Instead, with the Internet, that time of reflection and consideration isn't there. Respond NOW!, or the discussion goes on to another topic. As a result, I've been the target of flames and just plain rude remarks, and I have already unsubscribed from one listserv, and I am considering resigning from the rest. It's not worth getting scorched from the flames.

As I read further, I find myself struggling to understand the zine, my frying brain is now crispy around the edges, and is turning to mush like a brick of lard. So I will say that I enjoyed the rest of the zine, but could not think of suitable comments for it. The apans in the crowd will say RAE,BNC, but I prefer to say exactly what I mean, or at least try. If I could ever catch up on my sleep, I might never wake again. I plead fatigue. I have tomorrow off, but Yvonne has to go to work for four hours.

From: "Murray Moore" <mmoore@pathcom.com>, 1 Jan 2002

Tomorrow, Jan 2, 2002, I start my fourth year as a technical writer. From 1977 to 1992 I was a small market newspaper reporter and editor. From 1992 to 1997 I was a free-lancer. In 1998 I took a one-year information technology course with the DeVry Institute. I did not plan to become a technical writer. None of the IT diploma course's 12 classes dealt with technical writing. The benefit is that I ended up a technical writer for a small software company and what I learned in the 12 classes was very useful in my understanding the new industry I was entering.

You mention the possibility of returning to university. If you want to investigate technical writing, I suggest you find the Vancouver chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, go to a meeting, and talk to people.

After I began working as a tech writer I earned a tech writing certificate from a community college, going to evening classes, at a cost of about \$1,500. My employer repaid me my costs.

As for money, I started at \$32,000 in January 1999. My salary at the end of three years is \$43,000. I would have gotten a raise at the end of 2001 except for a pesky company-wide salary-increase freeze.

Luck in 2002, Garth.

From: "Welch, Henry" <welch@msoe.edu>, 18 Jan 2002

At 02:02 AM 12/30/2001, you wrote:

- > *If I had any idea what else to do for a living, what would I want to do? I have trouble grasping the concept "want".*

Sometimes this isn't about want, but flailing about trying things and find out what you don't want.

- > *Maybe I would like to be an independent researcher; a freelance researcher, if students or educators avail themselves of such a resource.*
- > *I would like to be a reporter, if that still meant anything worthwhile. I would like to be a freelance technical writer, if I can speed up my capacity to learn new programs, and other subjects. I would like to put up Web pages and websites on various subjects, if I can just upgrade my skills.*
- > *I would like to be an information broker, if that means anything.*
- > *I mean by that, someone who gathers useful information on any subject, whether by chance or by design, and makes it available to people who need it or want it. This sounds pretty innocuous, like my activities so far in putting up fannish websites; but I suspect the term "information broker" has been used for some sinister dealings, a little more like insider trading or offering police files with the Mob. Obviously I need to do some market research.*
- > *Have you any comments?*

None of these are the easiest fields to succeed in. I have a cousin who does fine as a freelance writer out of Montana. She even manages to get trips like climb[ing] Mt. Rainier with army rangers in training.

- > *Swiss Navy. (Then the Vancouver CommunityNet crashed in August, so I am reconstructing everything.)*

- > Richard E. Geis <RERWINGEIS@cs.com>, 14 Mar 2001
- >
- > Alas, Garth, better stop sending *The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette* in
- > hopes of a revived Geis Letter, or even

But he revived it earlier this week. If you haven't been getting it let me know and I'll forward the e-copy I have.

- > *There are people who have a computer but are novices in using it*
- > *... if you put the same level of know how behind the wheel of an*
- > *automobile and put them on the public highways, you would have people*
- > *paying no attention to the rules of the road, running out of gas by the*
- > *side of the highway, and never knowing how to drive when there is snow*
- > *on*
- > *the ground. I suspect this is the default human condition.*

But the price of Internet failure is usually not the spectacular death of a family in a minivan.

Rodney Leighton's letterzine (undated)

... 98% of the people I consider friends live in the U.S.; about 95% of copies of this thing go there. That doesn't prevent me from recognizing that the so-called war on terrorism has nothing to do with terrorism; nor does it prevent me from being pissed at the greedy U.S. lumber barons who are screwing us or at the U.S. forces who murdered some Canadian boys. The fact that it was likely a pure accident and the fact that I do not think Canadian troops should be in Afghanistan should not affect my friends. Some of them disagree with me. I don't have anything else to say about *The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette* #7.

Chester Cuthbert, 1104 Mulvey Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3M 1J5, May 13, 2002-08-31

... Although you brought us up to date on your doings, you did not mention having received my letter enclosing the copies of Bowie-Reed's reports on the CSFA. I sent a copy to Dale Speirs also, but he has not commented.

(Many thanks. I had already incorporated some third-hand report of Bowie-Reed's work in setting up a federated Canadian fan organization in the long ago, but didn't have any immediate comment on what you sent me.)

Your fanzines are always informative and since you have access to the fanzines in the B.C. club library, I wonder if there are any old enough to mention anything about Eric Frank Russell. I have an English correspondent to whom I've sent all the information I could supply, and Lorna Toolis has been most helpful, but more information is wanted.

(Um, the club library at Graeme Cameron's home is a little less than totally accessible. In any case you and Lorna have probably supplied more information than the club library can supply.)

I receive four or five of the fanzines you get, and I am always happy to read them, but I have not sought more. I have read over 100 books on hypnotism and this takes so much time that I have almost ignored SF.

(You're not alone. At the end of August there was similar discussion on the MemoryHole listserv, or Timebinders, in which Bruce Gillespie or Greg Pickersgill

confessed that they're just not keeping up with the current SF being published, despite giving themselves airs of being au fait with the field.)

Tony Davis, 41 Karen Street, Thornhill, ON L4J 5L5, May 8, 2002

Hobbies, including fandom, are taking a back seat more and more these days as work demands all but some sleep- and family-time. But I try. I am still actively involved in pulp (magazine) fandom.

On April 27, 2002 we had our annual pulp show in Toronto. About 150 people came to buy (we get some local dealers and a few from the U.S.) and attend talks and socialize. The venue is the branch of the Toronto Public Library which houses the Merril SF collection.

While I collect *Weird Tales* (1923-54), many collect the hero pulps – *Doc Savage, The Shadow, The Spider*, etc. And the cost of these brown, flaking tomes continues to increase, partly due to comic collector mania and eBay. Interestingly enough, aside from romance and sports pulps, the next least expensive category is science fiction pulp magazines. You can get an SF pulp with the first appearance of a Ray Bradbury story for \$10 or less. There's a lot of great material in *Astounding* from Heinlein, van Vogt, etc. or in *Planet Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories*, etc. The older Gernsback pulps are also available. That's not to say that there aren't pricey SF pulps – there are some. But since the early days of SF fandom in the late 1920s, fans kept their SF pulps, so there is no shortage of these today. A lot of neat "reads" for about the cost of a paperback.

