

# Alouette

*A Newsletter for Canadian Active Members of SFWA*

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

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300 Finch Avenue West · Suite 301 · Willowdale, Ontario, Canada · M2R 1N1

Phone: (416) 221-6842 · Fax: (416) 229-2372 · CompuServe: 76702,747 · GEnie: RJ.SAWYER · Internet: 76702.747@compuserve.com

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## EDITORIAL

### Welcome to Alouette!

Welcome to the first issue of *Alouette*, a private, *unofficial* newsletter for Canadian active members of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. *Alouette* is named after Canada's first satellite, which was launched September 29, 1962, making Canada the third nation into space. I'll be publishing *Alouette* at my own expense for six bi-monthly issues.

I welcome submissions of new or reprint material, but would be grateful if you could provide them on an MS-DOS disk (any size, any density, and word-processing format) or via electronic mail. I'd love to see new or reprint articles and non-fiction reviews, so please rummage around to see if you've got anything to share. If you'd like to have one of your previously published stories reprinted in our Fiction Showcase, that would be great. Short stories must be under 3,000 words.

Please note that *Alouette* is a *confidential* newsletter, going only to Active Canadian SFWAns and to the SFWA Board of Directors. Please treat it as you would the SFWA *Forum*, sharing its contents only with other members. I'm hoping to have frank business-oriented discussions here, and that will only be possible with a degree of privacy.

Speaking of *Forum*, issue 125 contains word from Executive Secretary Peter Pautz that all of Canada apparently is not lumped into the South/Central U.S. region of SFWA, despite previous information to the contrary. Rather, Canadian members are dispersed throughout three U.S. regions, including the South/Central. This confusion over exactly who is responsible for Canadian members simply underscores the fact that Canadians have been slipping through the cracks of SFWA. And now things are even worse than we'd thought: if we want SFWA to deal with a Canadian issue, we'd have to interface with three different SFWA regional directors. I think that after this revelation there can be no doubt left about the need for a separate Canadian Region of SFWA.

Finally, several SFWAns have credited the idea of a Canadian region to me. It's actually South-Central Regional Director Robin Bailey's proposal. He first presented it at the April 1991 SFWA business meeting in New York. It's almost unprecedented for a director of an American corporation to recognize of his own volition the unique concerns of Canadians. Robin has given us a historic opportunity, and we all owe him our profound thanks. \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

### Public Lending Right

by Robert J. Sawyer

I recently received a cheque from the Federal Government to compensate me for lost royalties on copies of my *Golden Fleece* borrowed from Canadian public libraries last year, as part of the Public Lending Right program.

Some Canadian SFWAns have been getting similar cheques for years; indeed, at least one of our members has received total PLR payments that now exceed his original advance against royalties on his short story collection.

You can get your share of the money for 1992-93 if your register your titles before May 1st.

The PLR program works like this: once a year, a survey is done of ten randomly chosen mid-sized public libraries located across Canada. For each title of yours for which at least one copy is found in one of these libraries' card catalogs, you get a sum of money. This year, it was \$43.25. If that particular book of yours is found in all ten libraries, you get \$432.50.

You can register as many titles as you like, but there's an annual per-author payment ceiling of ten times the maximum per-book rate, or \$4,325.00. Authors of collaborative novels split the money.

*Golden Fleece*, a Warner paperback that came out in December 1990, showed up in four out of the ten libraries, so I got \$173.00, which is equal to royalties on about *five hundred* copies. Not too shabby for just filling out a form, although, to be honest, I was surprised that my book showed up that many times — I'd been told that many libraries don't bother card-cataloging paperbacks at all.

To register your titles, request PLR first-time registration forms from:

Public Lending Right Commission  
99 Metcalfe Street  
P.O. Box 1047  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8

Phone: (613) 598-4378 · Fax: (613) 598-4390

In future years, you'll automatically be sent update forms for adding new titles, and — more than likely — a cheque. \*

## LETTERS

# The Canadian Region

By now, you've all seen Dave Duncan's letter in SFWA Forum 125, and Rob Sawyer's reply to it. Here, Andrew Weiner offers another response to Dave:

Dear Dave,

Rob Sawyer has passed on to me copies of your recent correspondence.

You seem to have reduced the issue of a Canadian region of SFWA to an either-or ... either SF Canada or a Canadian Region. I'm not personally convinced that we do have to choose. But forced to make a choice right now between SF Canada or an SFWA Canadian Region, I would have to say that the latter is more likely to be of greater value to me as a working SF writer, both now and in the foreseeable future.

I favoured the foundation of SF Canada. I thought it had the potential to support younger SF writers in this country; to raise the profile of Canadian SF; to lobby governments on issues affecting Canadian SF writers; and to act as an information net linking Canadian SF writers. I didn't expect to personally benefit from any of this, but it seemed a good thing to support.

So far SF Canada has done very little, other than producing a very good newsletter. It is of course early days yet (although not *that* early). The organization's goals and functions remain hazy. I would like to see SF Canada have a few more years to try and fulfill its potential. But I can't say that I'm holding my breath.

I was a member of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada (PWAC) for some ten years. I am currently a member of The Writers' Union of Canada. I was also briefly a member of the Canadian Science Writers Association. What these organizations have in common is that they are extremely *effective* on behalf of their members (more effective, I would have to say, than SFWA). They set clear goals and achieve quite a few of them. So, for that matter, does the Crime Writers of Canada.

What these groups also have in common are clear-cut and rigorous membership policies.

I dislike disputes over membership credentials. I didn't enjoy it when PWAC had to purge "associate" members from leadership roles: but it was undermining the organization's credibility to have PR writers representing an organization of magazine writers. I thought the recent SFWA furor over requalification absurd — but in that case the current membership qualifications, properly applied, seemed entirely adequate.

In his letter, Rob Sawyer draws attention to SF Canada's membership policies. This is a can of worms no matter how you look at it, but he's right to open it. If SF Canada wants to be a credible SF writers' organization, it needs credible membership policies. Otherwise it will be incapable of pursuing its goals. Of course there should be a place for beginning and aspiring writers in SF Canada (just as there is in PWAC or SFWA). But if their influence is too strong, you end up with a special interest version of the Canadian Authors Association. Professional writers will look elsewhere for an organization that reflects their own interests. (I was not aware, until Rob started making lists, just how unrepresentative SF Canada is of working SF writers in this country.)

I'm not planning to resign from SF Canada myself. But I have limited expectations as to what it can achieve. On the other hand, I think a Canadian SFWA region, to the extent that it reflected the concerns of working SF writers, could be of great utility. So if it does become a question of either-or, I guess you will have to count me out.

To be perfectly frank: if SF Canada fails to get it together, having a strong Canadian SFWA Region in place will give us a platform to build a genuinely effective Canadian SF writers' organization, in parallel with or in affiliation with SFWA. But I'm willing to let natural selection do its work. Are you?

I regret that these issues are being aired in *Forum* (where non-Canadian members will be either baffled or vastly bored). I am not going to send this letter to the *Forum*, but you may feel free to share it with other SF Canada members if you wish.

Best wishes,  
Andrew Weiner

CC: Ben Bova, Rob Sawyer

...

*These comments on the Canadian Region originally appeared in the SFWA Forum issues 123 through 125 or on GENie:*

**Barbara Delaplace** (Vancouver, *Forum* 124): "I'd like to add my voice in favour of Robert J. Sawyer's proposal in *Forum* #122 to establish a Canadian region of SFWA. Because of this country's differing tax laws, possibilities for support funding, and bilingual culture, the concerns of Canadian SF writers will be more effectively addressed by such a regional group."

SFWA Contracts Committee Chair **Raymond E. Feist** (California, on GENie): "For what it's worth, I think David Duncan missed the obvious reason for a Canadian region not tied geographically to US regions: it has nothing to do with Manitoba being closer to Fargo than Toronto, it has to do with the fact Canadian writers have to deal with all manner of crap US writers don't deal with. Canada is in a unique position, in that it may be the only market (with the possible exception of the UK) of English language writers dealing in large volume with New York publishers, and certainly the only one this side of US Samoa where a foreign publisher is their major market. You need a Canadian region because the membership meets the usual SFWA requirements, pros selling to US publishers, and you have unique problems, i.e. you're foreign nationals so you have to deal with all manner of international regulations; you could see major impact on your income collectively should US/Canada trade laws change again. Getting books across the border for signings is a problem, for that matter. I think the Board of Directors should move quickly on creating the Canadian Region, as soon as possible."

**James Alan Gardner** (Waterloo, *Forum* 125): "I'd like to add my support for making a separate Canadian region of SFWA. The current arrangement (Canada as part of the South/Central U.S. region) makes no sense. I have heard that the existing policy was set up at a time when there were few Canadians in SFWA, and Canada was simply added to the American region that had the smallest number of members. Today, however, there are enough Canadian writers to warrant a region of their own, similar to SFWA's existing Overseas Region."

**Terence M. Green** (Toronto, *Forum 123*): “Just a brief note to support the concept set forth by Robert J. Sawyer in re the matter of a Canadian division of SFWA. He pointed out, quite astutely, several significant differences in the respective situations of writers in the U.S.A. and Canada and, knowing him as I do, he is definitely the right choice to spearhead any movement in this direction.”

**Jack C. Haldeman II** (Florida, on GENie): “Rob, put me down as one who supports your position. I thought you presented your case very well in Chicago.”

**John Morressy** (New Hampshire, *Forum 125*): “I can’t see any objections to forming a Canadian region of SFFWA. The chief problems facing writers are common to both countries, but enough differences exist to justify a separate entity in which their problems are the concern of the majority of members, and not a minority.”

**Robin Rowland** (Toronto, *Forum 124*): “I wish to add my support to the idea that there be a Canadian region of SFWA. The SF writing community in Canada is dynamic and growing. A Canadian region of SFWA would let Canadian members maintain their traditional publishing and personal ties with the American SF community while giving us an opportunity to further ties within our own country. Although most of us are published in the United States, the Canadian voice is quickly finding a wide audience not only “south of the border” but in the world SF community.”

**Edo van Belkom** (Brampton, *Forum 125*): “I support the idea proposed by Robert J. Sawyer on the creation of a Canadian Region of SFWA. Canadian writers selling their work in the United States are in a unique situation and both they and SFWA could be better served if the region were represented as a group by a Canadian member.”

**Gene van Troyer** (Japan, *Forum 125*): “Our Canadian members have spoken well for themselves on the matter of setting up a Canadian Region to serve their needs. I’m 100% supportive. If I had anything to add, it would be that SFFWA go even farther and recognize first publication in Canada as a qualifying credential for active membership. The ‘A’ in our acronym could just as well be inclusive of *North America*, and not just the U.S.A. This is an idea whose time is close, if it hasn’t already come ... It would be hard to convince me that SFFWA lacks the resources to serve its Canadian members; if anything, those very members would prove to be a most dynamic resource in representing and promoting SFFWA interests.”

**Andrew Weiner** (Toronto, *Forum 123*): “I support the idea of a Canadian region of SFWA, as outlined by Robert Sawyer in *Forum #122*. It makes sense. And I never could figure out what we were doing in South-Central Region (North-Central, okay, maybe).”

Past SFWA President **Jane Yolen** (Massachusetts, on GENie): “Rob — I, too, feel a Canadian Regional Director is something that should be done.”

*(If you haven’t yet written to Forum supporting the Canadian Region, I urge you to do so: Forum, c/o A. J. Austin Hamler, 391 Adams St., Unit 16, Manchester, CT 06040.)* \*

## MORE LETTERS

# Funding

December 18, 1991

W. Michael Fletcher, Assistant Vice-President  
Cultural Industries Development Fund  
FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK  
P.O. Box 335, Tour de la Bourse  
Montreal, PQ H4Z 1L4

Dear Michael:

I thought I’d drop you a line about a rather unique problem, on the assumption that you’re tuned in with various federal agencies and programs that support (as much as they can in these tough times) the arts in Canada. I know this probably doesn’t come under your specific jurisdiction.

Canada’s science fiction and fantasy writers are facing a rather unique problem. In just the past five years we’ve become very successful. No one knows about it for one simple reason: 99% of science fiction and fantasy written by Canadians is published in the United States. The Canadian market alone just cannot support an SF publishing program. That very fact leaves us out of the Canada Council’s publishing support programs, which, of course, go and should go to Canadian-owned publishers.

There are, at present, 26 Canadian authors, including myself, who are professionally qualified members of the Science Fiction Writers of America and about another dozen or so who could qualify but who have chosen not to join for financial or other reasons. About 99% of promotion for our books is done in the United States, so we have the usual case of successful Canadians being largely ignored in their own country.

So we’re wondering if there is any way someone can help us promote the genre in Canada, either through the publisher’s Canadian agent or branch or through a professional organization like SFWA Canada or even some special program (“Canadian” goods manufactured in other countries?).

The bottom line is that it should pay for itself, the writers will get royalties and bookstores will get profits.

Any ideas?

All the best for a prosperous ’92.

Sincerely,  
Robin Rowland

January 7, 1992

Dear Robin:

Thank you for your letter of December 18th, 1991, regarding the problems faced by Canadian science fiction writers. As a long-time science fiction fan myself, I would be interested in seeing what I could do to help you.

I do have some ideas that may be of assistance; however, you may have tried some of them already. I think the best idea is for you and I to meet, either in Montreal or when I am next in Toronto. If we can set something up, please feel free to invite anyone else (Robert J. Sawyer) that you might think appropriate.

Looking forward to talking with you soon.

Yours sincerely,  
W. Michael Fletcher

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## CONTRACTS

## Splitting Rights

by Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens

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We have experienced both sides of splitting off Canadian rights, and believe a concerted effort should be made to have American publishers automatically treat Canadian rights as distinctly as British rights are now treated. On the down side, when we sold the first three books in our *Chronicles of Galen Sword* series to NAL (which are appearing as Roc titles), we were unable to separate Canadian rights from the overall deal. Though we are extremely pleased to be published by Penguin in Canada, what is galling is that our Canadian royalty earnings are treated as foreign sales and thus are split with the US publisher accordingly.

We feel such a split is fair when the publisher's foreign rights department serves as an agent and broker and actively pursues and closes a rights sale which results in a new edition of the book. However, that type of sales effort is rarely required between related Canadian and American publishers when books originate with the American office. Most often, the American product is simply taken automatically and the Canadian edition is run at the same time as the US edition, with only a price change to make it different. The same royalty situation also applies to our *Star Trek* novels.

But on the plus side, since Gar's first three novels had been published by Canadian companies — Seal, and later Doubleday Canada — Doubleday US, when deciding to purchase Gar's fourth and fifth novels, *Nighteyes* and *Dark Matter*, made no attempt to include Canadian rights in their offer, deferring properly and fairly to the originating Canadian publisher. Doubleday Canada and Seal became the books' Canadian publishers with a separately negotiated contract and advance, and full royalties.

