

# The Obdurate Eye #21

November 2022

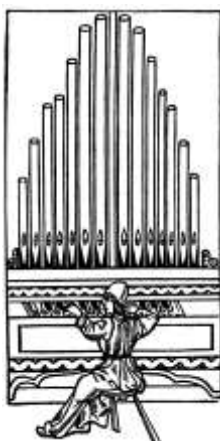
A fanzine from Garth Spencer



*Garth at Corflu Pangloss, demonstrating The Obdurate Eye*

# MASTHEAD

THE OBDURATE EYE #21 (November 2022) is what Garth Spencer does when nobody stops him in time. You can send letters, pictures, trade fanzines, articles, and suggested therapies to him by email to [garth.van.spencer@gmail.com](mailto:garth.van.spencer@gmail.com).



*The organ of no clique or party*

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## Fan News

### Justin Busch

Justin E.A. Busch, an active member of Stipple-APA in Minneapolis and of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and recently the editor of *Far Journeys*, passed on as of October 21, 2022. Justin had been in a state of decline since his cancer came back.

Jeanne Mealy, Official Editor of Stipple-APA, writes:

“Justin Edwin Anton Busch died peacefully in his sleep in the early evening of Friday, October 21, 2022. ... burial arrangements are being made in St. Paul.

Jeanne Mealy, October 23, 2022

### Call for Illustrations from Murderous Ink Press

(An email from Chuck Connor, [chuck.connor@gmx.co.uk](mailto:chuck.connor@gmx.co.uk), 27 Sept. 2022)

Good afternoon Sires,

Been a while since I've been active ... just had a surprise email from Taral saying he's not doing artwork anymore and that he didn't know anyone who might (*que?*). So, I'm coming cap-in-hand asking if you know of anyone who might be interested in helping out.

My usual 'go to' artist for Murderous Ink Press (Ricky Sprague) is getting slammed at his 'day job' and I've not heard back from Steve Jeffery who used to do the kind of line work I'm looking for.

Long story short, I've agreed to write up an Adult Pup Play Training Manual (yes, the things you agree to when in hospital and under some heavy medication...)

So, I'm looking for fillo artists to do some American Sign Language illustrations, but using an image with a pup hood (aka mask), collar and harness. I have 'sort of' examples of what I'm looking for, so it's not like it's total origination and creation, and they will be simplistic for illustration purposes. Think simple line fillos, used to demonstrate hand actions as used in regular ASL Teaching books.

Also, I've found a one-sheet of pup postures/stances, but there isn't one for SICK/POORLY, so I've had to fudge it a little. I have a copy of my POORLY fudge, but there are serious 'fuzzy' problems on my kludges. I need someone with a proper artistic eye who can make it/recreate it as crisp as the original shapes.

All artwork needs to be Black & White line with light shading if necessary – so as to fit in a paperback version of the manual.

And yes, this is weird, even for me... But the pup community is International, and exceedingly friendly to 'outsiders', and a very humorous collection of kinksters as well. They're also dragging me back into crafting masks, something I've not done since the 1980s.

It will be a Copyleft production, but if the artist wants to retain © then I can put that in outside of the copyleft notation.

(P.S.: And also, just heard that 2 of the Murderous Ink Press *Crimeucopia* authors have been included in the attached. Now that is validation on the quality of the anthologies – mind you, like Graeme Cameron, MIP also pays for the work, so I'm sort of semi-pro :) But in non-faned tradition, I set out to publish 4 anthologies in the first year, but ended up publishing 10. Yep, that far down the hole if I were to look up, I still wouldn't see Alice's petticoats. But it's also still a lot of fun :) [www.murderousinkpress.co.uk](http://www.murderousinkpress.co.uk) )



## Letters

**John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St., No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057, USA, 21 October 2022 (received Oct. 31)**

Aiee! I just noticed I sent my 20 Aug. [letter] to Perry St., instead of Doman St. Hope it reached you.

*((My former landlord has been great about letting me know when mail arrives at my old address.))*

You say (*Eye 19*) *utopia* has been transmogrified in popular speech to mean 'an allegedly perfect society.' *Transmogrified* is right. It means "changed

grotesquely.” Thomas More’s *Utopia* is a satire. Careless readers accept uninspected its allegations of how wonderful its described land is.

*((This sort of thing is why I have been advised to drop my mock-conspiracy theory about Belgium and all its works.))*

You grieve that legislators, lawyers, court officers, computer programmers, historians and pharmaceutical companies keep elaborating what already works, cranking out new laws, histories, medications, software, beyond all need. Perhaps as you say these folks are acting to justify their continuing income. Or their notes and other utterances may reveal they don’t recognize what does and doesn’t need improvement. The earl of Salisbury in Shakespeare’s “King John” protests gilding refined gold, painting the lily (Act IV, scene ii; careless reading transmogrifies this into “gilding the lily”).

*((Thank you for clarifying that. Until now I was guilty of this transmogrification.))*

Anyone can use language well. Here in the States, and perhaps in Canada, this is currently hindered by what seems to be incomplete thinking about freedom. In baseball, if I’m the batter, when a pitch comes to me I don’t get to duck so it hits the umpire, then run to third base. That’s not wisely considered an infringement on my freedom.