Aside from my involvement with the annual Toronto pulp show, I edit the con-zine for the annual Pulpcon held in the U.S. every summer – a four-day con with lots of guest speakers, dealers, etc. It takes place this year in Dayton over the second week of July.

Will I see you at Torcon next year?

(Um. Dickey question, that. On the one hand I have had a long-standing prejudice against really big conventions, and so I've never gone to Worldcons. But on the other hand, I guess I compromised my principles by attending Westercons, most thoroughly when I worked on Westercon 44, and in that way supported precisely the sort of certifiably insane convention chair that I was trying to discourage, by my boycott.

(The bottom line may be that I've sort of supported Murray Moore in his other Canadian fan endeavours, and he is promoting Torcon 3 ... and the last Convention Business Meeting, for which I served as secretary, approved Torcon's uncontested bid to host the 2003 Convention.

(Or maybe it all just depends on what my finances will be, this time next year.)

Lloyd&Yvonne Penney, July 4, 2002

I am very grateful that I have been fully employed for the last 3 years and 10 months, but I do wish that my employment had been at another company. Where I am, the bosses are abusive and the work is just plain boring. More and more, these very letters are being composed at work. I have more and more time, and creating these letters makes me appear to be busy. In the meantime, the job hunt goes on, looking for something a little more challenging, but without luck. One company called me yesterday to tell me I am number 2 on their list, and I shall receive a call if number 1 doesn't work out. Close counts only in horseshoes and hand grenades, definitely not in jobhunting. Another company has told me they will hire me if a big client is signed on. So far, no big client has signed on, and I continue to wait and wait. Why can't I just win Lotto 6/49 and be done with it?

I should congratulate you on getting [nominated] onto the [2002] Aurora ballot. I would like to see *BCSFAzine* or the *OSFS Statement* win this time around; the last two years, Karen Bennett's *Voyageur* from the USS Hudson's Bay/IDIC, the last major Star Trek club in Toronto has won the Aurora for Fan Achievement (Fanzine), and the club

has basically block-voted Karen the award twice. I have one of the few copies of *Voyageur* to go to an outsider; it has the usual Trekkish blend of club news, club members smiling for the camera, club news and self-congratulations, and horrific fanfic. I will admit that the zine is 11x17 folded and saddle-stitched, with scanned photos here and there; it has an eye-catching layout. Whether it's enough to win two Auroras may not be for me to say.

(That block-voting is precisely why the 2002 Convention Business Meeting ratified a motion to rule clubzines out of consideration for the fanzine Aurora Award. Honestly, despite Voyageur's virtues, it was pretty much unknown outside of its club; wouldn't it have made more sense to give it an award, if it were known across the country?)

... Any company that realizes it made a mistake in letting you go might treat you better the second time around. But then, when I worked for Maclean Hunter, they let me go because my boss had neglected to train me during my three-month trial. I asked for it, and complained that I wasn't getting it, but the reason they let me go was that I wasn't trained. I went to HR to complain, and they said they couldn't do much, but I was welcome to send in résumés for future jobs, and I would be fast-tracked back into the company. Needless to say, Maclean Hunter, now Rogers Media, has received probably more than a dozen résumés from me, and I haven't had so much as an interview.

(Left hand, right hand.

(By now you must have seen the account of my adventures in employment, and unemployment, and rehiring. In the interim I worked as a word-processing/data entry clerk at two medical clinics, BC Rapid Transit, and a law firm.

(I wonder what I'll be when I grow up?)

Tara Wayne, taralwayne@3web.net, July 1, 2002

I used to write about my fantasy worlds, and a lot of my art was based on it in my fanzine days. But I generally found fandom unresponsive. A few people were sympathetic, and equal number downright hostile, and the majority politely looked the other way in respect of other fanac that they did like. I eventually got the feeling that it was somewhat of an embarrassment to most people that I had these rather transparent fantasies, and yet wasn't quite some wretch of a Trekkie or whatever, that could easily be dismissed. (Didn't stop everybody though.) Despite myself, I did get caught up more in the orthodox fannish mythos, and for the last few years of the 80's my neuroses were academic so far as fandom was concerned. I had learned to "pass".

In furry fandom at least, fantasy worlds are the rule rather than the exception. This produces no creative utopia, I assure you. Every other person is dying to tell you everything about "Fur-madoria" or "Fur Fleet" or whatever stereotype genre they've translated into anthropomorphic terms. They can drone on for hours, days, lifetimes... always in a voice guaranteed more effective than a fistful of Valium. So now I just don't talk about my own fantasy worlds at all.

...unless invited.

(The key thing that struck me about the occasional glimpses into your Kjola and "house gamins" story universes is that they were so occasional. If non-comics fans like myself had more constant exposure to your story backgrounds, that would be another matter. This is a question of promotion.

(Come to that, an effort at wider publicity and promotion wouldn't hurt the Aurora Awards, either ...)

Speaking of Auroras, I can tell you that one reason some of the categories aren't broken into more categories. At least as matters stood some years ago, when I introduced some of the current rules at the Winnipeg Convention's award-rules meeting, there was a reluctance even to have *this* many. The cons that give the Auroras

(then "Caspers") were almost always rather small, and the cost of fabricating awards not cheap. Perhaps this is less of a problem now, but I doubt it.

Another point. I do sometimes wonder whether the Aurora doesn't just reward mediocrity. Take the novel category. If no Canadian SF or fantasy novel gets on the Hugo ballot, just how good is it anyway? Does it really deserve an award just because nationalistic criteria have eliminated 90% or more of the competition?

Look at it the other way, too. I've seen novels by Robert J. Sawyer and Bob Wilson on the Hugo ballot, but not on the Aurora. When most of the English-speaking world thinks highly of a Canadian written novel, why are Canadians sometimes less impressed? Even on a far more trivial scale, I've been nominated for the Hugo several times for my fan art, but not once for an Aurora. Pressed for an answer, I would imagine in that case it has something to do with availability of fanzines. But I have no idea what accounts for the seeming difference in taste between Americans and Canadians in published SF.

(I should think that Canadian fans are less aware of novels by Canadian SF/fantasy authors. Put another way, there are numerically fewer contemporary Canadian fans aware of, and interested in written SF or fantasy, and therefore numerically much fewer Canadian fans sufficiently aware of, and interested in such writings to nominate them for the Auroras. Multiply this fraction by the vanishingly small fraction aware of, and motivated to participate in the Auroras, as compared to the fraction of American fans participating in the Hugos. The comparatively smaller product may be sufficient to explain the seeming difference in Canadian fans' tastes.)