*Nighteyes* also serves as an example of how splitting rights can be even more advantageous than just providing full royalties. In the U.S., where *Nighteyes* was to all intents and purposes a first novel, the paperback edition came out as a Spectra title and sold primarily in the SF category market. However, in Canada, where the book was a fourth novel and had a proportionately larger base audience, the Seal sales reps requested that the Spectra imprint be removed from the paperback edition so it could be sold as straight Seal mainstream fiction, enabling them to target a higher-than-category level of sales (which the book achieved). This type of feedback from reps and the tailoring of the book's presentation to the Canadian market would not be as easy if it were simply another "run-on" from Bantam.

From our experiences as employees of various Canadian publishers, back before we wrote our own fiction, we know that Canadian publishers who are subsidiaries of U.S. companies have a greater interest in those books they have selected for themselves, compared with those books that simply arrive on the parent company's sales sheets. Therefore, the splitting off of Canadian rights can be extremely beneficial and the good news is that it can be accomplished when conditions are right. The trick is to come up with those conditions.

There is another action that could be taken to further the effort to create a separate identity for Canadian rights, one which we feel a Canadian Region of SFWA is well suited to initiate and manage. Foreign SF writers should be made aware that they should no longer automatically give away the Canadian rights to their works when they sell American rights. Certainly, in the beginning, most of those writers who try keeping Canadian rights separate will not succeed, but we have found that the more we publish and the better sales records we amass, the more leeway appears in our contracts as to which rights are deal-breakers and which are negotiable. If enough major American writers, say, constantly withhold Canadian rights so they can be sold directly to Canadian publishers, then over the course of a few years (or a decade or so) what the major writers have achieved, might be shared by all as standard contracts inevitably change. \*

## MARKET REPORT

## Sources of Info

by Edo van Belkom

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This is supposed to be a column full of up-to-the-minute updates and late-breaking news about science fiction, fantasy, and horror markets for fiction and non-fiction.

The only problem is that the information contained within any market news column that appears every few months is usually pretty stale by the time it reaches its intended reader.

The best way to learn about new markets as they open up is to have a strong network of friends and colleagues within the SF community. Nothing travels faster than word of mouth, especially when it's carried by electronic mail.

But not all writers are plugged into the SF community. Fortunately, there are several excellent publications that deal with markets, and some that even specialize in SF markets.

Many writers start out with a copy of *Novel and Short Story Writer's Market* and a highlighting pen. This annual listing of magazines, book publishers, and agents is published by Writer's Digest Books and costs in the neighbourhood of \$20. It's a handy reference tool, even though some of the top magazines like *Esquire* and *Family Circle* decline to be listed because of the deluge of amateur manuscripts a mention in the book brings on.

*The Gila Queen's Guide to Markets* is published by horror writer Kathryn Ptacek. It's a monthly publication that lists complete magazine guidelines. Not limited to SF/F/H, the Gila Queen features theme market issues and is ideal for writers who work in many different genres.

*Factsheet Five*, produced by Mike Gunderloy of Rensselaer, NY, is a magazine that lists a large number of other small-press magazines, good for writers looking for somewhere to place a story that doesn't fit the guidelines of the usual pro markets.

The news magazine *Science Fiction Chronicle* publishes regular surveys of professional SF book and short-story markets.

Finally, the one I subscribe to and highly recommend is *Scavenger's Newsletter*, published monthly by SF/horror writer Janet Fox. More than a newsletter, *Scavenger's* is an information pool to which both writers and editors contribute. Besides market updates, it provides information snippets on which magazines are good to deal with and which are not, infrequent lists of average response times, small-press magazine reviews, non-fiction articles on writing, and letters from subscribers.

In addition to the *Newsletter*, Fox publishes the *Scavenger's Scrapbook*, a twice-yearly complete listing of markets from professional magazines to those paying in copies.

Take your pick —

- *1992 Novel and Short Story Writer's Market*, Writer's Digest Books, 1507 Dana Ave., Cincinnati, OH, U.S.A. 45207.
- *Gila Queen's Guide to Markets*, Kathryn Ptacek, P.O. Box 97, Newton, NJ, U.S.A. 07860.
- *Factsheet Five*, Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer NY, U.S.A. 12144-4502.
- *Science Fiction Chronicle*, Andrew I. Porter, P.O. Box 4175, New York, NY, U.S.A. 10163.
- *Scavenger's Newsletter*, Janet Fox, 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS, U.S.A. 66523-1329.

(Please send market listings to Edo van Belkom, 52 Mill St. N., Brampton, Ontario L6X 1S8.) \*

## MEMBER NEWS

## Who's Doing What

"Adoption" by Calgary's **J. Brian Clarke** is in the May *Analog*.

Recent sales by Vancouver's **Barbara Delaplace**: "The Hidden Dragon," to *Dragon Fantastic* (DAW, May 1992) and "The Last Sphinx" to *A Christmas Bestiary* (DAW, December 1992).

**James Alan Gardner** of Waterloo has sold a novelette, "The Young Person's Guide to the Organism," to *Amazing*.

*Children of the Rainbow* by Toronto's **Terence M. Green** is now out as a trade paperback from McClelland & Stewart.

**Eileen Kernaghan** of Burnaby won the first prize in the Federation of British Columbia Writers' *Literary Writes V* competition for her poem "Demeter and Persephone Celebrate Spring in The British Museum." Eileen read at Simon Fraser University on February 12.

**Gar** and **Judith Reeves-Stevens** have sold a script called "Dreams of Darkness" to Warner Bros. animated *Batman* series, coming in Fall 1992 on Fox. They've signed to write "Day of Descent," first in the new *Alien Nation* series from Pocket. In November, *Galen Sword #1: Shifter*, was published in the UK by Roc/Penguin and others in the series will follow at three-month intervals. "Bluebound: An Untold Story from the Chronicles of Galen Sword" appears in a horror anthology trade paperback, *Chilled to the Bone*, published by Mayfair Games in December 1991. *Dark Matter* was published in the UK in February, with Gar's other novels following at four-month intervals. *Shifter* and *Bloodshift* have sold to Italy. *Bloodshift* and *Dreamland* have sold to Poland. And *Dreamland* and *Children of the Shroud* have been sold to Holland. Gar's story "Part Five" appears in *The Ultimate Frankenstein*.

The Ace hardcover edition of *Starseed* by **Spider** and **Jeanne Robinson** of Vancouver has sold out. The Ace paperback will be out in October. An Easton Press leather-bound acid-free hand-sewn gold-inlaid version of *Starseed* is due out soon in the Signed First Edition series, to match the 1991 Masterpieces of SF series edition of *Stardance*. Jeanne and Spider have signed with Ace to write a third book in the *Stardance* series, to be called *Starmind*, for hardcover and paperback publication in 1993. Their original Hugo- and Nebula-winning *Stardance* is now back in print from Baen.

On the solo front, **Spider Robinson** has delivered *Lady Slings the Booze*, the second Lady Sally McGee book, to Ace. It will be out this fall. He's currently working on *Callahan's Legacy*, under contract to Ace for both hard- and soft-cover publication, about the bar Jake opened up after Callahan's Place exploded. Steve Jackson Games is developing a game series based on the Callahan's Place saga.

**Michelle Sagara** of Toronto has sold the third and fourth volumes of her tetralogy "The Book of the Sundered" to Del Rey. Volume 1 was released in December 1991, volume two, *Children of the Blood*, is slated for June 1992, and the third, as

yet untitled, will be out in June 1993. She's just sold her first short story, "Gifted," to a Mike Resnick/DAW Books anthology with the working title *Aladdin Chronicles*. Michelle was interviewed in the "Reading Habits" column of *The Toronto Star* on Saturday, January 4, 1992. She reviewed *Moonfall* (Beach Holme) by Copenhagen-based Canadian **Heather Spears** in the January 1992 *Quill & Quire*.

*Far-Seer* by Toronto's **Robert J. Sawyer** has sold to the Science Fiction Book Club, and a chapter from it will appear shortly as part of *Amazing Stories*'s "Looking Forward" section. His fourth novel, *Fossil Hunter*, has just sold to Ace, and they have also contracted for an unwritten sequel.

Toronto's **S. M. Stirling** continues to be one of Canada's most prolific SF writers. His collaboration with **Shirley Meier**, *Saber and Shadow* — a prequel to their *The Cage* — will be out later this year. Steve is working on two more Kzinti novellas with Jerry Pournelle. They'll appear in *Man-Kzin Wars V* and *Man-Kzin Wars VI*, and later as an expanded novel. Steve's currently under contract for a four-way round-robin collaboration (with Harry Turtledove, Susan Schwartz, and Judith Tarr) called *Blood Feuds*. His second collaborative novel with David Drake, *The General #2: Hammer*, came out in February, and he's signed a contract for a new five-volume collaborative series with Drake.

In work on his own, the revised edition of **Steve Stirling**'s first novel, *Snowbrother*, will be issued in May. He's just turned in a novella called "Kings Who Die" to Jerry Pournelle's *War World* series, and he's got contracts for two more SF novels, *Heavy Iron* and *Conquistador*. All of Steve's works are published by Baen.

"Baseball Memories" by Brampton's **Edo van Belkom** will be reprinted in *Year's Best Horror 20*, edited by Karl Edward Wagner. Edo's recently sold "Induction Center" to *Haunts*, "Season's Meeting" to *Midnight Zoo*, and "Bloodsuckers" to *Kinda Kinky*, as well as many stories to American mass-market men's magazines which will be published under a pseudonym.

**Andrew Weiner** of Toronto has sold a novella called "Seeing" to *F&SF*. He's also sold "Changes" to *In Dreams*, a UK anthology edited by Kim Newman and Paul L. McAuley, to be published by Victor Gollancz. And he's sold a 7,200-word story, coincidentally also called "In Dreams," to *Asimov's*. His "Streak" is in the May *Asimov's*.

SFWAns **Terry Green**, **Michelle Sagara**, and **S. M. Stirling** read at the Harbourfront International Reading Series in Toronto on March 24. **Rob Sawyer** and **Tanya Huff** will read there on March 31. Box office: (416) 973-4000.

The following SFWAns have stories in *Ark of Ice*, edited by Lesley Choyce and to be published by Pottersfield Press in late August: **Phyllis Gotlieb**, **Terence M. Green**, **Eileen Kernaghan**, **Garfield Reeves-Stevens**, **Spider Robinson**, **Robert J. Sawyer**, **Sansoucy Walker**, and **Andrew Weiner**.

And these SFWAns have stories in *Northern Frights*, edited by Don Hutchison, forthcoming from Mosaic Press: **Robert Bloch**, **Charles de Lint**, **Terence M. Green**, **Garfield Reeves-Stevens**, **Steve Rasnic Tem**, **Edo van Belkom**, **Karen Wehrstein**, and **Andrew Weiner**. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

## Terence M. Green

by Robert J. Sawyer

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Terence M. Green is boldly going where no Canadian Science Fiction Author has gone before. He's the first SF author in this country to cross-over from having his books issued as genre SF in the States to having a novel released as a mainstream work from a major domestic publisher.

True, when Margaret Atwood and Hugh MacLennan wrote their SF novels *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Voices in Time*, they were released without the words "science fiction" on the spine. But unlike them, Green comes squarely out of the genre tradition of SF: he's best known for his brilliant short work in the American digests *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Still, McClelland & Stewart has just released Green's latest SF novel, *Children of the Rainbow*, as a mainstream trade paperback.

"Publishing in the United States is broken into genres such as science fiction and mystery," says Green, 45, a Toronto school teacher. "I think that's unreasonable philosophically. It's a marketing strategy that has nothing to do with reading or writing. To have a genre called science fiction and to include in it everything from Brack the Barbarian to Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* is to group the sublime and the ridiculous."

It's the quality of his work that propelled Green into the centre of Canadian literature, of course. Few writers — whether called genre authors or mainstream — have garnered the kind of reviews Green has had. Inside the SF field, Green's short story collection *The Woman Who is the Midnight Wind* (Pottersfield, 1987) was hailed by Hugo-award-winning SF author Orson Scott Card as "a milestone for all of us" and *Locus: The Newspaper of the SF Field* said Green's first novel, *Barking Dogs* (St. Martin's Press, 1988), was "not to be missed."

But the general press was just as laudatory: Of Green's collection, *Canadian Materials* said, "the writing is captivating" with stories of "serious reflection, wry humour, and devastating irony." And *The Globe and Mail* declared that *Barking Dogs* would "keep the reader riveted to the last paragraph."

And now, *Children of the Rainbow*, a time-travel novel.

"The story," says Green, "is about two people displaced in space and time. You don't have to be a science fiction reader to appreciate that. We're all displaced in one way or another. One of my characters is displaced happily; the other, miserably. In the novel, they're displaced through time by a nuclear blast. Metaphorically, everyone at some point in their life encounters a nuclear blast: the death of a loved one, the break-up of a long-standing relationship, the loss of a job. You're displaced, but you cope somehow. You go on. That's the psychological realism of the book."

It's no surprise that in the acknowledgments for *Children of the Rainbow*, Green credits "with real fondness" the apartment on Heath Street East in Toronto where he put his own life back together after one of his own personal nuclear blasts: the

break-up of his marriage. And his current writing project, an expansion to novel length of his acclaimed short story *Ashland, Kentucky*, likewise is a way of dealing with another such blast: the death of his mother.

"It wasn't until I started dealing with these sorts of things that my writing hit its power," says Green. "Up until then, I'd been writing *stuff*. Now I incorporate painful life experience. That turned out to be my voice — the horrors of my life. A writer has to deal with what's really important, with what really moves you."

Perhaps the best assessment to date of Green's work comes from Judith Merril, the principal North American editor during SF's literary "New Wave" movement in the 1960s:

Terry Green wants to know what love is all about — how it happens, why it happens, what it does for/to people who love or are loved. Using the uniquely flexible 'special effects' of science fantasy — dislocations in space and time, alien cultures, trick technology, outright magic — he distances / magnifies / highlights / contrasts the mechanisms and meanings of these most familiar and least understood of all human experiences.

In a similar vein, M. T. Kelly, winner of the Governor General's Award for fiction, says that *Children of the Rainbow* is "written with passion and love. Its great humanity and religious sense are as clear as the Pacific."

All the same, for one so fascinated by love, Green is often characterized as being an angry writer. It's that anger that drove his first novel, *Barking Dogs*, in which police officer Mitch Helwig of Toronto's finest goes on a vigilante spree, cleaning up the city's streets. He's armed with a hand laser and the Barking Dog of the title, an infallible lie detector that lets him play judge and jury to the scum making the city Green grew up in unsafe. It's no mere coincidence that Green dedicated *Barking Dogs* to his two sons, Conor and Owen: his anger is that of a father enraged by what's happening to the world his beloved children will grow up in.