*((These days I have to wonder how many Americans actually notice which words they see or read – or, more importantly, what words they actually say or write. I have to wonder what they think “freedom” is – merely lack of any restrictions on their movement? No buildings, traffic obstacles, fences, or boundaries as far as you can see? After some reflection I decided that “freedom” means the ability – not just the free space to move – to reach your goals. This presumes that you have goals in mind, of course. And motivations to achieve them. But either this idea makes an impression, or it doesn’t. I am resigned now to people who just can’t get new ideas.))*

English does not have an Academy that determines right or wrong. Good English is a composite of usage, etymology, history, reason, and esthetics – and esthetics is not wholly subjective any more than it is wholly objective. People say “attendee” when they mean “attender.” If there is any attendee of an SF con it’s the con itself. Nothing is gained by this. Nor is it an error just because I say so.

Extraordinary use of English can be a joy. Two, widely different from each other, who come to mind are e.e. cummings and Gerard Manly Hopkins.

Congratulations to Winnipeg (only 1400 mi, 2300 km, from you; 1500 mi, 2500 km, from me) on winning next year’s NASFiC. This bid after losing the Worldcon showed resilience. I hope to be there.

*((Bully for them. You have a good time there, now!))*

**Dara Korra'ti, [kahvipub@murkworks.net](mailto:kahvipub@murkworks.net), 24 October 2022**

Just wanted to drop you a note, partly to let you know I do read your perzine, even if as of late I've had no time at all for... much of anything outside working against the rise of the authoritarian right. As Tactical Officer Shaxs says, fighting fascism is a full-time job! And has been my whole life, the entirely unwanted but equally unavoidable second career, and it's working me overtime these last several years.

(Last week, the GOP also introduced Federal legislation to start making queers illegal again, describing us as an intrinsic sexual threat to children. That's exterminationist rhetoric, of course, and we've gone all the way back to the language of the 1990s, with some of them not content to recriminalize us, but calling for our deaths. You write fairly often about how you feel you've never known how to live your life; I feel fairly often these days that I've had to sacrifice much of mine - and these days, most of it. The worst part is, they enjoy all this shit - as bullies all the way up to full-on fascists always do - and crow about how much 'fun' it's going to be to take away our rights.)

*((Thank you for writing in!*

*((My father would be very disappointed in my lack of political commitment. I voted pretty much randomly in the latest (civic) election.*

*((I found myself relating at Corflu that if my folks were more articulate, he would have raised me to fight for a socialist revolution in Canada. Guess I've been indulging myself and living on borrowed time.))*

Sad to hear about the collapse of VCON. I finally started going regularly about a decade ago and it quickly became my favourite, and certainly most fannish, volunteer convention. I will miss the turkey readings terribly, of course. It was the kind of convention where you could still show up, discover there's no music programming that year, find an unused room on the spot and make it work. I've always loved that sort of thing, ever since some friends of mine and I showed up at a Rubicon in Lexington, Kentucky with an anime room, tabletop game programme, miscellaneous programming - don't tell Kevin, but I was doing fannish family feud even before he was :D - and an art show. We even had sales! Directly between artists and customers, of course, since we had no licenses of any kind. It was amazing.

Anyway, VCON, while much larger than the Rubicons of yore, still reminded me just a little of that, and was awfully good in many ways in its own right. Particularly the art show. Always such a good art show. But everything comes to an end eventually, I suppose.

*((An online dialogue is going on, about the present nature of conrunning and how a VCON - or any con - can be run in Vancouver. Shamefully, I haven't been keeping track.))*

Unlike you, I actually enjoy some of the large events, even commercial ones - Penny Arcade Expo, for example. I look forward to being able to go back. But it's definitely a different beast. Of course, as I had one of my novel characters say at one point, "Life is change. Let's live." The circumstances between real life and that moment in a novel are not remotely similar, but the point is still the same. If we're lucky, we can change time, but time is always changing us, and the only way out of that is to choose not to exist, which is still a pretty big - and rather final, as far as we know - change.

Me, I'd rather live.

*((I never opposed change. I just wish I had understood what social norms and expectations were being laid on me, when they were still current; as well, what changes I also had to adapt to. After some conversations I had at Corflu, though, I finally begin to believe that my concerns were a complete waste of time.))*

Watching you bring up Spoon Theory is kinda fun for me, because it's a bit of a "you're one of today's lucky 10,000!" moment. For me, as a Tumblrite, I was there when that particular new old magic was written! As I recall, it was literally a kitchen utensils/food preparation analogy, centered around being able to accomplish things being similar to being able to make and eat food, and how that's absolutely necessary but you need the resources - spoons, in this case - to actually make it happen, even so.

So, if everything you cook (do) requires the use of another spoon (another chunk of mental or physical resources), then there comes a point where it doesn't matter how much you want or need to make (do) something, you literally can't until you do your (metaphorical) dishes - which is to say until you rest/recuperate and rebuild the mental resources represented by the spoons.

I've always thought it was a good analogy. It's rather direct and pretty accurate. Some people try to make it more specifically adequate by adding more types of utensils - not all tasks require the same resources - and that's fine, but to me complicates things more than necessary.

And that's the origin of Spoon Theory, at least as I know it.

*((And now I know! Thank you!))*

... Anyway, I hope all this finds you well, or as well as can be managed in this time of plague, war, and encroaching global fascism. As we used to say in the supervillain biz, "Try not to die!"

*((I can't die yet; I have to become Anarchist Dictator of the Northwest and win self-determination for the Vulgarian people.))*

**Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, [penneys@bell.net](mailto:penneys@bell.net), 1706-24 Eva Rd.,  
Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, October 31, 2022**

Many thanks for issue 20 of *The Obdurate Eye*, and I like the cover. Sage advice for our new King. Anyways, on to the issue at hand...

