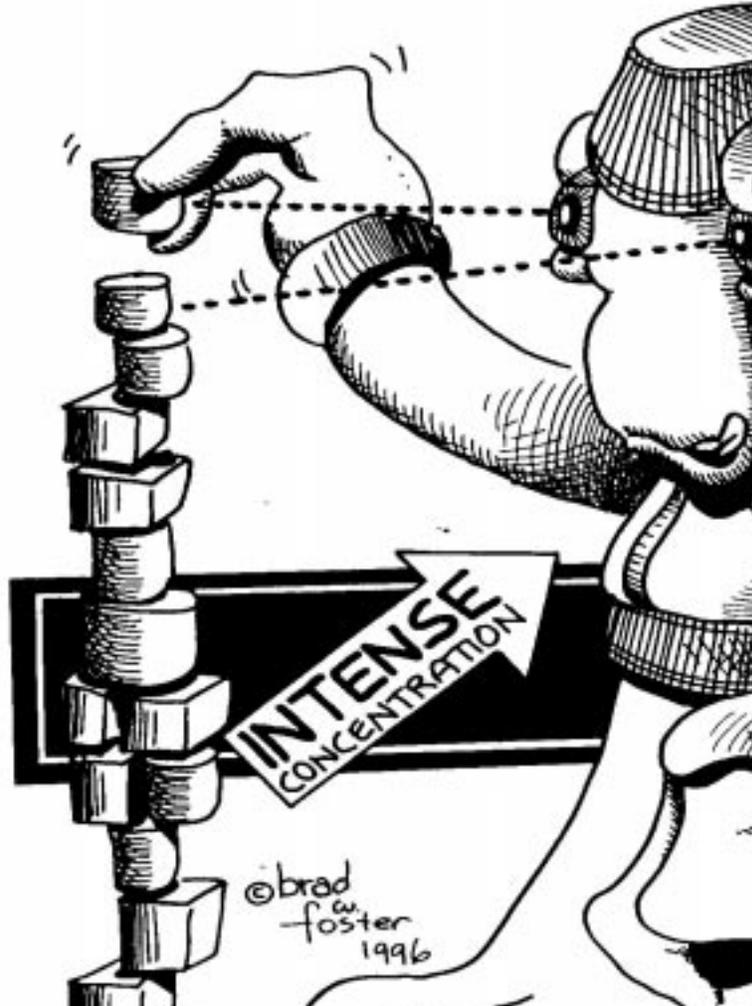


BCSFAzine #332

Vol. 29 No. 1

Jan. 2001



In this issue:

Plain Speaking (about the V-Con Society):	1
Letters of Comment:	2
Calendar:	3
Upcoming Conventions:	4
Media File:	6
Book Reviews (mysteries!):	7

COLOPHON

BCSFA Membership Rates:

New \$26.00
New Family \$32.00
Renewal \$25.00
Family (2 Votes) \$31.00

Above prices includes subscription to *BCSFAzine*. Make cheques payable to BCSFA (West Coast Science Fiction Association) c/o 86 Warrick Street, Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 5L4.

BCSFAzine is also available by e-mail as an Adobe Acrobat .PDF file. (Please e-mail hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca if you wish to receive the magazine by e-mail.)

BCSFA Executive

President R. Graeme Cameron
Vice President ?
Treasurer Doug Finnerty
Secretary Alyx Shaw
Archivist R. Graeme Cameron
Editor Garth Spencer
Members at Large: Randy Barnhart
..... Alan Ferguson
V-Con 26 Rep Chris Sturges
Keeper of FRED,
V-Con Ambassador for Life Steve Forty (S.40)
BCSFAzine Specialists
Layout, Acrobatics & Image Hyper Text Modem
Retrieval Specialists Dave and Chris Hale,
..... Dale McGladdery

This month's cover artist: Brad Foster (Texas)

BCSFAzine (c) (January) 2001 Volume #29, #1, Issue #332 is the club newsletter published by the B.C. Science Fiction Association, a social organization. For comments, subscriptions suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *BCSFAzine* c/o Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, B.C.
CANADA V6B 5B1.

CORRECTIONS

My first issue of *BCSFAzine*, in December, failed to update the BCSFA executive listed in the colophon; I trust you will find this corrected in this issue.

The calendar omitted directions to our president's home in Coquitlam, which is another oversight I can't reasonably explain.

It seems clear that I have a checklist of people from whom to ask for updates.

