

# BCSFA Zine

*The newsletter of the B.C. Science Fiction Association*

#425

\$3.00

October 2008



*Why doesn't Hospitality look like this?*

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*BCSFazine* (c) October 2008, Volume 36, #10, Issue #425 is the monthly club newsletter published by the British Columbia Science Fiction Association, a social organization.

Please send comments, subscriptions, suggestions, and/or submissions to Garth Spencer (the Editor), at garthspencer@shaw.ca or Box 74122, Hillcrest Park, 4101 Main St., Vancouver, BC, CANADA V5V 3P0. *BCSFazine* solicits electronic submissions, and black and white line illustrations in JPG or GIF format, and offers contributor's copies.

*BCSFazine* is printed most excellently by the good people at Copies Plus, at 1950 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, tel. 604-731-7868.

*BCSFazine* is distributed monthly at WHITE DWARF BOOKS, 3715 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6R 2G5, tel. 604-228-8223; email whitedwarf@deadwrite.com. Single copies C\$3.00/US\$2.00 each.

### ***This Month in BCSFA***

Friday, Oct. 10 from 8 pm: **BCSFazine deadline** - see Garth at FRED (at Boston Pizza, Broadway near Granville)

Thursday, Oct. 16 @ 7 pm: **October book discussion** at "Our Town" café, 245 East Broadway, Vancouver, starting at 7 pm. Book to be discussed will be *That Hideous Strength* by C.S. Lewis and *Starship Troopers* by Robert Heinlein.

Saturday, Oct. 18: **BCSFA party/meeting** – venue TBA.

Friday, Oct. 24 from 8 pm: **BCSFazine production** - distribution starts at FRED

### ***Art Credits***

Sheryl Birkhead.....Masthead  
Anonymous.....cover illo

## ***The Trouble with Belgium***

In some years we have printed extra copies of *BCSFazine* to distribute at VCon, and on such occasions I tried to include capsule descriptions of the clubs and conventions and other fan activities here. (And then I found out how incomplete and inaccurate my information was. Graeme's *WCSFazine* is more plugged-in than I am.) Maybe another perspective is worth taking.

What are all the different interests that carry on under the name "fandom"? Without surfing the Web very long, you can find:

- Animation and graphic design artists
- Japanese Anime (and all that that entails)
- Comics and graphic novel fans
- Conrunners
- Costuming
- DIY streaming-video fans
- Fanhistory fans
- Fantasy fans
- Fanzine fans
- Filk fans
- Gaming (from board to computer to live-action/role-playing games)
- Media (lumping together *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Forever Knight*, *Supernatural*, *X-files*, pirates, *Lord of the Rings*, etc.)
- Science fiction fans (the few, the proud)
- Society for Creative Anachronism
- Writers' workshop fans

You already know what this means, that we have a lot of different fandoms going around. And you probably know my next point, that this is just normal, the *status quo*, for contemporary fans – but not for fans who got an earlier, different concept. What is that concept, you ask?

One fandom that's not listed here is "fannish" fandom. That referred specifically to a phase characterized by the humorous, even surreal writing both fans and university frosh would produce; hoaxes like UVic's War with Greenland, or the Witherspoon-Li letters to *BCSFazine*, or the "Secret Life of Robert Runte" fantasies in *Neology* about the Grey Eminence of Alberta fandom. All of this seemed to be the hallmark of some intelligent, high-spirited, creative minds. My preferred company.

I've been trying to popularize the "fannish" concept with Royal Swiss Navy activity proposals, like the proposal to mount a United Anarchist Collective party in time for the next election, a Royal Swiss Navy uniform parade on April Fool's Day, or at least an RSN room party at VCon.

VCon tends to offer space and programming to a variety of fandoms, which is why it gets called a "general-interest" SF convention. Variety is great. It means that you should be able to find your kind of company ... your community. VCon also retains what I just assume is the focus of an

SF convention: written SF. Today, though, we have to call this a “literary” convention, as distinct from the conventions held by and for the majority of fandoms.

What I’m driving at is, we still have a high proportion of fans who learned of fandom as *one* interest group, not many; a subculture of *readers*, not overwhelmingly of media fans; and – here’s my deal – a *community*, however geographically distributed. Maybe fandom really was like this, once upon a time.

May I know, please, where to find a community of friends with active minds? Original minds? Fannish minds? I’m not dissing other kinds of fandom, I’m just asking you (once again) where my kind is.

Let’s be frank. Media, comics and games *don’t* present really original ideas, but science fiction and fantasy motifs that have been done to death a couple or five generations ago. Fandom as we know it *doesn’t* deal with true novelty very well: people latch onto one thing, and want to hang onto the same old trip forever; no wonder that “fanfiction” now means slavishly writing in your favorite media story universe, not an original one.

The *RSN Gazette* and the *RSN Handbook* have gotten a few laughs, but ... My campaign to promote fannishness hasn’t worked. I guess I don’t have that charisma thing.

So: What are *your* suggestions for making our fandom more fannish?

## ***Letters***

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*Greg Slade, September 13, 2008*

Editorial: I haven’t been attending VCon for very long, but I have formed a few opinions based on what I’ve seen so far:

VCon is a great convention. I attended NorWescon once, and while the con was much larger, very well run, and had a terrific dealers’ room and masquerade, the panels were a definite letdown. Having attended at *Battlestar Galactica* panel at VCon which featured actors from the show, and Eric Chu, the guy who designed the new *Galactica*, the new *Vipers*, and the new *Cylons*, attending a panel where the panellists were fans (and not terribly knowledgeable fans, either) was a big letdown. I could go on and on, but it should suffice to acknowledge what repeat attendees already know: VCon is good fun, and I want to see it continue.

Not only do I want to see VCon continue, I want to see it grow. Once, Palle told me that historically, the North Shore has been under-represented at VCon. That was actually one of the factors which motivated me to launch BIFF: to try to connect with North Shore fans who weren’t otherwise connected to the wider community of fans. I’m constantly running into people who are huge fans, but haven’t even heard about VCon, or any of the many other fan groups in town. BIFF hasn’t even begun to reach the huge number of disconnected fans on the North Shore, but already, I’ve met a large number of people who are great

fun to hang out with, almost none of whom have had any previous connection to VCon or BCSFA or any other fan groups in town. If that's true on the North Shore, I'll bet it's true all over the Lower Mainland, and all over the whole province: the true potential market for VCon has to be many times the number of people who have ever come out to any VCon. The question is how to reach all those fans.

There are a number of fans with a long-time association with VCon who actively campaign against any effort to allow VCon to grow. Some of these seem to have been so psychically scarred by Westercon 44/VCon 19 that they are convinced that "big" equals "money losing." Thus, while they, too, want to see VCon continue, they're convinced that the only way it can continue is by keeping it small. Still others complain at having any programming which could possibly divert people who attend from hanging out in Hospitality all weekend, eating, drinking, and talking to one another. (Now, I can see the value in hanging out with other fans, but that doesn't sound like a con to me. It sounds more like... well... FRED or BIFF. And you don't have to buy a membership to hang out at FRED or BIFF.)

