

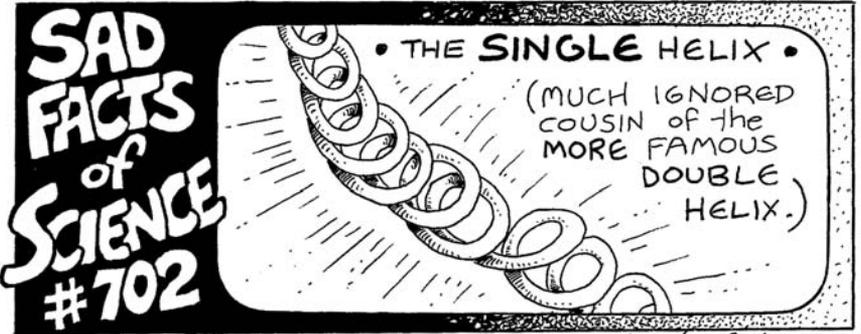
BCSFA Zine

The Newsletter of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association

#496

\$3.00/Issue

September 2014



©brad w.foster 2014

In This Issue:

This and Next Month in BCSFA.....	0
About BCSFA.....	0
Letters of Comment.....	1
Calendar.....	6
News-Like Matter.....	18
Fiction: 'Power Switch' (Michael Bertrand).....	20
Art Credits.....	22

BCSFAzine © September 2014, Volume 42, #9, Issue #496 is the monthly club newsletter published by the British Columbia Science Fiction Association, a social organization. ISSN 1490-6406.

Please send comments, suggestions, and/or submissions to Felicity Walker (the editor), at felicity4711@gmail.com or Apartment 601, Manhattan Tower, 6611 Cooney Road, Richmond, BC, Canada, V6Y 4C5 (*new address*). *BCSFAzine* solicits electronic submissions and black-and-white line illustrations in JPG, GIF, BMP, PNG, or PSD format, and offers printed contributors' copies as long as the club budget allows.

BCSFAzine is distributed monthly at White Dwarf Books, 3715 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6R 2G5; telephone 604-228-8223; e-mail whitedwarf@deadwrite.com. Single copies C\$3.00/US\$2.00 each. *Cheques should be made payable to "West Coast Science Fiction Association (WCSFA)."*

This and Next Month in BCSFA

Sunday 21 September at 7 PM:	September BCSFA meeting—at Ray Sereadin's, 707 Hamilton Street (recreation room), New Westminster.
Friday 19 September:	Submission deadline for October <i>BCSFAzine</i> (ideally).
Friday 26 September:	October <i>BCSFAzine</i> production (theoretically).
Sunday 19 October at 7 PM:	October BCSFA meeting.
Friday 17 October:	Submission deadline for November <i>BCSFAzine</i> (ideally).
Friday 31 October:	November <i>BCSFAzine</i> production (theoretically).

About BCSFA

The incumbent BCSFA Executive members are:

WCSFA Social Committee Chairman/Archivist: R. Graeme Cameron, 604-584-7562

Vice President: TBA

Treasurer/Supporting *BCSFAzine* Production Donor: Kathleen Moore, 604-771-0845

Secretary: Barb Dryer, 604-267-7973

Editor: Felicity Walker, 604-447-3931 (*new number*)

Keeper of FRED Book: Ryan Hawe, 778-895-2371

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

BCSFA's website is at <http://www.bcsfa.net/> (thank you to webmaster [Garth Spencer](#)). The BCSFA e-mail list is BC Sci-Fi Assc. (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bcscifi_assc/). See <http://bcsfa.net/events.html> for more events. Low-resolution back issues of *BCSFAzine* are also archived at <http://efanzines.com/BCSFA/index.htm> (thank you to webmaster Bill Burns). Contact Felicity for high-resolution copies.

Letters of Comment

[Editor's responses in brackets.]

Dave Haren

tyrbolo@comcast.net

Friday 19 July 2014



Hi Felicity,

I'm not sure I like the new word "renoviction." Interpreted it seems to mean kicking you out so we can charge the next victim more money.

[Yes.]

1500 tanks is only 300 packs of micro armor. Should fit easily on a kitchen table, not so easily on the wallet of the owner.

"Think of this in half the space" looks like where I'm sitting now.

It turns out half the Scots are actually Brits so even Mel can't give freedom to those whose chains are so shiny they can't bear to part with them.

As usual I'm finding interesting stuff.

Singularity 1 on 1 podcasts have Marvin Minsky, Vernor Vinge, Charlie Stross and Cory Doctorow and a lot of others available.¹

John Taylor Gatto has an epic up on YouTube. I first ran into him talking about the adoption of the Prussian school system by the rest of the western world. Turns out he was also a fan of the Mythos in his younger days.

Jake Applebaum was in South Africa giving a speech about the surveillance apparatus. The most interesting part was when he said USA gives Israel their full feed but asks them to remove any politicians' or celebrities' data. Snowden, Assange, and Kim Dotcom have nailed the leader of New Zealand for creating a complete surveillance system there and then passing a law so this illegal action then became OK. As this was being done he kept telling NZ that it wasn't going to happen.

The Washington comedy hour is giving "moderate Islamist" rebels in Syria a half billion in armaments and aid and I'm sure none of it will wind up in the hands of ISIL/ISIS like the last batch did. They are also passing out military arms to school SWAT teams.

The Rus are reactivating an Arctic base. The place is as lovely as Adak, Alaska except it's flat. Adak, "birthplace of the winds," at least had a few hills to look at. Given that the predicted ocean rise is going to drown the place it shouldn't be a terrible threat except pre-thaw.

I may actually go to the theatre for *Radio Free Albemuth*. PK Dick was a character in his own book. Whether it was Nixon or Reagan as Farris Fremont is an exercise for the reader.

[Or Nixon, but an alternative history Nixon, like in *Watchmen* (1986).]

1 [Link](#).

Odd factoid: Squanto the English-speaking Indian had crossed the Atlantic six times before arriving home to find his village full of Pilgrims (his own people were all dead).

“Russia Wants Bulgarians to Stop Vandalizing Soviet Monuments”:

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/505354.html>

“A few years ago, a wiseman I know observed that a stereotypical paranoiac delusion is the belief of having been implanted with a tracking/bugging device by government/aliens/whatever; yet if you merely offer all those tasty human resources some

‘camera, calculator, address book, music player, GPS, radio all in one unit,’ they will pay money for the privilege of carrying the implant with them. Problem solved! Indeed, the mewling thralls will even use peer pressure to enforce amongst each other the command that everybody shall carry the tracking device everywhere, all the time. ‘No wonder people find it odd when you don’t carry one.’ Thank you for making my point. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*”²²



JT Gatto:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQiW_I84t8&list=PL463AA90FD04EC7A2

7A2

Civil War cabin fakery:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwjlyHhF8Ww>

[*Lovecraft and racism:*]

<http://davidnickle.blogspot.ca/2014/08/dont-mention-war-some-thoughts-on-hp.html>

You don’t have to be a moron to hold incorrect opinions on the people of another age, but it will help you to be forgiven for them.

If you write horror you should make it horrible. HP succeeded at the time and continues to evoke horror to this day. He is a good example of the Erisian dictum which says you are not allowed to believe anything you see written in a book.