THE INVISIBLE FEN

The following BCSFA members seem to have disappeared into the electricity. Please help us find their email addresses again:

Alan Barclay (Seattle, Washington)
Mike Dezotell (Everett, Washington)
Lee Toop (Clearwater, BC)
Wilko Mueller (Halle, Germany)

ADS:

A 2BR spacious bsmt. suite in an older North Surrey home (at 120th St. & 96th Ave.) will be available for rent from January 6th, 2001. This 800-sq.-ft. unfurnished suite has a large 11'x12' living room, its own private entrance, and rents for \$650/month plus shared utilities. The lessor is looking for N/S, only socially-drinking men, women or families; some pets are acceptable; no drugs. Please provide references and other applicable documents. Damage deposit and other details to be discussed later. Laundry facilities might be shared. Depending on how soon you call, leave a message at either 430-3063, or 585-1020, or email slideman@mailandrews.com.
(Ken Wong)

THE VCON 26/CANVENTION 2001 CHAIR is looking for the following additions to the convention committee:

GoH Liaison (optional)
Registration Co-ordinator
Publicity Co-ordinator
Teardown Co-ordinator
Transportation Co-ordinator
Publications person

Volunteers for all departments are always appreciated!
Contact the Chris Sturges at chair@v-con.org, 294-9851, or 235 Liberty Place, Burnaby, BC V5C 1X5.

PLAIN SPEAKING

Scanning the last several issues for discussion of BCSFA, VCon 26, and the V-Con Society, I see that there has been some confusion about which is what. I hope the following will clear things up a bit.

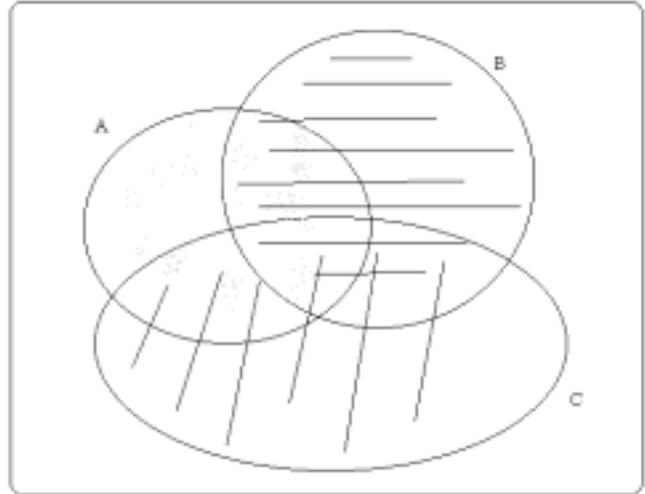
The British Columbia Science Fiction Association is a science fiction club. We hold meetings, and parties, and FRED, and publish *BCSFazine*, and the occasional *Fictions*, and maybe see movie premieres; and many of our members also work on a science fiction convention each year, which is VCon. But not all members of the club will be on a given year's convention committee (concom, for short). The concom will also include people who aren't BCSFA members.

Right away, this means we might best diagram these groups in the form of overlapping circles, where any geometric point in the diagram can stand for one element of a set, and a circle defines one set. A picture of such circles is an elementary logical aid, called a Venn diagram. I have supplied such a diagram here for your ease of reference. (Notice, I haven't tried to draw this diagram to scale.)

Now, you will notice there are *three* overlapping circles in this diagram. Why? The third circle represents all the people attending VCon in a given year – many of the members of BCSFA, most (or all) of the committee members, plus any number of people from outside of these groups.

You might have immediately thought the third circle was the V-Con Society. You must have been wondering why should we have such a Society, why would it be different from both the club and the concom, and what were some people arguing about anyway?

Well, I'll tell you. BCSFA is only informally organized; it doesn't exist in law, because we can't register a non-profit society with the province, with the name "British Columbia" in the title. (We would have to advertise to 70% of the fans in the province, and prove we had done so, and how do you prove that?) But ever since some of the early VCons, it has been clear that we can't hold VCons on an informal basis. We're dealing with other people's money, in five-figure sums; we're dealing with the reputation of our local fandom, and its perceived ability to hold conventions worth attending; and most importantly of all, there are certain kinds of trouble that can come to conventions. We *want* to provide a good time for all, make a bit of profit, gain some members, enhance our reputation; but any con can take a financial loss, or somebody can always get injured at the con and decide to sue. Or, possibly, someone could decide to contest our use of the VCon name. (Not too practical, since it's a trade mark registered to us.) Or some other completely unforeseen circumstance could descend on us.



A solution to many problems is provided by formally registering a non-profit society. In British Columbia as in other provinces, this extends "limited liability" protection to the convention – specifically, the convention committee, but generally the attending members.

BCSFA may exist in fact, but it doesn't exist at law. The V-Con Society exists at law, and in fact *consists* of BCSFA members, and members of the current committee, and members from other groups who get involved in the convention. It is what I call a "convention coordination committee"; in fact, most fan communities have a convention coordination committee, distinct from their club and from each year's concom.

How does it work? What does the Society do for VCons? Officially, the Society hears bids in about April of one year to hold VCon the following year. If a bid to hold VCon is satisfactory, the Society grants use of the VCon name to the bid committee. That extends limited-liability protection to the concom, and to the attending members, and to the clubs sponsoring the convention, which so far includes BCSFA and S'harien. We also offer guidelines and procedures that should assist the committee to get things done.