*((That's probably just me with that opinion; I don't think I represent anybody but myself. I became unimpressed with overinflated conventions – 2000-plus Westercons – only because they seem to draw wild-eyed, overenthusiastic, and vastly underprepared incompetents. I'm not convinced we have the potential attendees, or the net concurring manpower, for any of our conventions to reach that level.*

*((But I won't campaign against VCon growing; remember that in the late 80s, it was approaching an attendance level of 1,000, while in recent years the con sometimes drew less than 400 members.))*

Still other fans seem to want, not so much to keep VCon small *per se*, but to limit attendance at VCon to only those fans that they already know and like. (I'm still trying to get my head around the notion of somebody who claims to be a fan of genres which are all about strange people and settings, but never wants to meet anybody they don't already know.)

*((Yeah. Tribalism. It's irrational, and hypocritical ... and I find myself tending in the same direction.))*

Conflicting with the desire of some fans to keep VCon small is the stated goal of VCon (which has been listed on the web site since before I started attending five years ago) to cover all aspects of fandom, rather than one or a few specific interests. To me, any aim to cover all aspects of fandom has an unspoken corollary that the event has to be large (or larger than it is, anyway.)

*((But, but, but that would make sense! We don't do that around here! [Do we?]) And I wasn't aware that was actually VCon's mandate.*

*((Anyway we have fractured, divided, or simply divergent hobby groups that hold separate conventions, though they all call themselves "fandom". Where you have separate conventions – as when you have separate churches – you have separate communities. Are VCons really*

*offering what gamers and comic fans and furies and anime fans ask for?))*

We all have interests which may not be widely shared. (In my case, *Tom Swift*, which was my earliest introduction to written SF.) But any con has a finite number of panel slots, which means that not all interests can be covered, and even if there were space for a less-popular interest, the number of attendees at such a panel would necessarily be few at a smaller con. (How many people would have attended a *Tom Swift* panel if there had been one last year? Four? Five?) But the larger a con is, the more panels there can be (which means more interests can be discussed), and the more people there will be who would be interested in a given topic.

Now, Vancouver already supports multiple cons, including both fan-run cons (Anime Evolution and VCon), and commercial cons (for various shows which are or have been shot here.) In the past, we had the Rain cons, which were smaller than VCon, and ran in a different part of the year. It has seemed to me for some time that there would be room for at least one more con in this town. Since VCon runs in the fall, maybe it should be in the spring. Since some people obviously want a smaller, more intimate con, then make it small and intimate, so that VCon is free to grow into what it could be. Since some people only want to discuss written SF, and don't even want to hear about TV shows or movies, make it cover written SF only. Me, I'd go to both, because it's just too long between VCons to suit me.

Letters: To answer Lloyd's question, I'd love to go to Anticipation (or, for that matter, pretty much any con anywhere), but almost certainly won't be able to scrape enough money together in time. Calgary, not so much, because I'm far more into SF than fantasy.

We miss you Lloyd, or at least your work. I've never met you, but your Canadian con lists were of tremendous use to me when I was webmaster for VCon, because I could link to other cons right across the country. Without you, it's a lot more difficult to find out what's going on in other parts of the Dominion. (Not least because the few cross-Canada resources there are, like the Canadian SF Forum, Fandom.ca, or Made in Canada, are obviously not being fed the kind of news it takes to enable fan groups to connect with one another.)

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*BSCFAZINEzine, Volume 1, Number 73.424, Monday 15 September 2008, BSCFAZINEzine is from Felicity Walker, #209-3851 Francis Road, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, V7C 1J6, felicity4711@hotmail.com.*

I liked the look of this issue. The green cover paper was nice, and the body text felt typographically right, for the most part. I'm surprised to find I have nothing to say about the content itself, so I'll just say thanks for another *BSCFAzine* issue.

VCon is coming up fast. This time I haven't bought my membership in advance. I didn't get the chance at the end of last year's VCon, I didn't

get around to mailing in a money order before now, and when I went to pay through the website with my credit card, I found that (a) I have to start a PayPal account, and (b) I still have to print out and mail in the registration form, instead of filling it out on-line. I don't know if the mailed part would arrive in the mail before the con. Also, I don't know how to make sure my credit card payment lines up with my registration form, so that the treasurer knows the two are linked. I guess I'd better do something, though, if I want a badge with my name printed properly when I get to the con.

So far this season, there's only been one new TV show I've felt like checking out: *Fringe*. I've watched the first episode, and I'm interested. Oh, I also checked out *Wolverine* and the *X-Men*, but the art is in that bad style that every cartoon is in now: half Bruce Timm and half anime, with very little depth or construction. The only thing that kept me watching past the first minute was a billboard in the background of one scene that showed Magneto shilling for Genosha, of all places. However, this was not explored before I got sick of the style of the show and turned it off.

## Calendar

Oct. 3-5: **VCon 33** at the Compass Point Inn, Surrey, BC. Guests of Honour: Author Kelley Armstrong (*Women of the Otherworld*), Author Patrick Rothfuss (*The Kingkiller Chronicles*), Artist Lisa Snellings (*Dark Caravan*), Game Designer James Ernest (Cheapass Games), Dr. Jaymie Matthews (mission scientist, MOST project, Canadian Space Agency), Make reservations with the Compass Point Inn at 9850 King George Highway; rooms \$99 double, \$109 quad. Memberships: Adult \$60 at the door; students with ID, \$45; 7-12's, \$30 at the door; under 6, free. One-day memberships available. Write Box 78069, Grandview RPO, Vancouver, BC V5N 5W1, Tel 778-230-1605, or see [www.vcon.ca](http://www.vcon.ca)

[October 3 - 5, 2008 - H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival - Portland, Oregon](#) (Film festival centred on HP Lovecraft and similar offerings)

[October 5th, 2008 - Calgary Comic & Toy Expo - Calgary, Alberta Canada](#) (Comics and toys)

[October 6, 2008 - IPMS Vancouver Fall Model Show - Burnaby, BC Canada](#) (Modeling)

Oct. 7: Murray Moore's birthday.

Oct. 9: premiere of *Eleventh Hour* (a story about policing science) on Thursday at 10 p.m. on CBC, and premiere of *Life on Mars* (a retro police procedural) on Thursdays at 10 p.m. on ABC and Global.

Oct. 11 (6:30 p.m.): Book launch for *Finding Creatures & Other Stories* (by C. June Wolf) at Pulp Fiction, 2422 Main Street, Vancouver; author will be reading from her work. For more information call 604-876-4311 or see [www.pulpfictionbooksvancouver.com](http://www.pulpfictionbooksvancouver.com)

[October 11, 2008 - Tri-Cities Comic Con - Pasco, Washington](#) (Comics)

[October 11, 2008 - Revenant Film Festival - Seattle, Washington](#) (Showcase of Undead Cinema)

[October 11th, 2008 - Sci-Fan - Lynnwood, Washington](#) (modeling)

[October 11th, 2008 - Tri-City Comic Con - Pasco, Washington](#) (Comics)

Oct. 12: The original *Wizard of Oz* plays at Pacific Cinematheque, 1 p.m. only, tickets \$8 for adults, \$5 for those under 18.