Welcome to Hallowe'en, and frankly, while it can be fun, I will be pleased when it is done, so we can concentrate on getting Christmas taken care of. I do not envy our American friends, for this is the time of year when Hallowe'en, Thanksgiving and Christmas are all competing for the rapidly shrinking paycheque of those Americans still working. We all have enough competition for our meagre funds, and somehow, we are treated as if we are all fountains of cash.

The Friday before Hallowe'en, we attended a Hallowe'en party staged by our local anime convention, and we volunteered to work the registration desk. They had a staff lounge there, and while we weren't working, we'd hang out there, and we'd chat with friends, some of who we hadn't seen in more than the past two years of pandemic. Some of them surprised us with negative opinions of some fans we know, and we have to agree. I always saw fandom as a welcoming place, and fans as welcoming people, but more and more, that opinion of mine is changing. If some people fell off the face of the earth, I wouldn't mourn. I have known for the past few years that some attendees of these conventions, we'd call fans, but they wouldn't. They see the word 'fan' as something negative. We like to think of ourselves as a superior group, but we are just like any other group, or human being. I am an observer of fans of other interests, and some fandoms are frankly toxic.

*((Check out my speech at Corflu Pangloss for specifics.))*

VCON seems rather dead right now, as does Ad Astra here. Still, I remember many events like the three-day conventions we used to enjoy started as one-day events, and grew from there. Such a project is a multi-year project that at our age, we might not want to take on. I think we have to accept that much of our potential audience for a VCON or Ad Astra has gotten perhaps too old, or has moved on, or just plain passed away, and others who might call themselves fans are not fans of what the convention might cater to. Myself, I do not see Ad Astra coming around anymore, thanks to an aging committee, and a lack of funds in the con treasury. David Malinski speaks of something that will make it difficult to restore the kind of convention we want...a lack of volunteers. I know of at least two conventions that failed because they couldn't get the volunteers they felt they needed to get the job done. The age of the volunteer seems to be done.

*((Ah. So it isn't just a Vancouver thing. And the greying of fannish fandom is as general as I thought it was.))*

My loc...I have seen Graeme Cameron write about using the success and structure of the recent Corflu as a template on which to build a new VCON. Go for it, and if it works, share with the rest of the country.

*((Always recognizing that the focus of congoers' interests is not what it was, and a concom has to keep their contemporary interests in mind, from the outset.))*

Busy day coming up, so off this goes, and time to check my ever-expanding list of Things To Do. If I didn't have that list, I'd never get anything done. Take care, see you nextish.

**We Also Heard From:** Fran Skene, Taral Wayne, John Thiel, George Phillies, Bill Burns, Rob Jackson



## At War with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Dara Korra'ti

I had a mildly amusing while also frustrating adventure this past weekend, wherein I had a problem. I posted about it, but here's a version for you, if you like.

So, I had a problem, right? An electrical problem. Apparently.

And I'm all, "okay, sure, an electrical problem, I have some ideas, maybe it's partly a design problem, I can work this out." So, I started taking the device in question apart - a 3D printer - and I figured out it was definitely related to one particular subsystem - the print bed's heating unit - so that's good.

So, I poked that for a while. It's very simple, but also, everything is okay? I don't like the design, but otherwise, it's fine. From there, I went backwards up the chain, past the control system, up to the power system, and poked at that for a while looking for voltage drops and the like, but not finding anything until I get all the way back out to the AC side. I tried throwing in a little power buffer onto the DC side, but that doesn't help at all, which if I'm honest about it makes sense at this point.

Eventually I figure out how to measure the problem on the AC side and figure out exactly what's triggering everything and honestly, I'm starting to get a little worried and trying to figure out how big an electrical problem I have, when suddenly I went...

"wait"

...and thought about physics.

Then I grabbed a voltage drop calculator and plugged in all my numbers (estimates in many cases, but they're decent ones) and hit calculate... and out came exactly the power drop number I was seeing in the wall. Which means... god dammit... I didn't have an electrical problem.

No. That, I could fix. But I had a \_physics\_ problem. And I said "\_fuck\_," because I can't fix physics.

I mean, really, what I have is a design problem. or strictly speaking, two design problems, and they're both in devices I neither designed nor can re-design. To wit:

1: pulse-width modulation heating on a 3D printer build plate is frankly nasty bullshit, but also,

2: Dimmable LED lights should not act like stressed-out drama queens when seeing a cyclic 1.4v drop across a circuit, particularly when that drop only gets you down to 120 volts, I am just saying, Philips Lighting Corporation.

I am just saying.

Time to buy some different lightbulbs, because goddammit physics. xD



*Left to right: John Mainer, Garth Spencer, and Les Sveinson  
at the Sveinsons' home*

## Pills and Pricks

*John T. Mainer (Facebook, Oct. 17, 2022)*

Getting old is a bitch. It steals everything that makes life worth living, raises the cost of everything you do, including nothing, but it does present a couple of interesting options.

Everybody knows Pfizer's little blue pill, Viagra. A failed heart medication that can give a near-corpse a hard on. Old men everywhere are reaching for that little blue pill to return to the prick they used to be.

Cool. Nothing against putting lead back in the pencil, but while everyone is replacing the bad sides of aging with the little blue pill to get us the prick of an eighteen-year-old again, did anyone look at the other hand.

While it is great to take the little blue pill and get the prick you used to have, there is a second pill that Pfizer isn't selling, this one you produce yourself.