Taking things written for entertainment in another age, particularly an age you know nothing about, personally, works against you. If you want to complain about racism try attacking the living examples. Every day there’s plenty of horrible shit going on right now which should be vigorously attacked.

I’ll give you one classic example: the Canadian government’s assault on any science that interferes with their ecology-wrecking tar sands scheme.

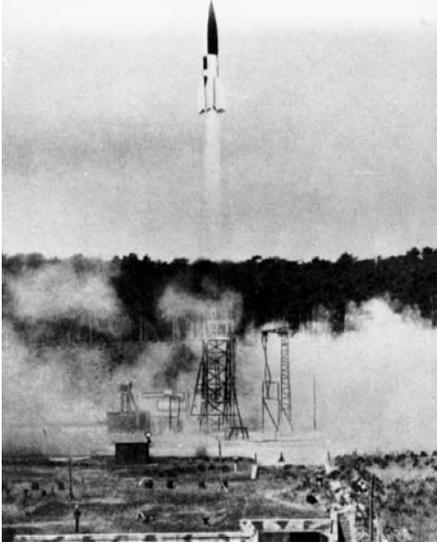
1920s racism burned people’s houses, dynamited them, and left people hung from trees all across the USA. HP Lovecraft did none of those things nor did he encourage others to commit such acts. When a lynch mob burned a jail the coroner found their black prisoner who died in the fire guilty of arson. In the 1960s the young gathered to break the back of institutional race policies. Now they congratu-

2 [Link.](#)

late themselves on the lovely world they live in and have let slip back into the current occult mess.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2734694/It-hard-appalling-nature-abuse-child-victims-suffered-1-400-children-sexually-exploited-just-one-town-16-year-period-report-reveals.html>

(I find this a bit odd!!)



Christianity has been in China for centuries and currently is about five [percent] of the population and growing fast.

I have another bit swiped from Hobson that'll have to be for another time.

Now to dig into the pics for the issue editor's perusal.

That's a Japanese killer hornet used as a pet.

The first V2s were reported as gas explosions in neighborhoods.

The Torpedo tester blew up a town by firing one down a city street.

Comet 67P placed on top of Los Angeles for an idea of what is out there zooming around.

Tsar tank for the Steampunk crowd. Fnord PD cover sacred Chao.

Warm regards,

Dave

Canadian News Item...*grin*:

“ ‘We feel if we don't do something about it now it's only going to get worse,’ said one Three Mile Beach neighbour, who did not wish to be named.

“The petition was crafted by a small group of neighbours and began circulating this week. It calls for ‘immediate action’ and a sign that reads ‘No nudity allowed on Three Mile Beach.’

“The neighbour said everyone living on Three Mile Road signed the petition, except for one man who is a nudist.

“ ‘It's a really huge concern in the community,’ the neighbour said. ‘Families and the public are no longer able to enjoy the place because there's a bunch of people sitting there with their pants off.’

“...

“Dennis Roszell, who currently lives in Alberta but owns a home across from the beach, claimed the nudists are deliberately intimidating the public with their actions.

“ ‘The nudists have actually perpetuated their blatant crimes to a point of terrorist activity and should be convicted of terrorism,’ he said in an email.”

[*Three Mile Beach is in Penticton, on the east shore of Okanagan Lake. I spent about a quarter of my childhood in Penticton, though the beach I went to was at the south end of the lake, along Lakeshore Drive. I miss Penticton.*]

Michael Bertrand
fruvousfox@gmail.com

Sunday 27 September 2014

Re: Dave Haren talking about Slavoj Žižek:

I have seen Slavoj in a number of documentaries. He seems to be making a living as a philosopher, which makes me insanely jealous. But mostly, I find him frustrating and somewhat tiring, because he alternates between saying obfuscatory, dissembling things which seem to be constructed from a Western philosophy magnetic poetry kit and actual, salient, coherent, on-point things which make me go hmmm. So I have to wade through the annoying bits to get to the good stuff, and that is tiring.



This is why I never did the reading in philosophy courses, and just waited for the professor to explain it to me coherently.

As for Hegel, I have never heard a convincing argument for why understanding Hegel is worth it.

Re: Lloyd Penney and the weather:

Maybe this is just the fat guy in me talking, but any day that reaches 24°C is not “chilly cool” to me.

On the personal front, minor physical ailments plague me (mysterious earaches, messed up cartilage in my left knee, the usual depression and diabetes) but my overall mood improves every day. I am less prone to naps and more prone to looking for something to *do*. So it’s a mixed bag all up in here.

And finally, I hope all you wonderful VCON people are having a great time at the con and will feel like reading and appreciating the short story by a struggling writer included in this very tome. He’s very talented.

Happy VCON to everyone!

Lloyd Penney
1706–24 Eva Road,
Etobicoke, Ontario
M9C 2B2
penneys@bell.net

Sunday 27 September 2014

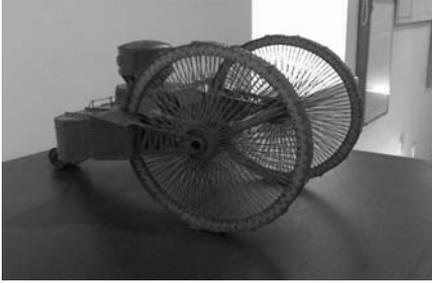
Dear: BCSFen:

Thanks for the August *BCSFazine*, issue 495, which arrived in the mail just yesterday. Looks like you’re a little behind, based on the date on the front, and illo on the back, so the sooner I can get this done for the local, the better.

[*Thanks! I’m going to try to get this issue out before VCON in one week.*]

Greetings to Dave Haren! I indeed did find a job on June 2, my birthday, and on September 5, I left it to take another job that started on September 9. The first job, no positive feedback at all, but at least some with the new job. Yvonne’s done the

same, went from a job with an abusive boss to another job with lots of good vibes. Wages are great, but you've also got to feel good about what you do and where you spend one-third of each work day. My writing locs has slowed down a little, but I've become experienced in personal time management, and when I have some time, .pdfed fanzines and locs on a USB drive and a spare computer is a marvel.



My loc...as Steampunk vendors, we had a great time at the Suburban Steam event in North York, and we did fair business. We are feeling better financially at least a little, so we will be going to the city of Guelph, northwest of Toronto, in October to take a table at Genrecon 2014. Fan Events Forum was a great initial try to bring local conrunners together, and I hope it will be done again,

and elsewhere. Getting the local conrunners together to trade stories, ideas and techniques is a good idea anywhere.

Any reports on the BC Renaissance Faire? I am always hoping that Christina and Martin can make this a success, and I know how hard they work, how much they give of themselves, to make it work.

I think I am done for the moment; hope you get caught up and that 496 is available real soon. Remember, if the cost of the zine gets too much, I will be happy with the .pdf you send. Take care, see you next issue.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney

Brent Francis

b-francis@sympatico.ca

Wednesday 1 October 2014

Classic Horror Film Board post (warning—ads)...

<http://monsterkidclassichorrorforum.yuku.com/topic/56672/IT-WAS-46-YEARS-AGO-TODAY>

Anybody see this when it first came out?

[I wasn't born yet then, but like any horror fan, I still felt Night of the Living Dead (1968)'s influence on every subsequent entry in the genre.]

We Also Heard From: William Graham, Cathy Palmer-Lister, Spider Robinson.