Lyn McConchie, Farside Farm, R.D. Norsewood, New Zealand, July 24, 2002

(After we discussed increasing reports of random, public violence :)

I DO think our culture is increasingly violent. I also believe I know why. It's the growing complexity and frustrations of modern life. People weren't evolved to live this way, we may be in another 1000 [sic] years, but right now civilisation and science are advancing faster than we can cope. I'm outside much of that. I get up when I wake, sleep when I'm tired, structure my writing around those times, my farm work, and my energy levels. Little stress, less hassle, but the times I AM stressed it's dealing with government departments or private companies who don't want to listen. I think this sort of problem adds to the unemployment rate; some of the long-term unemployed are people who simply can't handle dealing with demands of the kind departments and companies impose.

It's like *Heartbeat*, which a friend and I watched recently, in which there's a chap who'd be slightly retarded. Nice guy, hard-working and honest, competent if you keep the job simple and make sure he knows what to do, but no good with complexity or pressure. Back in the 60s when the series is set, a guy like that would still be fine. [There was] enough labouring work or odd jobs to keep him employed. A hundred years ago no-one would have even noticed his handicap, he'd have had a job, a wife and kids, and got by quite well.

It's like **, my mate next door's son ... He's a good worker, IF you don't hassle him, don't expect him to keep any kind of time, and accept he's illiterate. But there's no way he can hold down a normal 9-5 job which requires reading, time-keeping, and a boss.

The question is, if people like that find life so unbearable currently, what's going to happen to them in another generation? Another two or three generations? I haven't seen the film as yet ... but I'm under the impression *Forrest Gump* dealt with that to some extent. Must watch the movie when it arrives. I think it's a deepening problem as is that of ordinary people finding the stress and unrealised potentials of their lives increasingly unbearable. It results in outbursts of rage at whatever is handy, road rage, air rage, and why?, because frustration builds to a level where they can't contain it. I

suspect a lot of the less-organised aspects of terrorism, and their creators, stem from the same frustrations.

(I think you're partly right. Not all of your points support the conclusion, though.

(It's questionable how much our alleged civilization has advanced, or how much scientific advances have to do with anything. If anything, we are reverting to a Dickensian environment where a social class with investment capital makes all the decisions for everybody, incidentally wreaking havoc on people who don't have investment capital. Scientists are often hired hands, not decision-makers; and most of the change in life you see is merely a change in tools and furnishings, in technology. Although I'll grant you, it is getting more and more difficult for people to find work without communicating with computers of some kind.

(Forrest Gump is actually about a slow-witted man who somehow evades getting institutionalized, and in fact lives quite a full, successful life. Since his life is set in the 1960s and 70s in the United States, I class the story as fantasy.

(There are lots of reasons why people explode in road rage, or air rage; I believe one of the established factors is a high CO₂/low O₂ level, as in contemporary airplane flights. Not all of the people showing rage attacks are life-skills-challenged.

(Although I can well believe many of the permanently homeless and unemployed, and many of the people having rage attacks, are challenged in the way you describe.)

HOW TO TELL APART DIFFERENT KINDS OF ANGLOS FROM QUITE A LONG WAY AWAY

- Aussies: Believe you should look out for your mates.
Brits: Believe that you should look out for those people who belong to your club.
Americans: Believe that people should look out for and take care of themselves.
Canadians: Believe that that's the government's job.
- Aussies: Dislike being mistaken for Pommies (Brits) when abroad.
Canadians: Are rather indignant about being mistaken for Americans when abroad.
Americans: Encourage being mistaken for Canadians when abroad.
Brits: Can't possibly be mistaken for anyone else when abroad.
- Americans: Spend most of their lives glued to the idiot box.
Canadians: Don't, but only because they can't get more American channels.
Brits: Pay a tax just so they can watch 4 channels.
Aussies: Export all their crappy programs, which no-one there watches, to Britain, where everybody loves them.
- Americans: Love to watch sports on the idiot box.
Brits: Love to watch sports in stadiums so they can fight with other fans.
Canadians: Prefer to actually engage in sports rather than watch them.
- Americans: Will jabber on incessantly about football, baseball and basketball.
Brits: Will jabber on incessantly about cricket, soccer and rugby.
Canadians: Will jabber on incessantly about hockey, hockey, hockey, and how they beat the Americans twice, playing baseball.
Aussies: Will jabber on incessantly about how they beat the Poms in every sport they played them in.
- Americans: Spell words differently, but still call it "English."

Brits: Pronounce their words differently, but still call it "English."
 Canadians: Spell like the Brits, pronounce like Americans.
 Aussies: Add "G'day", "mate," and a heavy accent to everything they say

Brits: Shop at home and have goods imported because they live on an island.
 Aussies: Shop at home and have goods imported because they live on an island.
 Americans: Cross the southern border for cheap shopping, gas and liquor in a backwards country.
 Canadians: Cross the southern border for cheap shopping, gas and liquor in a backwards country.

Aussies: Are extremely patriotic to their beer.
 Americans: Are flag-waving, anthem-singing, and obsessively patriotic to the point of blindness.
 Canadians: Can't agree on the words to their anthem, when they can be bothered to sing them.
 Brits: Do not sing at all but prefer a large brass band to perform the anthem.

Americans: Drink weak, pissy-tasting beer.
 Canadians: Drink strong, pissy-tasting beer.
 Brits: Drink warm, beery-tasting piss.
 Aussies: Drink anything with alcohol in it.

Brits: Are justifiably proud of the accomplishments of their past citizens.
 Americans: Are justifiably proud of the accomplishments of their present citizens.
 Canadians: Prattle on about how some of those great Americans were once Canadian.
 Aussies: Wallow on about how some of their past citizens were once outlaw Pommies, but none of that matters after several beers.

Americans: Seem to think that poverty and failure are morally suspect.
 Canadians: Seem to believe that wealth and success are morally suspect.
 Brits: Seem to believe that wealth, poverty, success and failure are inherited things.
 Aussies: Seem to think that none of this matters after several beers.

Canadians: Encourage immigrants to keep their old ways and avoid assimilation.
 Americans: Encourage immigrants to assimilate quickly and dump their old ways.
 Brits: Encourages immigrants to go to Canada or America.

Canadians: Endure bitterly cold winters and are proud of it.
 Brits: Endure oppressively wet and dreary winters and are proud of it.
 Americans: Don't have to do either, and couldn't care less.
 Aussies: Don't understand what inclement weather means.

Aussies: Have produced comedians like Paul Hogan and Yahoo Serious.
 Canadians: Have produced many great comedians, like John Candy, Martin Short, Jim Carrey, Dan Aykroyd, and all the rest at SCTV.
 Americans: Think that these people are American!
 Brits: Have produced many great comedians, but Americans ignore them because they don't understand subtle humour.