The first such formally registered society – which was neither BCSFA nor a VCon committee – was the Western Canada SF Convention Committee Association. This was reorganized in 1991-92 as the West Coast SF Association – which also was neither BCSFA nor a VCon committee. We found cause to reorganize it again, recently, as the V-Con Society, for a number of reasons Clint Budd has tried to make clear. (In fact he felt that identifying WCSFA with our club was tearing the club apart.)

This brings me to my concluding points. We had a recent letter of comment from one BCSFA member who seemed not to know *any* of the above information; in fact, he seemed to think BCSFA was divorced from VCon, or the V-Con Society. If any number of people can fail to understand that they're overlapping circles, then an explanation

LETTERS OF COMMENT

*"Paul M Carpentier" <whc2001@uswest.net>
Sat, 9 Dec 2000*

Hey Garth,

Great first issue. I would have cut you a lot of slack, but it turns out that I don't have to. All of the glitches are forgiven, and in time will disappear.

*"Lloyd&Yvonne Penney" <penneys@attcanada.ca>
1706 - 24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2
Fri, 15 Dec 2000*

Dear Garth:

I have here your first issue of *BCSFazine*, issue 331. Work is slow these days, because of upcoming Christmas, so there's time to respond to a zine or two, and here's a loc for this one.

(Less than a month to go to the next millennium ... I'll bet five bucks that we'll all be sick to death of "Also Sprach Zarathustra" before the end of March.)

A number of Toronto fans went to Smofcon in Cocoa Beach, Florida, namely Larry Hancock, Peter Jarvis and Hope Leibowitz, all of Torcon 3. Torcon being represented at that convention was very important, as Smofcon is a tiny but tough proving ground for potential Worldcon bids and newly standing Worldcons. Also, there was a shuttle launch around that time (the one with Marc Garneau aboard), so everyone got an additional treat. Florida is a little out of *our* reach, as we're saving to go to the Philadelphia Worldcon next Labour Day.

I have been trying to keep track of what groups there are in the Toronto area, and I've been successful to a degree. I know where the local clubs are, I have some idea of where SCAdians are, comics fandom doesn't seem to exist here, I'm in touch with the lit, Trek, Who, anime, filk and costumer groups. Such a search for similar information in Vancouver is commendable; rebuilding a more comprehensive fannish network would help support clubs, cons and other events.

((In fact I have some evidence that a guide to current Canadian fan groups would be welcome. We should continue to correspond about this and compare

notes. I am reliably told that no organized comics fandom exists in Vancouver, either.))

Beulah Wadsworth's letter is a little mysterious. The club that was in Toronto, the Ontario Science Fiction Club (OSFiC), died close to 20 years ago, and never had anything to do with Ad Astra. Toronto has no convention coordination committee, for I doubt that anything would unite and coordinate the various committees in a common cause. There's Ad Astra, Toronto Trek, PriMedia, Anime North, FilKONtario, Orion and Pandemonium, plus small comic cons.

((People normally confuse SF clubs with what I call "convention coordination committees", or CCC's with actual concons. I will editorialize about this. People here seem to need an explanation, too.

((You seem to think that there should be just one convention coordination committee per city, with responsibility for all the SF conventions in the city. That doesn't follow. In fact I would expect each convention series to have its own CCC; I mean one for Ad Astra, one for Toronto Trek, etc. Fans sort of tend to be independent, you know?))

The Doctor Who convention in November drew about 90 people, and broke even. Fans from as far away as Chicago and New Jersey were there to meet with Terence Dicks, a pleasantly fan-friendly man who was very happy to be in Toronto.

The new year and the new millennium beckon ... in the New Year, Yvonne and I will be working on Ad Astra and FilKONtario, doing marketing and the con suite respectively. In the next week or so, we plan to go to the copier to finalize our 1998 CUFF trip report, possibly the first one to be self-contained in a fanzine for sale. I've pegged a price of \$10 on it, and all money collected will go to CUFF. As soon as information is full ready, I'll send out a press release, and let Canadian fandom, and then fanzine and fan fund fandoms know. With luck, we'll sell out fast.

((Bruce Pelz' address:))

And I guess that's quite enough for this issue, and this year. Yvonne and I hope you all have had a great Christmas, and we'll see you in the 21st century.

((Thanks, and a merry New Year to you too.))

PLAIN SPEAKING (cont'd from p. 1)

with illustrations is needed, like this one. Also, a letter from one of our out-of-province members reminded me that SF clubs, and convention coordination committees, are easily confused. I hope I've made it clear that they're different groups, even if they share 90% of the same people, inasmuch as they do different things.

I've put labels on each of the three overlapping circles. But there should be a fourth symbol, for the entire field in the diagram. Potentially, the Society can include – *and protect* – every fan in the Lower Mainland.