RANDOM NOSTALGIA

STAR TREK³
SHADOWRUN FIRST EDITION
COLD FUSION VIDEO REVIEWS
"BACHELOR PARTY"⁴

3 (The animated series.)

4 (1984).

Calendar

Note to print readers: underlined events have an associated URL. Links are included in the PDF version at <http://www.efanzines.com/BCSFA/>.—Julian Castle

Already in Progress

Spring–15 September 2014: Call for submissions for Vancouver’s eleventh annual Hot One Inch Action, a one-night show of art on one-inch pin-back buttons. Art deadline Monday 15 September at noon. “Only one submission per artist each year...It’s free to submit your artwork!...artists selected to be in a show will receive 20 free copies of their button!” Submit via email *or* “by [snail] mail for scanning. E-mail us for mailing or delivery instructions...Please keep your art smaller than letter-sized (8.5×11) so it fits on the scanner.” More info at [guidelines webpage](#). (I wrote “Vancouver’s eleventh” because HotOneInchAction has done shows in other cities.)—Julian Castle

16 August–1 September 2014 (but closed 18 & 25 August): PNE (Pacific National Exhibition) 11AM until late. (A) Game of Thrones®: The Exhibition, daily 11 AM–10 PM in Garden Auditorium. (B) Get Animated! Interactive Animation Exhibit daily 11 AM–11 PM in Rollerland. (C) Just for Cats: Internet Cat Video Festival in Celebration Plaza. 16–17 August: *free* gate admission for first responders (police etc.). 19 August, 11 AM–1 PM: *free* gate admission for all guests. 21 August, 11 AM–1 PM: *free* gate admission for seniors 65+. 27 August: \$5 gate admission for Vancity members and a friend. Admission: gate prices free to \$42.75; online prices free to \$49.75; more admission details at website.—Julian Castle

September 2014

September is Be Kind to Editors and Writers Month; National DNA, Genomics, and Stem Cell Education and Awareness Month; and Library Card Sign-Up Month.

1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 September and 6, 13, 20, and 27 October 2014 (*Mondays*): Board Gamers: Painting Miniatures, 5–9 PM at Board Game Warriors, 708 Clarkson Street, New Westminister. “Hello. Painting miniatures can be fun, challenging, and sometimes even outrageous. Feel free to come by the store to paint, share tips, or maybe even learn a thing or two about the craft, nay artform, that is miniatures painting. There are some paints available to use, and brushes, as well as primer. Warmachine figures will likely be the name of the game for most, but anything is welcome.”—Keith Lim

1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 September and 6, 13, 20, and 27 October 2014 (*Mondays*): Vancouver Hack Space Craft Night, 7:30–10:30 PM at 270 East 1st Avenue, Vancouver. Phone: 778-330-1234. 2 October, 7:30–11:20 PM: Craft Night: Shoebox Loom-Making. 9 October, 7:30–11 PM: The Craft Element. 16 and 23 October, 7:30–11:30 PM: Craft Night: Halloween Costume Making Night Parts 1 & 2. [*See Vancouver Hack Space Open House for more VHS details.*]—Julian Castle

2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 September and 7, 14, 21, and 28 October 2014 (*Tuesdays*): Board Gamers: Tuesday Night Board Gaming, 5–10 PM at Board Game Warriors, 708 Clarkson Street, New Westminster. “Feel free to come by anytime from 5 PM to about 10 PM to play a game or two. There are hundreds of open games for playing, or feel free to bring your own. Parking out front is a buck thirty-five an hour (free after 6 PM), or there is a parkade a block away (buck an hour), across Columbia and down by the river. We are located two blocks northeast of the New Westminster SkyTrain Station, at Columbia and Begbie. There is a Waves coffee shop in the same building. Go uphill on Begbie to Clarkson, and the store is to the right. Tuesday is also the Buck a Slice special feature at Fresh Slice Pizza just down the street. Have a good day.—Kirby”—Keith Lim



2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 September and 7, 14, 21, and 28 October 2014 (*Tuesdays*): Vancouver Hack Space Open House, 7:30–10:30 PM at 270 East 1st Avenue (new location as of May 2013), Vancouver. Phone: 778-330-1234. “Bring your ideas, projects, kits, art, music, robots, etc. down for some good times with good people.” VHS mission is “to provide a common workspace where its members, hackers, makers, crafters and otherwise (technically) creative people could work on projects and find like-minded people, in sharing knowledge and ideas.” “There are stairs down to the space from the back alley and a wheelchair-accessible level loading bay entrance from the street, although someone has to have opened the space through the stairs before the loading bay is available.” Parking is available outside the space. Bikes can be brought inside the front door. No membership required. Admission is by donation.—Julian Castle

2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 September and 7, 14, 21, and 28 October 2014 (*Tuesdays*): Hot Improv Tuesdays at Café Deux Soleils!, 8 PM at Café Deux Soleils, 2096 Commercial Drive, Vancouver. “The Fictionals are serving up kickass comedy every Tuesday night at Café Deux Soleils! Everything onstage is made up based on your suggestions, so come down and help us create a hilarious show ‘guaranteed to tickle your funny bone’ (*The Georgia Straight*). Short form classics, long form insanity, special themes and special guests. Remember: only the laughs are real. Home of Vancouver Improv Fight Club! Tickets: \$7 at the door. Doors @ 7:30 PM. Show @ 8 PM. More info at <http://thefictionals.com/>. Twitter: [@TheFictionals](https://twitter.com/TheFictionals). Instagram: [@thefictionals](https://www.instagram.com/thefictionals).”—The Fictionals Comedy Co.

3, 10, 17, and 24 September and 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 October 2014 (*Wednesdays*): Cloudscape Comics Weekly Meeting, 7:30–11:30 PM at top floor of Memorial South Park’s fieldhouse, located inside the park at 5955 Ross Street (at 41st Avenue), Vancouver. “The Cloudscape Comics Society is a community of comic creators in Vancouver, BC who together publish and distribute quality graphic novel antholo-

gies, as well as host comic workshops and other related events. Here enterprising comic artists come together to network, develop their ideas, and help each other perfect their craft.” “Everyone is welcome to attend” the weekly meeting on Wednesdays.—[Keith Lim/Julian Castle](#)

4 September 2014: **Lezli Robyn**’s birthday.

4, 11, 18, and 25 September and 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 October 2014 (*Thursdays*): [Thursday Hobby Build Nights](#), 6–9 PM at [Ages Three and Up Gundam](#), 226–9855 Austin Road, Burnaby. “Is your backlog looking rather full? Are un-built kits starting to stack up in your room? Bring your kits, tools and Gundam knowledge and come on down for three hours of quality build time. Share what you’re working on, ask for some help or just argue about if Kamille is a really a girl’s name (it is). Hobby nights are informal and fun ways to network and learn more about the gunpla community!”—[A3U Gundam](#)

5, 12, 19, and 26 September and 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 October 2014 (*Fridays*): [Magic: The Gathering Friday Night Games](#), 5:30–9 PM at Imperial Hobbies, 5451 Number Three Road, Richmond. “Tonight is the night for *Magic: The Gathering* here at Imperial Hobbies! Drop by and play in a casual open setting with a group of great people, or learn one on one how to play with one of our staff. Contact: [Stephanie](#).”