Likewise, this passage from *Children of the Rainbow* is quintessential Green. Here, Major Anderson, the commandant of the Norfolk Island penal colony in 1835, faces a man from the future who has taken the place of one of his prisoners:

Anderson studied the man. "I will tell you this: I am outraged that you are somehow involved in something that has to do with my family. May God help you if you step in where you have absolutely no business. I will forget that I am a soldier, an officer, and will let you know the full measure of my wrath as a husband and father."

Green does write with anger, and with conviction, but it is all driven by the love Judith Merril and M. T. Kelly cite. For Terence M. Green, the limitless vistas of space and time are simply metaphor. More than anything else, he's writing about family.

*This profile originally appeared in Aloud, the newsletter of the Harbourfront International Reading Series in Toronto, where both Terry Green and Rob Sawyer read in March.* ❄

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

## 20% Bakka Discount

Toronto's Bakka, the oldest SF store in Canada, is offering a 20% discount on cash purchases to Canadian Active Members of SFWA. Enclosed is a membership card for you to sign; please show it before your purchases are rung up. Note: SF Canada members get a 10% discount, but you can't add this on top of your 20% SFWA discount.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

## SFWA Meetings

- The second Ontario gathering of SFWA members will be held Monday, May 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Rob Sawyer and Carolyn Clink, 300 Finch Ave. W., #301, Willowdale, Ontario, M2R 1N1, (416) 221-6842. Attendees are asked to each kick in \$3 to help defray the cost of beer, wine, soft drinks, and munchies.
- The first annual informal Canadian SFWA meeting will be held at this year's Convention, WilfCon VIII, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, June 27-28.

## LOBBYING

## Chuckles the Clown

As you've no doubt read in the press, late last year Chuck Cook, the Member of Parliament for North Vancouver, called for an abolition of government support for the literary arts in this country.

Cook, who claimed to be a reader of genre fiction, said that he passed over the work of Canadian authors "because it is just not good enough."

I urge all Canadian SFWAns to write to Cook — no stamp is required when addressing an MP — and set him straight, both about the value of Canada Council and other grants and the high quality of genre fiction we, and our colleagues in mystery and other areas, create.

Below is the letter I sent him; in response I got back pages of boilerplate, which lead me to agree with Alison Gordon, president of the Crime Writers of Canada, that Cook is "just what we needed — a real villain with a black hat and a clown's nose, a symbol of what is wrong with this government's attitude toward the arts." Cook's address is Room 534N, House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0A6. Here's my letter:

Dear Mr. Cook:

*I take great exception to your recent comments about the quality of Canadian writing, especially in contrast to that done by Americans.*

*The May 1991 issue of The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, established in 1949 and published in Cornwall, Connecticut, contains that magazine's reviewer's picks for the best novels of 1990. The reviewer is Orson Scott Card, New York Times bestselling author, who lives in Greensboro, North Carolina. He is not a Canadian nor a Canada-booster.*

*Card's pick for the best SF novel of 1990, bar none? My own Golden Fleece. Card's pick for the best fantasy novel of 1990, bar none? The Little Country by Ottawa's Charles de Lint.*

*This is a major American writer in a major American magazine recognizing the world-class nature of the work by Canadian writers. Would that our own politicians could do the same.*

*I look forward to your reply.*

Sincerely,  
Robert J. Sawyer

## CONTRACTS

## Canadian Royalties

by Robert J. Sawyer

Most U.S. publishers pay woefully inadequate royalties on copies of books sold in Canada. Warner, for instance, calculates the Canadian royalty on the net proceeds instead of the gross price, and Ace has a standard 5% Canadian royalty as part of its boilerplate.

This has rankled me ever since I sold my first book, and I'm pleased to report some progress in getting proper full royalties on Canadian copies. My latest two-book contract with Ace specifies a flat 6% royalty instead of 5% on Canadian copies, a 20% improvement which brings my Canadian royalties in line with minimal U.S. royalties.

I haven't gotten a break-point worked in yet, and I haven't gotten the rate up to my current U.S. value of 8%, but it's definitely a step in the right direction. I welcome reports from other SFWAns about how they've tried to deal with this entrenched rip-off.

## FICTION SHOWCASE

## Blood Bait

by Edo van Belkom

From The Vampire's Crypt

Copyright © 1992 by Edo van Belkom

He rubbed his tongue under a fang as he ran down the dark, damp street. The tooth seemed sharper than he remembered.

Everything about him, in fact, seemed sharper. His senses were like talons and his body hummed with pure energy. He was aware of every rolling stone, every half-opened door.

He could smell her now; her scent was strong, intoxicating.

He was getting closer.

His feet flew over the slick pavement as his bloodlust led him around dark corners and down through the hissing shadows of a greasy back alley.

It was a blind pursuit. He knew that. But he could not stop himself. He was being drawn to her, pulled by an otherworldly kind of attraction that would not end until he had her ... completely.

He came upon one of her shoes lying on its side in the middle of the puddled alley. He stopped there, bent down and gently picked up the shoe as if it were a downy feather. He looked at it longingly, held it up even closer to his eyes and for a moment he could see her clearly in his mind.

She was magnificent. A tawny gold goddess, young enough to be unpolluted by the world around here, but old enough to know that her sex was at the height of its power.

He guided his fingers along the shoe's spiked heel; there was gratification even in that. She had been wearing it barely minutes before in the restaurant when she had excused herself from the table. He'd waited but she never came back. Then, as he was about to leave, he noticed the card by her wine glass. He picked it up and read the fatal, hand-written words — "I know what you are."

It didn't bother him that she knew; he was glad it was out in the open — much more exciting that way. The panic and terror the victim felt during the chase was almost as invigorating to him as the sweet-tasting prize at its end.

A door clicked shut in the distance.

He let the shoe fall from his fingers and took flight down the alley. Her scent was even stronger now; she would be his in minutes.

In seconds he was standing before the door. On the slick pavement by his feet was one of her sheer black stockings. He looked at it

for a moment.

*What sort of game is this?*

As he reached for it, a rat skittered into the shadows. He picked up the stocking and watched its silhouette writhe in the hot, damp breeze. With his free hand he picked up the dangling end and pulled it taut between his fingers. He ran his tongue along the length of it. He could taste her; the flakes of skin melted on his tongue like sugar.

A sound came from inside the building.

He tried the door. It was unlocked. He stuffed the stocking into a pocket and went inside. As the door slammed shut behind him, he found himself surrounded by darkness.

He could hear her padding softly through another part of the building. *Where?* He couldn't be sure. But her scent was even stronger indoors as it mixed with the thick smell of oil and lingered in the air. He followed her scent and bounded up a flight of stairs in pursuit.

He stopped a few steps from the top and sensed something strewn invitingly across his path. He bent forward and could see the faint outline of her scarf on the top step. He picked it up and felt the silken smoothness of the material as he passed it lightly across his face; it was still warm and moist with sweat. The thought of the material draped around her neck made his bloodlust unbearable. It rose up in him in a wave of strength far surpassing anything he'd ever felt before.

He was unstoppable now, and he would not stop until he had her ... all of her.

He was down a hallway in a flicker of shadows, instinctively knowing the shortest route to his passion.

As he turned a corner he sensed another of her things on the floor — *a second stocking?* — but passed it by without a glance.

He was close to her now and ... she had stopped running.

He could feel she was still, could sense the thunder of her heart beating a few feet away on the other side of the door.

With a single step he crashed through the door, shattering the flimsy wooden barrier in a burst of splinters. The room was a little brighter than the rest of the building had been, but it was still dim ... and small.

She was over in the corner.

He could barely make out her lithe form in the faint light but imagined her young body cowering before him in terror. He could smell her fully now, her body scents and perfume gently wafting above the musty-sweet smell of sweat rising up from her sex. There was no doubt in his mind that she would satisfy him — tonight and forever.

He made a move toward her. It was supposed to have been a rushing, overpowering motion, but he stopped himself midway. He took a deep breath and slowly began walking around the edge of the room.

He could hear her breathing. It was a heavy sound, hard and deep, but restrained, as if she was having difficulty controlling her terror. It was a beautiful sound, melodic. As he listened, he could almost imagine her bare chest rising and falling in fear.

His own breath quickened and he placed a hand over his heart to check its pounding, pulsing rhythm.

"So," she said in the darkness. "You've finally caught up with me."

Her voice was gritty, rasping through the air like sandpaper on a blackboard. But it was musical to his ears and he imagined the same voice moaning with pleasure under the piercing pressure of his touch.

He said nothing, but let out a low throaty laugh under his breath. He slowed his steps further to prolong and intensify the sense of anticipation. It had been a long time since the chase itself had felt like foreplay.

He sensed her moving in the darkness, to the right, behind a large coffin-shaped object, the only thing in the room besides the two of them.

"I hope you didn't have too much trouble finding me," she said. She sounded innocent, almost apologetic, as if she had invited him over for a house party.

He liked that, and he struggled to fight off the urge to fly across the room and take her in his arms and peel away her skin in long,

bloody strips.

She stepped out from behind the object and in the faint light he could see that she was wearing both her shoes *and* her stockings. Her scarf was the only thing that was missing.

*A trap!* The thought flashed through his mind like a silver hammer crashing down onto the base of his skull.

He was overcome by cold. His bones chilled at the sudden realization and his veins iced over as if he'd been impaled through the heart with an icicle. His bloodlust was gone, his body charged instead by the new and unfamiliar sense of ... being afraid.

He took a split-second to consider his options. The door was a few feet away on the right and open, she was a few feet away on the left and in control. His first inclination was to take flight, but the thought was quashed under centuries of nightstalking that absolutely forbade him to run from any mortal.

He spread his arms wide and tensed his muscles in preparation for the leap through the void at what was now simply flesh for his blood feast.

Suddenly, the room was ablaze with white heat and he was blinded by a blast of light.

He was thrown back against the wall, his arms raised above his face in a feeble attempt to protect himself from the cleansing brightness of the light of day.

Already he could feel his skin beginning to crawl as if he were being eaten alive by the rays of life.

His breath became laboured as he slumped back against the wall and crouched into a tight little ball. His skin started to crack, splitting apart along endless fault lines that allowed the purifying light to bore even deeper into body.

He squinted and looked straight into the torturous glare, trying to see her one last time. She was standing just a few feet before him, her shapely form outlined — still voluptuous to his aching eyes — in silhouette against the light of the tanning bed.

He continued to stare into the scorching rays of ultraviolet light even as his eyeballs hissed like steam and burst from their sockets. The jellied mass dribbled down his cheeks like tears.

He could hear her laughing now. It was a sound he recognized. It was the same satisfied laugh he had laughed a thousand times following the ravaging of his prey.

He tried to cover his ears.

But as he moved, the parched skin and dusty bones of his arms snapped and cracked like kindling wood. His limbs hung stiffly from their sockets, slowly crumbling into dust.

"Welcome to my salon," she said.

He tried to answer. His jawbone was still intact but as he moved it to speak his tongue and the skin on his cheeks broke away from his face. A keening wail rose up and seemed to split the room in two. He realized the wail was his own voice and it slowly died into an exasperated cry until he choked on his own dust and was silent.

A moment later, his skull fell to the floor and shattered into a million tiny shards.

She took a few steps toward the mound of dust by the wall and reached down. With a bronze-skinned hand she picked up two solid beads of white — his fangs, perfectly preserved.

Holding one of the canines between her thumb and forefinger she turned around and held it up to the light. As she looked at it, the sharp pointed tip of the tooth pierced the skin of her thumb drawing blood.

"Ouch," she said, placing the two teeth in a pocket. She looked at the red liquid bead bubbling up on the end of her thumb, stuck it into her mouth and began to suck. \*

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*Edo van Belkom is a member of the Horror Writers of America. He has sold SF, fantasy, and horror stories to Aethlon: The Journal of Sports Literature, Gent, Haunts, Kinda Kinky, Midnight Zoo, The Nightside, Northern Frights, On Spec, Plots, Potent Aphrodisiac, The Raven, The Vampire's Crypt, and Year's Best Horror 20. He lives in Brampton, Ontario, with his wife Roberta and son Luke.*

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# Alouette

## A Newsletter for Canadian Active Members of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

Publisher: *Who's That Coeurl?* Press

118 Betty Ann Drive · Willowdale, Ontario, Canada · M2N 1X4

Phone: (416) 221-6842 · Fax: (416) 229-2372 · CompuServe: 76702,747 · GEnie: RJ.SAWYER · Internet: 76702.747@compuserve.com

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## SFWA Unanimously Approves Canadian Region

*Region Established Effective Immediately · All Canadian SFWAns Automatically Part of it*

At the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America business meeting held on April 26, 1992, in Atlanta, Georgia, a formal motion to create a separate Canadian region of SFWA was carried unanimously. A secondary proposal, that the Canadian Regional Director should have a full vote on the SFWA Board of Directors, was also overwhelmingly approved. However, actually giving the Canadian Director a vote has been deferred to the business meeting at the WorldCon in September. (For more on this, see page 2.)

In alphabetical order, the Regions of SFWA are now:

- Canada
- Eastern United States
- Overseas
- South/Central United States
- Western United States

The five regional directors, plus the four SFWA officers (president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer) comprise the corporation's Board of Directors.

All Canadian-resident SFWAns are now automatically members of the Canadian Region. Special thanks go to Robin Bailey, South/Central Regional Director, for first proposing the Canadian Region a year ago and for making the motion in Atlanta to create it. Also a tip of the hat to Eastern Regional Director Ann Crispin, who seconded the motion in Atlanta.

At the request of Directors Bailey and Crispin, I have agreed to be a candidate for Canadian Regional Director. SFWA elections chair T. Jackson King did not seek other candidates for the Canadian directorships. However, there is a provision for a write-in candidate on the ballot. You should have received your ballot by now; please mail it in time to arrive by May 27.

I know almost all Canadian SFWAns are delighted with the creation of our new region. On Monday, April 13, 1992, SFWA President Ben Bova asked me to conduct a survey of opinions of Canadian Active Members who had not yet declared a stance on the issue of a Canadian Region.