*

The following BCSFA members are due to renew their memberships:

Lea Rush & John Bartley, Jan 01/01
 Jill L. Pruett, Jan. 01/01
 Les Shewchuk, Jan. 01/01
 Richard Scheib, Jan. 8/01
 Barb Dryer, Jan. 14/01
 Jon Foster, Jan. 28/01
 James Kling, Feb. 01/01

CALENDAR

Contributor's Deadlines - Jan. 19, 2001, Feb. 16, Mar. 16, Apr. 20, May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, Sept. 21, Oct. 19. Send, your submissions, comments, locs to **Garth Spencer at P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O., Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1, or e-mail me at hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca.**

NEXT EVENT: A “welcome the New Century” party at R. Graeme Cameron’s place, 82 Warrick Street, Coquitlam, B.C. January 20th, 2001, 6:00 p.m. Graeme hopes people will come with ideas to discuss, about the possibility of club activities at the Space Centre in the Planetarium.

(directions from Nov. issue)

F.R.E.D. - Every Friday: The weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in joining us for an evening of conversation and relaxation, with pool table option. At the Burrard Motor Inn opposite St. Paul’s Hospital (Downtown Vancouver) 6 blocks south of Burrard Skytrain Station. 3 blocks west of Granville (where many buses run). #22 Knight/ McDonald bus along Burrard. Begins 8:00pm. **On the Friday before long weekends**, FRED will be at the lounge of Bosman’s Hotel. This is two blocks east and a part of a block north of the Burrard Motor Inn (actual address is 1060 Howe St.).

OUR LOCAL HEROES GRAPHIC ARTISTS (#1)

COLIN UPTON COMIC’s 1999-2000 catalogue includes the following masterpieces! See **HIS WEB PAGE** at www.stinz.com/cuption for details of his entire works ...

Buddha on the Road nos. 1-6 (\$2.95 in U.S., \$4.25 in Canada) – what would happen if an actual war veteran got involved in the War in Heaven
Buddha on the Road sticker sheet (B&W, 8.5x11 label paper, \$1.00)
The Big Thing Set (\$20)

The Complete Small Press Collection – \$25 including these high points:
The Granville Street Gallery #1-7 (50¢ each) – character studies of street characters. (Noses supplied separately.)
The Collected Socialist Turtle #1-7 (50¢ each) – funny animal Stalinists do battle for control of a featureless plain
The Adventures of Happy Ned and His Rabbit Spot #1-8 (50¢ each) – a buoyant born-again proselytizer who gives you the Good Word, or a hail of automatic weapons fire; published *years* before abortion-clinic murders became fashionable
A Short Guide to the Care and Production of Mini-Comics (40¢ each)

NOTE: * all comics rated “mature” unless otherwise noted
 *. Prices are given in U.S. funds. Postage 20% (40% overseas), 50¢ minimum. Write to:

Colin Upton
 6424 Chester Street
 Vancouver, B.C. V5W 3C3
 Phone (604) 327-1544
 Email cupton@planeteer.com
 or see **HIS WEB PAGE** at www.stinz.com/cuption



UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Note: I had intended to include with this issue a report on a recent Vancouver convention, AKA-Kon ... but even with severe editing, I ran out of space. Well, next issue ...

And has anyone seen a report on the Stargate convention that was here last fall?

JANUARY 2001

January 12 - 14: Rustycon 18 at the Everett Holiday Inn in Everett, Washington. GoHs: Bob Mayer, Joe Dolson, Robert Doherty, Bob McGuire, Greg Donegan; AGoH Real Musgrave. Memberships \$50 at the door. Write Rustycon 2001, Box 84291, Seattle, WA 98124-5591. Email bobbied@microsoft.com, URL www.rustycon.com

Sunday, January 14, 11am to 5pm: Vancouver Comicon at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, B.C. Special Guest: Ricardo Delgado, creator of Age of Reptiles, Hieroglyph; production artist for Matrix 2, Godzilla, Star Trek. (Delgado was Concept Artist for Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, Star Trek: Voyager, Star Trek: First Contact, Species, Men in Black, and the upcoming Matrix 2.) Admission: \$3.00 per person (Free for kids under 14). Dealers Tables: \$45 per centre table/\$50 per wall table. Free autographs, giveaways, and hourly door prizes. Free Marvel Comics for kids under 14! Buy, sell, and trade comic books, action figures, sport, non-sport, and gaming cards, and other collectables. See <http://users.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>; Mailing address: PO Box 48873, Bentall Station, Vancouver, BC V7X 1A8.

Sunday, January 28, 11am to 5pm: Toy, Model, and Collectables Show, at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Admission: \$2.00 per person (Free for kids under 14); Dealers Tables: \$35. Model building demo by Monster Attack Team Canada! Buy, sell, and trade character toys, action figures, Beanie Babies, toy cars, Star Wars, model kits, trading cards, comic books, Barbies, games, and more! Info is on my web



page, <http://users.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> and updated sort of regularly. Mailing address: PO Box 48873, Bentall Station, Vancouver, BC V7X 1A8.

Further Comicons in 2001 are tentatively scheduled in Jan, March, May, July, September, and November (actual dates aren't pinned down, because Len Wong is waiting for some guests to say when they want to come out). Toy shows most likely in January, April, July, and October. Info is on my web page, <http://users.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html> and updated sort of regularly. Mailing address: PO Box 48873, Bentall Station, Vancouver, BC V7X 1A8.