5, 12, 19, and 26 September and 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 October 2014 (*third Friday*): [Board Gamers: Friday Night Magic](#), 6:30–9:30 PM at Board Game Warriors, 708 Clarkson Street, New Westminster. Open gaming; seven to eight tables. “For Friday Night *Magic* we will be running a limited Draft FNM. Cost is three booster packs plus \$2, starting at 6:30 PM. Also feel free to come by for some casual *Magic: The Gathering* from 6–9 PM. Feel free to use the house decks if you just want to try out the game. Don’t forget to check out [our Facebook page](#).”—[Keith Lim](#)

5, 12, 19, and 26 September and 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 October 2014 (*Fridays*): [Friday Board Game Night—Drexoll Games](#), 7–11 PM at Drexoll Games, 2880 West 4th Avenue (½ block west of MacDonald Street), Vancouver. “In our stores, it’s *open gaming* any time we’re open, so stop in with a friend and try a game! Both of our locations have 7–8 tables and plenty of seating. Space may be limited during tournaments—scheduled events take precedence over open gaming tables. We have about 100 open board games for playing in the store. Playing is *free* except for some tournaments.”—[Keith Lim](#)

6 September 2014: **Pawsie Earsa Shippo**’s birthday. Read a Book Day.

6, 13, 20, and 27 September and 4, 11, 18, and 25 October 2014 (*Saturdays*): [Board Gamers: Saturday Afternoon Gaming](#), 12–7 PM at Board Game Warriors, 708 Clarkson Street, New Westminster. “Hello. Feel free to come in anytime on Saturday afternoon until 7 PM and play any of the many open games there are here at the store.—Kirby”—[Keith Lim](#)

7, 14, 21, and 28 September and 5, 12, 19, and 26 October 2014 (*Sundays*): Kitsilano Board Games: Lazy Sundays, 2–3 PM at Cuppa Joy, #295–2083 Alma Street, Vancouver. “Sunday afternoons: they are made for relaxing, cups of warming beverage, and most especially board games. Thus, *Sunday board games!* Cuppa Joy’s large tables, usually unoccupied space and laid-back attitude suits this purpose perfectly. Bring board games, friends, and of course your lovely selves! If anyone has any board game requests, feel free to post them in the comments and I will try to accommodate. You can also post less specific requests (e.g. ‘games that take eight players,’ ‘games that don’t involve math,’ ‘games about farming’) and I’ll see what I can do. Happy Sunday!”—Keith Lim

7 September 2014: VCON Convention Committee (ConCom) Monthly Meetings, 2–4 PM at Brandywine Bartending [*School*], 241 Union Street, Vancouver. “If you are on our concom, or interested in becoming involved with VCON 39, we invite you to attend our monthly planning meetings! VCON is Vancouver’s premier fantasy and science fiction convention since 1971 and everyone who works to make VCON happen is a volunteer. We are completely non-profit and fan run. Lots of people volunteer a little of their time, usually at or just before and after the event, but some volunteers—the convention committee (concom)—are involved all year long and do the major lifting of planning and organizing the event. It’s these people that are the heart and soul of the VCON experience. So if you like sci-fi/fantasy art, writing, craft, film, costuming, or gaming, etc. and want to meet some new fellow geeklings, let us know and come on out! We’d love to have you in on the inner workings of our convention and be front row for the newest happenings in the world of the geektastic! *Note:* The location is all-ages appropriate as it is a bartending *school* with no alcohol on site. Meeting schedule for 2014: [...] Sunday 7 September—last regular meeting before the convention • Sunday 28 September—bag stuffing (time and location to be determined) • Thursday 2 October—evening Guest of Honour/concom reception (exact time and location to be determined) • Friday 3 October—morning Guest of Honour/concom breakfast (exact time and location to be determined) • 3–5 October: VCON! • Sunday 2 November—VCON 39 debrief.”—VCON via Jenni Merrifield

VCON 39

8 September 2014: International Literacy Day.

9 September and 14 October 2014 (*second Tuesday*): Meeting of Automotive Model Builders Vancouver, 7 PM at Burnaby Lions Club, 7420 Mulberry Place, Burnaby. “BC’s original model car club since 1982. For more information visit us at <http://vancouvermodelcars.ca/> or call Gerry Chevalier 604-599-8213 or Jim Ervin 604-420-3768.”

9 September and 14 October 2014 (*second Tuesday*): Monthly Steampunk Coffee Klatch, 7:30–9 PM at Waves Coffee House—Large Private Room, #100–900 Howe Street (@ Smithe), Vancouver. “Second Tuesday of every month. In the Victorian

tradition of conversation in coffee houses, this casual monthly event is open to everyone who wants to just get together and meet up with other local steampunks. Whether you're new to steampunk or well-seasoned, young or old, silly or serious, please feel free to drop by. We can discuss whatever folks want, plan nefarious plots, or just relax, hang out, and get to chat with one another. Costumes welcome but not required—dress as you feel comfortable! I will be at least steamily accessorized, since I have to work immediately beforehand. The only requirement for us to have this space is that everyone should purchase something at the coffee house. They offer teas, coffee, hot chocolate, and various cold beverages, as well as some baked goods.”—[Keith Lim](#)

10 September 2014: **Bruce Lord**'s birthday.

10 and 24 September and 8 and 22 October 2014 (*alternate Wednesdays*): [Kitsilano Board Games: Wednesday Is the New Monday!](#), 7–8 PM at Cuppa Joy, 2083 Alma Street, Vancouver. “Wednesday is the new Monday! And by that I mean, we're switching our every-other-week, weeknight games to Wednesdays, so that I can actually attend! Also popular opinion (i.e. I asked a couple of people) seems to agree—Wednesdays are superior. Some come on down to Cuppa Joy, grab a pint and a samosa, and play some *board games! Wednesday Wednesday Wednesday!*!”—[Keith Lim](#)

11 September 2014: **Ziv Kowarsky**'s birthday.

11 September and 9 October 2014: [Teen Manga Advisory Group](#), 4–5 PM at Harvey Southam Room, Children's Library, Vancouver Public Library Central Branch, 350 West Georgia Street, Vancouver. For teens aged 13–18. “Do you love manga?... Come tell us what the library should have on our shelves and meet other manga enthusiasts!” Free. For more info phone VPL Teen Services: 604-331-3690.—[Julian Castle](#)

11 and 25 September and 9 and 23 October 2014 (*alternate Thursdays*): “Burnaby Sci-Fi Writers' Group meets alternate Thursdays 7–9 PM at Metrotown Public Library (program room) or Connections lounge. Open to new members, mainly sci-fi/fantasy or what have you. Contact Allan @ (604) 946-2427 or email lowson@dccnet.com for details.”—[Allan Lowson](#) (on [Richmond Writers Network Facebook Group](#))

11 September and 9 October 2014 (*second Thursday*): [Fraser Valley Model Club Monthly Meeting](#), 7:30–9:30 PM at Kariton House Gallery, 2387 Ware Street, Abbotsford. “Meetings held second Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM from September to June (July & August have no meetings—summer break).”—[Keith Lim](#)