Oct. 13: premiere of *My Own Worst Enemy* ("my other personality is a lethal assassin!") on Mondays at 10 p.m. on NBC & Global.

Oct. 14: **Canadian federal election**, featuring robots, phantoms, backbenchers and other alien presences masquerading as the representatives of our interests.

[Tactical Solutions: October 17th-19th, 2008 - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho](#) (Gaming)

Oct 18: **24 Hour Comics Day (24HCD)**. This is an annual event that started in 2004 "where cartoonists around the world each try to create 24 pages of comics in 24 hours... To help these cartoonists, some [organizations] will host special 24 Hour Comics Day events." During 2004 to 2007 Elfsar (in downtown Vancouver) has been the location of the only 24HCD-event in British Columbia, so Elfsar will probably have a 24HCD-event this year. More info at <http://24hourcomics.com/>

Oct. 19 (1 – 4 p.m.): Book launch of *Grim Hill: The Secret Deepens* (by Linda DeMeulemeester, from Lobster Press, winner of Silver Birch Award) and *Wild Talent: A Novel of the Supernatural* (by Eileen Kernaghan) at Grimoire's Books, #102 – 319 Governors Court, New Westminster; for directions, see [www.grimoiresbooks.com](http://www.grimoiresbooks.com)

[October 20th, 2008 - Keep Portland Weird - Portland, Oregon](#) (a celebration of cultural weirdness - sounds like something other innovative communities could emulate)

Oct. 21-26: **Vancouver International Writers & Readers Festival**; see [www.writersfest.bc.ca](http://www.writersfest.bc.ca)

Oct. 24-26: Surrey International Writers Conference; see [www.siwcc.ca](http://www.siwcc.ca)

[October 24 - 26, 2008 - Con-Fusion - Victoria, BC Canada](#) (Gaming and anime)

[October 24 - 26, 2008 - MileHiCon 40 - Denver, Colorado](#) (General SF)

[October 24 - 28, 2008 - Anime Banzai 2008 - Salt Lake City, Utah](#) (Anime)

[October 25, 2008 - Seattle Thrillers 2008 - Seattle, Washington](#) (a dance event commemorating the 25th of the Michael Jackson Thriller video taking place in Seattle and beyond)

Oct. 25 (1 to 3 p.m.); Book launch of *Grim Hill: The Secret Deepens* (by Linda DeMeulemeester) at Once Upon a Huckleberry Bush children's bookstore, 4387 Main Street, Vancouver.



[October 25, 2008 - Bellerose Con - St. Albert, Alberta Canada](#) (Anime)

Oct. 26: Dominique Kops' birthday.

Oct. 29 & 31: The original *Nosferatu* (1922, F.W. Murnau) plays at 7:30 p.m. at Pacific Cinematheque, Vancouver, BC.

Oct. 30 - Nov. 2: **World Fantasy Convention 2008** in Calgary, Alberta. Theme: "Mystery in Fantasy and Horror." GoHs: David Morrell, Barbara Hambly, Tom Doherty; ArtGoH: Todd Lockwood; TM: Tad Williams. World Fantasy is a literary focused convention that is in a different city every year. This is only the third time it has been in Canada and the first time it has been west of Ottawa. The convention is aimed at authors, developing writers, readers and artists. Attendance is limited to 850 attendees. The convention theme in 2008 is "Mystery in Fantasy and Horror". During the day there will be two streams of discussion panels and two streams of author readings. Major events are the Friday night autograph session and the Sunday afternoon World Fantasy Awards banquet. More details coming on [www.worldfantasy2008.org](http://www.worldfantasy2008.org)

Oct. 31: Deadline for submissions to *Tesseract's Thirteen* – Edge Publishing, PO Box 1714, Calgary Alberta, Canada T2P 2L7. Send mail submissions to Attention: Series Editors, c/o Tesseract's Thirteen Submissions.

[GIRAF 4: November 5th-8th, 2008 - Calgary, Alberta Canada](#) (animation festival)

[November 6 - 9, 2008 - AmberCon Northwest - Portland, Oregon](#) (Amber LRP)

[November 7 - 9, 2008 - Aki Con 2008 - Everett, Washington](#) (Anime)

[November 9th, 2008 - Portland Comic Book Show - Portland, Oregon](#) (Comics)

Nov. 14: premiere of *Quantum of Solace*.

[November 14 - 15, 2008 - 2D OR NOT 2D Animation Festival - Seattle, Washington](#) (Animation festival taking place at the Seattle Science Center IMAX theatre)

[November 15, 2008 - Emerald City GameFest - Seattle, Washington](#) (gaming event that free and family-oriented)

[November 16, 2008 - Vancouver Comicon - Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada](#)  
For more info about show, please email [ls Wong@uniserve.com](mailto:ls Wong@uniserve.com) or call 604-322-6412

[November 16, 2008 - Victoria Toy Show - Victoria, BC Canada](#) (Toy show that takes place twice a year)

Nov. 21: premieres of *Twilight* and *Bolt*.

[November 21 - 23, 2008 - Orycon 30 - Portland, Oregon](#) (General SF and the quintessential SF convention in Oregon)

[November 28 - 30, 2008 - Tomodachi Fest - Boise, Idaho](#) (anime)

Dec 30/08 - Jan. 1/09: **M.E.W. Convention** at the Red Lion at the Quay at Vancouver, Washington. M.E.W. is a New Year's cross genre celebration offering a diverse programming line-up of anime, costuming, fantasy, gaming, manga, science fiction, and much, much, more. M.E.W. is pleased to welcome The Slants (Chinatown Dance Rock synth rock band) and A-Key-Kyo (J-Pop) as our honoured guests. The sponsor, Manga and Exotic Worlds LLC, is an independent business based in Beaverton, Oregon whose mission is to promote creativity and imagination through all forms and mediums of art and literacy. Fans, writers and artists alike are encouraged to have fun, connect and exchange ideas through events, forums, web content and meetings. For more information, visit [www.mewcon.com](http://www.mewcon.com).

[January 9 - 11, 2009 - Rustycon 26 - Seatac, Washington](#) (General SF)

Jan. 15: Deadline for speculative literature submissions to *Room of One's Own* - PO Box 46160 Station D, Vancouver, BC Canada V6J 5G5.