That little red pill called compassion. To get to the point in life you need the little blue pill, you have lived through a whole lot of shit, you have seen those around you experience a whole lot of shit, and unless you are really lucky, you have lost more people than you like.

This is where the little red pill comes in. Taking the little blue pill can give you the prick you used to have. Taking the little red pill can make you less of a prick than you used to be.

I get it, no one wants to be old, bald, fat, and with parts that don't answer like they used to. Nothing wrong with fixing that, but we all begin so very

sure of ourselves, and so very blind to other people's needs and problems. While we were busy getting old, we were given the chance to see so many things the worldview of that eighteen-year-old couldn't dream of. He was an ignorant little prick. He didn't know any better (yet). You do.

That little red pill of compassion won't honestly make you feel any better, but it will make being around you a lot better for everyone. Taken regularly, it may cause you to make things better for everyone.

So, while you are busy taking the little blue pill to get the prick you used to have, consider taking the little red pill so that outside the bedroom, prick is not the only thing you show the world.

#### **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT:**

- Why bats are dying by the millions
- Why bees are dying by the billions
- Why bird populations are plunging
- Ocean acidification
- The melting ice caps
- Deforestation
- Dangers of natural gas fracking
- GMO, Monsanto, and the problems caused by toxic farming practices
- Potential food shortages because of drought, soil depletion, and the plunge in wildlife populations
- Polluted and depleted aquifers
- How to grow food
- Hazards of industrial pollution
- How your rights are being violated
- The realities of war
- Growth of the prison industry
- Lies about the War on Drugs
- Lies about immigration
- How to disconnect from fossil fuels
- Permaculture and sustainable living

#### **WHAT THE NEWS TELLS YOU ABOUT:**

- Who got murdered
- Who said what that doesn't matter
- Kanye West and Kim Kardashian
- The First Lady's workout routine
- Justin Beiber
- Who is getting divorced
- Drama in D.C.
- Corporate products to buy
- Courtroom scandals
- Misinformation about everything
- Who is gay
- Sports drama
- ‘Reality’ show drama
- What various people are wearing
- Who got arrested
- How many cars are selling
- Sex scandals
- Who got an award
- Car chases
- Socialites
- Whatever subtly perpetuates fear
- Whatever will keep you tuned in

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SCIENCEGASM](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SCIENCEGASM)

## Corflu Pangloss – Corflu 39 in Vancouver, BC – October 21-23, 2022



*The Canadian fanhistory panel at Corflu Pangloss*

On Friday I hied myself directly from work to the Sands Best Western Hotel, which is like half a block away from English Bay, in the cool hipster yuppie part of town. And I met fans I had only corresponded with by email for years, not all of whom were white-haired like me, and drank too much, and convinced Nic Farey I'm a flake, and had a blast. I had to go home by taxi.

This was when I discovered a Corflu tradition: they pick an attending member's name out of the hat, and he/she becomes that convention's Guest of Honour. As fate would have it, that was me. So I became their GoH and had to prepare a speech to follow the Sunday banquet.

§

On Saturday I embarrassed myself by being late for the fanhistory panel, which was my suggestion in the first place. Note to self: always give myself an extra half-hour to get places in Vancouver, and rely on Translink's suggested routes.

The panelists picked up the ball anyway and started a wide-ranging discussion of Canada's fanhistory, featuring but not entirely consisting of remembrances of Susan Wood, who was Famous Fan Face, Hugo Award co-winner, and editor of *Languages of the Night*, a collection of nonfiction about writing, by Ursula LeGuin. However, Susan Wood was prominent in the fanzine/fanhistory display, and several luminaries held a Susan Wood panel on Sunday.

We had a blast again on Saturday night. Several of the fan faces I met there were great to party with, including Nic Farey and Tommy Ferguson. Ferguson held a whiskey tasting in the consuite, as part of his promotion of Corflu Craic (next year's Corflu, to be held February 2023 in Belfast).

Once again I found myself going home by taxi. Hey, it was that late.



*Tommy Ferguson explaining why you really should buy a membership in Corflu Craic and come to Belfast in 2023*



*Pat Virzi discovering she is supposed to act out the reading of terrible SF stories – from the Turkey Readings at Corflu Pangloss*

## §

Sunday was distinguished by the Turkey Readings, a general annual meeting, and the closing ceremonies. (at which I had to give a GoH speech. It follows below this conreport.)

Fran Skene and Graeme and Murray Moore and I held the Turkey Readings, which are readings of really bad, yet somehow published SF. Members of the audience then bid 50¢ to stop, or \$1.00 to continue the reading. Other members are selected to act out the story being read. It was stupid, hokey fun.

Andrew Hooper conducted an annual general meeting in the afternoon, where people played Robert's Rules and had a good deal of fun. At least Moshe Feder did. One of the subjects that led to amendments to amendments to motions to amend motions was whether or how to rename the Fanzine Writers of America. After much involved and self-entertaining discussion some decision was reached (but I forget what it was).

(Later I told Andy that I thought of proposing the name “Fanzine Writers of the Anglosphere”, but that suggestion apparently went over like a lead balloon.)



*Chair Ulrika O'Brien's closing speech at Corflu Pangloss*

After the closing ceremonies, I had dinner with some other attendees, including Dennis and Pat Virzi, and Lucy Huntzinger.

At the Dead Dog party Nic Farey came up to me and said “DOCTOR! MY BRAIN HURTS!!” and we acted out the brain specialist sketch from Monty Python. One of the committee rushed over to shush us and tell us it was past the quiet-time deadline; I had no idea how late it had gotten.