11 September and 9 October 2014 (*second Thursday*): [Vancouver Astronomy Monthly Meetup](#), 7:30–8:30 PM. [*No location given.*] “Second Thursday of every month. This is the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada—Vancouver monthly meeting and is shared with the general public at no charge. Please be advised that RASC Vancouver's monthly lectures will be held at different locations. The location

of each meeting will be posted in advance, along with details of the speaker and topic. We meet at 7:30 PM on the second Thursday of each month, with astro-coffee, cookies, and juice served after the presentation. Please join us for interesting and informative lectures on all aspects of astronomy and space-science, along with stimulating conversations!”—[Keith Lim](#)

12 September 2014: National Video Games Day.

12–13 September 2014: *The Labyrinth: A Burlesque Re-Imagining* at [the Rio Theatre](#), 1660 East Broadway, Vancouver. [Geekenders](#) present a remount of a “grownup reinvention of a classic film about a young girl who finds herself in a fantastical world for a journey of sexual discovery, eighties glam rockers and sequined goblins.” Doors 7 PM/show 8 PM. 19+ only, with bar service. Bring two pieces of ID. Rio info: 604-878-3456. Tickets: \$22 advance/\$25 door.—[Julian Castle](#)

13 September 2014: **Scooby Doo**’s birthday.

13 September 2014: [Comic Book & Movie Poster Appraisal Day](#), 9 AM–1 PM at 1055 Vernon Drive, Vancouver. “Do you have a collection of old comics, vintage movie posters or hockey cards and wonder what they are worth?...Join the staff of Vancouver’s Comic Shop and the professionals at Able Auctions for this one day, of *free* appraisals...a realistic estimate of what your collection is worth...No need for an appointment” just “bring your collectables.” For more info contact tyler@ableauctions.ca or call 604-683-7713.—[Julian Castle](#)

13–14 September 2014: [Small Press Expo AKA SPX](#) in Bethesda, Maryland.—[Julian Castle](#)

14 September 2014: National Pet Memorial Day.

15 September 2014: **Mike Jackson**’s birthday.

16 September 2014: **Melissa Tookey**’s birthday.

16 September 2014: [The Gentlemen Hecklers present: Ed Wood’s *Plan 9 From Outer Space*](#) (horror/sci-fi) at [the Rio Theatre](#), 1660 East Broadway, Vancouver. Two-year anniversary show. “Hilarious live commentary for the best bad movies.” Doors 6:30 PM/show 7 PM. 19+ only, with bar service. Bring two pieces of ID. Rio info: 604-878-3456. \$6 advance/\$9 door. [Twitter](#).—[Julian Castle](#)

18 September 2014: [Improv Against Humanity](#) at [the Rio Theatre](#), 1660 East Broadway, Vancouver. The Fictionals present an interactive improv show based on... [Cards Against Humanity](#). Contestants will play Cards Against Humanity for prizes. Prize sponsors: Gamedeals, EXP Bar, Starlit Citadel, Toy Traders, Big Pete’s, Arcana Comics, Living Myth Magazine, C&C Cakery, etc. Warning: may contain sexual content & mature themes. Doors 7 PM/show 8 PM. 19+ only, with bar ser-

vice. Bring two pieces of ID. Rio info: 604-878-3456. Tickets: \$7 advance/\$10 door. Online advance sales end 6 PM.

19 September 2014: **Randy Byers'** birthday. International Talk Like a Pirate Day. Premiere of film *The Maze Runner* (SF/action/mystery).—[Julian Castle](#)

19 September and 17 October 2014 (*third Friday*): [IPMS Vancouver Monthly Meeting](#), 7–9:30 PM at Bonsor Recreation Complex, Second Floor “Arts Room,” 6550 Bonsor Avenue, Burnaby. “Club meetings are held on the third Friday of every month (with very few exceptions such as if the third Friday falls on Good Friday or is too close to Christmas—check schedule). Doors open at 7 PM. Meetings officially run from 7:30–9:30 PM.”—[Keith Lim](#)

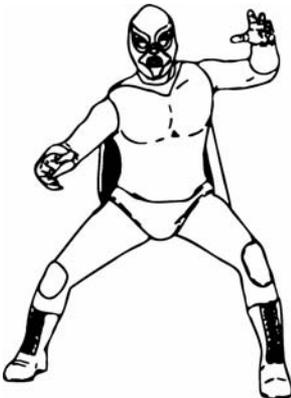
19 September 2014: [The Evil Dead trilogy](#) at [the Rio Theatre](#), 1660 East Broadway, Vancouver. *The Evil Dead* (1981): doors 6:30 PM/film 7:30 PM. *Evil Dead 2* (1987): 9:30 PM. *Army of Darkness* (1992): 11:30 PM. Rio info: 604-878-3456. Tickets: \$6 advance/\$8 door (each). All three for \$13 advance/\$15 door. Online advance sales end 5:30 PM. Rio site says “Dress up in a film-related costume for \$2 off the \$8 ticket price,” so presumably this applies to *Evil Dead* screenings.—[Julian Castle](#)

20 September 2014: [VCON Postering Day!](#), 1 PM at A&W, #101–1715 East Broadway, Vancouver. “Come and help us plaster the city with the awesomeness that is to be VCON 39/Canvention 34! Saturday at 11 AM at Commercial and Broadway. We’ll be meeting downstairs from the SkyTrain in front of A&W.”—[Jenni Merrifield](#)

VCON 39

16–20 September 2014: [Vanpla September Build Night](#) at various times and locations including Imperial Hobbies, Ages Three and Up, 木: Ki Tea House Cafe, Metropolis Comics and Toys, and Sakura Media. “Join us for a gunpla evening at Vanpla Build Night. Whether you are new to the hobby or veteran modeler, drop by and build in a casual open setting with a group of fun people. With different locations to

choose from, you are welcomed to attend any one of the stores. Please note the date and time may be slightly different from store to store.”



20 September 2014: [All Star Wrestling Midget Time Tour](#), 7:30 PM at the Fridge Youth Centre, 11295 Mellis Drive, Richmond. [Tickets available](#). “ASW Cruiserweight Title—Featuring Midget Superstar Short Sleeve Sampson vs. The Great Kasaki (Champion)! \$1000 Winner Take All Over the Top Rope Battle Royal! wrestlers must pay \$100 entry fee. Featuring Jason Cage & Flexx with Vixxxen! ASW Ladies Title—Bambi Hall (Champion) vs. Kaitlin Diamond! Grudge Match—Azeem the Dream vs.