[January 16 - 18, 2009 - Conquest NW - Bellevue, Washington](#) (Gaming)

[January 30 - February 1, 2009 - Confilkt - Seattle, Washington](#) (local northwest filking convention)

[January 30 - February 1, 2009 - Eugene Games Gala - Eugene, Oregon](#) (Gaming)

[February 6 - 8, 2009 - BeyondCon - Gig Harbor, Washington](#) (a costuming relaxacon that is fast becoming a costuming staple in our convention listing)

[February 6 - 9, 2009 - GottaCon - Victoria, British Columbia, Canada](#) (Gaming)

[February 7th, 2009 - Science Fiction + Fantasy Short Film Festival - Seattle, WA](#) (Film - may need to hunt around a bit on the Science Fiction Museum site to find the information)

[February 7th-8th, 2009 - Game Design Expo -Vancouver, BC Canada](#) (Gaming with emphasis on game design)

[February 13 - 15, 2009 - Radcon 5a - Pasco, Washington](#) (General SF with a gaming and relaxacon emphasis)

[February 19 - 21, 2009 - Life, the Universe & Everything 26 - Provo, Utah](#) (Academic symposium on science fiction and fantasy with an emphasis on writing.)

[February 27 - March 1, 2009 - Potlatch 18 - San Francisco Bay Area, California](#) exact location TBD (General SF with a writer emphasis - and rotates between California, Oregon and Seattle)

[February 28 - March 2, 2009 - Dak-Kon XIV - Courtenay, BC Canada](#) (Vancouver Island gaming event)

March 6: premieres of *Watchmen* and *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*.

[March 12 - 15, 2009 - Anime Oasis EVO - Boise, Idaho](#) (anime)

[March 13-15, 2009 - Corflu 26 - Seattle, Washington](#) (This is a convention gathering of the fanzine fan community)

[March 14th, 2009 - The Joy of Modeling: Vancouver, Washington](#) (Modeling)

[March 26 - 29, 2009 - GameStorm - Portland, Oregon](#) (Gaming)

[April 2 - 4, 2009 - Stargate SG-1 and Atlantis Convention in Vancouver - Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada](#) (Creation Entertainment for profit media convention)

[April 4 - 5, 2009 - Emerald City ComiCon - Seattle, Washington](#) (Comics)

[April 9 - 12, 2009 - Norwescon 32 - Seatac, Washington](#) (major regional science fiction convention)

[April 10 - 12, 2009 - SakuraCon 2007 - Seattle, Washington](#) (Sakura-Con is the premier Pacific Northwest Anime Convention devoted to East Asian Culture, with a particular focus on Japanese animation (anime), Japanese Comics (manga), and video gaming)

[April 25 - 26, 2009 - Calgary Comics & Entertainment Expo - Calgary, Alberta, Canada](#) (Comics)

[April 30 - May 3, 2009 - World Horror Con 2009 - Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada](#) (Premier horror convention)

[May 15 - 16, 2009 - 10th Annual UFO Festival - UFOFest - McMinnville, Oregon](#) (well, as you might guess - a UFO enthusiast event taking place in the Pacific Northwest)

[May 15-17th, 2009 - Zompile - Portland, Oregon](#) (Undead film festival)

[May 22 - 25, 2009 - MisCon 23 - Missoula, Montana](#) (General SF)

[May 22 - 24, 2009 - CONduit XIX - Salt Lake City](#) (General SF)

[May 30, 2009 - Spokane Comicon - Spokane, Washington](#) (Comics)

[June, 2009 - ConComCon 16 - Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada](#) (Con for con runners) (details to be announced soon)

[June 12 - 14, 2009 - Anime Evolution - Vancouver, BC, Canada](#) (anime)

[July 2 - 5, 2009 - Westercon 62: FiestaCon - Tempe, Arizona](#) (The pre-eminent western regional science fiction convention that moves each year)

[July 1 - 4, 2010 - Westercon 63: Confirmation - Pasadena, California](#) (The pre-eminent western regional science fiction convention that moves each year)

[July 31st - August 2nd, 2009 - SpoCon - Spokane, Washington](#) (General SF)

[August 6 - August 10, 2009 - 2009: Anticipation, the 67th World Science Fiction Convention](#), Montréal, Québec, Canada (This is the convention that those wishing to see Seattle win should either attend or become supporting member and then as either [voting for Seattle](#) - please note that my suggestion as you will note below comes from a prejudiced corner :-)

GoH Neil Gaiman, Elisabeth Vonarburg, Taral

Wayne, David Hartwell, Tom Doherty. Author Julie Czerneda will be Master of Ceremonies. Artist GoH announced: Ralph Bakshi. Memberships now Can55/\$US55/£30/€35 supp; discounts for site selection voters, presupporters, etc. See <http://www.anticipationsf.ca/> , email: [media@anticipationsf.ca](mailto:media@anticipationsf.ca) or write to: Anticipation The 67th World Science Fiction Convention, P.O. Box 105, Station NDG Montréal, QC H4A 3P4.

[August 7th-9th, 2009 - Fandemonium - Boise, Idaho](#) (General SF, media and more)

[October 23 - 25, 2009 - Steam-Con - Sea-Tac, Washington](#) (Steam Punk)

## ***News***

### *A MEMBER PASSING*

"My Mom (Donna Markbride) died August 4th. It's been very, very hard for me to talk to people, and I haven't yet posted the news in BCSFA lists.

"Would you please announce it for me, and maybe mention all the good times she had at FRED, she was there from day one, and things like V-Con hot tubs, etc.

"There is a link to here obit and picture in the Vancouver *Sun* of Aug. 9 or 16, one of those Saturdays, I can't remember. She used both Markbride and McInnes so that's how I did the obit.

"... [A] memorial celebration will be followed by a FRED of some sort, and I will have the details closer to early September.

"I miss her so much already."

Joanne McBride Wilson, September 5, 2008

### *BIFFNESS*

"Shiver me timbers! Ten people turned out for Dress like a Pirate Night, including 6 swashbuckling buccaneers. (My favourite bit of swashbuckling sartorial splendour was Alan's instant eyepatch.) We also got to see poppet again, which is always a good thing. We also saw Paxwolf for the first time in way too long, and she immediately set to out ask everybody else what we've all been up to since the last time she was around. That, in turn, prompted a round of "I've got a question for you!" We talked about (but never got around to watching) the premiere of the new Flash Gordon series, the season premiere of Doctor Who, and assorted bad movies. (We've decided that, if we can find out who has the copy of Xtro which has been changing hands at Video Crossing nights, it would be fund to show the interview with the director where he talks about how bad it is, and how the sequels are even worse. Not the film, you understand: just the interview. There are limits to how much badness the human mind can take without irrevocable brain damage.)

"This week, we're going to experience *Save the Green Planet*, a Korean-made flick which, I have it on good authority, is:

One of the Weirdest sci-fi films Ever made.

“Looking ahead to next week, it's VCon time, and, as has been our practice on VCon weekend, BIFF will be meeting, but we won't be meeting at the usual place and time. Instead, we will be meeting at Amber Jack's Tap House, the pub in the Compass Point Inn, across the parking lot from the King George Skytrain Station in Surrey. Note that, even though this is the hotel for VCon, the pub is not part of the event space, so you don't have to be a member of VCon to come. (Think of it as participating in VCon by proxy, if you will.)