FEBRUARY 2001

Feb 9-11: CONspiracy 2001, a Gaming Odyssey, in Mission, British Columbia. Directions: 1 hour's drive east of Vancouver B.C. and 2.5 hours north of Seattle, Washington. Location: Best Western Mission City Lodge, Mission B.C. Guest of Honor: Monte Cook, one of the D&D 3E authors. Call the Best Western Mission City Lodge at 1-888-552-5542 to book a room; mention the Con for convention rates.

Pre-registration rates by Jan 31: Friday Only \$10.00 Canadian, Saturday Only \$20.00 Canadian, Sunday Only \$10.00 Canadian, Weekend Pass \$35.00 Canadian. At the Door: Friday Pass \$12.00 Canadian, Saturday Pass \$25.00 Canadian, Sunday Pass \$12.00 Canadian, Weekend Pass \$40.00 Canadian. To register: register at www.longshotsystems.com/games or call Mission Games and register with Warren at 1-888-21-GAMES (toll free anywhere in N. America) pay by VISA/Mastercard or cheque. Cash and debit card may be used in person at Mission Games To volunteer: e-mail Jess at giediprime@telus.net. For more information, or if you want a convention flyer, e-mail Grant Kinsley at sawbones@uniserve.com, or call Mission Games at 1-888-21-GAMES.

Feb 16 - 18: RadCon 3A at the Doubletree Inn in Pasco, Washington. GoHs: (Scientist) Dr. Steven D. Howe; Writer GoH Michael Stackpole; Artist GoH Roberta Gregory; Fan GoH Bob Ladd; And a large jungle cat from Cattales. Featuring Critter Crunch! Artshow, Dealer and Masquerade information online; see URL <http://Radcon.yi.org>. Rooms: Contact Doubletree Inn, 2525 N. 20th, Pasco, WA; telephone reservations at (509) 547-0701. Memberships \$20 to February 2, \$25 thereafter. Registration form also online. Write to Radcon, PMB#162, 2527 West Kennewick Ave., Kennewick, WA 99336-3126, U.S.A.

MARCH 2001

March 16-18: Lepracon 2001 at Mickey O'Reilly's Inn in Wenatchee, Washington. Guest Author: Elizabeth Anne Scarborough. Guest Artist TBA. Guest Fan: David Bigelow, with Betty Bigelow. Dead Guest of Honor: Ernest Hemingway. For masquerade info. Go to www.geocities.com/tiger_meep/GrandMasque.html or email tiger_meep@yahoo.com. Rooms \$62 for a single bed, \$72 for double beds; call (509) 884-1474 for reservations. Preregistration fee, \$15. See <http://iguana.penguinpowered.com/lepracon2001/> for more information, or email LittlePeople2001@juno.com, or write Lepracon 2001, PMB 352, 2527 W. Kennewick Ave., Kennewick, WA 99336.

APRIL 2001

April 12 - 15: Norwescon 24 at the Doubletree Hotel Seattle Airport at SeaTac, Washington. Guest of Honor: Connie Willis. ArtGoH: Bob Eggleton. FanGoH: Charles N. Brown. Rooms: \$96 flat frate for up to four people (family suites and presidential suite available by contacting Norwescon); phone (800) 222-TREE for reservation or write Doubletree at 18740 Pacific Highway South, SeaTac, WA. Memberships \$55 at the door; memberships limited. (No mailed registrations accepted after Feb. 28.) See <http://www.norwescon.org>, call (206) 270-7850 (hotline), email info@norwescon.org, or write Norwescon 24, P.O. Box 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547, U.S.A.

April 27-29: SakuraCon 2001 at the Holiday Inn in Everett, Washington. (An anime con.) Memberships U.S. \$40 to March 31, 2001. (Children 6-12 half-price.) Mail to Sakura Con Registration, 900 Meridian East #19-407, Milton, WA 98354; URL www.sakuracon.org.

MAY 2001

May 4 - 6: VCon 26 at the Radisson in Burnaby, British Columbia, theme - 2001: A Space Oddity - Humour in Science Fiction. Guest of Honour Lynne Abbey. Gaming Guest of Honour James Earnest, President of Cheapass Games. Artist Guest Pat Turner, a cover artist for Baen Books! ** VCon 26 is very happy to host *Convention 21*, and the *21st Prix Aurora Awards*. For more information on the Auroras, see the Aurora Web page at <http://www.sentex.net/~dmullin/aurora/>. ** The Radisson Hotel in Burnaby (4331 Dominion Street, Burnaby, B.C. CANADA V5G 1C7 off Canada Way, just west of Willingdon) offers 275 rooms and 16,000 sq. ft. of convention space over two floors. Room rates: \$89/night for one to four occupants. Phone 800-333-3333 for reservations, or email reservations@villa.bc.ca - don't forget to tell them you're with VCon! (For more information see www.radisson.com/burnabyca/). Membership rates: Can.