*Relayed via Alister Wm Macintyre (MacWheel99@aol.com)
 19 Apr 2002*

COLLECTED NEWS FROM AND ABOUT FANDOM

2002 Aurora Awards

The 2002 Aurora Awards for Canadian SF, Fantasy and fan activity were presented at Con-Version 19 on August 9-11, 2002. The winners are:

- Best Long-Form Work in English: *In the Company of Others*, Julie E. Czerneda (DAW, June/2001)
Best Long-Form Work in French: *Les Transfigurés du Centaure*, Jean-Louis Trudel (Médiaspaul, 2001)
Best Short-Form Work in English: "Left Foot on a Blind Man", Julie E. Czerneda (*Silicon Dreams*, DAW)
Best Short-Form Work in French: «Souvenirs de lumière», Daniel Sernine (*Solaris* 138)
Best Work in English (Other): "Underwater Nightmare", Isaac Szpindel (*Rescue Heroes Cycle II* -- Episode 17a, air-date Aug/2001) [TV screenplay]
Best Work in French (Other): *Solaris*, Joël Champetier, réd. (Les Compagnons à temps perdu)
Artistic Achievement: James Beveridge (*On Spec* Spring/01, *On Spec* Summer/01)
Fan Achievement (Fanzine): *Voyageur*, Karen Bennett & Sharon Lowachee, eds. (USS Hudson Bay / IDIC) (www.idic.ca) [clubzine]
Fan Achievement (Organizational): Peter Johnson (USS Hudson Bay / IDIC)
Fan Achievement (Other): Alex von Thorn, fan writing/écriture fanique

Presenters of the awards included Guest of Honour Michael Bishop, Toastmaster Robert Sawyer, and faneditor runner-up Garth Spencer, to name but a few.
(Don Bassie, Dennis Mullin, and Garth Spencer)

Lydia Langstaff Award

Derryl Murphy announced at the Aurora banquet that this year's recipient of the Lydia Langstaff Award will be Elaine I. Chen, who will receive \$100 on the strength of two short stories.

(Garth Spencer)

Bequest

A collector by the name of William Gibson – no, not our William Gibson – died last year aged 92, and “did sf research great service by amassing 35,000 rare sf and pulp magazines, now donated to the University of Calgary, Canada” (*Ansible* 181, August 2002). The news of this bequest was carried by Canadian Press on August 2, 2002, and occasioned a lot of comment at Convention 2002.

(Donna McMahon, Clint Budd, Garth Spencer et al., August 2 – 11, 2002)

Outcomes of the 2002 Convention Business Meeting

Torcon 3 Bid to Host Convention 2003: Dale Speirs moved that we accept the Torcon bid; Robert Sawyer seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ratification of motion to clarify category definitions. When the categories were created, it was considered obvious which ones were for professional work and which were not.

“Moved that (a) the title for Article II, Section 2: ‘Best Work in English’ be changed to ‘Best Professional Work in English’; that (b) the title for Article II, Section 3: ‘Best Work in French’ be changed to ‘Best Professional Work in French’; and that (c) Article II, Section 4, Item A have this sentence added to the definition for Artistic Achievement: ‘This category is for both professional and fan work’.”

Paul noted the omission of the phrase "Long Form" in the award category designations. Robert spoke against this motion, as a solution for a non-existent problem. This motion confirms current practice. NOT RATIFIED

Ratification of the motion to remove club publications from consideration for the Fan Achievement (publication) category. RATIFIED

Ratification of the motion to make it more difficult to be nominated. NOT RATIFIED

Ratification of a motion aimed at reducing possible voter fraud: "that separate, personal cheques, cashier's cheques, or money orders – no cash – be submitted with ballots, and that ballots be submitted in separate envelopes". NOT RATIFIED

Dennis Mullin's motion specifying that the host convention must set up an awards subcommittee (rather than making it optional) to oversee the awards process. NOT RATIFIED.

Sandra Kasturi's question, "I have wanted to have a separate poetry category in the Aurora Awards for years. How would one go about lobbying to get one?" Paul noted that the "Short Form" fiction award categories were open to nominations of poetry. Linda noted that this question about poetry has been raised /numerous/ times, and always answered "yes". Fran noted that Marcie Tentchoff had in fact won an Aurora Award the previous year for poetry. The meeting passed on deciding on this motion.

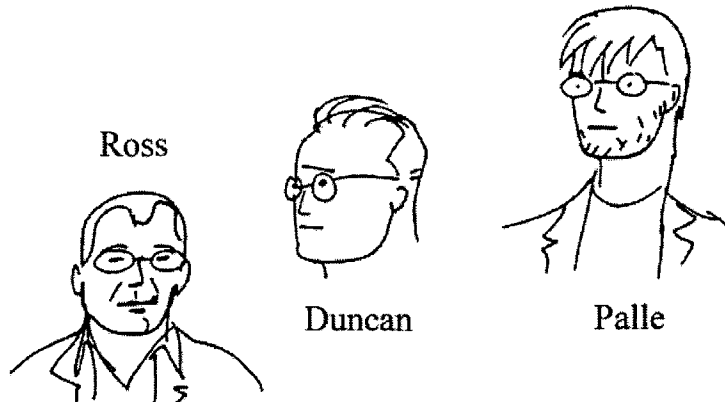
Dennis Mullin's additional line for "Article II, Section 9: Final Ballot": "If fewer than three (3) nominees make the eligibility cut in a category, that category will not be placed on the final ballot." Translation: A category will not appear on the final ballot if only 2 nominees are eligible. This will probably only occur if there is low nominator interest in the category. The meeting passed on deciding on this motion.

Paul Bushell's minimum-nomination-bar motion like Dennis Mullin's, but specifying three (3) nominations and/or five percent (5%) of the total vote. Paul's motion was passed unanimously. It will go to Torcon for ratification.

Garth Spencer's motion that:

1. the AGM elect the Aurora administrator for the following year;
2. the Aurora administrator
 - a) shall be responsible for all the processes in the Aurora competition,
 - b) shall be the final authority on the application of the Aurora rules;
3. a) the complete list of the current Aurora Award rules (as of 2001-2002) shall be published on the Aurora website BEFORE the 2002-2003 eligibility list is published,
 - b) this set of rules shall be the sole source of decisions about the Aurora Awards (with the exception of 3.c)
 - c) in the event that a decision must be made that is not covered by the existing rules, the Aurora administrator shall make that decision and post it to the Aurora website immediately. The decision(s) will be voted on at the following AGM and, if approved, added to the rules."