“But BIFFarinos won't be crying in our beer alone. Oh, no. As we have done in years past, we will be celebrating a joint meeting with FRED (Forget Reality – Enjoy Drinking), the long-running weekly fanmeet which inspired the creation of BIFF, so you could say that it's going to be a family reunion. Not only that, but we'll also be meeting with the Vancouver Doctor Who Meetup Group. As far as I'm concerned, the more, the merrier. Let's take over the pub, and order Romulan Ale, Fruity Oaty Bars, and Newt Nuggets! (But not Soylent Green.)

“Even though I'm posting a startup time, the truth is that people will be popping in and out all night long, and also checking out room parties and other events at the con.

BIFF, or "Burrard Inlet Fan Fellowship" happens Fridays (except long weekends and VCon weekend) from 6:30 p.m. until closing time (officially 9:00) at the Eighties Restaurant ([www.80srestaurant.com](http://www.80srestaurant.com)), 110 West 14th Street (at Lonsdale) in North Vancouver. To keep in touch with any changes, please check the BIFF web site (which has links to more details about the events listed here) at: <http://biff.realityfree.ca/>

Greg Slade, September 24, 2008

*"He felt that his whole life was some kind of dream and he sometimes wondered whose it was and whether they were enjoying it."*

- *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

## FREDNESS

Ryan Hawe suggests we do some outreach and re-establish a liaison with the UBC SF Society. Excellent idea; in fact we could do with a standing outreach committee. In recent email exchanges, some of us have suggested sending them some flyers and leaflets, not only on VCon but on FRED, BIFF, the book discussion group ... and why (I ask) don't we have a flyer for BCSFA, too? Might be a good thing.

## BOOK RELEASES

Neal Stephenson's new novel *Anathem* (*sic*) is now available at Powell's in a signed hardcover first edition (\$29.95).

Powell's Book News

Recent book releases by Lower Mainland authors include:

*Finding Creatures & Other Stories* (by C. June Wolf)

*Grim Hill: The Secret Deepens* (by Linda DeMeulemeester, from Lobster Press, winner of Silver Birch Award)

*Wild Talent: A Novel of the Supernatural* (by Eileen Kernaghan)

*The Centermint Caper, The Policemen's Ball, and A Credit to the Art* are SF novels by Craig Conley of Ontario, published by Vanguard Press in England and now available on Amazon.com.

Craig Conley, August 21, 2008

#### WHY TV SF IS LIKE THAT

"On the Monday, September 28 *Urban Rush* show on Shaw 4, two directors were discussing the [following]: half hour show: *Make or Break TV*. Air Times: Mondays @ 9pm et/pt, Thursdays @ 12pm, 6pm & 8pm et/pt; a compelling look at the television industry that has an insider's take on the talent, wits, and timing that determine success or failure of a television show. *Make or Break TV* is a humorous, insightful, fast-paced look at the process of television production. Features award-winning well-known actors such as Eric McCormack, Richard Benjamin, Ken Olin and Joe Pantoliano."

Ken Wong to BCSFA email list, September 25, 2008  
(see <http://www.canada.com/tvtopolis/tv/makeorbreaktv/index.html>)

#### SF/F/H MARKETS

*Arkham Tales, A Magazine of Weird Fiction*—See Web site. Address Nathan Shumate. "*Arkham Tales* is a free quarterly PDF magazine devoted to 'weird' fiction: supernatural suspense and adventure stories informed by (though not imitative of) the pulp fiction of the early 20th century. The first issue is scheduled to be available for download November 2008."

"*Arkham Tales* is predominantly a showcase of original short fiction, encompassing pulp adventure, weird horror (including Lovecraftian influence, obviously), and the fantastic. 'Straight' science fiction, murder mystery, etc., will be rejected unless there is a weird or fantastic element. There is no length limit, but realize that a long story will have to be better than the two or three shorter stories it would replace."

"Manuscripts should be submitted electronically in MS Word, WordPerfect, or RTF formats, in standard manuscript format. Please do not copy your submission into the body of your E-mail."

"While we appreciate and welcome submissions which show the influence of the classic pulp and weird fiction authors, *Arkham Tales* is not a venue for fan-fiction or continuations of other writers' characters or worlds; we will also reject stories set recognizably in specific RPG campaign settings. Even 'Lovecraftian' stories should be more than a concatenation of Mythos references connected by antiquated adjectives."

Pays 1¢/word, "prior to publication, for first worldwide electronic rights, exclusive for one year from date of publication. All payments are made via PayPal."

Previously-Published Fiction: "On rare occasions, we may choose to publish work which has been published before, if it meets the following restrictions:"

a. "Prior publication must have been in a small, under-circulated magazine; in other words, it should have been in a venue where our audience likely would not have read it before."

b. "Any prior publication in print should have been at least ten years ago, and must never have been published or made available previously via the Web or any other electronic distribution channel. This includes personal portfolio Web sites.

Payment and rights are identical to those for original fiction."

Original Nonfiction: "We have no preexisting guidelines for nonfiction articles, but no great pressing need for them. Query first for any nonfiction. Payment and rights are identical to those for original fiction."

Original Cover Art: "We will consider photography, photocollage, digitally produced or manipulated images, and more traditional illustration."

"We do not commission artwork to accompany or illustrate specific fiction; instead, we ask artists to E-mail us lower-resolution versions of artwork available, or (better yet) refer us to an online portfolio of work available for non-exclusive use as cover graphics, and we will contact you for a high-resolution version if and when we want to use it."

Pays \$30 (art), for "non-exclusive worldwide rights. All payments are made via PayPal."

[E-mail: [arkhamtales@gmail.com](mailto:arkhamtales@gmail.com); <http://www.arkhamtales.com/>].

*Gila Queen's Guide to Markets* #152, Sept. 25, 2008

*Fantasy Magazine*—See Web site. Editors: Cat Rambo, Sean Wallace.

"*Fantasy Magazine* is an online weekly magazine of all forms of fantasy fiction. High fantasy, contemporary and urban tales, surrealism, magical realism, science fantasy, and folktales can all be found in our pages."

Fiction: "We are looking for stories that delight, entertain, and enrapture readers, stories ranging from delicious treats that melt on the tongue, leaving only a trace of sweetness, to the dark and poignant tale whose memory lingers with you for days, perhaps years. *Fantasy Magazine* is entertainment for the intelligent genre reader—send us stories of the fantastic that make us think, and tell us what it is to be human while amazing us with your mastery of language and story elements. From the very first issue, *Fantasy* has featured authors of significant literary reputation, such as Jeffrey Ford, Caitlin R. Kiernan, Stewart O'Nan, and Holly Phillips. Send us your best. While we run the gamut from light to dark, we don't have as much of the former as we'd like, and are always looking for more."

"We are not looking for cookie-cutter fantasies or retellings of D&D campaigns. We do not want any 'fan fiction' or story that depends on the use of media characters. While any sort of fantasy content is allowed, the execution must be superb. Some sexual content is acceptable, but the title *Fantasy* does not refer to sex fantasies. We are not an appropriate market for erotica."

1000–6000 words; pays 3¢/word, for "exclusive first world electronic rights for 60 days from publication, and non-exclusive anthology rights." RT—30 days.