\$25, U.S. 20 Jan. 31, 2001: Can. \$30, U.S. \$25 from Feb. 1 to April 30: Can. \$35, U.S. \$30 at the door: Can. \$45, U.S. \$40. Contact information: Chair, Chris Sturges at chair@v-con.org, phone (604) 294-9851. See website: www.v-con.org or write Vcon 26, c/o 235 Liberty Place Burnaby, BC CANADA V5C 1X5.

May 18 - 20: Anglicon 14 at the Radisson Hotel SeaTac Airport in SeaTac, Washington. (English SF media, hence the name; a convention of long standing in the fannish community.) GoH: Robert Trebor. Call (206) 244-6000 for reservations or visit online at www.radissonseattle.com. Memberships U.S. \$45 to May 8, \$55 at the door. Write to Anglicon 14, P.O. Box 75536, Seattle, WA 98125, or phone (206) 789-BRIT, email anglicon@rocketmail.com, or see www.webwitch.com/anglicon.

May 18 - 20: CONduit 11 / 2001: A Space Oddity, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Author GoH: Alan Dean Foster. Special GoHs: Three Weird Sisters. Media Guest: James Rogers. Art GoH, Scientist GoH and Fan GoHs: TBA. Memberships: \$26 to April 19, 2001; \$36 thereafter. See URL <http://conduit.sfcon.org/CONduit/> or write to P.O. Box 11745, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0745, U.S.A.

May 18th - 20th: Keycon in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Author Guests of Honour: Spider & Jeanne Robinson. Artist Guests of Honour: Phil & Kaja Foglio. Fan Guests of Honour: The Wild & Hairy Guys. Keycon is Manitoba's annual science and speculative fiction convention. Fans from Winnipeg, as well as all over the prairie provinces and states and further afield, gather to share their interests. Adult Memberships Jan. 3 - Apr. 30, 2001: \$40.00; Adult Memberships May 1, 2001 - at the door: \$50.00; Children's Memberships anytime: \$25.00; LARP Pass (Includes Friday and Saturday Nights) \$30.00. c/o Pendragon Games & Hobbies, 516 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg MB R3C 0G2; tel 204-772-5415; email pgh@pangea.ca.

MICHAEL'S BOOKS

109 Grand, Bellingham, WA 98225

Telephone: (206) 733-6272

Books in all fields

"We pay cash for hardback & paperback."

Michael Elmer, Owner
10% off for WCSFA members

MEDIA FILE

by Raymond Seredin

Gene Roddenberry's *Andromeda*: Number One in America

Gene Roddenberry may be dead; still, his ideas are drawing millions of viewers. But this time they are not heading for the "Star Trek" universe, but to the "Andromeda". This new, locally-produced program is now the number-one first-run syndicated series in the US.

The main draws to the series are super hunks Kevin Sorbo and Keith Hamilton Cobb. Still, there are other strong characters, three of them female, to keeps things interesting. Oh, did I say, a few characters can't stand each other and have to learn to get along? ("Toto, I don't think we're on the star-ship *Enterprise* any more.")

The storylines (so far) are fast-moving, and with its ties to "Hercules" this series could be around for a while.

Dark Angel: Full Season Go-Ahead

Besides a few lukewarm reviews, another new, locally-produced series is getting good ratings, and has been given the green light by FOX for another nine episodes.

The "Dark Angel" is "Max", an eighteen-year-old enigma, bred to be a "Super Soldier" by the US Military. Her "James Bond/Doogie Howser"-like dry wit helps keep her going in a world where America's a "World Vision" poster child, run by a corrupt dictatorship that wants her on their side. Still she refuses to carry a gun and fights using her super abilities, rather than taking the chance of having a stray bullet accidentally killing someone who's innocent. Fortunately, most of her adversaries are caught in their own follies and she just speeds up their own down-falls.

I know this series copies ideas from others; yet, most of these ideas work just fine. But the storylines could move a little faster. That aside, "Dark Angel" should last a while.

So: Are "Andromeda" and "Dark Angel" the next "X-Files", placing Vancouver back on the sci-fi media map? I say, "Stay tuned".

PoCo Place

Gallery & Framing Custom Framing
& Limited Edition Prints

Telephone: (604) 942-6434

PoCo Place Mall,
18 - 2755 Lougheed Hwy. Port Coquitlam, B.C.

10% off for WCSFA members.

"Xena": The End

After six years of beating the crap out of evil doers, the "Warrior Princess" is no more.

The series is number one around the world, but the cost per episode in the US is now up to one million dollars per station. Other series like "Sheena" and "Relic Hunter" are undercutting "Xena's" per-episode cost by up to 1/3, through their stronger multinational distribution deals.

WB is planing on going over to a seven day prime-time schedule next fall and the news is UPN could be broken up between FOX and PAX, whom have or soon will have plans for a seven day prime-time schedule. This will moves "Xena" broadcasts into weekend non-prime-time time-slots with less viewers on 97% of the stations presently carrying it. Furthermore, many of these station carry sporting events and occasionally special programming during weekend non-prime-time hours, resulting in that week's "Xena" installment being preempted. Because of these factors USA Films is pulling the plug after six seasons.