In calling coast-to-coast, it was great getting to talk to so many of you (although I wish Ben had volunteered to have SFWA cover the expenses for the survey!). The responses

below were gathered from letters to *Forum* or myself, declarations at the December 1991 Ontario SFWA or April 1992 Ontario Hydra meetings, or from phone calls made by me on April 13 and 14, 1992:

### IN FAVOUR OF A CANADIAN REGION (26):

Colleen Anderson (Vancouver, B.C.)  
 Lynne Armstrong-Jones (London, Ontario)  
 Mary E. Choo (Richmond, B.C.)  
 J. Brian Clarke (Calgary, Alberta)  
 Don H. De Brandt (Vancouver, B.C.)  
 Barbara Delaplace (Vancouver, B.C.)  
 Charles de Lint (Ottawa, Ontario)  
 James Alan Gardner (Waterloo, Ontario)  
 Phyllis Gotlieb (Toronto, Ontario)  
 Terence M. Green (Toronto, Ontario)  
 Sansoucy Kathenor (Greely, Ontario)  
 Eileen Kernaghan [with reservations] (Burnaby, B.C.)  
 Donald Kingsbury (Montreal, Quebec)  
 Shirley Meier (Huntsville, Ontario)  
 John Park (Ottawa, Ontario)  
 Teresa Plowright (Bowen Island, B.C.)  
 Spider Robinson (Vancouver, B.C.)  
 Robin Rowland (Toronto, Ontario)  
 Michelle Sagara (Toronto, Ontario)  
 Robert J. Sawyer (North York, Ontario)  
 Kathryn A. Sinclair (Edmonton, Alberta)  
 S. M. Stirling (Toronto, Ontario)  
 Edo van Belkom (Brampton, Ontario)  
 Karen Wehrstein (Huntsville, Ontario)  
 Andrew Weiner (Toronto, Ontario)  
 Robert Charles Wilson (Nanaimo, B.C.)

### AGAINST (2):

Dave Duncan (Calgary, Alberta)  
 Leslie Gadallah (Winterburn, Alberta)

I'm delighted that the proposal had such overwhelming backing from all regions of Canada. And now, to work!

## CANADIAN DIRECTOR

## A Vote for Canada?

*The following has also been submitted to the SFWA Forum:*

The April 1992 SFWA business meeting in Atlanta overwhelmingly approved as separate items both the creation of a Canadian Region and the empowering of the Canadian Regional Director with a full vote on SFWA's Board of Directors.

A Canadian Region has indeed now been created, and I'm delighted. However, despite the strong support for it in Atlanta, President Bova has deferred until the SFWA September meeting in Orlando the empowering of the Canadian Regional Director with a vote (although the Canadian Director nonetheless is to be fully involved in Board deliberations as soon as he or she is elected).

Presumably this decision arises from the concern, first voiced by Jerry Pournelle at the SFWA business meeting last year in Chicago, that the Canadian Region, smallest in population of all SFWA regions, should possibly not have a voice equal to that of the Western Region, which is the largest. But comparing those two regions is silly. The appropriate comparison is not between smallest and largest, but between smallest and next-smallest. The next-smallest region is the Overseas, which consists of 57 members (of which 44 are active). The Canadian Region, which suffered three resignations last year over the membership-reform debate, currently stands at 35 members (of which 28 are active).

If 57 members is big enough to warrant a vote on the Board of Directors but 35 is not, what, one must ask, is the magic cut-off number? And once that number is set, is SFWA prepared to remove the Overseas Regional Director's vote should his constituency fall below it? That region, too, was hit by resignations over the reform debate, including Harry Harrison's. Meanwhile, despite the recent resignations, the Canadian Region is still the fastest-growing one in SFWA, and is bigger now than the Overseas Region was when it got the vote. Note, too, that the largest SFWA regions in geographic area are the Overseas and the Canadian. The three American regions are all tiny in comparison.

But the key point being missed in this discussion is that it's not *just* regional directors who have votes. SFWA officers are voting members of the Board, as well. Prior to the creation of the Canadian Region, there were eight members of the SFWA Board of Directors, each of which had one vote: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Western, South/Central, Eastern, and Overseas Regional Directors.

In all of SFWA's history, seven of those eight seats have always been occupied by Americans, making the ratio of American to non-American votes on the Board 7 to 1. The addition of a voting Canadian Director would make that 7 to 2 — hardly enough power for the damn foreigners to overthrow the government.

If one wants to question the weighting of votes on the SFWA Board, perhaps one could begin by asking why, for instance, the secretary has a full vote. Yes, in other organizations, the secretary is responsible for recruitment and keeping the membership rolls — but not in SFWA, where those jobs are taken care of by our one employee, Peter Pautz. No, our elected secretary is just one of many volunteers doing work for the organization. His or her job amounts to little more than printing out in booklet form an already-computerized database

and recording minutes at those meetings he or she happens to attend. Surely any Regional Director, by virtue of being responsible to a specific constituency (regardless of its size), is at least as deserving of a vote.

More: Regional Directors have a history of long-term service on the Board, while officers do not. Pierre Barbet, for instance, has been Overseas Regional Director for as long as I can remember. Surely SFWA benefits from having voting Directors who can bring continuity to the organization's policies.

I'm sure it was inadvertent, but by denying even until September a vote for the Canadian Regional Director, Ben has made second-class members out of the Canadians, for we are now the only ones in all of SFWA to not be represented on the Board by a voting Director. Robin Bailey's original motion to establish a Canadian Region was designed to recognize the significance of the Canadian members of SFWA. By creating a Canadian Region with no vote on the Board of Directors, exactly the opposite has occurred: we Canadians have been stripped of any power in running the organization. I protest this in the strongest possible terms, and trust this injustice will be rectified in Orlando. \*

## CANADIAN REGION BUSINESS

## Annual Meeting

The motion at the Atlanta SFWA business meeting specifically enables the Canadian Regional Director to call *official* SFWA regional meetings. Assuming I am elected, I will establish the principle of having an annual Canadian SFWA meeting at each year's Canadian National SF Convention (the "Convention"). Conventions alternate between eastern and western Canada. This year's is WilfCon VIII at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, June 27 and 28. A Canadian SFWA meeting will be held there, with a report on it appearing in the July issue of *Alouette*. \*

## ONTARIO REGION

## Second Gathering

Ontario members (and any SFWAns who happen to be visiting the province): don't forget that the second gathering of Ontario Members of SFWA will be held Monday, May 11, at 7:00 p.m., at the home of Robert J. Sawyer and Carolyn Clink, 300 Finch Avenue West (at Bathurst Street), Apartment 301. Attendees are asked to kick in three bucks to help defray the cost of wine, beer, soft drinks, and munchies. Call Rob at (416) 221-6842 if you need any more information. \*

## MEMBER NEWS

## de Lint hits a HOMer

Charles de Lint's *The Little Country* has won the Compute-Serve Science Fiction & Fantasy Forum's 1992 HOMer Award for Best Fantasy Novel published in the previous year. \*

## MARKET REPORT

# Danger, Will Robinson!

by Edo van Belkom

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The warning lights should have gone up a long time ago, but there are two prospective professional markets that everyone should know about and avoid.

The first is the Canadian magazine *Sepulchre House*; the other, a publishing venture which goes by several names, but is most commonly called DimeNovels or Dime Store Novels.

First of all, *Sepulchre House*. This so-called professional magazine burst onto the scene with market listings like this one in the October 1991 issue of *Scavenger's Newsletter*:

**SEPULCHRE HOUSE:** David Bond, 102-11825 88th St., Edmonton AB T5B 3R9 Phone 403-477-0688 (voice or fax). A new horror magazine with planned print run of 25,000 to be distributed through Coles in Canada, WH Smith in the UK and Walden Books in the US. Issue #1 is to appear September 15. Deadline for #2 with a theme of "Childhood Fears" is October 15. For "Things That Go Bump in the Night" deadline is December 15 and for "Technological Horror" it's February 15. Reprints will be considered.

Sounds good. However, it soon became apparent that the people behind the magazine didn't have a clue as to what they were doing. For example, Ontario Hydra member Nancy Kilpatrick received a telephone call from David Bond telling her that her story had *not* been accepted, and then asked if she'd like her manuscript returned in her SASE.

By November 1991 a warning was issued in the Horror Writers of America *Newsletter* and in January 1992 this update appeared in *Scavenger's*:

... Chet Williamson, vice-president of Horror Writers of America, has looked into dealings at *Sepulchre House* and discovered that so far Editor David Bond has not sent contracts to any of the writers whose stories he's accepted. He did pay two writers whose stuff was taken early on but so far no one else has received a check or contract.

Soon after, cheques began bouncing, calls to the *Sepulchre House* number weren't being returned and neither was letter mail. It was obvious that the people involved with *SH* had put the carriage before the horse and had no experience in what it took financially or otherwise to put together a professional magazine.

Finally, the March 1992 HWA *Newsletter* featured an article entitled "The Saga of *Sepulchre House*" by Phil Nutman, who was to have a regular column in the fledgling magazine. Nutman tells a cautionary tale involving bounced cheques, continual misinformation, and a serious lack of professionalism. He concludes by saying: "Based on this phantom magazine's track record, it would be fair to say it seems extremely unlikely we will ever see this publication, or if we do that it will last longer than three issues."

The other recent publishing fiasco is DimeNovels. This venture's promises seemed so attractive that many took the plunge before thinking twice.

Check out just part of the DimeNovels listing in the November 1991 issue of *Scavenger's*:

**DIMENOVELS:** Editor: Linda Stirling-Warner, 1511 SW Park Ave., Ste 320, Portland OR 97201. A collection of unique pocket-sized paperback novels, generally referred to in the industry as novellas. Each novella contains an original story, never before published, written by a nationally recognized author or a budding new writer. Lengths 20,000 to 21,000 words. Pays US\$500 on acceptance, US\$1,500 on completion plus 2% royalty paid biannually on the retail price ...

Stop right there. That sounds like an awful lot of money to be paying for a brand-new venture in an untried format. DimeNovels promised twelve new titles a month in genres ranging from romance to mystery, horror to SF. However, prospective writers were required to follow a very specific set of guidelines in order to submit.

Something seemed fishy and it didn't take long for DimeNovels to be removed from the HWA market guide and other market listings. The reason: writers wishing to submit to DimeNovels were required to pay US\$18 for a set of submission guidelines. Many sent for guidelines and were shocked by the bad grammar and spelling errors they contained.

Sometime later DimeNovels announced that they had a new set of guidelines and writers were asked to send another \$18 for them. By this time it was obvious that DimeNovels was a scam.

The final chapter came recently when Raymond E. Feist, chairperson of the SFWA contracts committee, posted this bulletin on CompuServe and GENie:

Effective April 2, 1992, SFWA announces that Dime Store Novels, Inc. also known as DimeNovels, Inc., also known as Anytime Pee Wee Novels, Inc., a publishing enterprise in Portland, Oregon, operated by Mr. Randal Byrd, has repeatedly ignored attempts by SFWA to convince this company to cease engaging in practices we feel are detrimental to writers. As a result, we are declaring this company an Unsatisfactory Market. Sales to this company will not count as sales to a professional market for membership purposes. Should this company change its business practices in the future, we will notify the membership of any such changes.

The lesson to be gained from all this is, if it sounds too good to be true it probably is. \*

## SHAMELESS PLUG

# Free Book!

Rob Sawyer's *Far-Seer* comes out this month. *Asimov's* calls it a "tour de force; vastly enjoyable, beautifully realized." If you'd like a free copy, just let Rob know. \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## Auctions

by Robert J. Sawyer

In February 1991, two of my Science Fiction novels were auctioned by my agent, Richard Curtis, so I thought I'd share what I learned through the experience.

As you know, under normal circumstances, a manuscript is shown to only one editor at a time. That editor may take an extended period — perhaps two to four months — to make a decision. If he or she says no, then the book is shown to the next editor on the list. But when there's enthusiasm for a particular author or book, an auction may be held. It's quite rare, however, for authors of my rank: my first novel, *Golden Fleece*, was published by Warner in December 1990, so by February 1991 there were no concrete sales figures yet available. A less-well-known agent couldn't have pulled off an auction for someone like me. But four factors came together to make Richard think this was the right time to auction my work.

First, Warner was dragging its heels on making a commitment to my second novel. They kept saying they liked it, they wanted to buy it, and so on, but they never put anything in writing. Well, as with most book contracts, Warner had an *option* on my second book — the right to be the first to see it. But the option clause in my contract only gave them 60 days in which to make up their minds, and that time ran out. It's not unusual for option periods to expire without any action, I'm told. Publishers tend to think you aren't going anywhere.

Second, while Warner was chewing over my option book, I wrote another novel (*Far-Seer*), which Richard was very enthusiastic about, terming it (modest cough) "a masterpiece."

Third, much to my surprise, my first book shot way up the preliminary Nebula Award ballot, coming in at tenth place (out of 653 science fiction, fantasy, and horror novels published in the United States in 1990). That made a few people sit up and take notice, especially since *Golden Fleece* had only been available for eight weeks before the nominating deadline.

And, finally, I was lucky enough to get some glowing reviews, particularly one from Orson Scott Card in the December 1990 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. (There's much debate about the value of the preliminary Nebula ballot and reviews, but Richard says both were instrumental in enabling him to position my next book as, in his words, a "hot property.")

On January 23, 1991, Richard simultaneously submitted my two completed manuscripts to six publishers (Ace, Avon, Bantam, Roc, Tor, and Warner) with the understanding that if any of them wanted the novels, they had to submit written bids within four weeks, by February 20. (Richard omitted DAW because it doesn't have the money to participate in auctions and Del Rey because of its inability to respond quickly.)

The first publisher to bid sets the *floor*, which the agent then communicates to all other participants. Subsequent bids must come in at least 10% above the floor bid, or any later-received higher bids. However, whichever publisher bids first gets *topping privileges*. At the end of the auction, that publisher has the right to top, by at least 10%, the best other bid received so far and thereby acquire the books in question.

For me, the most nerve-racking part of the process was the period between the beginning of the auction and the receipt of the first bid. There's always a possibility that no one will bid

in an auction, and so, in one fell swoop, a book can in essence be rejected by a bunch of potential publishers. A book from a failed auction gets a shopworn feel about it, and may thereafter have great difficulty selling at all.

During this initial period, no end of people thought it was funny to tell me the story of Jack McClelland's first stint at agenting, when he auctioned a book and nobody bid. But, of course, a major agent doesn't hold auctions lightly; after all, the agent's reputation is tied up in the books he or she promotes. Richard phoned me as soon as he had an acceptable floor bid. After that, I was able to relax.