"We do not accept simultaneous or multiple submissions. Electronic submissions should be pasted into the body of the E-mail, or attached as RTF or MSWord DOC to [fantasysubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:fantasysubmissions@gmail.com)."

Nonfiction: "If you wish to submit articles, essays, or interviews, please query first to [fantastictempest@gmail.com](mailto:fantastictempest@gmail.com). We're particularly interested in interviews with authors, creators, producers, writers, and actors from all genre media. We're also looking for more columnists to provide commentary every three or six weeks on genre topics, particularly television. Query at the address above."

Reviews: "We do not accept unsolicited reviews at this time. However, we are looking for more reviewers. If you'd like to become part of our team, please E-mail the Reviews Manager. Include up to three reviews (published or not) of books, comics, or graphic novels (preferably from 2008)."

"If you would like to review games (video, tabletop, etc.), please send up to three game reviews to [fantastictempest@gmail.com](mailto:fantastictempest@gmail.com)."

Producers, Publishers, Authors & Publicists: "If you would like *Fantasy Magazine* to review your book, game, movie, television show, or comic/graphic novel, please E-mail the Reviews Manager a virtual press packet/release or other pertinent information."

Audio Dramas/Radio Plays: "In 2009 *Fantasy Magazine* will add audio dramas to our suite of podcasts. To that end, from September 1–November 15, 2008, we will accept audio script submissions for the first season."

"Scripts should run 30–60 minutes and follow traditional radio play format. (Examples) We prefer plays that will require five or fewer actors."

"Though we will lean more heavily toward dramas in the fantasy genre, we will look at science fiction and dark/horror tales. Any good script with elements of the fantastic is game. Keep in mind that we're looking for many of the same qualities in audio drama that we look for in our fiction. Scripts should emphasize character, dialogue, and a good story over relying heavily on sound effects and cool tricks."

"Your script may be original or based on an existing story or book. However, you must get permission to adapt an existing work from the author before submitting the script to us unless the original work is in the public domain. If we express interest in your script, you must produce documentation of this before we accept your work. We cannot obtain or negotiate these rights for you. If you would like to adapt a story previously published in *Fantasy* and can't find contact info for the author in question, we will pass on your request. (Most authors have a Web site link on their story page.) The SF/F writers listed here are open to having their work adapted."

Pays \$50, "for non-exclusive audio rights. Produced dramas will be available as a podcast from *Fantasy* and possibly broadcast on a public radio station."

"To submit, please send your script in .DOC or .RTF format to [fantasymagpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:fantasymagpodcast@gmail.com). The subject line should be Audio Drama Sub: [Title]. In your cover letter (in the body of the E-mail) please indicate if your script is original or an adaptation. If the latter, name the original



story and author. Also include the number of characters and approximate running time."

"If you have a radio play that has already been produced and recorded and you'd like us to consider it for our podcast, please send a query to: [fantasymagpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:fantasymagpodcast@gmail.com). Include the title, a short description of the play, when it was first produced and broadcast, and length."

[E-mail: [fantasy submissions@gmail.com](mailto:fantasy submissions@gmail.com);  
<http://www.darkfantasy.org/fantasy/>].

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*Beneath Ceaseless Skies* – a new online magazine dedicated to “publishing the best in literary adventure fantasy.” Wants stories that combine 30's pulp and 70's post-Tolkien “adventure fantasy plots in vivid secondary worlds, but written with a literary flair.” Pays 5 cents per word or more. Guidelines at <http://beneath-ceaseless-skies.com>.

Burnaby Writers' Society Newsletter, Sept-Oct 2008

*Shock Totem*—See Web site. "*Shock Totem* is a new dark fantasy/horror e-zine launching in 2009. Fiction and nonfiction will be published biweekly, on an alternating schedule, from which we'll choose the most memorable writings for our annual paperback anthology."

What We Want:

Fiction: "We consider original, unpublished stories within the confines of dark fantasy and horror-mystery, suspense, supernatural, morbid humor, fantasy with a horror element, etc." To 5000 words (firm). "We will consider novelettes/novellas. Please query first. We are also interested in tightly woven flash fiction (no vague pieces or stories that say nothing). Stories written in a concise manner will get preferential treatment."

Nonfiction: "We're interested in well-researched and compelling nonfiction, such as interviews and editorials on relative subjects."

Poetry: "We're interested in dark poetry on a limited basis."

Artwork: "We solicit artwork directly. But please E-mail us with samples if you're interested (link to Web site or online samples/portfolio preferred—no large attachments!). Artwork must be appropriate. If you paint flowers and wildlife, we're probably not right for you—unless the flowers have teeth and are eating the wildlife. Send questions to: [art@shocktotem.com](mailto:art@shocktotem.com)."

What We Do Not Want: "We're not interested in hard science fiction, epic fantasy (swords and sorcery), splatterporn (blood and guts and little more), or clichéd plots. Clichéd themes are okay. We don't mind stories about zombies or serial killers or vampires, but please make the overall piece unique. If the plot has been worked to death we will likely not consider it, no matter how well it is written. No fan fiction."

What We Do Not Want But Will Consider:

Reprints: "But unpublished work will always get first consideration. Any submitted reprint must not have been published within the last

twelve months, and the author must retain all applicable rights. All previous publication information must be disclosed."

Format: "We only accept electronic submissions in .DOC/.RTF format as file attachments. Please use William Shunn's Manuscript Formatting template, and we ask that your Subject Title be in this format: SUBMISSION: Title (Class). Example: SUBMISSION: Pay Attention ... or Die! (Fiction)."

"No simultaneous/multiple submissions. Do not send a second submission until we've accepted or rejected the first. Include published credits, if applicable."

Payment Rates: Pays 1¢/word, "for our online publication, with a \$10 minimum and \$50 cap. Payment will be made within 30 days after publication," 3–5¢/word, "for exclusive stories (not previously featured on the Web site)."

"All authors will be considered for publication in the anthology and—if selected—receive one paperback copy of the published collection."

Rights: "We claim First World Electronic Rights and Non-exclusive Anthology Rights."

[E-mail: Questions: [general@shocktotem.com](mailto:general@shocktotem.com); Submissions: [submissions@shocktotem.com](mailto:submissions@shocktotem.com); <http://www.shocktotem.com>]. RT—2 months.

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*Space and Time Magazine*—Space and Time Magazine, Inc., 1308 Centennial Ave., Suite 101, Piscataway NJ 08854. Editor-in-Chief: Hildy Silverman. Quarterly.

"ATTENTION: We are reopening to submissions on 9-22-08 and will remain open until 11-30-08. Only submissions received during our open window will be considered for publication."

"Continuously published since 1966, *Space and Time Magazine* publishes science fiction, fantasy, and horror, and specifically seeks submissions that blend these genres in new and unique experiments. Both experienced and novice writers of fiction and poetry are welcome to submit."