And I went home again, home again, jiggedy jig, by taxi for a third time. I really must be more self-disciplined.

And of course I caught a cold after Corflu Pangloss. *Quelle surprise.*

#### [North of the 49<sup>th</sup>](#)

(A very superficial overview of Fanzine Fandom in Canada)

*(Contributed by Garth Spencer to the Corflu Pangloss program book)*

Stories about Canadian fandom are like stories about fans anywhere, except that the physical distances between fan groups are generally greater than the distances in the United States or Britain. Fans appeared in Canada in the 1930s, as early as anywhere else – isolated fans such as Nils Helmer Frome, an artist and fanzine publisher in British Columbia – but they were few and far between.

Fandom is a demographic phenomenon. The earliest groups of fans were in the centers of population, starting in Toronto and in Vancouver. But from the Maritimes through the Prairie provinces to BC, populations and

discretionary income for travel had to rise before any number of fan groups appeared there.

## §

A gentleman by the name of Jack Bowie-Reed - a publicist for the Canadian Conservative Party - travelled across Canada in the late 1940s and would place newspaper ads inviting SF fans to come out and form a club. He then encouraged them to federate as the Canadian SF Association. Several SF groups in Ottawa in the late 1940s were affiliated with the Canadian SF Association; the first Ottawa SF Society was formed in 1948. In 1949, the Canadian SF Association established contact with several Western SF groups, including one in Winnipeg. But shortly afterward, several Eastern SF groups in CSFA dissolved. (*Opuntia* #26, p. 15)

But the whole enterprise died of attrition in the 1950s, leaving one remnant in Winnipeg. Chester Cuthbert, who was the president of the Winnipeg CSFA branch, found his home basically dominated by the Association's book and fanzine library. Subsequently Mr. Cuthbert hosted sporadic meetings of fans in his home, and he chanced to meet Michael Hall and Steve George in the 1970s, who became well-known fanzine publishers. Michael Hall later became a fanzine publisher for Edmonton fanzines such as *New Canadian Fandom*, and was the first delegate chosen for the Canadian Unity Fan Fund. Steve George, editor of *Zosma*, later went on to author a series of horror novels in mass-market publication.

## §

Some of the best-known names in fanzine fandom appeared in eastern Canada as early as the 1960s – Norm Clarke and Gina Ellis, for fanzines such as *Queebshots*; Eli Cohen, who edited *Kratophany*; Michael Glicksohn and Susan Wood, who produced *Energumen*; and Taral Wayne, who produced many fanzines such as *DNQ* and *New Toy*, from the 1970s to the present. His many professional-grade illustrations have appeared in fanzines throughout North America.

## §

In Quebec, after several Quebecois fans met each other at Torcon II (the Worldcon held in 1972 in Toronto), they began several French-language SF magazines, such as *Solaris*, and small-press book imprints. The fact that it often took as much as five years for SF and fantasy to be translated from other languages, such as English, had a lot to do with it. Thus evolved “SFFQ” (*science fiction et du fantastique quebecois*) – a *milieu* of sometimes-collaborating, sometimes-contending writers, artists, editors and small publishers. While they also corresponded with, and participated in the francophone publishing world outside Canada, they conceived several SF/F awards – the Prix Solaris and the Prix Boreal, to name just two – and began a rather literary small conference, Boreal.

## §

In 1971, a student SF society at the University of British Columbia began a long-running convention named VCON. After the success of a film showing of *One Million Years BC*, and faced with the rule of returning all their funds to the Alma Mater Society at the end of the year, they banked the money off campus and began operating as the unregistered BC Science Fiction Association. They also began a long-running clubzine called *BCSFazine*, supported two apas (BCAPA and VANAPA), inspired some independent fanzines (such as Jim Welch's *SFA Digest*, Fran Skene's *Love Makes the World Go Awry*, and R. Graeme Cameron's *Space Cadet Gazette*), and began a writers' workshop which produced a series of anthologies (*Fictons*).

When Susan Wood moved to Vancouver and took a teaching position at the University of British Columbia, she became involved in fan activities, but became progressively more involved in her academic career. In *The Best of Susan Wood*, Jerry Kaufman observes that she was on the point of entering an editing career before she died; she edited a collection of Ursula LeGuin's nonfiction writing, *The Language of the Night*. A memorial volume of the feminist revue *A Room of One's Own* was dedicated to Susan Wood.

Professional writers such as William Gibson, Lisa Smedman and Don H. Debrandt have been associated with BCSFA. R. Graeme Cameron, a former *BCSFazine* editor, CUFF delegate and now Aurora Award winner, today produces a small-press SF magazine, *Polar Borealis*, and a poetry periodical, *Polar Starlight*.

In 1977 Vancouver hosted Westercon XXX. One result of this convention was to inspire several fan communities in the Pacific Northwest to begin long running conventions in the next two years, ranging from Orycon in Portland, Spokon in Spokane, Moscon in Moscow, Idaho, and Noncon in Edmonton.

## §

Also, in the 1970s, an explosion of fanzines and apas came out of Edmonton, Alberta. The Edmonton Science Fiction and Comic Art Society brought together a host of young university students of both genders. It was explained to me later that a great deal of this release of energy might be attributed to ESFCAS functioning as basically a large dating society. Be that as it may, the club's fanzine *Neology* was soon joined by *New Canadian Fandom*, *The Monthly*, and one-shots such as *The You Can't Get to Heaven on Roller Skates Infrequently*.