A few weeks before, the studio cancelled her sister series "Jack of All Trades" for the same reasons, while her other sister series "Cleopatra 2525" will likely replace her next fall. Many viewers (including myself) feel that the studio should have kept "Jack" and had him replace "Xena".

The good news: the series will not end until June. Unfortunately they run out of new "Jack" episodes in early January. (In fact Vancouver's Global affiliate has already pulled all three series in early November. However, older "Xena" episodes started to run on Space:TIS on December 4.)

As for its star Lucy Lawless, she plans to take a year off to be with her family.

Dr. Who: Movie Gets Green Light

As an early Christmas present to "Who-Fans", "The Partnership" announced the "Dr. Who Project" will be a \$115 million (US) feature film, with more films, a new TV series or both to follow if successful. Yet, the November 23, 2003 release date remains firm, since there's no financial or production schedules on the horizon for the near future.

The "Dr. Who" movie is just one of many films projects that could be made in a \$500 million (US) venture announced in December.

Briefly in other "Who" news:

The pilot is done for the proposed "Dr. Who" radio series, although with the holidays fast approaching the "Powers At Be" at Radio4 will now make their final decision in early January. According to highly-placed sources at the network, it will not likely air before June

BOOK REVIEWS

by Donna McMahon

10 MYSTERY WRITERS NOT TO MISS

Most SF fans also read murder mysteries and, indeed, many SF writers write them. So here, for a change of pace, is a column on my ten favourite murder mystery authors (several of whom you will recognize from their SF or Fantasy work). Titles by all these writers can be found at the Vancouver Public Library or Dead Write Books (White Dwarf's alter-ego).

BARBARA NEELY [*Blanche on the Lam, Blanche Among the Talented Tenth, Blanche Cleans Up*]: Blanche White is an improbable name for a middle-aged black woman who works as a housekeeper/cook and Blanche has an improbable knack for turning up murders. These novels are not just entertaining mysteries with a shrewd, wryly amusing protagonist—they are a very hard, clear-eyed look at the realities of race and class in the United States. Blanche really knows the score and so does Barbara Neely. Do NOT miss these books.

BARBARA HAMBLY [*A Free Man of Color, Fever Season, Graveyard Dust, Sold Down the River*]: Fans will already know Barbara Hambly as a superb fantasy writer, and they shouldn't miss her extraordinary novels set in 1830's New Orleans. Benjamin January, son of a *placée* (white man's mistress), is a Paris-trained surgeon but his dark skin limits him to making a living as a musician in New Orleans, where a growing tide of "Kaintucks" is gradually diluting French society and eroding the already grim position of blacks (African slaves) and coloureds (mixed race). Part of the charm of these books is their French viewpoint – a far different take on American history than we usually get. While the books stand alone, I recommend reading them in order (as listed above).

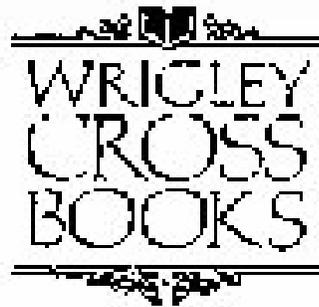
LAURIE KING [*The Beekeeper's Apprentice, A Monstrous Regiment of Women, etc.*]: I believe that Laurie King actually writes Sherlock Holmes better than Arthur Conan Doyle did. But it's not Holmes and Watson in these stories – it's Holmes and Russell. The ageing, retired Sherlock Holmes has met his match in Mary Russell, a brilliant, troubled young woman who adopts him as her mentor. *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* is an absolute delight, and will draw you on to the rest of the series—currently five books set circa World War I.

SHARYN McCRUMB [the *Ballad* series, including *The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter, If Ever I Return Pretty Peggy-O, The Rosewood Casket*]: Sharyn McCrumb achieved notoriety in fandom a few years ago for her two SF fandom-based murder mysteries – *Bimbos of the Death Sun* and *Zombies of the Gene Pool* – but these books are utterly different. Set in a small Tennessee town, these

novels convey a sense of place, history and continuity that's very rare. McCrumb interweaves Appalachian history and local characters into stories about Sheriff Spencer Arrowood and the crimes he investigates.

MICHAEL PEARCE [the Mamur Zapt books, including *The Mingrelian Conspiracy, The Camel of Destruction, The Snake Catcher's Daughter*]: Cairo in 1905 is an explosive stew of religions, cultures, poverty and wealth. Muslims, Christians, Jews, dozens of other sects, and scores of different ethnic groups are crowded into a city governed ostensibly by an Egyptian Pasha, but in fact by the British, who are "advising" (certainly not occupying) the country. Hence, the head of the Secret Police (the "Mamur Zapt") is a young Welsh officer, Captain Cadwallader Owen, a man trying to keep the peace AND keep all his political masters happy – not to mention his Egyptian mistress. These whimsical, dryly understated books are terrific. Vancouver Public Library has most of them in hardcover, and several are currently being republished in paperback.