The end result: I've got a new, enthusiastic publisher and a substantial increase in what I'm making per book. Of course, I try to write the best books I can, but the real lesson here is that it pays to have an agent with clout. \*

## LATE-BREAKING NEWS

## Reviewer Update

Chuq Von Rospach has been dismissed as a reviewer for *Amazing Stories*, the glossy SF magazine published by TSR Inc. No word yet on a replacement. \*

## WHAT'S ON

## Upcoming Events

- Monday, May 11, at 7:00 p.m.: **Ontario SFWA** gathering #2, at Rob Sawyer's, 300 Finch West, Apt. 301, Willowdale.
- May 22-24: **CanCon**, "Conference on Canadian Content in Speculative Literature," Market Square Holiday Inn, Ottawa. SF GoH: **Don Kingsbury**. Free memberships for SFWAns! Jim Botte, Box 2-45, Somerset W., Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0H3.
- June 5-7: **Ad Astra 12**, Scarborough, Ont. Chair: SFWAn **Karen Wehrstein**. Box 7276, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1X9.
- June 18-21: 23rd Annual Conference of the **Science Fiction Research Association**, John Abbot College, Montreal. Info: Steven Lehman, 4319 Esplanade St. (2), Montreal, H2W 1T1.
- Saturday, June 20: **Terence M. Green, Michelle Sagara, Robert J. Sawyer, and S. M. Stirling** autograph at Bakka, 282 Queen Street West, Toronto, (416) 596-8161.
- Wednesday, June 24: **Rob Sawyer** reads at Richmond Hill (Ont.) Library, 24 Wright St. Reserve seats: (416) 884-9288.
- June 27-28: **WilfCon 8**, 1992 Convention and first annual Canadian SFWA meeting, Wilfrid Laurier U., Waterloo. GoH **Andrew Weiner**. 6-69 Donald St., Kitchener, N2B 3G6.
- July 17-19: **Conversion 9**, Westin Hotel, Calgary. GoH: **Michael Coney**. Box 1088, Station M, Calgary, T2P 2K9.
- August 14-16: **NonCon 15**, U of British Columbia, Vancouver. GoH: **Robert Charles Wilson**. Box 113, S.U.B., U of Alberta, Edmonton, T6G 2J7. \*

## LETTERS

## Re: Alouette

From SFWA Overseas Director Pierre Barbet (translation follows):

le 1er Avril 1992

Chers amis,

comme vous le pensez, j'applaudis à la naissance de l'ALOUETTE, gentille alouette ... et ce n'est pas un poisson d'Avril.

Peut-être certains d'entre-vous se rappellent-ils de moi puisque j'ai assisté à la Convention Mondiale de Toronto au Royal York, mais les années passent!

N'hésitez pas à vous adresser à moi pour tous renseignements concernant la SF européenne et spécialement la France, puisque je suis aussi vice-président de la Sté francophone de SF, INFINI.

Toutes mes félicitations

Bien amicalement,

Pierre Barbet, Directeur Régional Outremer de SFWA

April 1st, 1992

Dear friends,

As you might expect, I applaud the birth of *ALOUETTE*, *gentille alouette* [to quote the song] ... and this isn't an April Fool's joke.

Perhaps some of you remember me, since I attended the Toronto WorldCon at the Royal York [in 1973], but years fly by!

Don't hesitate to ask me about anything regarding European SF and especially SF in France, as I'm also vice-president of the francophone SF society, INFINI.

My congratulations.

Cordially, Pierre Barbet, Overseas Regional Director, SFWA

...

April 3rd, 1992

Dear Robert:

Thank you for sending me a copy of *Alouette*. Please put me down as a supporter of the Canadian bid for a separate SFWA region. Best regards, C. J. Cherryh, Secretary, SFWA

April 9th, 1992

Dear Robert,

Thanks for the copy of *Alouette*. While I'm still not entirely convinced that Canadian authors who make their living in the States can be best served by a splinter-group of SFWA dealing solely with Canadian concerns (sort of a "distinct society" within SFWA is what I suppose you envision), I'm still interested enough in your proposal to follow the arguments as they're raised.

*Alouette* seems to be a fine forum in which to do so. I enjoyed the profile of Green and the various articles, but feel you are doing a disservice to your endeavour by printing fiction. For all your complaints of amateurism in SF Canada, printing fiction in a newsletter strikes me as more fannish than anything they have done. There are plenty of markets for fiction and if you want *Alouette* and your proposal of splitting Canadian members of SFWA into a separate entity to have any real validity, you might consider dropping that section for future issues. Be that as it may, I'll look forward to seeing how things develop in coming issues.

cheers, Charles de Lint

[I think you're missing a key point, Charles. Indeed, when Jean-Louis Trudel proposed that SF Canada's Communiqué should run previously unpublished fiction, I objected strenuously on exactly the same grounds you have raised. However, the short stories appearing from time to time in *Alouette* are exclusively and without exception reprinted from professional markets. They are in no way fan fiction; rather they are samples of professional work by professional writers, and an attempt to help foster a sense of national community through increased familiarity with each other's work.] \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

## Barbara Delaplace

Barbara Delaplace was born in Vancouver, B.C., and has lived there all her life. She works as a research technologist at the Terry Fox Laboratory for Cancer Research, where she's a division head of the Media Preparation Department. She's also earned a certain amount of notoriety for publishing a *very* informal in-house newsletter.

For three years Barbara was a staffer on CompuServe's Science Fiction/Fantasy Forum, first as a section leader and later as an assistant sysop. She now edits the monthly "Publishing News" electronic news column in Section 5 (Publisher's Corner) of the Forum. Networks are addictive; she's also online on Delphi and GENIE.

Barbara started reading science fiction when she was about eleven years old and grew up on Heinlein, Clarke, Asimov, Moore, Bradbury, Blish, and a whole lot of others. But she didn't start writing SF and fantasy until a couple of years ago, thus fulfilling a fifteen-year dream. She now divides her time between laboratory and computer, and hopes to make the jump to full-time writing in a few more years.

Barbara is eligible this year and next for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer. Here's a list of her sales to date:

"Legends Never Die" in *The Fantastic Adventures of Robin Hood*, Martin Greenberg, ed., Signet, June 1991

"Wings" in *Horsefantastic*, Martin Greenberg, ed., DAW, December 1991

"Choices" in *Alternate Presidents*, Mike Resnick, ed., Tor, January 1992, to be reprinted in *Pulphouse: A Fiction Magazine*

"Once A Hero" forthcoming in *Science Fiction Review*

"The Hidden Dragon" in *Dragonfantastic*, Martin Greenberg, ed., DAW, May 1992

"Freedom" in *Alternate Kennedys*, Mike Resnick, ed., Tor, July 1992

"Belonging" in *The Crafters, Vol. 2: Blessings and Curses*, Bill Fawcett and Christopher Stasheff, ed., Ace, August 1992

"Lost Lamb" in *Whatdunits*, Mike Resnick, ed., DAW, October 1992

"Trading Up," a collaboration with Mike Resnick, in *Battlestation, Book One*, David Drake and Bill Fawcett, ed., Ace, July 1992

"The Last Sphinx" in *A Christmas Bestiary*, Rosalind M. and Martin Greenberg, ed., DAW, November 1992

"Black Ice" in *Aladdin: Master of the Mystic Lamp*, Mike Resnick and Martin Greenberg, ed., DAW, December 1992 \*

## SFWA NEWS

## Nebula Winners!

SFWA presented its 1991 Nebula Awards on April 25, 1992:

Best Novel: *Stations of the Tide* by Michael Swanwick

Best Novella: "Beggars in Spain" by Nancy Kress

Best Novelette: "Guide Dog" by Mike Conner

Best Short Story: "Ma Qui" by Alan Brennert

Also presented: SFWA's first Ray Bradbury Award for Dramatic Script to James Cameron (a Canadian) and William Wisher for *Terminator II: Judgment Day*. \*

## STATE OF THE ART

## Realism in SF

by Andrew Weiner

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Alouette is pleased to launch "State of the Art," a regular critical column by Andrew Weiner, contributor to F&SF, Asimov's, and Interzone, and author of Station Gehenna (Congdon and Weed) and the collection Distant Signals and Other Stories (Press Porcépic).

The Spring 1990 issue of Quantum: SF & Fantasy in Review contained an article called "Spaced Out" by Ronald Anthony Cross, who argued that, because faster-than-light travel had no legitimate theoretical basis, science fiction, despite its pretensions of rationalism, was really just another form of fantasy. To quote Cross: "science fiction writers usually don't fully realize that they are writing fantasy stories, whereas fantasy writers usually do." Andrew Weiner believes Cross didn't go far enough, as he outlined in his own article in Quantum's Fall 1990/Winter 1991 issue:

Although faster-than-light travel is admittedly the central fantasy of science fiction, it is only one of many equally implausible SF tropes. A list of them would look something like this:

1. FTL travel
2. Time travel
3. Aliens, whether (a) visited by FTL-traveling Earthfolk or (b) visiting Earth by means of FTL
4. Parapsychological ("psi") powers
5. Travel to other "dimensions" or "alternate universes;" visitors from other dimensions
6. Interstellar war conducted via FTL spaceships
7. Immortality
8. Invisibility

Doesn't leave much, does it? Stories of near-space exploration. Political dystopias. Near-future thrillers. Some borderline cases, such as after-the-bomb stories (but not if you accept the theory of nuclear winter) and cyberpunk stuff (but not if you look too closely at the possibilities for true artificial intelligence). Aliens visiting Earth in Rube Goldbergish slower-than-light starships (Gregory Benford has done this quite well). Earthfolk visiting other star systems in near-light speed vessels (it's stretching a point to imagine any such form of propulsion, but what the hell). Alternate histories, if you want to be really generous about it and reduce quantum physics to metaphor.

But all the rest of it — constituting an overwhelming proportion of all the work published in the SF genre — is clearly fantasy. It is fiction with no basis in either contemporary science or any imaginable future science.

I must include in this category even such carefully crafted works of speculation as Greg Bear's *Blood Music* or Bruce Sterling's Shaper/Mechanist series. While such stories may not actively contradict contemporary scientific knowledge, the distance between the two points is so great, and the links between them necessarily so vaguely drawn, that the final product is indistinguishable from fantasy.

Why, then, the peculiar insistence that science fiction is a more "realistic" genre than fantasy? To answer this question, we must look back to the father of us all, H. G. Wells.

"For the writer of fantastic stories to help the reader to play the game properly," Wells wrote in 1934, "he must . . . trick him into an unwary concession to some plausible assumption and get on with his story while the illusion holds. And that is where there was a certain slight novelty in my stories when they first appeared. Hitherto . . . the fantastic element was brought in by magic . . . But by the end of the century it had become difficult to squeeze even a momentary belief out of magic any longer. It occurred to me that instead of the usual

interview with the devil or a magician, an ingenious use of scientific patter might with advantage be substituted. That was no great discovery. I simply brought the fetish stuff up to date and made it as near actual theory as possible." (Quoted in *The H. G. Wells Scrapbook*, Peter Haining, editor).

An ingenious use of scientific patter. Or to put it more bluntly: faking it.

The history of modern science fiction is very largely a history of more or less distinguished fakery. Wells faked his sci/tech fetishes as a means to an end: he used the fantastic both to entertain and to comment on, among other things, the fragility of human culture. For Wells, aliens were a metaphor, just as angels and demons and magicians had served as metaphors for earlier writers of fantastic literature. Time travel was a metaphor. The future itself was a metaphor: a blank slate upon which to write the hopes and fears and dreams of the moment.

Wells's successors for the most part faked it in the service of pure entertainment — very often, as the late James Blish has pointed out, using their increasingly ingenious scientific patter only in the service of "semi-erotic, semi-irresponsible daydreams" and plain "anti-social childishness." Which was okay, too.

But all along, there have been those who missed the point — who got caught up in their own sci/tech fetishes rather than using them as a means to an end.

Jules Verne, Wells's immediate precursor and considerably irked contemporary, was the first great techno-fetishist. "I make use of physics," he complained of Wells. "He fabricates. I go to the moon in a cannon-ball discharged from a gun. There is no fabrication here. He goes to Mars in an airship, which he constructs of a metal that does away with the law of gravitation. That's all very fine, but show me this metal. Let him produce it." (Quoted in *New Maps of Hell* by Kingsley Amis).

In the footsteps of Verne came Hugo Gernsback, prophet of popular mechanix, extrapolator extraordinary, the man who forecast night baseball. And after Gernsback, John W. Campbell, founder of Modern American Science Fiction.

There is no way that I can do justice here to a figure as complex and deeply bizarre as Campbell. But Campbell, clearly, was the key figure in patching together the SF ideology of so-called "realism" that lingers to this day. It was Campbell, more than anyone else, in his editorials and other public pronouncements, who insisted on scientific rigor and technological plausibility.

From this distance in time, it is clear that many, perhaps most, of the stories that Campbell actually published diverged wildly from his agitprop. His favorite authors, like van Vogt, Hubbard, even the sainted Heinlein, piled one implausibility upon the next.

I can well remember my own disorientation in reading Heinlein's acclaimed Golden Age classic "Waldo" — a story beloved by generations of engineers — and watching him plunge into outright magic. Similarly, "All You Zombies," dazzling as it is, can in the end be read only as a piece of unalloyed wish fulfillment, one that any psychoanalyst would have a field day with (as an imagined psychoanalyst does, in passing, in my own short story about time travel, "Klein's Machine").

It can be argued, in fact, that Isaac Asimov was the One True Campbellian — the only truly rational, well-balanced, scientifically-disciplined thinker in the whole Golden Age crew. (But only, of course, if we can get past that nasty business of FTL.) Campbell himself revealed a distinctly non-Campbellian, unrealist streak in his enthusiastic endorsement of pseudo-scientific paraphernalia like Dianetics, parapsychology, and (remember this one?) the Dean Device.

And yet for all the yawning gap between program and action, Campbell's rhetoric had its effect. He succeeded, eventually, in setting a whole generation of writers to work, slaving over their orbital calculations and detailing their exobiologies. He called into being that strange subset of science fiction known as "hard" SF. The end-result can be seen in today's *Analog* — the SF magazine for those who took Campbell at his word. I wonder if even Campbell could bear to read what it has become.

The hard SF writer wants — needs — to be rational and realistic.

But let's face it, kicking around the solar system gets boring after a while. You can do near-FTL travel, maybe: but all the relativity paradoxes have already been done to death. Similarly, who wants to read yet another novel about a strange alien artifact found drifting in intersystem space? No, in the end the hard SF writer must push outwards — and jump through a series of tortuous hoops in the attempt to make “realistic” what is quite plainly irrational and impossible.

If you're a true hard SF writer, you can't simply treat a starship as a magic bus and get on with the voyage. At some point (and perhaps repeatedly) you've got to come up with an explanation, rummaging through your back issues of *Scientific American* to come up with page upon page of bafflegab about wormholes or superstrings or whatever else might be both cosmologically fashionable and utterly impenetrable.

Similarly, you can't see an alien for what it is — a product of your own head, a walking, talking metaphor for whatever might be on your mind right now. No, before you can have aliens, you must first have a sun of a particular type (maybe — why not? — a double sun), a planetary orbit, a particular gravity, an ecology ...