The first two motions Garth presented were rejected by the membership with no vote. The third motion was moved and seconded, voted on, and passed unanimously. It goes to next year's meeting for ratification.



VCON CHANGES VENUE: Vcon 27 officially changed its venue from the Guildford Sheraton Hotel in Surrey to the Plaza 500 Hotel at 500 West 12th Avenue in Vancouver. For reservations call: (604) 873-1811 or toll free: (1-800) 473-1811; the URL is www.plaza500.com.

CANVENTION 2002:WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION

By Garth Spencer

(a previous version of this conreport appeared in BCSFAzine 352, Sept. 2002.)

Con-Version 19/Convention 22, held August 9-11, 2002 at the Metropole Convention Centre and Westin Hotel, Calgary, Alberta. Guest of Honour: Guy Gabriel Kay. Canadian GoH: James Alan Gardner. Artist GoH: Lar de Souza. Science GoH: Geoffrey Landis. Toastmaster: Robert J. Sawyer. ConSpec GoHs: Michael Bishop, Alan Steele, Peter Watts, Jeff de Boer.

Thursday before this convention, I was running around in decapitated-chicken mode to pack everything (except a camera). Due to my poor budgeting (and a lame-brained hotel telephone receptionist) I was neither flying to Calgary, nor staying at the Westin, but taking a Greyhound bus and staying at the Ramada eight blocks away.

*Oh and just one time, I would make it to Convention
And see esteemed presenters place our laurels on native sons,
Tracing one warm line through a land so wild and savage
And see who are Aurora's chosen ones.*

Travelling 14-plus hours by Greyhound is not the way to go. But it was endurable, more or less, and the landscape views were great as long as the sun was up.

It is wisely written that he who goes to a con will come back with at least a cold. In fact I seem to have caught one while *going* to the con. Maybe I should have joined someone who was driving to Calgary.

What the hell: the weather was fair, the con wasn't a very long walk away, and I even had a chance to take a nap and shower and change. I even found a photocopy place relatively close by, so I could copy up CUFF sales-lists and other chapbooks for distribution along with VCon flyers. (Since downtown Calgary is eerily quiet on weekends, and most things there are closed after five and on Sunday, I took careful note of the stores and eateries that were open.)

Con-Version is definitely a different con; they do things differently there, like no panels on Friday afternoon before you can get there. In fact the Registration desk wasn't open until 5:00 p.m.

Some initial confusion was occasioned by the way functions were spread out. It developed that there were *two* consuites, for instance, one in the Metropole Centre and one in the Westin Hotel. Although the buildings are virtually next to each other, the "plus-15" overpass from the hotel does not offer a direct connection to the Metropole, but to the mall next to it. (This being the weekend, the mall was dead quiet.)

For whatever reason the Aurora Awards presentation was held that Friday evening. I soon found out why the awards dinner cost \$30 – on top of a decent formal dinner, the committee laid on entertainment. This was not only a drum band performance, not only a singer performing some of J.R.R. Tolkien's songs in English and in Elvish, but also a presentation by an atmospheric scientist who actually studies auroras. Interesting stuff.

Asta Sinusas, the reporter covering Convention for *SFRevu*, commented:

To say the least, I was shocked that only one Aurora recipient was present to accept his award in person. I can't imagine that all the winners were too busy on a Friday night in the middle of summer to be in Calgary. This isn't a minor award. This is something that book publishers put on the front of jackets and authors in biographies. Not only that, it is an affirmation from peers and countrymen.

Before the Aurora Awards were presented, Derryl Murphy gave a brief presentation on the Lydia Langstaff award (reported elsewhere this issue). Yours truly had been induced to serve among other Aurora awards presenters; so had members of SF Canada, such as Derryl Murphy, and several of the aforementioned Guests of Honour, e.g. Michael Bishop presenting the Fanzine Aurora. (When we were introduced to each other at Registration, Mr. Bishop asked my help to pronounce the nominees' names right.)

It hadn't really dawned on me until the awards presentation, but after the atrocity of September 2001, so few people were about to travel to the planned ConSpec in Alberta that it was suspended, and folded into Con-Version 19. Thus ConSpec constituted another track of programming, a whole consuite of their own, and made up some of the presenters of the Auroras.

As usual at conventions I actually cracked the program book right after registering, and made a list of the panels I wanted to see; and as usual I missed most of them. In fact I ducked into two panels for maybe five minutes each. My attention span must be fried. I blame it on television.

The upshot is that I spent the convention shmoozing with old friends, and making new ones. Paula Johanson, for instance. We caught up on each other's doings – Paula's SF writing and market gardening, her husband Bernie's woodwork and incipient fanpubbing, what their kids are doing, now in their teens – and I helped mind the *On Spec* dealers' table with her. Bobbie Dufault, for another. I was a bit surprised to see this Rustycon veteran in Calgary, until I understood that she was promoting Seattle's bid for the 2005 NASFiC. Almost immediately she invited me to join the NASFiC team. Kathleen Moore-Freeman was in evidence, of course, like other veterans of fabulous 1980s Edmonton fandom. (It's amusing how little we see of other BCSFA members in town until we go to out-of-province conventions.) I even got a chance to have dinner and catch up with Steve Pikov and Lexie Pakulak, who remember the early years of NonCon and Con-Version in Calgary.

It's a curious thing, but no matter whom I asked at this Alberta convention, *nobody* knew if a NonCon was scheduled for this fall! In fact it appeared that NonCon

hadn't even been held for a few years, and at one point I was told that the NonCon Society itself was effectively dissolved. How are the mighty fallen; this rotating Alberta convention used to be a small-but-influential gathering, inspired like several other Northwest conventions by the 1977 Vancouver Westercon, and NonCon was itself part of the inspiration for Banffcon (held in 1989 and 1995).

I got to meet Murray Moore of Mississauga again, the incumbent CUFF administrator, with this year's CUFF delegate Colin Hinz in tow, also from Greater Toronto. Murray and Colin both have some history as fanpublishers, and this weekend I got to see Murray's 2001 CUFF trip report.

Linda Ross-Mansfield attended, promoting a future bid to hold the Westercon in Calgary. She informed me that this bid is looking at a year when the Calgary Stampede is *finally* being moved a few weeks away from the July 1st/4th weekend.

Chaz Baden and I met up, after long-time email correspondence. This southern-Californian webmaster (see www.boston-baden.com) has been compiling concentrated fannishness online for a few years now, and attended Con-Version as part of the contingent advertising Los Angeles' bid for Worldcon in 2006. Among other exploits he snapped pictures repeatedly to post on the Fan Gallery. (Those wishing to verify my whereabouts may find my face among his online pictures.)