Nasty Nate Daniels! Tag Team Action—Johnny Obsession & Don Ciever vs. Matt X Static & Hung Lo! Plus the debut of the Salty Seaman! Tickets are \$15 front row and \$12 general admission. Available in advance at *Core Games* in Landsdowne Mall or All Star Wrestling. Meet the wrestlers after the show at Pioneer’s Pub [#200–10111 Number Three Road, Richmond]!”—Verne Siebert

20 September and 18 October 2014 (*third Saturday*): Vancouver Comic Jam, 8 PM–late (sometimes ends when Wallflower closes at 1 AM) at the Wallflower Modern Diner, 2420 Main Street, Vancouver. “The Vancouver Comic Jam is generally held the third Saturday of the month. In cases of long weekends or other conflicting dates, the jam may move to the second or fourth Saturday. For up to date information, join the VCJ Facebook group or follow us on Twitter. *Who can come?*: Anyone who is of legal drinking age is invited. *How much?*: No admission fee. There is a \$5 minimum purchase per person required by the Wallflower. They provide their full menu to order from and alcohol galore: beer, wine, highballs and shots. *There will be a gratuity of 18–20% added to all bills because we are a large group*. Bring your own pencils/pens. Paper is provided. If you’re drawing with markers that bleed through paper, be sure to either bring a drawing surface or place extra sheets of paper under the paper you’re drawing on.”—Keith Lim

21 September and 19 October 2014 (*third Sunday*): Board Game Swap Meetup, 11 AM–1 PM at Board Game Warriors, 708 Clarkon Street, New Westminster. “Every third Sunday of the month a swap meet will be held where gamers can sell or trade any board games they would like to get rid of. RSVP for the event and you can list what you are looking to sell, or what you would like in trade. Use the message board to propose trades or list items for sale. Board Game Warriors can be a neutral site for meeting and doing transactions during store hours.”—Keith Lim

22 September 2014: **Peter Kuper**’s birthday. Season two premiere of *Sleepy Hollow* on Fox. Series premiere of *Scorpion* on CBS (genius nerds recruited by Homeland Security).—Julian Castle

23 September 2014: David Bowie Day.

24 September and 30 October 2014: The Critical Hit Show: A Live Dungeons & Dragons Comedy Experience, 8 PM at Rio Theatre, 1660 East Broadway, Vancouver. Usually on a Wednesday, but October show on a Thursday. Tickets: \$6 online; \$9 at door. Doors 7 PM; show 8 PM. 19+ only with bar service; two pieces of ID required. Twitter. Reference for 30 October.—Julian Castle

25 September 2014: National Comic Book Day.

25–28 September 2014: Eighth annual RainFurrest (furry convention), Seattle, Washington.—Julian Castle

26 September 2014: Premiere of film *The Boxtrolls* (computer animation; Simon Pegg, Ben Kingsley, Jared Harris, Nick Frost, Tracey Morgan, Dee Bradley Baker, Maurice LaMarche, Fred Tatasciore, Laraine Newman, James Urbaniak, Pat Fraley).

27 September 2014: **Douglas Mellott**'s birthday.

27 September and 25 October 2014 (*last Saturday*): Board Gamers: 12 Hours of Gaming, 12 PM–12 AM at Board Game Warriors, 708 Clarkson Street, New Westminster. “Hello. Feel free to come by anytime on Saturday from noon until midnight and play any of the many open games there are here at the store. The event is perfect for any of those more epic games we have at the store that you’ve been wanting to try or for any you might own but can rarely find the time/space/players to accommodate. Besides a couple of local coffee joints, there are a bevy of nearby eating establishments, and we will probably order some supper at around 6 PM. Hope to see you there.—Kirby & Critty”—Keith Lim

27 September 2014: Vancouver’s eleventh annual Hot One Inch Action, 7–11 PM at Hot Art Wet City, 2206 Main Street (at 6th Avenue), Vancouver. “The tiny work of fifty different artists is reproduced on one inch [pin-back] buttons [and are displayed on the gallery wall]. Buy a mixed bag of five random buttons for \$5. Want a specific button? Trade with other people at the show.”—Julian Castle

October 2014

1 October 2014: **Dave Strutt**'s birthday.

2 October 2014: National Custodial Worker Day.

3 October 2014: Techies Day. Premiere of films *Annabelle* (horror; Tony Amendola, Alfre Woodard), *Left Behind* (action/SF; Nicolas Cage, Lea Thompson, William Ragsdale), and *The Hero of Color City* (computer animation; Christina Ricci, Sean Astin, Owen Wilson, Rosie Perez, Craig Ferguson, Wayne Brady, Jess Harnell, David Kaye).

VCON 39 3–5 October 2014:
VCON 39 at the Sheraton
Vancouver Guildford Hotel,
15269 104th Avenue, Surrey.

“Theme: Military Might—From Swords & Sorcery to Phasers & Grasers. VCON 39 is also *Convention 34!* Come join us for three days of fannish fun and multi-track programming including: Art Show & Auction • Vendors Hall • Author Readings • 24-Hour Games Rooms • Multi-Author Book Launch • Writers Workshops • Demos • Academie Duello • Artists Alley • Frankenstuffies • Fan Groups • Costume Contest • Panels • Hospitality Suite • Dance • Elrons • Turkey Readings • Workshops. Guests of Honour: Author GOH David Weber (Honor Harrington Series; Safehold Series, Dahak Series); Artist GOH David Mattingly (cover illustrator for David Weber’s Honor Harrington Books); Game Design GOH Bruce Heard (early

TSR employee, BECMI version of D&D—Mystara, World of Calidar). Convention 34 Guests of Honour: Convention Guest Author Tarol Hunt; Convention Guest Artist Melissa Mary Duncan.”

4 October 2014: **Barbara Scutt**’s birthday.

4 October 2014: Vanpla 2014 October Workshop, 1–5 PM at Metropolis Comics and Toys, 4735 Kingsway, Burnaby. “Every month, Vanpla members get together for a build and socialize workshop meetup. Usual activities include: kits building (bring your own kits and tools), show your proud completed work, technique coaching (feel free to ask), demos and workshops, airbrushing (depending on venue, spray booth may be available, bring your own airbrush/paint/thinner, etc.), access to gunpla graveyard (salvage parts for your project free), group build/event discussion, watching anime, meet new people, chill, and enjoy. We invite everyone to join. See you guys there!”

4–5 October 2014: Friends of the Richmond Library Whale of a Book Sale, 9 AM–5 PM (Saturday) and 9 AM–3 PM (Sunday) at Thompson Community Centre, 5151 Granville Avenue, Richmond. “Fiction, non-fiction. Sorted. Priced low! Good selection for children, young readers, and adults. All funds benefit your library. Drop off your donated books at any Richmond Library Branch. Care to join Friends? Ask library staff for a Friends membership brochure.”



4–5 October 2014: 21st Alternative Press Expo AKA APE (Comic Con) in San Francisco.—Julian Castle

5 October 2014: **Jim Naguib**’s birthday.

5 October 2014: Bolt Action: Tank You Very Much!, 12–5 PM at Imperial Hobbies, 5451 Number Three Road, Richmond. “Players bring as many tanks and/or anti-tank vehicles as you can and battle it out to see who is the greatest tank commander!! Each player will generate one skill per veterancy (e.g. 1 for inexperienced, 2 for regular, etc.) for each tank under their command and play a free-for-all death-match style game. Prizes for last man standing, first kills and first out. Afterwards there will be demos using the new armored platoon rules to showcase the way they function. Contact: Chris.”

6 October 2014: **Arthur Hlavaty**’s birthday.

7 October 2014: **Howard Chaykin**’s birthday.

10 October 2014: Premiere of films *Dracula Untold* (action/vampire; Charles Dance) and *Dead Snow 2: Red vs. Dead*⁵ (horror/comedy).

11 October 2014: **Ivy Blais**'s birthday.

11 October 2014: 44th Annual IPMS Vancouver Fall Show and Swap Meet, 9 AM–4:30 PM at Bonsor Recreation Complex, 6550 Bonsor Avenue, Burnaby. “Our show attracts scale modellers from around the Pacific Northwest, Western Canada, and Europe. Past competitions have had up to 450 scale models on display. This year’s theme: ‘The Great War—1914–1918.’ [...] Admission is \$5 for anyone 17 years and older and *free* for 16 and younger. Parking is also free and we are very close to Metrotown SkyTrain station. Door prizes donated by local hobby shops and industry suppliers will be given out all day long, and awards will be handed out at the end of the day for the winning models. Our famous vendors’ room will be open as well for those looking for some modelling bargains. For more information please go to <http://www.ipmsvancouver.ca/>.”