No doubt it's fun working out these details. And clearly a lot of people have fun reading this stuff. But why? Why this drive to make the impossible plausible? I think it's because we have to give ourselves permission — whether as readers or writers — to dream.

There is an apparent continuum here. “Hard” SF writers apply the Protestant work ethic to their dreaming. They have to work up a sweat to give themselves permission to dream at all. It's as if the very process of calculating a planetary orbit can somehow distance them from their own creations. No, they're saying, this alien didn't come from my subconscious: it has nothing to do with my childhood memories, my interpersonal relationships, my aggressive and sexual impulses. It's an *alien*, goddammit. It lives on a world orbiting a G2-class star once every 1.9 Earth years, with a gravity of 1.4 Earth ...

High fantasy writers, on the other hand, let their dreams run amuck, conjuring up whole new worlds at the flick of a magical amulet. (One only wishes that they would *stop* dreaming now and again.) And those who work the border zones — whether of “soft” and “humanist” SF, or of modern urban fantasy — fall somewhere in between.

Yes (someone will no doubt point out), some hard science fiction writers also write high fantasy. No real contradiction here. For these writers, high fantasy becomes a much-needed vacation from the rigors of the Campbellian superego. High fantasy, in any case, tends as a genre to be nearly as innocent of its own metaphors as hard SF.

Speaking personally, I find aliens an extremely valuable and useful metaphor. I would hate to live without them, as reader or writer. And if I need FTL to get to them, I'll go with that too. Just don't ask me to design a space drive, or calculate a planetary orbit.

As for time travel — why not? What could be a better device for stories exploring the mysteries of memory, regret, and nostalgia, of free will and determinism, of existential choice? But who needs a wiring diagram? (“Tachyons and so forth,” explained one of my time travelers. Worked for me.)

As a reader, I do not look for scientific or technological realism in science fiction. I look for psychological realism. And by this I do *not* mean “good characterization” (a vastly over-rated concern, recently — and tediously — discovered by Campbell's spiritual children). Clearly-drawn archetypes will suit me just fine, thank you, in most cases. No, I mean realism in terms of how people might actually think and feel and behave when confronted with particular varieties of strangeness.

I look, also, for some element of psychological *truth*. Is this story about anything that could possibly matter to me, or to anyone else? Is it about anything at all, other than the writer's own ingenuity? Was there any good reason to write it, other than the wish to notch up another sale, or to put bread on the table? (I empathize with those writers who must churn out hack work as a means of survival. I just wish they could find some more imaginative way to make a living.)

Finally, of course, I look for that quality that SF provides so well: strangeness, displacement, “cognitive estrangement,” “sense of wonder.” Why else would I read and write this stuff? But I am no

longer much interested in strangeness for its own sake. And I find that a little strangeness can go a long way.

If a story is psychologically real and true and pleasingly strange, I don't much care how the writer goes about justifying it.

Science fiction readers pride themselves on their open-mindedness. But in many ways, the general mainstream readership has been far ahead of us.

Ordinary readers, their heads free of Campbellian clutter, embraced Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles* when so many SF fans were despairing at the ludicrousness of his canals. Ordinary readers related to the poetry in C.S. Lewis's “science fantasy” (a much better generic term, I believe, than “science fiction”) *Out of the Silent Planet*, while literal-minded SF fans were taking offense at its willful scientific ignorance and technophobia. Ordinary readers enjoyed Vonnegut's wacked-out *Cat's Cradle*, with its gimcrack world-destroying “ice-nine,” or Walter Tevis's painful self-portrait of the alcoholic-as-alien in *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, for all its nonsense about a planet “on the other side of the sun,” while most SF readers remained blithely indifferent. Give us realism or give us death. Or anyway, give us some more Larry Niven.

If science fiction, as I have just argued, is largely a fraud and a sham, why do we bother? Why not just embrace straight-ahead fantasy?

I think J. G. Ballard, as usual, said it best, when he pointed out that science fiction is the “folk literature of the 20th Century ... Science fiction represents a popular mythology *inspired* by science, and it isn't necessary for strict scientific accuracy to play a dominant role ... In many ways, *accuracy* is the last refuge of the unimaginative ... Because I think there's something vital about the power of the imagination, and its ability to remake the world.” Rules, Ballard concluded, “have no business in the realm of the imagination.” (*Rolling Stone* interview, November 19, 1987.)

This is as good a working definition of science fiction as any: “folk literature ... inspired by science.” Reasonable, rational and scientifically-minded as we may be, we still hunger for the fantastic. And we meet that hunger in any way that we can. In any way, that is, that resonates with our hopes and fears and dreams.

For me, at least, science fiction meets that need better than unabashed fantasy. Contemporary urban fantasy I'll read and enjoy, as long as it's *knowing*, as long as its writers have something interesting to tell me about their ghosts or their creatures from the id, as long as they're not just crunching bones and splattering blood for the sheer hell of it. King, Straub, TED Klein — these guys are usually working within some psychologically plausible framework, despite the clear ridiculousness of their monstrous creations.

But high fantasy? I just can't summon much interest in wizards, elves, princesses, Amazons, barbarians or magic amulets. I can see how all that stuff might have some sort of therapeutic function. But it doesn't say a lot to me about my own life in the late 20th Century, or anyone else's. And if this attitude is rooted in irrational prejudice and a failure of the imagination, then so be it.

Indeed, in the light of Wells's credo that I quoted earlier, I find it somewhat alarming to think that we have now regressed to a point where so many well-educated and intelligent people actually *prefer* magic to “scientific patter.”

But to each his own. \*

## AURORA AWARDS

# Voting Time!

Accompanying this issue of *Alouette* are final ballots for this year's Aurora Awards, honouring excellence in Canadian science fiction and fantasy. Special thanks to Aurora Awards chair Paul Valcour for faxing us the ballot in time for inclusion.

The voting deadline is very soon, and the awards will be presented at this year's Convention, WilfCon VIII, June 27 and 28, in Waterloo, Ontario. Winners will be reported in *Alouette* #3. \*

## INTERVIEW

## Donald Kingsbury

by Robert J. Sawyer

Excerpted from *Science Fiction Review*, Spring 1984

Copyright © 1982 by Robert J. Sawyer

**Robert J. Sawyer:** You were born in San Francisco in 1929 and ended up in Montreal, but there was a lot in between, wasn't there?

**Donald Kingsbury:** When I was a year-and-a-half, we moved to a gold-rush town in the interior of New Guinea. My father hired a converted World War One bomber to fly us in. They tell me I stuck my nose right out the window and got a big shock as 100-mile-per-hour winds whipped by. I had Australian nannies and we had 20 Black servants. My mother was a Southerner and she easily fell into the old plantation mode. When the servants chopped wood for the stove — we didn't have electricity — I'd turn up and all the work would stop. They'd teach me about woodcutting. I'd play around with the axe under their careful supervision; they weren't going to let me get hurt. All my early learning was in this manner: interacting with the adults. My two sisters and I were the only children in the town. When I was six, my parents decided it was time we got out of the wilderness and into some proper schools. We spent six months in the Pacific en route to California, traveling around China, Japan, Indonesia, and Hawaii. That's one reason I like to wander around the galaxy on paper: it's easy for me to fall into the traveler mode. We left California when I was in the sixth grade and went to New Mexico for a year. We lived in Tyrone which is an old silver-mining town not far from Alamogordo where the A-bomb went off.

**RJS:** How were these moves reflected in your work?

**DMK:** When you write, you take things and alter them. The character Joesai being a goldsmith in *Courtship Rite* comes from the time we spent in New Guinea. A lot of the semi-desert in New Mexico probably came out when I wrote about the planet Geta in that book. Someone wrote me a letter saying, "That doesn't look like an alien environment to me; it seems just like New Mexico." Well, I thought about it and said, "Yeah, you're right." I wanted Geta to be a harsh planet, so I took Earth and censored the lush parts that I'd come to know. I didn't want to make it uniformly harsh, though. That's often a weakness in SF: they take five square kilometres of the Earth and make a whole planet out of it. In Frank Herbert's *Dune*, it's all desert; in *Star Wars* they've got planets that are all rain forest or all ice. That doesn't strike me as reasonable. Human beings live between the freezing point and the boiling point of water, yet in that small range you can find tremendous climatic variety. In the north of Geta, it's very cold and elsewhere there are forests — admittedly not very lush ones — and there are many, many places where it is harsh, harsh desert. Australia might be a model for it. All the Australians live along the coast; it's pretty uninhabitable in the interior.

**RJS:** What made you choose science fiction as your means of expression?

**DMK:** Science fiction is a testing ground for new ideas about society in a world where conventional ideas are beginning to limp. It's immunization against future shock. The science-fiction reader is quicker on the draw than the TV watcher when challenged by a new reality. If I had been confined to writing a novel about group marriage consummated in contemporary North America, I would have had to deal with jealousy and the interactions of a hostile society. Without the constraint of being stuck in our culture I could ask: How would the sexes distribute family burdens among many members? How would they get along if they saw an addition to their family as a

helpmate rather than a rival? What limitations would such a loyal, close-knit group have?

**RJS:** How did you become interested in science fiction?

**DMK:** When we came back to the States, I discovered *Brick Bradford* comics. I can't remember any of the other comics I read, but I do recall reading *Brick Bradford*. I might have reacted the same way to *Flash Gordon* or *Buck Rogers*, but the newspaper we got didn't have them. *Brick Bradford* was their one science-fiction strip. When I first came across it they were in the middle of an adventure: the States were being invaded by these strange people in big fur caps and long winter coats. They weren't called Russians, but you knew that's what they were meant to be. They were invading in a fleet of zeppelins. *Brick Bradford* got involved with a scientist who managed to put up something like the DEW line, only it wasn't radar: it was a kind of repelling ray that disintegrated the zeppelins. In the next adventure *Brick* got involved with the great Dr. Timmins. They built a sphere that shrank and they went into the eye of a Lincoln penny, finding planets orbiting around atomic-nuclei suns. I used to read that strip carefully, cutting them out and putting them in a scrapbook.

**RJS:** How did you get introduced to *Astounding* magazine?

**DMK:** I'd never heard of it until the War when I was on paper drives, collecting newspapers and the like. We'd pick up these strange books with covers showing bug-eyed monsters carrying off nubile young ladies: *Superscience*, *Astonishing*, *Thrilling Wonder*. I would take these home and read them. There were a couple of *Astoundings* mixed in with the others. I didn't differentiate between them at all at the time. One day in 1944 I noticed a copy of *Astounding* on the newsstand. It had an intriguing cover by Timmins. I bought a few issues, but hadn't been impressed, so I'd skip an issue or two. I always looked and evaluated whether a particular issue was worth a quarter or not. Then I saw the cover for A. E. van Vogt's "Mixed Men" with a guy falling toward a planet. Couldn't resist it; loved the story. The next issue I bought had "Dead Hand" in the Foundation series by Isaac Asimov. "Mixed Men," "Dead Hand," and Murray Leinster's "First Contact" fell practically one right after the other. After those three stories and their lovely illustrations I was hooked. I always found a quarter every month after that.

**RJS:** How did you get started as a writer?

**DMK:** When I was sixteen, back in the days when \$30 a week was a very good wage, anything an editor would have paid you for a story was a lot of money. I always wanted to be a writer; I never stopped to consider if it was a good way to make a living. It said "unsolicited manuscripts must have return postage" on *Astounding's* title page, so I figured someone must be sending these stories in. I set a goal of writing two pages a day. For the first story I wrote, I fulfilled that faithfully, no matter how long it took me. If I got to the bottom of the second page and I was in the middle of a sentence I stopped and went to bed. I had to get the spelling right, which was very painful for me.

**RJS:** What was that first tale about?

**DMK:** It was a simple story about a bunch of guys who built an atomic rocketship and go to the Moon in 1965, get out of the ship, look around at a bleak landscape, pick up some rocks, and head back to Earth. I wasn't into having them find vegetation on the Moon because I didn't believe in that. I was writing SF, not fantasy. I had them finding exactly what *Apollo* really did find.

**RJS:** But it didn't sell.

**DMK:** No. I was dejected. I'd expected to make a sale. I felt obviously someone was going to buy it and give me a hundred dollars so I could take girls to the movies and be a big shot in high school. I took it pretty bad; I cried a lot. But I sat down and wrote another



story. I just kept doing that. Finishing something is a lot of reinforcement in itself. Pick a size you can deal with and work up from there. Don't start with a novel. I know lots of people who tried to begin with a novel and never finished it so today they aren't writers. I turned out 25 short stories before I sold "Ghost Town" to Campbell.

**RJS:** Were you only submitting your work to *Astounding*?

**DMK:** No. If Campbell rejected it, I sent it to *Planet Stories* or *Thrilling Wonder*. There was no *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. One of my stories was rejected by John Campbell because it had sex in it. H.L. Gold rejected it "because we've already done sex to death."

**RJS:** Your published output was quite small in those early years, wasn't it? The only other thing was the article "The Right to Breed."

**DMK:** Campbell kept sending that back for revisions. "No fire," he'd say. "Give me fanaticism!" I re-wrote it but he sent it back again. "Worse. Now you're slyly winking at the reader saying I'm not this fanatic; these aren't my real opinions." So I wrote it the way he wanted and it was a great success. While a student at McGill University in Montreal, I tried to write the Great American Novel. I had a story in my files about a pregnant girl running away to a hot, sandy Venus. My agent said, "What's Venus doing in this story? Put it back on Earth." Well I did and I made a novel out of it. I got lost, disappeared from the SF scene, doing it, but it never sold. I didn't keep up my connections with Campbell. That was a bad, bad mistake.

**RJS:** How did you learn to write?

**DMK:** In the early days, I always kept a copy of Wells's *Seven Famous Novels* and *The World of Null-A* by A.E. van Vogt on my desk, along with some Westerns. Whenever I was having trouble writing a particular passage, I'd look to see how Wells or van Vogt handled something similar. The Westerns were helpful for atmosphere description, landscape and action detail. Van Vogt had this thing about 800-word scenes: shorter than that you may not be saying enough; longer, you may be saying too much. I found that a good guide in trying to pace myself. Van Vogt, by the way, ended up doing a review of *Courtship Rite* for the dust jacket. I was thrilled.

**RJS:** You were once involved in Scientology. Or would you prefer not to talk about that?

**DMK:** Oh, I have no trouble handling the Scientologists. Dianetics, you know, was first presented in *Astounding*. I sent away for the book, actually receiving it before its official publication date, and read it in one sitting. I thought, "That's a very interesting psychotherapy technique; I'll try it out my girlfriend." I went over to her place, had her lie down on the couch, and closed the living-room door. In the middle of the session, her mother broke in. She thought — well, you know what she thought: we were doing something indecent. I later married that girl, though. I spent one week of our honeymoon learning Dianetics from Hubbard; the other week we went to Martha's Vineyard. I began to have reservations about the Scientology organization. I was going to start a group in Montreal, but I found Hubbard very, very, very difficult to work with. I always knew I didn't agree with him on a lot of things. He was impossible to work with if you didn't agree with him and in that way he created scads of heretics.