Interestingly enough, Julian Warner, the Australian delegate for this year's Down Under Fan Fund, made it to Convention. He even attended the awards dinner and Convention business meeting.

There were parties, held variously by Seattle, Los Angeles and ConSpec contingents. There was also a "Disposable Life" party, which apparently was to promote an independent movie production by a contingent of Calgary fans and aspiring film artists.

Among other new people I saw at the Auroras dinner, and at the parties, there was Asta Sinusas, observing the Convention for the online magazine *SFRevu*, and taking pictures of Aurora presentations and con parties herself. Unfortunately the lady lives on the other side of the continent.

Not much more to report was happening on Sunday, apart from the Convention Business Meeting. In the general interest of flinging information about, the proceedings are also reprinted elsewhere in this issue; the gist is that Torcon 3 is the uncontested host of Convention 2003. I got to have dinner with Julian Warner and Colin Hinz, and learned the kookaburra joke: "How do you cook a kookaburra? Take a kookaburra and a stone. Cook them in a stewpot until the stone softens up. Throw away the kookaburra and eat the stone." (No, this wasn't inspired by our dinner.)

I don't remember much of the Dead Dog Party. Maybe that means I had a good time.

Anybody interested in my copies of Murray's trip report?

*And through the night, behind the wheel, the mileage clicking west,
I think upon brave Spider, Robert Runte, and the rest
Who braved the world's indifference, and carved a path for me
Where'er they give awards, from sea to sea*

*And how am I so different from the first fen through this way?
Like them I left a mundane life, I threw it all away:
Seeking fame and glory, or a fannish place to be,
And only found the road back home to sea.*

*Oh and just one time, I would make it to Convention
And see esteemed presenters place our laurels on native sons,
Tracing one warm line through a land so wild and savage
And see who are Aurora's chosen ones.*

THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY NEWS

"When a person is prevented from sleeping and dreaming he embraces a wide variety of lost causes, studies dozens of languages, eats five or six meals a day, and uses his life to furnish those elements of fantasy that other men find in dreams."

(Lawrence Block, *Here Comes a Hero*, p. 28)

One of these days I want to revamp the RSN Handbook to include condensed intelligence reports on global criminal organizations, like Exxon and British Petroleum and the Monarchist League of Canada; I also want to work up tradecraft policies and procedures for RSN Intelligence operatives, based on *The Action Hero's Handbook* (reviewed this issue) and on the relentlessly paranoid stuff from Loompanics Unlimited. Until I do, I'd just like to propose some Heroes and Saints for the Royal Swiss Navy:

Maxwell Smart CONTROL (*Get Smart*)
Insp. Jacques Clouseau, Sureté de France (*Pink Panther* series)
Sgt. Renfrew, RCMP, and his faithful dog Cuddles, in their lonely log cabin on the 14th floor of the CN Tower (Dave Broadfoot)
Sgt. Preston, RCMP (Republic Films)
Cpl. Benton Fraser, RCMP (*Due South*)
Evan Michael Tanner (Lawrence Block's Tanner series)
Valerie Irons, Valerie Irons Protection (*VIP*)
"Crocodile" Dundee (Australia)
Mrs. Helen Tasker (*True Lies*)
Walter Mitty (by James Thurber)

If you don't recognize some of these names, check out the associated movies and TV series. I think you'll laugh.

A little while ago I heard from a member of the "Swiss Imperial Navy" (SWIMN) about his friends maybe joining forces with the RSN. It's been a while since I heard from them.

The manifesto on their Web page, back when I first heard from them, went as follows:

AD MAIOREM HELVETIAE GLORIAM
A LA PLUS GRANDE GLOIRE DE LA SUISSE
ZUM GRÖßEREN RUHM DER SCHWEIZ
ALLA GLORIA MAGGIORMENTE DE LA SVIZZERA
FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF SWITZERLAND

Who Are We?

The Swiss Imperial Navy (SWIM'N) is an entity sharing micronational status with the Greater Swiss Empire. We maintain offices in Berne, Switzerland; Belchertown, Massachusetts, USA; Washington, D.C., USA; and New Mexico, USA. The capital is Bernia on the planet New Switzerland. Read our paper, the *Hornblower*, for more information. In the Mundane Dimension, we're also a group of friends and acquaintances who share a reduced dislike of science fiction, world/galactic domination, fantasy, history, humour, British humor, and stuff like that. Yeah. Like, Whatever.

What Can be Found on These Pages?

A great place to start is the *Horriblower*, official journal of the Navy. This will keep you up to date on all the latest news and happenings, and provides a fun look into the past. A complete list of the hosers who make up the core of the Navy can be found under Personnel. The SWIM'N ExtraTerrestrial Operations Division (EtOps) is the Space Fleet. This is one of the most important divisions. For those interested in the past, specifically early Renaissance Switzerland, the Flaming Duck Pike Division is for you. Stuff and Things is full of goodies for you. News Flash! Stuff and Things has been made obsolete by the launching of the Swim'n Online Library. Get the latest from Chef Dickie on recipes, food, and more. A list of all pages is found here.

Just Opened: the First Imperial Museum, and the First Bank of New Switzerland!

Also New: the Diplomatic Corps and the Senate.

Member Pages:

- * Trojan Guerilla Forces: based in Fiji, this elite group raises funds through the sale of rare, diverse, and exotic items. Also a tough little commando group. Maintained by Ryan Fitzemeyer.
- * Icarus Air: If you'd like to get somewhere, this is the official airline of Swim'n. No connections or similarities whatsoever with the son of Daedalus. None. Well, maybe a few. But not many. Right. Shut up now, not you, me. Maintained by Nathan Labak.
- * "EtOps Home": Supreme Commander Andy O'Shea's page, ostensibly dealing with EtOps, the Extraterrestrial Operations Division. Also information on Senator O'Shea's planet of Nod.
- * Underwater Transportation Services (UTS): The brainchild of French repatriate Anthony "Don't Call Me Tony" Dearden.
- * Gumbo's Killer Clown Division: General Gumbo runs a fine show of Clownz. Ever hear of dying of laughter?
- * Axion's Armada: Jeff LeBoeuf, Lord Axion is Fleet Admiral of DSSF 1. This is his page.
- * Page O' Craziiness: By Jeff LeBoeuf and Nathan Labak.
- * Admiral Sullivan's Page: Senator from Copan Colony and Admiral of DSSF 3.
- * DSSF 2 and Conrath: Consul and Fleet Admiral Nadeau's spiffy page.
- * Swim'n Online Library: Wryan Butler and Steve Westinghouse archiving the bits and pieces of Swim'n history.