They also began Noncon, which was conceived as an Alberta regional convention, and which was held in Calgary and in Red Deer in later decades. Noncon was even held in Vancouver once, starting as a joke bid.

## §

In Victoria, BC in the early 1980s, there were two or three tiny clubs, with small amateur publications (*FTA/Phoenix*, produced on a spirit duplicator, and a *Trekzine*). I produced my first fanzine, *Scuttlebutt*, on the spirit duplicator and later by photocopy. In 1981 and 1982 the several tiny clubs

in Victoria held modest, one-day conventions at the Student Union building at the University of Victoria. These were relatively successful in that they involved several fans, drew decent attendances, showcased several interests and activities, and made small profits. (It is helpful to know that Victoria is situated on an island, and access from Seattle and Vancouver is restricted to air and ferry travel.)

Before the event in 1982, these Victoria fans became aware of some people they barely knew, who wanted to hold a very large event in Victoria. It seems they had been to a Worldcon in Chicago and had been dazzled by the event. It developed that the Constellation Con '83 committee had *no concept of practical limitations*, of seed money, of realistic attendance to expect at a first convention in a small town. They read the lack of support from our fan community as active opposition, too. (Paula Johanson chronicled the story in a one-shot zine, *Atrazine*. She is now a published small-press SF and fantasy writer.)

The best response to this was offered by Karl Johanson and John Herbert – later editors of the genzine *Under the Ozone Hole* – who started the joke bid for Worldcon '89 at Myles' House, proposing to hold the Worldcon at a household in Sydney, BC, with special attractions such as looking at goats and gravel pits and a kid sister's Duran memorabilia collection. Many room parties at conventions followed.

Another response from another Victoria fan resulted in *The Maple Leaf Rag*, a fan newszine which picked up where New Canadian Fandom let off. To his credit, the editor of *New Canadian Fandom* supported MLR by sharing his mailing list. It is possible that MLR assisted Canadian writers to form SF Canada and helped the revival of the Canadian SF & Fantasy Award and the Canadian Unity Fan Fund.

Some years later, a new fan in Victoria (Terry Wyatt) began a new series of Trek-oriented conventions, with rather more success until they were discontinued.

## §

About 1980 and 1981, several fans began to feel that some national SF institution was called for. Linda Ross-Mansfield, then living in the Maritimes, launched CANADAPA. Robert Runte in Edmonton began *New Canadian Fandom*, a fanzine based on a fannish news column he had contributed to *Neology*. And a few English teachers in the Maritimes conceived of a national Canadian SF award, to spotlight the writers and the speculative fiction appearing in Canada.

The Canadian SF and Fantasy Award got off to a rocky start. It appeared the teachers were aware of the several conventions then operating in several cities – such as Halcon in Halifax, Boreal in Quebec, Maplecon in Ottawa, VCON in Vancouver – but they did not actually contact the “leading SF fans” they thought they were contacting. They initially proposed that Canadian conventions should present the award in rotation, one year after each other

– to be titled “Conventions” – a suggestion which was not received with universal enthusiasm. And they seemed completely unaware that the SFFQ milieu had already been operating their own French-language awards for some years. Perhaps the Maritime provinces have always been a little isolated. It is, allegedly, somewhat easier to travel between Boston and Halifax than between Toronto or Montreal, let us say, and Halifax.

It appeared the early Conventions suffered more than their share of mutual unawareness, and breakdowns in communication. Typical is one exchange between an original organizer of the award, and the late Joel Champetier, who was prominent in the organization of Boreal. The organizer later described how he met Mr. Champetier, and discussed the CSFFA, and Mr. Champetier agreed that Boreal hosting the award presentation would be a good idea. The organizer departed, thinking he had secured a commitment. Mr. Champetier seemed to have thought the conversation was hypothetical. At any rate, the Boreal committee that year was not aware someone expected them to host the CSFFA award, so it wasn’t held that year. Finally, at the 1986 Convention (VCON 14), Mike Wallis from Toronto announced he was making some changes to the organization of the award presentations, starting with Ad Astra the following year. Since then, the Aurora Awards (as they have been renamed) have operated on a sounder basis. The number of awards has grown, as well, so that Aurora Awards are presented for best Canadian works in several categories. (More information can be found at the [prixauroraawards.ca](http://prixauroraawards.ca) website.)

## §

Because fan communities in Canada tend to be isolated by distance, a Canadian Unity Fan Fund appeared. In 1981, Michael Hall of Edmonton was the first Canadian Unity Fan Fund (CUFF) delegate, to Torque 2 in Toronto. This enterprise lapsed for several years, until Mike Wallis announced in 1986 that he was restarting the fund. By now, several fans across the country have been assisted to attend conventions, usually Conventions, on the opposite side of the country. (Usually, the border between Manitoba and Ontario is considered the dividing line between East and West.) Some of the CUFF delegates include the late Michael Hall of Edmonton, Garth Spencer (then from Victoria, now living in Vancouver), Robert Runte (then from Edmonton, now living in Lethbridge), Kent Pollard of Ontario, and R. Graeme Cameron (then from Vancouver, now living in Nanaimo).

Linda and John Mansfield sometimes complained in later years that no one was standing for candidacy for the fund. This was probably due to its obscurity. Somehow, no one thought to advertise and promote CUFF sufficiently – just as no one thought to advertise and promote the Aurora Awards, in my not-so-humble opinion.