**RJS:** You were ultimately excommunicated.

**DMK:** I taught my mathematics course at McGill in the same way they taught Scientology: as workshops, a very fast, very effective method. I wrote a report on the application and sent a copy to Hubbard. He sent me back a letter saying I had plagiarized his learning theories. Hubbard built a great apparatus to deal with enemies. In order to have something for the apparatus to do, he goes out and creates enemies. He has a hard time with able people. When he gets able people around him, he excommunicates them. \*

## FICTION SHOWCASE

### Young Person's Guide

Last summer I heard James Alan Gardner read from a new novella at Rhinocon I in London, Ontario. His story, "The Young Person's Guide to the Organism (Variations and Fugue on a Classical Theme)," enthralled, charmed, and moved me. I knew as soon as I heard it that it deserved to be an awards contender. I've already sent in a Nebula recommendation for it.

Jim, winner of both last year's English short-form Aurora Award and a Writers of the Future Grand Prize, sold this story to *Amazing Stories*, the first place he submitted it to. Now, I'm a fan of *Amazing* myself, having been published four times in its pages, but everyone knows how poor *Amazing*'s circulation is and how hard it is to find on newsstands.

So, this time out, we're doing something very special with *Alouette*'s fiction showcase. Instead of running a story as an integral part of the newsletter, I've talked Jim into letting me mail out reprints of his story as a companion to this issue. Read it and enjoy.

The novella "The Young Person's Guide to the Organism" appears in the April 1992 issue of *Amazing Stories*.

Oh, and on a completely different topic, there's a new address for Nebula recommendations which I've been meaning to squeeze into *Alouette*, and since I've got a little blank space left, I'll add it here:

Chuq Von Rospach, NAR  
1072 Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road  
Bldg A107-503  
San José, CA  
U.S.A. 95129

\*

## TRIBUTE

### Isaac Asimov, 1920-1992

Isaac Asimov called himself "The Good Doctor," and referred to his audience as "gentle readers." His death wasn't unexpected. Word of his failing health had been circulating in the SF community for many months. Nonetheless, the actual news that he was gone hit hard. Isaac Asimov, who didn't fly, didn't drive, didn't like to travel at all, has embarked on his final journey.

I met Asimov once. In the summer of 1985, when I was in New York City doing work for CBC Radio, I managed, after considerable wrangling, to get Asimov to agree to be interviewed for one hour. Exactly one hour; more than that he would not countenance away from his writing. Even then, even seven years ago, he knew he had more than he wanted to say than he'd ever have time to commit to paper, and any distraction from that process was resented. I'll never forget that hour, one of the highlights of my life. We sat side by side on his couch in his Manhattan penthouse and talked ...

... talked of the origin of the robot stories; of the genesis of the Three Laws; of his relationship with his mentor, John W. Campbell, Jr.; of his profound belief in rationality, and his absolute pacifism; of his pride in the magazine that bears his name; of the exquisite joy he found in writing.

"If I make myself and my readers happy, in that order, then I'm pleased," he said. He cared not at all that critics often dismissed his work. He knew his audience loved what he was doing, knew that his classic novels including *The Caves of Steel* and *Foundation* and his short works including "Liar!" and "Nightfall" would be remembered and enjoyed for decades to come.

Almost 500 books bear his name; his legacy is greater than that of almost any other 20th-Century writer. Across the entire world, millions of gentle readers mourn the passing of The Good Doctor. \*

## CANADIAN MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

## Active SFWAnS

**Colleen Anderson**

2082 Mannering Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V5N 3C3  
(604) 251-4002

**Lynne Armstrong-Jones**

78 Trillium Crescent, London, Ontario, N5Y 4T4  
(519) 453-9946

**Mary E. Choo**

5711 Wallace Rd., Richmond, B.C., V7E 2C4  
(604) 277-3446

**J. Brian Clarke**

2015 19 Avenue NW, Calgary, Alberta, T2M 1C1  
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**Charles de Lint**

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(613) 237-5087

**Don H. DeBrandt**

5080 Clarendon Street, Vancouver, B.C., V5R 3J5  
(604) 431-9244

**Barbara Delaplace**

#307 - 8770 Montcalm Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6P 4R2  
(604) 266-1795

**Dave Duncan**

Box 1, Site 13, SS 3, Calgary, Alberta, T3C 3N9  
(403) 246-4105

**Leslie Gadallah**

Box 8, Site 3, R.R. #1, Winterburn, Alberta, T0E 2N0  
(403) 962-3315

**James Alan Gardner**

10 Young Street East, Unit G, Waterloo, Ontario, N2J 2L3  
(519) 888-6913 ■ Fax: (519) 895-1864  
Usenet: jagardner@watmath ■ Internet: jim@Thinkage.On.CA

**Phyllis Gotlieb**

19 Lower Village Gate, P.H. #6, Toronto, Ontario, M5P 3L9  
(416) 482-4509 ■ Usenet: csri.toronto.edu!utflis!gotleaf

**Terence M. Green**

32 Brooklyn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M4M 2X5  
(416) 463-1601

**Sansoucy Katheron (Walker)**

P.O. Box 70, Greely, Ontario, K0A 1Z0  
(613) 821-1991

**Eileen Kernaghan**

5512 Neville Street, Burnaby, B.C., V5J 2H7  
(604) 433-5810

**Donald Kingsbury**

1563 Ducharme, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 1G4  
(514) 277-7625

**Shirely Meier**

R.R. #2  
Huntsville, Ontario, P0A 1K0  
(705) 789-7497

**John Park**

1576 Feather Lane, Gloucester, Ontario, K1T 1V4  
(613) 731-2488

**Teresa Plowright**

R.R. #1, D18 Melmore Road, Bowen Island, B.C., V0N 1G0  
(604) 947-0271

**Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens**

279 South Beverly Dr., #1067, Beverly Hills, CA, 90212  
(310) 854-5646  
CIS: 76264,1520  
Internet: 76264.1520@compuserve.com

**Spider Robinson**

4348 W 12th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6R 2R1  
(604) 222-2255

**Robin Rowland**

268 Poplar Plains Road, #1005, Toronto, Ontario, M4V 2P2  
(416) 923-4961  
CIS: 70471,336 ■ Internet: 70471.336@compuserve.com

**Michelle Sagara**

12 Ferrier Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M4K 3H4  
(416) 778-4855 [h] ■ (416) 596-8161 [b]  
GEnie: M.SAGARA ■ Usenet: mms@gpu.utcs.utoronto.ca  
Bitnet: mms@utorgpu.bitnet

**Robert J. Sawyer**

118 Betty Ann Drive, Willowdale, Ontario, M2N 1X4  
(416) 221-6842 ■ Fax: (416) 229-2372 ■ GEnie: R.J.SAWYER  
CIS: 76702,747 ■ Internet: 76702.747@compuserve.com

**Kathryn A. Sinclair**

10819 - 52nd Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 0P2  
(403) 438-3574

**S. M. Stirling**

50 Cornwall Street, #803, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 4K5  
(416) 862-8292  
GEnie: S.M.STIRLING  
BIX: sstirling

**Edo van Belkom**

52 Mill Street North, Brampton, Ontario, L6X 1S8  
(416) 453-3208

**Karen Wehrstein**

R.R. #2  
Huntsville, Ontario, P0A 1K0  
(705) 789-7497

**Andrew Weiner**

26 Summerhill Gardens, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1B4  
(416) 924-9051 ■ Fax: (416) 920-2482

**Robert Charles Wilson**

3330 Hickman Pl., Nanaimo, B.C., V9T 3Y1  
(604) 756-7818

# Alorette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

Publisher: *Who's That Coeur!? Press*



SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
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NEW ADDRESS: 7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5  
Phone: (416) 882-5033 • Fax: (416) 886-1624 • CompuServe: 76702,747 • GEnie: RJ.Sawyer

### EXCLUSIVE MARKET REPORT

## Books in Canada

The March 1993 issue of *Books in Canada* will contain a special report on Canadian SF and fantasy. As part of it, the magazine wants to run several 2,500-word excerpts from works in progress by Canadian SFWA members. If the novel you wish to excerpt has already sold, it should be scheduled for publication no earlier than September 1993, but excerpts from unsold or unscheduled works will be considered, too. *Books in Canada* will pay \$250 for first serial rights to the excerpts it uses. Deadline for submissions: December 31, 1992. Send your excerpts (standard manuscript format, with SASE) to:

Paul Stuewe, editor, *Books in Canada*  
33 Draper Street, 2nd floor  
Toronto, Ontario M5V 2M3

\*

### CAMPBELL AWARDS

## Delaplace and Sagara

Canadian SFWAns Barbara Delaplace and Michelle Sagara have both been nominated for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer.

Barbara, who lives in Vancouver, was nominated for her many short stories, including "Legends Never Die" in *The Fantastic Adventures of Robin Hood* (edited by Martin Greenberg, Signet, June 1991), "Wings" in *Horsefantastic* (also edited by Greenberg, December 1991), and "Choices" in *Alternate Presidents*, (edited by Mike Resnick, Tor, January 1992). *Locus* has called her work "lyrical," and *Dragon* says she has "a light, wry touch."

Michelle, who is manager of Toronto's Bakka SF bookstore, was nominated for her "Books of the Sundered" fantasy tetralogy from Del Rey, which began with *Into the Darklands*, published in December 1991. The second volume, *Children of the Blood*, came out in June 1992. *Quill & Quire* says "Sagara is a talent to watch." *Locus* called *Into the Darklands* "a very strong first novel — effective and compelling."

The other Campbell nominees this year are Ted Chiang, Greer Ilene Gilman, and Laura Resnick. The award will be presented at the 1992 World SF Convention in Orlando.

\*

### SFWA ELECTIONS

## Sawyer Elected

In its 1992 elections, Robert J. Sawyer was voted in as Canadian Regional Director of SFWA. Sawyer is the first Canadian ever to serve on SFWA's Board of Directors.

SFWA's current directors are: **Joe Haldeman**, president; **Sheila Finch**, vice-president; **Michael Capobianco**, treasurer; **Dafydd ab Hugh**, secretary; **Diana Paxson**, Western U.S.; **Robin Bailey**, South/Central U.S.; **A. C. Crispin**, Eastern U.S.; **Robert J. Sawyer**, Canada; **Pierre Barbet**, Overseas. \*

### CONGRATULATIONS!

## Aurora Winners

The 12th-Annual Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards (the "Auroras") were presented June 28, 1992, at WilfCon VIII:

English Novel: *Golden Fleece* by Robert J. Sawyer  
English Short: "A Niche" by Peter Watts and "Breaking Ball" by Michael Skeet (tie, both in *Tesseracts 3*)  
English Other: *Prisoners of Gravity*, TVOntario  
French Novel: *Ailleurs et au Japon*, Élisabeth Vonarburg  
French Short: "L'Enfant des mondes assoupis," Y. Meynard  
French Other: *Solaris*, Luc Pomerleau, réd.  
Artistic: Martin Springett  
Fanzine: *SOL Rising*, D. Larry Hancock, ed.  
Organizational: John Mansfield, Winnipeg WorldCon bid  
Fan Other: David W. New, editing *Horizons SF* \*

### ANNOUNCEMENT

## Change of Address

Robert J. Sawyer and Carolyn Clink have bought a condo. Effective immediately, their new address is:

7601 Bathurst St., Apt. 617  
Thornhill, Ontario L4J 4H5  
Phone: (416) 882-5033 • Fax: (416) 886-1624 \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## Selling to the SFBC

by Robert J. Sawyer

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The conventional wisdom is that the Doubleday Science Fiction Book Club has no direct dealings with authors or agents, but rather only buys books from publishers. But my friend John E. Stith thinks that his personal intervention — sending a self-made galley of his *Redshift Rendezvous* to SFBC editor Ellen Asher — was instrumental in his first sale to the Book Club.

My own experience makes it even clearer, I think, that the Book Club should not be viewed as a black box, the workings of which are forever hidden from authors. At the Nebula Awards weekend in April 1991, I sought out Ellen Asher and chatted her up about my first novel, *Golden Fleece* (Warner), and my then forthcoming *Far-Seer* (Ace).

She said she had received a paperback of *Golden Fleece* some months ago (a paperback which I had sent her myself on January 17, 1991), and had never officially turned it down, but thought it was too late to be thinking about a book after the paperback was already out.

I therefore thought *Golden Fleece* was a lost cause, but then told her about *Far-Seer*, which had recently sold at auction to Ace. When I said it was hard SF and 85,000 words long, she replied: “May I kiss your feet?” She’s hungry for shorter novels, and for SF as opposed to fantasy. I grabbed my Ace editor, Peter Heck, and brought him over, making sure he heard and understood that Ellen wanted to see the *Far-Seer* manuscript. She said she likes to see novels eight or nine months in advance of publication date, and so we agreed that Peter would send her a copy of *Far-Seer* in October 1991.

When I got back to Toronto I figured, what the heck, I’d send Ellen a stack of reviews for *Golden Fleece*. She was apparently impressed by them, and bought the book immediately, despite it being, by that point, an old title. (Later on, she took *Far-Seer* as well: it’s a July 1992 alternate selection in the U.S.; it’ll be offered a couple of months later in Canada.)

You won’t get rich selling to the SFBC. Both *Golden Fleece* and *Far-Seer* are “alternate selections” (which means members have to specifically order them; main selections are sent automatically unless the member sends back a form). For each of them, Ellen advanced \$1,500. Half of that goes to the original publisher, and the remaining \$750 for each book got credited to my royalty accounts at Warner and Ace. You don’t receive dime one of front money, but eventually you will likely earn some royalties (and there’s no reserve against returns, since the books are sold directly to customers).

The low advance wouldn’t be that depressing, except that Bob Eggleton tells me he got \$1,800 cash up front for the cover for the SFBC edition of *Golden Fleece*. That Eggleton cover was actually a reprint (although the SFBC paid him as if it was a new painting; reprints normally go for half as much, says Bob). His painting had originally run as the cover for the September 1988 *Amazing Stories*, which featured a novelette version of *Golden Fleece* as the cover story. As soon as I’d heard that the SFBC had bought *Golden Fleece*, I sent Ellen a copy of that issue’s cover, along with a note suggesting she use that art instead of the truly awful painting that was on the Warner paperback of *Golden Fleece*. Ellen liked my suggestion, and Bob got the job.