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SOMETHING I FOUND WHILE TOSSING OUT OLD PAPER #1:

Re your concerns: I've touched upon this elsewhere, but you must learn to accept that Canadian Fandom does not have a Corp., Inc., or Ltd. after it. It's all voluntary, and it's often run by people who sometimes put their mundane lives and concerns (like paying bills) first. The big names in Canadian fandom, and in fandom in general, are often those who sacrifice most (to quote Fran's eulogy to Susan Wood, "she gave and she gave and now she is dead"). True, there are cutthroat fans out there who are only interested in self-aggrandizement and the confounding of their enemies, but I think by and large they are a minority. Fandom is, for a great many people, a transitory thing, and a weekend escape for adolescents of all ages, until they find it's time to grow up. In between are those who believe in fandom as an ongoing thing. Some, as you do, feel that the goodness, the knowledge, and the experience must be preserved. The only problem is, that in order for it to WORK, everyone must feel the same way. But they don't. Slip-ups and petty politics get in the way, often out of the best of intentions. People discover that their interests outside fandom begin to take precedence, and renege on promises made (often to themselves) - promises that would objectively have been made for the good of fandom. Neofans wind up making the same mistakes as neofans before them, because for them it is the first time, and the only experience they'll learn from is their own. Taken to an extreme, if fandom dies utterly (and I doubt it ever truly will), it will be because no one wants it. It will then be re-invented by some neofan (or group thereof) who *does*. Fandom is. Period.

Steve Pikov, May 88, BCAPA

THE SETUP (IN FANDOM)

By Garth Spencer

A NEBULA-WINNING WRITER

Leaps tall buildings in a single bound,
Is more powerful than a locomotive,
Is faster than a speeding bullet,
Walks on water,
Gives policy to God.

A HUGO-WINNING WRITER

Leaps short buildings in a single bound,
Is more powerful than a shunting engine,
Is just as fast as a speeding bullet,
Walks on water if sea is calm,
Talks with God.

A SECRET MASTER OF FANDOM

Leaps short buildings with a running start and favourable winds,
Is almost as powerful as a shunting engine,
Is almost as fast as a speeding bullet,
Walks on water in an indoor swimming pool,
Talks with God if special permission is approved.

A FANEDITOR

Barely clears the bicycle shed,
Loses a tug-of-war with a locomotive,
Can fire a speeding bullet,
Swims very well,
Is sometimes addressed by God.

A GOFER

Runs into buildings,
Recognizes locomotives,
Is not issued ammunition,
Can stay afloat with a lifejacket,
Talks to walls.

A HOTEL CONFERENCE MANAGER

Falls over doorsteps when trying to enter buildings,
Says "look at the choo-choo!",
Wets himself with a water pistol,
Drowns in large puddles,
Mumbles to himself.

AN SF CLUB/CONVENTION SECRETARY

Lifts buildings and walks under them,
Kicks locomotives off the tracks,
Catches flying bullets in her teeth and eats them,
Freezes water with a single glance,
IS God.



THE SONG OF THE TRUFAN

By Garth Spencer

(with apologies to Robert Service)

(reprinted from *BCSFazine*, June 2002)

This is the song of the Trufan, and ever he makes it plain:

"Send not your foolish and feeble, send me your strong and your sane —

"Strong for the red rage in loccols, sane, for I'll harry them sore —

"Send me fen fit for a fakefeud, fen who are grit to the core;

"Them will I gift with fan Hugos, them will I glut with my meat —

"But the others — the unlettered fakefen — I leave them the dust of my feet.

"Dyslexic, damned and demented, crippled and palsied — and *vain!* —

"You would send me your couch potatoes?? Go; take them back again.

"Lonely I stand, far from fellow 'zine fans, patient and wearily wise,

"With the weight of a world of boredom in my quiet, passionless eyes;

"I wait months and years for a genzine, waiting at least for a loc

"That does not ignore what I offer, nor writes to me only to mock;

"Dreaming of fen who will *read* me, and call what they read ... good;

"Of children born at conventions who read *Jurgen* — and *understood!*;

"Of writers' groups leaping to stature, of fame like a flag unfurled,

"As we pour out our tide of fanwriting in the eager lap of the world."

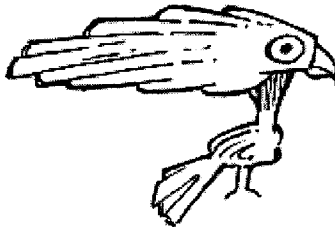
This is the song of the Trufan, he sings it o'er and o'er,
Sitting alone in his fanzine room, rocking, as if rowing with one oar;
His fanzines are unread and dusty, his locks are greyed too with his years,
And the sound of the far-off room parties comes distant and faint to his ears.

SOMETHING I FOUND WHILE TOSSING OUT OLD PAPER #2:

... I don't know just why it is, but when I go to Ditto I feel expansive and friendly and fandom is wonderful and fanzines are wonderful and I can't wait to pub my ish and goshwowoboyoboy! But when I go to Corflu I often start to feel like I'm back in high school, with the cliquishness of it all, and think, "these people are such snobs; why do I want to be here?"

Since the people who go to Corflu and the people who go to Ditto overlap quite a bit, I don't quite understand these different reactions, and I know I ~~sound like Taras~~ other people don't experience this, though one or two fans have admitted similar responses.

Leah Zeldes Smith, *Stet* 4



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FANZINES RECEIVED (and some reviews)

A number of fanzines and letters have come my way, of course, since I last wrote. But my records are so disordered I can't always find things in a timely fashion. I'd like to acknowledge at least a few of the fanzines I've received:

Alexiad (TXT), Vol. 1 No. 3, June 2002, and 1:4, August 2002, c/o Lisa & Joseph Major, 1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, KY 40204-2040, U.S.A. The first issue I received was a wide-ranging text-only email zine, featuring Joseph Major's book reviews, and many informed and sardonic letters from correspondents such as Alexei Panshin and Ben Indick. The consensus seems to be that Hugo winners aren't what they used to be, now that Buffy and Star Trek productions get nominated and voted on. *Alexiad* 1:4 reminded me more of the suspended FOSFAX, in that Joseph's reviews seemed to have far more in-jokes and obscure references, and I recognize letter-writers' names like Taras Wolansky.

Ansible (TXT) 178 – 181 Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks., UK, RG1 5AU, ansible@cix.co.uk. Dear Marty, *Ansible* and occasionally *File 770* constitute what I call real news. Or as "real" as reality ever gets. What's happening in publishing, what's

happening in fandom, what's happening to people some of us know and care about, and what makes us laugh.

As the Crow Flies #5, Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98166, or bearlodge@msn.com.

Stories from Frank Denton's recent life, mostly to do with family and his area, but not entirely unrelated to fandom. From this I learn (finally) where Marc Schirmeister is, how the Bush administration has done some disservice to Washington state and its natives, and how people besides me are also struggling with the kipple, uh, "treasure" that one accumulates in a life. Interesting!