Fiction: "We are looking for creative blends of science fiction, fantasy, and/or horror, but are really open to looking at anything, so long as it is speculative. Stories should be in standard manuscript format. Gratuitous sex and gore will not win you any brownie points, so only include it if they are integral to the plot. Don't send children's stories; we're not for the young'ins. No simultaneous or multiple submissions and no reprints without querying first. All submissions are to be sent electronically as a Word or .RTF attachment. If there is some reason that you cannot send us a story electronically, please query at the same address and explain the situation, so a snail mail address can be provided. NOTE: Do NOT snail mail to the Piscataway address—that's for invoicing and other business correspondence ONLY. Submissions to that address will be returned unopened or discarded."

10,000 words maximum, to 7500 words preferred; pays 1¢/word, for First North American Rights.

Poetry: "Poetry is also opening for submissions on 9-22-08. Please send your submissions either embedded in your E-mail, or as an attached Word or .RTF document, to [appropriate E-mail address below]. Please note that poems should be no longer than a single, standard 8.5x11 inch page, and must be of a speculative nature—either science fiction, fantasy, horror, or any combination thereof will do. All submissions must be sent electronically."

Artists: "All artwork in S&T is assigned. To be considered for an assignment, send samples of your work to editor-in-chief Hildy Silverman (non-returnable photocopies). You may also E-mail samples (or a Web site) to [appropriate E-mail address below]." Pays \$10 (interior illustrations), \$25 (cover), on acceptance ("or as near acceptance as finances allow").

Other: "We do not require you to look at our magazine before submitting material, but we won't discourage you from trying to psyche us out or ingratiate yourselves." (732)512-8789; [E-mail: [hildy@spaceandtimemagazine.com](mailto:hildy@spaceandtimemagazine.com); Fiction: [fictioneditor@spaceandtimemagazine.com](mailto:fictioneditor@spaceandtimemagazine.com); Poetry: [poetryeditor@spaceandtimemagazine.com](mailto:poetryeditor@spaceandtimemagazine.com); Art: [artgoddess@spaceandtimemagazine.com](mailto:artgoddess@spaceandtimemagazine.com); <http://www.spaceandtimemagazine.com>].

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*Under the Moon*—Final Sword Productions, See Web site. "*Under the Moon* is launching the fiction side of things fully in October 2008. Currently there are limited spaces in 2008, primarily for short fiction, or novellas."

"*Under the Moon* is the fiction imprint of Final Sword Productions, a role-playing game company, and as such we're interested in stories that might appeal to gamers."

What are we looking for?: "Alternative history; historical; fantasy; science fiction—either space opera, sci fi tech, or 'adventure'; urban fantasy; dark fantasy; horror/paranormal—not the blood and guts type of horror; cross genre, or stories that don't fit a specific genre, would also be of potential interest to us, so don't be afraid to query."

"Stories that are more likely to interest us will be either non romance, or have only a small romance sub plot. There might be some erotic content, but neither the romance, nor the erotic content, will be the driving force of the story."

"Releases will be in eBook first, through our partnership with Mojocastle (this saves us buying 'shelf' software)."

"We will be releasing one full-length book and one novella a month at first, with the optional release of a short story. All contracted work will go into print, through our in house printer, and sold direct on our store, as well as via Amazon. Yes, even the shorts—though they will do so in 'chapbook' form. We believe this will allow our authors to take active roles in local conventions because even a chapbook allows an author to take part in a signing at events such as these. Books will go into print approximately three months after their eBook release."

"The books will not be distributed via Ingram's, so if you're searching for a publisher who will attempt to place your work with the traditional brick and mortar book stores, we are the wrong house for you. We do, however, sell/distribute via Alliance Diamond, Black Hawk, and other RPG distributors."

5000–16,000 words (shorts); 16,000–45,000 words (novellas); 45,000–150,000 words (novels; prefers 120,000 words or less).

"Now, why this change? Quite simply because we already have that connection with the RPG market. Although there's some crossover the readers for this market seem to prefer stories closer to the Luna brand, Tor paranormal, Baen Books, Jennifer Roberson, Mercedes Lackey, Pern novel style than romance led books. So, there can be a romantic sub plot there, but this cannot be the driving force of the story."

"We're also looking at the 'boys own' market. Think *Deathlands*, *Horselords*, Pournelle, Ringo books as ideas there. We're especially interested in good alternative history/History novels."

Royalty rates: Pays 35% (eBook), 8% (print), "paid quarterly, within 60 days after the end of the quarter."

How to submit: "First, query me with a synopsis. Query must not contain any attachments at all. This includes JPG signature files. Do not, under any circumstances, send even a partial without a direct request from me first. Breaking either of these rules will immediately have your E-mail deleted, unread."

"Send queries to [E-mail address below]. A response to your query will generally be sent within 28 days."

"Now, for the odd part."

"UTM is a small press, and heavily connected with the RPG industry. It is common for this side of the industry to 'shut down' during the summer months. The reason for this is the convention season. Most of the major conventions for the RPG industry take place between May 31 and September 5. As such, queries sent between these dates are subject to slow response because my priority during this time are the conventions, my children (who are school age and home during those months) and preparing the releases for the summer period."

[E-mail: [terri@underthemoon.org](mailto:terri@underthemoon.org); <http://underthemoon.org/>].

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*vMeme21*—3622 S. Fairplay Way, Aurora CO 80014. Address Editor. "*vMeme21* (pronounced vee meem twunty wun) is the first sf multimedia magazine, combining fiction, music, visual arts and animation, and nonfiction. The first issue will be on sale January, 2009. See [the Web site] for a general introduction to the magazine."

"It will initially be published via the Internet twice a year. (Our multimedia approach takes a good while longer to prepare than conventional magazines, as music and art have to be created and carefully coordinated with the text.)"

"We are looking for literary-quality fiction with conventional storytelling virtues (good characterization, a detectable and engaging plot, and so forth). Where we depart sharply from other sf magazines is that we are

interested in 'mundane' sf, which should be near-future, real-world, and oriented to the main problems confronting humanity. Non-mundane sf will be considered, but only if it has some bearing on such problems. Your best literary models are Kim Stanley Robinson (especially his Science in the Capitol series), Octavia Butler (*Parable of the Sower*), and Ursula LeGuin (*The Dispossessed*), as well as such older novels such as *Fahrenheit 451* and *A Canticle for Liebowitz*. These novels have something to say, yet don't preach."

"We are also looking for authors willing to write in a shared universe, set in the near future following an economic/ecological collapse. For details, keep an eye on the Web site. The first stories in the series will appear in the first issue."

"Nonfiction should be concerned with technologies that will help us to address our problems, reviews of software that is empowering of democracy or personal growth and development, new ideas in governance or economics, and in general anything that will help us save the planet. If you don't know what a 'values meme' is, look it up. You should be helping to develop key memes."