BRUCE ALEXANDER [*Blind Justice, Watery Grave, Murder in Grub Street, etc.*]: By some peculiar coincidence, there are currently several authors writing series set in London of the late 1700's, but Bruce Alexander's books are by far the best. These novels revolve around Sir John



Science Fiction, Fantasy,
Horror, Mystery, General
Stock, New, Used,
Collectable Books!

1809 N.E. 39th Avenue,
Portland, OR, 97212
Telephone: (503) 281-9449
▪ Fax: (503) 281-9706

MEDIA FILE (cont'd from p. 6)

"IF" picked up.

The book *Regeneration* will be sold only in the UK. Still, a few copies could turn up at local SF conventions.

Warner Home Video is still "...going through transitional pains," with the "Classic" series videos.

Star Trek: Cable Bound

Three of the four "Trek" series are heading for a cable super station in the US. Viacom's own TNN has won the record \$364 million (US) licensing fee for "Next Gen", "DS9" and "Voyager" transition rights, beating out the Sci-Fi Channel. The three series will "Beams Up" to TNN between September 2001 and January 2006.

Space got the Canadian rights to all four "Trek" series till January 2007.

Latest word on the next "Star Trek" movie is that they'll be facing off with the Romulans, and there's a rumors that "Picard" will leave after this one.

Is Patrick Stewart about to trade the "Enterprise-E" for a certain "Police Box"?

Once again I say, "Stay tuned".

Freakykinks: The New Season's First Casualty.

The producers of the "Blair Witch" better stick to movies as their new FOX series "Freakykinks" was canceled after just four outings. It came in fifth for its time slot for all but its first airing. Fox holds its broadcast rights till June 15; however, it's questionable if the series will air again. The Sci-Fi Channel said it's interested in picking up the remaining nine episodes.

Its Canadian broadcaster Global also pulled the plug. Meanwhile, Space said it's interested in the remaining episodes.

That's all for now, so I wish you the best and I'll be seeing you.

BOOK REVIEWS (cont'd from p. 7)

Fielding, the "Blind Beak," the larger-than-life judge who helped create the London police force, but they use the viewpoint of a fictional character, Jeremy Proctor, an orphaned printer's apprentice who is adopted by Fielding. Alexander has a great feel for the historical setting and catches the flavour of 18th century prose without inflicting an excess of it on his readers. I especially recommend the first book, *Blind Justice*.

WILLIAM DEVERELL [*Trial of Passion, Kill All the Lawyers, Needles*, etc.]: If you haven't yet discovered lawyer-turned-writer, Bill Deverell, better hurry out and find one of his many bestselling novels set on the streets and in the law offices of Vancouver. Deverell writes convincing drama about criminals and their lawyers, and his books keep getting better. My personal favourite is *Trial of Passion*, an engrossing tale of love, divorce, sexual assault trials, and laid back living in the Gulf Islands.

JAMES MELVILLE [*Death of a Daimyo, the Bogus Buddha, Go Gently Gaijin*, etc.]: James Melville lived in Japan for many years and he writes in wonderful depth about that country and its people. His Inspector Otani mysteries, begun in the early 80's, introduce us to many levels of Japanese society – not just the middle class businessmen we see in the West. Join the adventures of Inspector Otani, Detective Kimura (a dandy with an inexplicable liking for foreigners) and Ninja Noguchi (the tough old cop who knows the slums and seedy underworld of the city like nobody else). The earlier books in this series are available through the Vancouver Public Library, and more recent ones are also in bookstores.

DIANE DAY [*The Strange Files of Fremont Jones, Fire and Fog*, etc.] Fremont Jones is a 20th-century woman,

determined to throw off the genteel shackles of upper-class Boston. Armed with a typewriting machine (and using her middle name instead of the hated "Carolyn"), she sets off for California to start a career, arriving just weeks before the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. Diane Day's first two books featuring the redoubtable Fremont are very entertaining and convey an authentic flavour of the times – especially *Fire and Fog*, which takes place in the aftermath of the earthquake. Unfortunately, subsequent books are not nearly as good.

G.M. FORD [*Who in Hell is Wanda Fuca?, The Bum's Rush*, etc.] GM Ford knows Seattle intimately, and local readers will pick up on all sorts of thinly veiled people and events as they follow the hilarious adventures of low rent detective, Leo Waterman, and his smelly surveillance team of old rubbies. (Other people stake out suspects from cars – these guys use shopping carts.) Ford's books are well-plotted, very funny, and stuffed with great characters. My only quibble is the violence, which I occasionally find excessive.

Special Mention: *The Good Children* by KATE WILHELM – This unusual suspense novel from well-known SF and mystery writer Kate Wilhelm is so good that I bought extra copies to give to friends for Christmas. Wilhelm tells the deceptively simple but engrossing story of four children who decide to cover up their mother's death so they won't be placed in foster homes. Unfortunately, one lie leads to many complicated lies, and secrets fester. Warning: Don't start reading this before bed because you'll be up all night reading.