Banana Wings 17, May 2002, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, respectively at 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7HA, and 14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE, U.K., email banana@fishlifter.demon.co.uk.

Another it's-been-a-while editorial segues into talk about fanzine fandom at Eastercon and Paragon, in Britain and abroad (ending "Hail Sheena!") "2000 Conventions" is Claire and Mark's collection of funny stories about the cons they attended across Britain. In fact, this issue features a number of con-related reports, such as David Redd's observations on going to Eastercon after a 31-year lapse, and Mark relating the Paragon fan room to MemoryHole and British children's TV. (Note to self: this zine really must start doing that unifying-theme business some day.)

I could go on listing the contents; but the real point is, *Banana Wings* looks at the world *funny*. Any zine which is advertised as "the international equivalent of a skateboarding otter" has to be a contender.

A Bright Particular Star: words and deeds of Lucy Huntzinger, a collection edited by Kim Huett, now at 29/63 Pearson St., Holder, ACT 2611, Australia.

Some truly excellent fanwriting, ranging from fun and froth about Ben Yalow's mystique; inventing a patron saint of Attitude in the face of cross-cultural confusion; and being a shoe junkie, to a moving article about discovering her brother is actually schizophrenic.

Conferring with Earthquakes 9 (March 2002) and 10 (June 2002) from Brin-Marie McLaughlin, 247 19th Ave., Apt. 6, San Francisco, CA 94121-2353 or brininsf@aol.com.

Brin's two latest personalzines have another unifying theme, a conflict with friends Andy Bell and Vince Clarke, and its resolution. It was a valuable thing to see how and where Brin found the support of her real friends.

Derogatory Reference 99, Arthur Hlavaty, 206 Valentine St., Yonkers, NY 10704-1814, havaty@panix.com.

Arthur Hlavaty comes up with more wit in fewer fanzine pages than anyone on the continent, I think, whether he's commenting on his work, on current events, on fandom, on the conferences and conventions he's attended ... or on sports. (Well, nobody's perfect.) Sample:

"I do not believe that Son of a Bush plotted 9/11 as a trick to clamp down on dissent. I do not believe that those around him who are smart enough to think of it did so. I find it extremely likely that the Bush administration did not pay as much attention to the dangers of terrorist attack as the Clinton administration had. This suggests that perhaps the Republicans were mistaken, and helping your rich friends steal even more is a bigger distraction from the proper duties of government than getting your knob polished. ..."

Diary Of A Dafiate (TXT rec'd Dec. 30/01), Harry Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309, 310-835-9202, harryandruschak@aol.com. Sample excerpt:

... Of NASA: No amount of Thunderbird or Mad Dog can dim those heady days of the Golden Age of Planetary Exploration. And looking back on it 25 years later I can still say that I am proud of my small part in that great adventure. It couldn't last, of course. ...

Emerald City #76-84, Cheryl Morgan ... "an occasional `zine produced by Cheryl Morgan and available from her at cheryl@emcit.com or on-line at <http://www.emcit.com>"

Cheryl's email fanzine relies heavily on book reviews. At other times she describes her congoing, and (briefly) her peripatetic career across England, Australia and California. I never know where she is physically, so I can only give her email address.

With her latest issue I took more notice than usual, because of her review of *New Minds for Old* (Justina Robson); I had been thinking about how human minds work and why so many don't, in family life or in the workplace ...

"It is the last great frontier for medical science. After the human genome has been unravelled, only one great secret remains: the map of the human mind. When this is complete, all sorts of beneficial technology will become available. It will be possible to cure schizophrenia, depression, even anorexia. The benefits to mankind will be immense."

"CIA reports show that the Chinese are only a few months behind our team in developing so-called mindware. We also have evidence that criminal elements funded by the Russian mafia have been attempting to bribe and blackmail scientists from our project team in order to obtain details of the technology. Whether they are doing this on their own initiative, or with the promise of Iraqi money, is currently not clear. Mr. President, there has never been an arms race like this. It is our belief that we dare not slacken our effort, and that the United States must be prepared to launch a first strike."

FOSFAX #206, July 2002(two volumes) – SUSPENDED until further notice. This is one of a number of fanzines I can think of that have had to suspend operations for a while ...

Gegenschein 92, Eric Lindsay, PO Box 640, Airlie Beach, Qld, Australia, 4802, eric@wrevenge.com.au, fiawol@ericlindsay.com, <http://www.ericlindsay.com/sf/geg92.htm>

The Geis Letter: 99-101, Richard E. Geis, Portland, OR (RERWINGEIS@cs.com, I think, or he may have changed his email address ...)

Monster Attack Team Canada newsletter 17 Stan Hyde ed., Vancouver, BC stanhyde@shaw.ca

Mimosa Anthology / Mimosa 28, the next-to-last *Mimosa*, from Nicki and Rich Lynch, P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885, fiawol@cpcug.org (www.jophan.org/mimosa/)
What shall I say that Ted White's fanzine review hasn't said better already?

Opuntia from Dale Speirs, P.O. Box 6830, Calgary, AB T2P 2E7

The Penny Gazette from Penelope Harris, #214 – 14861 98th Avenue, Surrey, BC V3R 0A1

Rastus Times (RTF) #3, May 2002 and #4, Sept. 2002; Email address: J.D.Owen@open.ac.uk, Website Address: <http://www.rastus.force9.co.uk/SBHome.html>

Steam Engine Time, Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele St., Collingwood, Vic. 3006, Australia,
Maureen Kincaid Speller, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ, U.K.,
mks@brisingamen.demon.co.uk and Paul Kincaid, set@acnestis.demon.co.uk

TommyWorld 58, 30 Ava Park, Belfast, BT7 3BX, Northern Ireland, tw@tommyworld.net,
<http://www.tommyworld.net>.

*A Trip Report Found in a Plain Manila Envelope: Being a true account of the adventures in
May 2001 of Murray Moore of Mississauga who traveled to exotic Vancouver and to
fabulous Seattle*, C\$5 / US\$5 payable to CUFF, c/o Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Road,
Mississauga, ON L4Y 1C8, or mmoore@pathcom.com. With illustrations by Craig Smith
and Scott Patri. What can I say?

Visions of Paradise, Robert Michael Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, NJ
07828-1023, bobsabella@nac.net

Wurlitzer (PDF), April 12, 2002, official organ of LASFAPA (mailing #307), Harry
Andruschak: OE, Marty Cantor: "Little Tin God", 11825 Gilmore St. #105, North
Hollywood, CA 91606

Xenolith (46-48), Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45238-4503,
xenolith@one.net or Xenolith@Outworlds.net