11–12 October 2014: GeekGirlCon at the Conference Center at the Washington State Convention Center, [800 *Convention Place*], (8th Avenue & Pike Street), Seattle, Washington. E-mail: info@geekgirlcon.com. Twitter: [@geekgirlcon](https://twitter.com/geekgirlcon). [Facebook](#).

15 October 2014: **Verne Siebert**'s birthday.

16 October 2014: **Duncan McGregor**'s birthday.

17 October 2014: Premiere of films *The Book of Life* (computer animation; Zoe Saldana, Channing Tatum, Ron Perlman, Danny Trejo, Christina Applegate, Ice Cube, Grey DeLisle, Cheech Marin, Gabriel Iglesias, Hector Elizondo, Carlos Alazraqui, Plácido Domingo), *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (comedy; Emma Stone, Naomi Watts, Edward Norton, Michael Keaton, Zach Galifianakis), and *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* (anime; Beau Bridges, James Caan, Dean Cain, Lucy Liu, Chloë Grace Moretz, Oliver Platt, Mary Steenburgen).

18 October 2014: Magic: The Gathering: Khans of Tarkir Game Day, 10 AM–5:30 PM at Imperial Hobbies, 5451 Number Three Road, Richmond. “Join us for a game day celebration with the newest Magic: The Gathering set. Contact: [Stephanie](#).”

18 October 2014: The 6th Annual Bellingham Comicon, 10 AM–5 PM at Ferndale Events Center, 5715 Barrett Road, Ferndale, Washington. “Exit 262—just three blocks east of I-5. Northwest Washington’s largest selection of comics from the golden age to modern, toys, action figures, and more! Guests: Norm Breyfogle, Patricia Briggs, Stefano Gaudiano, Randy Emberlin, James Taylor, Rick Hoberg. Tons of free parking! Admission only \$7 (kids seven and under free).”

5 AKA *Død Sno 2*.



18–19 October 2014: Vancouver Halloween Parade & Expo, at Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre, 1088 Burrard Street, Vancouver (convention) and Granville Street, Smith Street, and Howe Street, downtown Vancouver (parade). “Cosplay, films, comics, anime, games, toys, and costumes. E-mail: feedback@vanhalloween.com. Telephone: 778-300-7456. Meet the original Alien. Meet the original Predator. Meet the original Gohan Dragon Ball. Meet the original Kiba Naruto.”

18–19 October 2014: Portland Retro Gaming Expo, Portland, Oregon.—Julian Castle

19 October 2014: **Gareth von Kallenbach** and **Cathy Palmer-Lister**’s birthdays.

20 October 2014: **Richard Walters**’s birthday.

21 October 2014: **Christopher Garcia**’s birthday.

24 October 2014: Premiere of film *Ouija* (horror).

24–25 October 2014: Vancouver Island 5th Annual Most Amazing Collectable Show!, 5–9:30 PM (Friday) and 10 AM–4 PM (Saturday) at Pearkes Field House, 3100 Tillicum Road, Victoria. “With featured guests Trina Robbins (artist for *Wonder Woman* and *Pretty in Ink*) and Steve Leialoha (artist for *Fables* and *Star Wars*) Admission \$4; children with adults free. For further information call 250-361-5909 or e-mail acoccola@shaw.ca.”

25 October 2014: Punk for a Day Day.

27 October 2014: **Peter Tupper**’s birthday.

27 October 2014: Steampunk Murder Mystery—The Seance, 7 PM at La Fontana Caffè, #101–3701 Hastings Street, Burnaby. “We have killed at the Legion Hall and we took the life of another at Emerald City Comicon. Now it is time to take another life, Hallowe’en style. You are invited to join us as another member of the Steamteam leaves us for the great beyond. In true Hallowe’en style, this time it will be during a seance. The Spectral Lantern will be presented to the guests as the connection between both worlds. Once everyone has decided what treats they would like to snack on for the evening, they will be seated and the lights will go out. Once the lights are out we ask that everyone remain seated as who knows who or what will come through the thin veil between both worlds. By the glow of the Lantern, the Steamteam will attempt to call on the dead. At the end of the experience the Inspector will ask for the audience’s help in deciding who the murderer is, so come early

enough to watch the characters interact. Clues will be dropped during the social time before the seance. Time: Doors open between 6:45 and 7:30 PM. Seance and ‘murder’ around 7:45 PM. Tickets: \$15 pre purchase; \$20 at the door. This is a small cafe and therefore fairly intimate. It is recommended that if purchasing at the door please feel free to call the hotline and make sure tickets are left. Pre-buying tickets *highly* recommended. 778-925-3378. No refunds. Ticket sales final. Tea, coffee, juice, pop, and desserts available for purchase. Steampunk cupcakes by Cakenista. Vendor Bits & Keys will also be present. Child friendly, however please be aware at one point there is a murder and a ‘blackout.’ Please print out your PayPal receipt as your proof of payment and entry.”—Times Past Entertainment

28 October 2014: **Church Haley’s** birthday. Plush Animal Lovers’ Day.

29 October 2014: **Tamara Gerbrandt’s** birthday.

30 October 2014: **Kirstin Morell’s** birthday.

30 October 2014: Steampunk Murder Mystery—The Seance, Part 2, 7 PM at La Fontana Caffè, #101–3701 Hastings Street, Burnaby. [*See description for 27 October 2014.*]

31 October 2014: Halloween. Frankenstein Friday. Increase Your Psychic Powers Day. Premiere of films *ABCs of Death 2* (horror; Tristan Risk, Voltaire) and *Horns* (horror; Daniel Radcliffe, Heather Graham, James Remar, David Morse, Jay Brazeau).

31 October 2014: Penticton Zombie Walk & Costume Parade, 4:30 PM at Nanaimo Square (corner of Nanaimo Avenue West & Main Street), Penticton. Details TBA.

31 October 2014: Glamour Trash Halloween Ball, 9 PM–3 AM at Club 23 West, 23 West Cordova Street, Vancouver.

News-Like Matter

Notes from August 2014 BCSFA Meeting

In attendance were Barb Dryer (secretary), Kathleen Moore (treasurer), Ray Seredin (host), Felicity Walker (editor), Michael “Fruvous” Bertrand, Joe Devoy, William Graham, and Stewart Smyth.

Stew asked “Has Tchaikovsky’s ‘Ode to the Scottish Highlands’ recovered from being associated with the racist cartoon of the bushman with the bone in his nose?” and “Did your mom correct you when you were listening to the *Lone Ranger*⁶ theme and say ‘That’s the *William Tell* Overture’?”



6 (1949).

I'd had the opposite experience: I heard Rossini's "Overture" first, and then my dad said "That's also the *Lone Ranger* theme!" and then told me the "to the dump, to the dump, to the dump dump dump" joke.



He also used to play *Goofy Greats* (1975), a K-Tel album collecting several novelty songs, from which I liked "Guitarzan," "Purple People Eater," "Surfin' Bird," and "Ahab the Arab." Fruvous asked if it also had "Beep Beep." I didn't remember.⁷ Fruvous and Stew then summarized the song, about a race between a Cadillac and a Nash Rambler. Stew had it on an album of all car-themed songs, mostly Beach-Boys-esque.