There is probably a deeper problem than that. From the 1970s onward, fandom was diverging into different paths. The fandom which revolved around professional (or amateur) *writing*, and one’s participation in

organized activities, is outnumbered by the fandoms which revolve around screen entertainment, and gaming or costuming activities. Not only did many people not hear about SF awards or fan funds, but their motivations and enthusiasms lie elsewhere.

§

Today, the important distances between fan groups are the distances between fandoms, in Canada as much as anyplace else. The discontinuation of several conventions across Canada is as much about the loss of volunteer support for general-interest conventions, as much as it is about the impact of economic changes, the rising cost of hotel venues, or the COVID-19 pandemic.

*(Mad ambition tells me in the middle of the night that there may be a place in fandom for a volume of Canadian fanhistory, incorporating writing by Taral Wayne, the late Michael Hall, R. Graeme Cameron, myself, and others. I guess I could revive the Stop Press imprint and release a book-length volume, but a cloud of witnesses warns me against self-publishing, saying This Way MADNESS Lies! But it may be too late, I tell you, I caught the Zine Pubbing Bug long ago, and we know what that leads to ...))*



## Corflu Pangloss GoH Speech

*(Presented at Corflu 39, Oct. 21-23, 2022, by Guest of Honour Garth Spencer)*



*Delivering my Guest of Honour speech, revealing the hideous basic truths of fandom, at Corflu Pangloss, Oct. 2022*

Hello. My name is Garth Spencer. This is my kind of convention.

I was surprised and honoured to be named your Guest of Honour, and to be asked to give a speech. We are met to celebrate literate self-expression, to remember celebrated fanzine fans, and to look forward to future self-expression by friends we haven't made yet.

What have we all learned from our experience of fandom? That depends upon the baggage and preconceptions we drag into fandom, and whether we know enough to let them go.

Deep in the wilds of darkest Victoria – the hometown from which I came (fleeing!) to seek my fortune here – there are excellent fans named Karl Johanson and John Herbert. I know they are excellent because they originated the WorldCon '89 at Myles' House bid, a wonderful satire on overhyped media conventions. From them I learned that some people have fun, do good, and throw great parties!

In the dim backward and abysm of fanhistory, there were fandom guides, and faanfictions that everyone knew and understood – classics such as *The Enchanted Duplicator*, and *The Mimeo Man*. Today, of course, separate fandoms have different points of reference, and there are no universal focal points. All the clues are gone to who sawed Courtney's boat, or the meaning

of grunch and crottled greeps. In short, there's a great many sayings and allusions that have to be explained, not to mention things fans do and why we do them.

From the golden zines of fabulous 1970s Edmonton fandom, especially from Robert Runte's *New Canadian Fandom* and his brilliant ESFCAS hoax, I learned that some great things can be accomplished with fanzines, even feats of social engineering!

From the example of Vancouver fandom, its long-running weekly FRED gatherings, and Steve Forty standing as the unofficial greeter to new visitors, I learned there are a few essential things required to form a fannish community – none of which are guaranteed to be present.

Every so often, in a given decade, a few communities somewhere experience extraordinary convention fiascos. From this I learned that fans can come down with unworkable, absurd ideas as easily as anyone else – and can cling to them, sacrificing finances and reputation and relationships to them. No one can prevent this. No one even understands the idea.

There was a time when I thought no one had published a best-practices guide for conrunners; why couldn't I compile it, from any information I could gather? So, I sent out query letters to potential informants and participants, and started outlining one. Then I got strange responses like *"Who are you to tell us what to do? You haven't run any conventions yourself! We've been doing things our way for years! Go to hell!"* So, I learned that fans are liable to react to things entirely different than I thought I said, or asked for.

There was a time when I thought every other country seems to have a published fanhistory; why shouldn't a Canadian fanhistory be published? Maybe I could compile it, from any information I could gather. Then I got strange responses like *"Who are you? Why are you asking me questions? Who sent you? I'm not responsible!"* So, I learned that There Are Things Fans Must Not Put on Record. More to the point, my search to find out what people can be expected to do, when to expect it, and how to defend yourself, is not the first thing people think of when they think of fanhistory.

This returns us to the baggage and preconceptions people drag along when they come into fandom. For example, some people used to expect science fiction to draw people into the sciences. Unfortunately, I don't know anyone with a mad science laboratory in their homes. Today, some people expect any fans must aspire to become published writers. Well, maybe that's true and maybe it isn't; may we have a show of hands? How many of us are writing fiction?

My own opinion is somewhat different. I expect any fan worth the powder to blow them to hell will concoct a Crank Theory, which is theirs and belongs to them. Would you like to hear mine? The secret rules to human behaviour I discovered? The keys to describe, to predict, even to control our most unreasonable acts? No, on second thought, let's make it like the Turkey Readings and you can bid on whether I go on with my lecture, or stop it.

In conclusion, I have learned from fandom the things I should have learned before even hearing of fandom. Humans are humans, fun and offensive, intelligent and deeply stupid, articulate and inarticulate, creative and dull, and utterly inconsistent and unpredictable. In short, a whole universe. Fans are no different. Like the weather, you can only be prepared for the ones who behave their worst, and enjoy the ones who are at their best.

*((I was going to sign off with “and know where your towel is,” but something restrained me.))*

## What We Learn from Fanzines

I’m beginning to think I would do better justice to fanzines and their editors by writing individual letters of comment to each, then building my fanzine around them. What say?