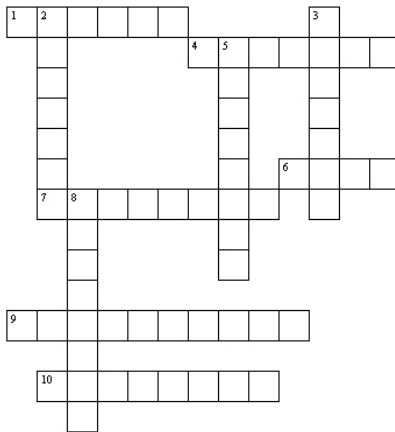
"Contributors to vMeme21 will be guided in the use of free software of the sort used by serious futurists to try to get some sense of the shape of the future, and the opportunity to participate in a discussion forum that focuses on likely and desirable human futures."

"Fiction may be of any length, may be multiply submitted (if we are advised of this), and can be submitted electronically at lengths up to 10,000 words to [E-mail address]. Manuscripts longer than this should be submitted via conventional mail." Pays 5¢/word (fiction and nonfiction).

[E-mail: [submissions@vmeme21.com](mailto:submissions@vmeme21.com); <http://www.vmeme21.com>].

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## **Crossword**



ACROSS

- 1 Canadian author and Auroras MC at VCon 32
- 4 Understanding Comics author
- 6 Produces APA at every WorldCon
- 7 Immortality, Inc. author
- 9 Author and VCon 30 GOH
- 10 Asian pop star in short story “Johnny Mnemonic”

DOWN

- 2 Canadian fan awards
- 3 Term for anonymous client in “Shadowrun”
- 5 Who Goes There? author
- 8 “Known Space” detective with telekinetic arm

***Runes***

By Garth Spencer

A few months ago, a conversation at a BCSFA meeting about writing systems led to a breakdown of communication. I was maintaining that medieval runes not only served as a sort of alphabet, but the individual symbols could be used as ideographs on their own. The hostess brought me a volume to correct my impressions – which had nothing to do with the Norse runes I was talking about. I should have been more specific.

The short version of this story is that, even long after Europe was Christianized, some Northern Europeans used a sort of alphabet that was vaguely associated with paganism, with the Norse and Danes and Goths, and with folk magic. As symbols, alone or in combination, runes were used for calendars, for divination and in talismans.

That said, we can now go into details. Strictly speaking, an “alphabet” is not only a set of signs for the sounds that make up words; “alphabet” is specifically applied to the Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Arabic scripts, to the symbols used for Russian, or Coptic, or Armenian or Amharic – in fact, for a host of scripts descending from ancient Punic – all of which start with similar sequences. The Latin A, B, C, D, etc. are mirrored by the Greek Alpha, Beta, Gamma, the Hebrew Aleph, Beth, Gimel ... and so it goes. (Incidentally the Hebrew names for the letters are recognized as words for “ox”, “house”, and so on.)

Runes follow a different sequence, usually called a “futhark” ...

ƒ	Feoh	ꝛ	Perth
h	Ur	ʝ	Eoh
þ	Thorn	ʝ	Elhaz
F	As	⚡	Sigel
ƕ	Rad	↑	Tyr

<	Ken	ᚷ	Beorc
χ	Gyfu	ᚠ	Ehwaz
ƿ	Wyn	ᚡ	Man
ᚱ	Hagal	ᚢ	Lagu
ᚦ	Nyd	ᚣ	Ing
l	Is	ᚤ	Odal
ᚥ	Jera	ᚥ	Dagaz

There have been different versions of Norse runes at different times and in different places, not only with variant forms but also with a different number of symbols, and with different names. The version shown above is the Elder Futhark, perhaps the earliest known form of the runes. The names of the runes – like the original names of letters in Hebrew – were taken from everyday objects or concepts, not all of them natural: “Feoh” was a word for cattle, “Urs” a word for the aurochs (now extinct), “Hagal” for hail. Also like the earliest alphabets, the runes are very angular, adapted to carving into wood or stone.

A longer futhark developed in Anglo-Saxon Britain; a shorter sequence, the “Younger Futhark”, developed in medieval Scandinavia. As late as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, runes were used for writing, for ciphers, for calendar reckoning and for folk magic. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century yet another runic system was dreamed up by a German mystic, and co-opted by the German fascist movement in the 1930s.

Come to think of it, a lot of fringe culture from the 1930s was co-opted by the German fascist movement. Neo-fascism keeps popping up again in our generation. What I call “fringe culture”, including crop-circle theories and pyramid power and astrology and, well, rune lore keeps making a comeback, too. Without looking terribly hard I keep finding books on runes, on the same shelves where you find astrology guides and numerology texts, palmistry, witchcraft courses, and a thesis arguing that Atlantis was a Neanderthal stronghold.

(This is not to say that someone sporting runic tattoos or writing runic graffiti is likely to be a skinhead, anymore than a member of the Bush administration is likely to suffer from Alzheimer’s, just because they work in the same building as the late President Reagan.)

Runes, like Tarot cards, are prone to evoke a sense of cryptic, potent symbolism. (At least, crude geometric designs and symbols of basic, common experiences have that effect on me. Must be something in the limbic system.) I want to call this “iconic” even though it’s a misnomer.

The fact of life, however, is that *any* arbitrary set of symbols can develop “iconic” significance for people, in my sense; just give it enough time and reinforcement. It has been traditional to claim that Tarot cards are some cosmic, timeless, Platonic powers *in themselves*, not just as

symbols; the same thing has been claimed of runes, Hebrew letters, and Sanskrit writing, even of their very sounds. It may not matter.

The folk-magic aspect of runes combines the notion of runes as signs for Cosmic Values, and the notion that you can somehow divine character, foretell the future, or cast spells by rearranging the signs. From the days of Viking raids to the present, people have been casting runes for divination, writing runes in rings, and combining runes in talismans for health and good fortune.

The conclusion of this is obvious: we have here an Unregulated Industry, and it is past time to call for professional standards of runecraft, and government regulation. It only remains to consider whether this is a Federal or a Provincial jurisdiction.

We could also strike a Royal Commission to ask whether the archetypes of First Nations monumental art bear “iconic” significance. This calls for further study.

### ***About BCSFA***

The incumbent BCSFA Executive members are:

President & Archivist: R. Graeme Cameron, 604-584-7562

Vice President: TBA

Treasurer: Kathleen Moore-Freeman, 604-771-0845

Secretary: Barb Dryer, 604-267-7973

Editor: Garth Spencer, 604-325-7314

Keper of FRED Book: Ryan Hawe, 604-448-8714

VCon Ambassador for Life: Steve Forty, 604-936-4754

BCSFA's website is at [www.bcsfa.net](http://www.bcsfa.net).

The BCSFA email list is [bc\\_scifi\\_assc@yahoo.com](mailto:bc_scifi_assc@yahoo.com), archived at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc\\_scifi\\_assc/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_scifi_assc/)

### ***Why You Got This***

\_\_\_ You are a member.

\_\_\_ I thought you were a member.

\_\_\_ You trade with us.

\_\_\_ You carry sample copies of *BCSFAzine* to advertise us.

\_\_\_ In memory of an enchanted night of forbidden lust. (You know who you are.)

\_\_\_ At your request; we apologize for omitting this back issue.

\_\_\_ You actually wrote to our address by mistake, thinking this was the B.C. Salmon Farmers' Association.