Both *Baretta* (1975) and *Name That Tune* (1952) were before my time. I only knew them through parodies (like the *SCTV* mashup "That's the Name of That Tune"). Stew could relate, having only known movies from *Mad* magazine because his dad didn't like movies. Stew said *Extant* (2014) stars Halle Berry as a woman alone on a space station for 13 months who comes back pregnant. Someone said the Crusades were the flimsily-justified war in the Middle East of their day.



Stew reported that Alex Winter will direct Keanu Reeves in something, making it a "Bill & Ted" reunion. I mentioned *Freaked* (1993), starring and co-written/co-directed by Winter, with an uncredited Reeves as Ortiz the Dog Boy. Stew thought that Bill & Ted should have appeared on "Wayne's World" on *Saturday Night Live*.



Stew asked "Did anyone see the new season of *Red Dwarf*?" I had. They were so-so—not bad, but they lack that original *Red Dwarf* (1988) look and feel. We talked about the episodes, such as the one with the new ship's computer with autocorrect. Stew wondered who the woman was who received a dedication in the credits of one episode. I didn't know, but I thought that Norman Lovett had died. Others were surprised.⁸ Ray said that Lovett was his fa-



7 It did.—Future Felicity

8 And rightly so! Apparently he is alive.—Future Felicity

avourite Holly. Mine was the Hattie Hayridge Holly that was supposed to have been the Lovett Holly after a sex change. Joe mentioned another female Holly, played by Jane Leeves in the lost American *Red Dwarf* pilot episodes (1992).

Felicity Walker

Sunday 17 August 2014

Fiction: 'Power Switch'

Michael Bertrand



Only fifteen minutes after I woke up, I turned myself On.

I know I am not supposed to do that. The doctors and med techs say that the mind is not ready to be electrically stimulated into the On state until at least an hour after waking, and preferably after a hearty breakfast. But *no coffee*.

They tell us that every time we check in at Control, as though the urge to drink coffee was some sort of primordial instinct that required constant reinforcement to suppress. But I have always been a green tea gal myself.

Besides, only a genuine mental defective would imbibe anything caffeinated when, with a touch of a button, they can be more awake than any human being has ever been in the history of humanity.

But I'm not addicted. I could stop right now and never miss it. I only turned myself On early because I was working on a very interesting chess calculus puzzle when I timed out and the system turned me Off last night, and I want a chance to finish it before I have to go to work.

As usual, my morning routine seems like it is happening to someone else. While I am On, it is absurdly easy to delegate routine tasks, ones for which you have strong muscle and reflex memories, to a lower, subconscious level of your mental muscle, leaving your conscious mind free to focus on higher level thinking.

So I am my own servant. I only have to tell my body to do something and it does it. Psychologically, the experience is subjectively identical to having someone else do the work. Only the physical sensations of movement and touch differentiate it from the actions of another.

Thus, I can do almost anything routine while keeping my conscious mind in the state of relaxed alertness that is required by the kind of work we of the Electric Lizard program are called upon to do.

I am in my favorite breakfast spot, the Nook, before I have to take any mental CPU time away from my chess calculus calculations. In theory, I could decide upon and order my breakfast from one of their charming waitresses without taking myself off autopilot, but one of the strongest and most inflexible rules of the program is that you never, ever interact with another human being that way. In order to preserve our humanity, we Lizards are trained to make a very specific and concentrated effort to emotionally connect with every human being we interact with.

Agents who forget this rule end up the real Lizards, and lose not only their humanity but a good deal of their sentience as well. It happened to my favorite bunkmate during training. I saw her drifting away from humanity and I regret to this day that I chose loyalty to her over her own wellbeing, and did not report her increasing detachment to the docs until it was far too late, and she was a shrieking, babbling madwoman.

That's why I never, ever forget. The On state has many wonderful characteristics, but it dampens one's empathy in the process. And without empathy, we become lost in our own minds.

I am just finishing my meal when a purple-green flash in my peripheral vision tells me that the system that controls my implants thinks it has just turned me On. I smile inwardly at this. It was child's play to hack the firmware of my implants so that they always told Control what Control wanted to hear and left the actual On and Off switch to me. And they had to have known that we would all figure it out in short order. Yet the charade persists.

The soft, neutral voice of my implants tells me that my assignment today is to monitor a potential hotspot near the edge of the Wentworth neighborhood. Analysis has assigned this area, around six square blocks, a high probability of some kind of flareup, and I am to travel there, assess the situation, and intervene if necessary.

That is too big an area for just one agent, but one of the peculiarities of my kind is that we cannot tolerate one another's company when On. This necessitates becoming adept at working solo, which tends to suit us just fine.

Oh, and by "my kind" I mean, of course, those of us in the Electric Lizard program. Not that we are a separate species, or anything. We are as human as you are.

After some deliberation, I decide to walk to my assigned area. It will take eleven minutes longer, but the crisis point is not predicted until fifteen minutes from now, so I have time.

And I am not in the mood to interact with a cabbie or bus patrons. The very idea of having to not just put up with their mindless nattering but also to try to connect with them emotionally makes my head ache. People rarely attempt to interact with you when you are walking alone, especially if you do so while looking focused and purposeful.

I love my fellow human beings. I value each and every one of their precious, vulnerable lives. The whole purpose of the program is to keep them safe from harm. They are all valuable and it is neither my job or my right to judge them.

It's just that sometimes. I find them rather hard to take. But that's true of all us humans, right?

I swear I'm not drifting off. I'm not. I adore all my little blind sheep. I would never dream of viewing them as anything less than full, valid, worthwhile human beings.





And if, hypothetically, I were to start feeling like they were worthless stumbling disgusting drooling morons who don't deserve a nanosecond of my time or attention, Control would find out, turn off my implants, and that would be it. I would never be On again. I would spend the rest of my life bleating and excreting in a heavy fog of ignorance and idiocy just like them.

And that is simply...unthinkable.

I reach my assigned area and find a bus bench to sit on while I monitor the area near the predicted epicenter of the disturbance. To the outer world, I am just another businesswoman in a business casual suit, staring at her laptop while she waits for a bus.

But I know that I am so much, much more than that. If any of these human cattle start causing trouble, I will know, and apply whatever kind of force is needed to defuse the situation.

I am not drifting off.

Michael Bertrand

The Homepage of Michael John Bertrand

Sunday 7 September 2014

Art Credits

Sheryl Birkhead.....	Masthead
<u>Brad Foster</u>	Cover
Clip art (via <u>Dave Haren</u>).....	Pages 1–4, 7
<u>Dave Haren</u> (photo).....	Page 5
Jayde Garrow Fonts (font).....	Page 9
S. John Ross (font).....	Page 12 (top)
Anfa (font).....	Page 14
Clip art (<u>Clker.com</u>).....	Pages 12 (bottom), , 15, 17, 18, 20–22
Clip art [“Guitarzan” (1969) screenshot].....	Page 19 (top)
Clip art [<u>SCTV</u> (1976) screenshot].....	Page 19 (middle)
Clip art [<u>Red Dwarf USA</u> (1992) screenshot].....	Page 19 (bottom)