*Beam* #17, Oct. 2022, edited by Nic Farey and Ulrika O’Brien. 2657

Rungsted St, Las Vegas, NV 89142, USA, email : [fareynic@gmail.com](mailto:fareynic@gmail.com) ,  
418 Hazel Avenue N., Kent, WA 98030, USA, email :

[ulrika.obrien@gmail.com](mailto:ulrika.obrien@gmail.com) . A very professionally-produced fanzine with a fine cover by Alan White. Ulrika O’Brien points out how important simple conversation is, for humans generally and for fandom, and how we are undermining the ability to converse – partly when we so often self-isolate, and partly when we shun anyone labelled Politically Incorrect. The late Justin Busch discourses on numbered fandoms. Nic Farey questions the economics of how spaceships get built. This is a thinker’s fanzine.

*Captain Flashback* #47 (for the Turbo-Charged Party-Animal Amateur Press Association), Oct. 18, 2022. Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, residing at 11032 30th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125. E-mail Andy at [fanmailaph@aol.com](mailto:fanmailaph@aol.com). A chronicle of horror TV hosts in the Midwest, beginning as early as the 1950s. I had no idea how much there was to know.

*CyberCozen* #34:10, Oct. 2022, Editor: Leybl Botwinik, E-mail:

[leybl\\_botwinik@yahoo.com](mailto:leybl_botwinik@yahoo.com) . *CyberCozen* continues to promote science fiction in Hebrew and Yiddish, and provides links to entertaining science news.

*Films Fantastic* #17, Sept. 2022, edited for the N3F by the late Justin Busch.

*INCantations* #20, Aug. 2022, Rob Jackson, Chinthay, Nightingale Lane, Hambrook, Chichester, West Sussex, U.K. PO18 8UH, [robjackson60@gmail.com](mailto:robjackson60@gmail.com) or [jacksonhambrook@uwclub.net](mailto:jacksonhambrook@uwclub.net). A nice thick meaty genzine with many think pieces, and dramatic accounts of life in the stern, snowy wastes of frontier Britain.

*MT Void* #2244, Oct. 7, 2022, Co-Editor: Mark Leeper, [mleeper@optonline.net](mailto:mleeper@optonline.net); Co-Editor: Evelyn Leeper,

[eleeper@optonline.net](mailto:eleeper@optonline.net); Sending Address:  
[evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com](mailto:evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com) . Interesting book and film reviews; I wanted to go out and buy the novel *Neom* after reading here.

*The N3F Review of Books* (incorporating *Prose Bono*), September 2022; published by the National Fantasy Fan Federation, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049 and distributed for free to N3F members and archival sites. (Mainly reviews by N3F members.) Editor: George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609, [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net) . Massive fiction and nonfiction reviews. Too massive, I realized, for me to get into right now.

*Origin* #56, Oct. 2022, official organ of the N3F History and Research Bureau, John Thiel ed., 30 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Lafayette, In 47904, [kinethiel@mymetronet.net](mailto:kinethiel@mymetronet.net). Research and opinion pieces on fanhistory, conventions, and the treatment of Robert Heinlein's novels since his demise (not great).

*Pablo Lennis*, Oct. 2022 (by mail), John Thiel ed., 30 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Lafayette, In 47904, [kinethiel@mymetronet.net](mailto:kinethiel@mymetronet.net) . John Thiel's monthly amateur fiction magazine. I would like to spend more time on *Pablo Lennis*, but I am overwhelmed by the number of fanzines I am receiving, and put off by PL's covers and layout. Maybe a less shallow reviewer could suggest improvements to John Thiel.

*Perryscope* #27, Perry Middlemiss, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia 3122. E: [perry@middlemiss.org](mailto:perry@middlemiss.org). A nice meaty genzine from the co-host of an SF podcast and former Worldcon chair, with recent reading, recent adventures, and letters.

*Spartacus* #59, September 2022, Guy Lillian, 1390 Holly Avenue, Merritt Island, FL 32952 \* [GHLIII@yahoo.com](mailto:GHLIII@yahoo.com) . Guy writes about the recent passing of the Queen, the recent Hugo Awards, and his late friend Larry Montgomery.

*The National Fantasy Fan* #81:10, Oct. 2022, Editors George Phillies [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net); Jon Swartz [jon\\_swartz@hotmail.com](mailto:jon_swartz@hotmail.com) . As a newsletter, TNFF is surprising in the breadth of activities that members are carrying on, at least in fan publications.

*This Here* #57 & #58 (I guess these are both dated October 2022), Nic Farey ed. Locs & that to: 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, or email [fareynic@gmail.com](mailto:fareynic@gmail.com) . Another meaty, well-produced electronic fanzine, including a quick post-Corflu report, uncovering Jeffrey Redmond's recurring plagiarism in (among other places) N3F columns, reviews of movies and TV SF, the TAFF race to attend Pemmi-Con (the NASFiC in Winnipeg), and locs.

*Vanamonde* nos. 1458 to 1515, John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St. No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057, USA. Every so often John sends me six to 12 months' back issues of *Vanamonde* – his regular contribution to APA-

L, the weekly APA from the Los Angeles SF Society. I keep being surprised by how much classical education John displays!

*Wave Without a Shore* #5, Oct. 21, 2022, Tom Becker, 203 San Luis Ave. #1, Mountain View, CA 94043, U.S.A., [twb@fanac.com](mailto:twb@fanac.com) . An ensmallled zine for Corflu Pangloss: science fiction and music reviews, health news, science philosophy, and the discovery of the latest edition of the Epic of Gilgamesh. All in four pages!!