In that same letter to Ellen, I asked if she’d be willing to

re-typeset *Golden Fleece* from my computer disk. I had heard on CompuServe that Michael P. Kube-McDowell had gotten them to do that for *The Quiet Pools*, eliminating the typos in his original hardcover.

At last count, there were almost 40 known typos in the Warner *Golden Fleece* (including nonsense such as “smuggling” becoming “snuggling”). Now, of course, I tried to proofread the galleys myself, but you all know how difficult it is proof your own words. I’m pissed off, because it’s clear that Warner had no one proofread the typesetting at their end at all, although it was run through a computerized spelling checker, apparently, since every typo that got through was such that it turned one valid English word into another. (There is one typo that is a sort of poetic justice, though: cover artist Barclay Shaw’s name is misspelled on the copyright page.)

Anyway, I was embarrassed by the typos and wanted to get them corrected in the Book Club hardcover. The SFBC had no problem with that, and a fellow from their typesetting firm called to discuss the exact details of what they needed the disk to look like (any size or density disk, one file for the entire manuscript, in WordStar, WordPerfect, or ASCII, with open and close quotes distinguished from each other by using paired backquotes for one and paired apostrophes for the other). The transfer went flawlessly.

(Buoyed by this, I pushed hard for Ace to typeset my next book from disk, and finally got them to say okay. I’m proud to report that *Far-Seer* is the first Ace title ever typeset directly from the author’s disk. Ace’s production manager said the whole process could not have gone more smoothly.)

Anyway, the SFBC edition of *Golden Fleece* is lovely: clean text and a much nicer cover than the Warner version. And the SFBC now trims its books on all three exposed sides; they no longer have the cheap “obviously a book-club edition” look they used to have.

It’s nice to have a hardcover sitting on my shelf, and occasionally it’s useful from a business point of view, too. For instance, the Canada Council Public Readings Program pays approved Canadian writers \$200 per reading (up to 14 per two-year period), plus travel expenses to get to the reading venue (libraries, universities, and so on; the reading must be free to the public). The trick is to become an approved writer: you have to pass through a jury process the first time you apply (after that, you’re approved until you croak). Well, I was afraid the juries might look down on paperback publication, so when I applied I sent in Book Club hardcovers of *Golden Fleece* instead. Success: I’m now on the Council’s approved list.

The only potential downside I can see of being involved with the Book Club is that a book is normally considered in print so long as the principal publisher’s edition is available or so long as a licensed sub-edition, such as a Book Club edition, is still in print. My agent, Richard Curtis, suspects that he can get a reversion on *Golden Fleece* despite the Book Club edition (it was a November 1991 selection), but in theory Warner could dig in its heels and say, no, even though we’re not going to do anything further with the book, you can’t have the rights back until our licensing deal with the SFBC expires. A normal SFBC license lasts five years, apparently.

I’ve never seen the Book Club’s contract with Warner or Ace, although at my request, Richard has asked them to provide me with copies. John E. Stith tells me he’s got a provision in his contracts that requires the principal publisher to furnish the author with copies of all sub-rights contracts; I’ve asked Richard to put that into my future contracts.

The SFBC doesn’t automatically provide copies of their edition to authors, but Ellen Asher was glad to send me 25 free copies of *Golden Fleece* just for the asking. \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

# Teaching SF Writing

by James Alan Gardner

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In the fall of 1991, I found I had time on my hands (my wife Linda had moved to Saskatoon for two years to do her Master's) and I decided that one pleasant way to occupy myself would be to talk about writing. Even better would be to talk about writing and get paid for it, by teaching a course on writing SF.

The obvious place to teach such a course was our local community college, Conestoga College. It offers an extensive program of continuing education courses at half a dozen campuses around our county, and most of the courses are taught by knowledgeable people rather than professional teachers.

To get the ball rolling, I just called the nearest campus and told the switchboard person that I was interested in teaching a writing course. She switched me to the coordinator of the Communications Department and we arranged the meeting. For the meeting, I was told to bring my résumé and a course outline.

By looking at the college's course catalogue, I saw that it offered two types of course: 10-week courses with one two-hour night a week, and one-day courses with a single six-hour class. I drew up course outlines for both types; those outlines are included later in this article. I printed the outlines on a laser printer and made several copies before I went to the meeting.

The meeting was short and simple. The coordinator's basic question was, "Why should we offer an SF course when we already have a course on fiction in general?" My answer was that my experience with local writers groups suggested there were a lot of would-be SF writers in our region, particularly in the 16-30 age set, and that SF writers faced a number of problems unique to the genre. I expanded on that a bit and apparently the coordinator accepted that I knew what I was talking about.

The coordinator decided to try a one-day course to test the waters. If there proved to be enough demand, we would talk about a 10-week course later on. The standard fee for first time teachers was \$150, and I didn't see any reason to try to get more — I couldn't claim extensive teaching experience or a big name in the genre. We'll see if the money goes up after I've taught a few courses successfully.

We did all the paperwork on the spot. This consisted of writing a brief blurb for the course catalogue (I should have done that ahead of time) and writing up a formal list of objectives: what the students should have learned at the end of the course.

The college wanted a minimum enrollment of four students and I wanted a maximum of twenty. It turned out that I got twelve people, which made us all happy. I asked the college to ask the students to submit the first three to five pages of an SF story or novel they were working on, submissions to be received at least two days before the class. I wanted to keep this request low-key so that people didn't feel intimidated, but I also wanted to see what level the students were writing at. Unsurprisingly, they were all over the map: the best one was close to publishable, while the worst had absolutely no concept of what a story was or how to tell one. I wrote constructive critiques for each submission before the class, in an effort to identify specific problems for each writer and to suggest some approaches to overcoming these problems.

For the class, I prepared a hand-out that gave useful references (like *The SFWA Handbook*) and the names/addresses of the major SF magazines. I also brought in a stack of books so the students could see what they were looking for, including the *Handbook*, *Locus*, my favourite science references, *Literary Market Place*, and so on. Finally, I made copies of the first two pages of one of my own manuscripts so the students would have a sample of standard manuscript format.

The first class (February 1992) went fine. I'm scheduled to teach

the same course on another campus in a month or two, and I intend to follow the same outline, with only some fine-tuning for balance. Readers can certainly feel free to borrow/adapt any parts of my outline for their own use. Have fun with it ...

## WRITING SF STORIES

(Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror)

In the past 25 years, the SF genre has grown from gee-whiz gadget tales for adolescents into one of the most important fields of fiction today. The quality of writing has improved dramatically, the range of themes has widened, and the readership has increased. Unlike other genres, SF continues to provide a healthy market for short stories. In addition, the professional SF magazines pride themselves on being open to new writers; it is often said that it is easier for unpublished writers to "break in" with SF than with any other type of story.

However, the SF field also contains many pitfalls for the unwary. It's true that SF stories share many of the requirements of all fiction: the need for memorable characters, for engaging plots, and for a clean prose style. But SF also has requirements unlike any other type of writing: the need to develop original stories that believably portray distant places and times; the need to describe and explain unfamiliar worlds, where magic may work, monsters may roam, or alien societies may pursue strange goals; the need to create convincing non-human characters; the need to extrapolate current social or scientific trends, to understand the effects of environment on people, and to ask oneself, "What if ...?"

I have given a number of talks about SF writing to local groups (the Canadian Authors Association, the Guelph Writers' Group, Kitchener Public Library) and have found that many people in the community are interested in the subject, from high-school students (who may read nothing but SF) all the way to seniors (who fondly remember the classics of SF's "Golden Age," 1930-60). I also believe I have the credentials to teach the course:

- I'm a member of the Science Fiction Writers of America (the American organization for professional SF writers) and SF Canada
- I'm a graduate of Clarion West, a highly regarded SF writing workshop in Seattle, and have been invited to do public readings of my SF work in such places as Banff, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Niagara Falls, NY
- I'm the winner of the 1989 Writers of the Future award (an international contest for unpublished SF writers) and the 1990 Aurora award for Best English-Canadian SF Short Story, not to mention first prize in the 1990 Canadian National One-Act Playwriting Competition
- I've sold a number of SF stories to professional markets in the U.S. and Canada, and am currently at work on a fantasy novel
- I've been a professional technical writer for more than 10 years, and have published two university-level text-books on computer science plus a large number of other computer books and manuals
- Before becoming a technical writer, I made my living tutoring university students in math subjects for more than four years; I've also taught short courses on playwriting to university theatre groups

## A 10-WEEK COURSE

My preferred approach would be to run this as a 10-week course, with a maximum of 20 students. Each week will cover a different aspect of writing SF stories, and students will be given short assignments that let them explore the points made in class. In addition, students will be expected to write at least the first draft of an SF short story by the last session in the course. Some or all of

these stories will be critiqued by the class and the instructor, in order to familiarize the students with workshoping techniques. Weekly sessions are outlined below. While many of the topics are relevant to fiction writing of all kinds, we will always concentrate on how the principles can be applied to writing SF in particular.

### Week 1: What is SF? What is a story?

- Overview of the course
- Getting to know the class and what they expect from the course
- Discussion of the nature of SF, its sub-genres, its great writers
- Aspects of a story: action, plot, tale, text
- What are we actually trying to accomplish when we write a story?
- Basics of manuscript preparation

### Week 2: Story structure

- Examination of basic story structures and their components: characters struggling with problems
- Story components: milieu, ideas, characters, events
- How internal character development matches or conflicts with external action
- How much do we plan, how much do we discover as we are actually writing?
- Two styles of plot: leading up to a crisis vs. showing the aftermath of a crisis
- How reincorporation of story elements can provide satisfying endings

### Week 3: Idea development — finding, construction, performing, polishing

- The stages of writing: finding, construction, performing, polishing
- How to find ideas
- How to construct stories around ideas
- Scenes and centrepieces; telling the reader to watch for High Noon
- Extrapolation of events, settings, oddities
- Creating characters who have a personal interest in the events
- Digging past clichés

### Week 4: Good story openings

- Grabbing the reader immediately
- Techniques of opening: dialogue, action, exposition, description
- The dangers of early metaphor
- How SF readers read: abeyance and deduction

### Week 5: Characters

- What are characters and why do we care?
- When characters shouldn't be memorable: suiting the amount of character development to the character's role in the story
- Characters and internal conflict: people trying to prove themselves, improve themselves, change themselves, find a reason to live
- Creating characters through action and attitude
- The strengths and weaknesses of stereotypes

### Week 6: Viewpoint

- The tone of voice of the writing
- Third-person narration: omniscient, limited, sigma characters
- First-person narration and unreliable narrators
- Present tense vs. past tense
- Writing with an attitude
- Prithee, sirrah — suiting the diction to the mood

### Week 7: World building

- How to create a world that readers will believe
- Verisimilitude

- Physics, geology, biology
- Sociology, psychology, anthropology
- Magic and the supernatural: make your rules and stick to them
- Research

### Week 8: Subgenre survey — problems specific to fantasy, science fiction, horror

- Fantasy — magic systems, clichéd fantasy, how non-technical cultures work
- Hard science fiction — science, cultural change due to technology, feedback between technology and character attitudes, space opera, must predictions be accurate?
- Horror — splatter vs. lurking shadows, showing or not showing the monster, absolute moral stances vs. psychology vs. empty heaven, confrontation of external demons as key to confronting inner ones

### Week 9: Putting words on paper

- Dramatizing character and exposition
- Show, don't tell (and when to tell things anyway)
- Transportation scenes
- Fight scenes
- Heart-thudding scenes
- Dialogue (naturalism vs. repartee)
- Writing descriptive passages
- Humour
- Suspense

### Week 10: Marketing, workshoping, conventions

- The professional, semi-professional, and fan markets
- Cover letters
- Workshop pros and cons
- Fandom and SF conventions
- Where to go from here

...

## ONE-DAY SEMINAR

Running this course as a one-day seminar would be less useful to students — I think it's valuable for students to be able to discuss writing techniques, try those techniques at home, then bring back their efforts and receive feedback.

However, if a ten-week course can't be arranged, a one-day seminar could be helpful with some advance preparation. I would ask each student to submit the first three pages of an original story (or novel) beforehand so I would have a chance to assess the pieces and build a seminar around them. Such a seminar would address story openings in particular, but I'm sure the openings would provide sufficient material to spark discussion of other aspects of writing such as character building, idea development, exposition, and description of setting.

## FROM IDEA TO STORY

*(Outline for One-Day Course)*

- Overview of course
- Aspects of a story: action, plot, tale, text
- What are we actually trying to accomplish when we write a story?
- The stages of writing: finding, construction, performance, polishing
- How to find ideas
- How to construct stories around ideas
- Extrapolation of events, settings, oddities
- Creating characters who have a personal interest in the events
- Digging past cliché
- Basics of manuscript preparation

✱

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## Writers Rights Day

SFWA joined with 19 other writers organizations to declare Tuesday, June 9, 1992, as "Writers Rights Day."

"We are fed up with canceled contracts, late and poor payments, killed assignments, stolen royalties, and the host of other abuses every writer in America faces today," said Jonathan Tasini, president of the National Writers Union. "From this day on, the publishers will face an increasingly united front of writers."

A variety of events calling for the fair treatment of writers were held across the United States, with the highlight being the signing and release of the "Declaration of Writers' Economic Rights:"

## DECLARATION OF WRITERS' ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Writers have always defined civilization. We have always been the voice of society, expressing its ideas and desires and the pain and sweetness of life.

As journalists, book authors and screenwriters, we monitor and describe and enlighten the human condition. We explain the intersection of collective experience and the individual.

As novelists and poets, we are the cartographers of the psyche. We tell the stories that link people across continents and oceans.

As technical writers, we help people control and manipulate the ideas and tools of society.

But we are in economic jeopardy. Many writers' earnings place them well below the poverty line. We must bear the costs of our own health insurance and retirement plans. As publishers consolidate around the globe, our situation grows more precarious every day.

## WE DECLARE THE RIGHT TO:

**Fair Compensation:** Compensation must rise from its current level which, for most writers, has not changed in more than a decade. We demand timely payment, not at the whim of publishers who make a profit on interest earned from our money. Unfair royalty schedules must be restructured.

**Uniform Contract Standards:** Writers must have a recognized and negotiated code of minimum standards set forth in written contracts.

**Broader Protection for Uses of Writers' Work:** With the advent of new technologies, writers' control over ownership of their work is eroding. Writers must have the right to control and negotiate compensation for new uses of work, including electronic databases, CD-ROMs and software. Writers should also receive compensation for subsequent uses of their work, including library lending, as is the case in a number of other nations.

**Legal Protections:** Fair negotiations between writers and the multinational publishing industry are impossible unless writers have the right to negotiate as a group. Without restricting the right of publishers to make legitimate editorial decisions, no writer should be discriminated against on account of race, age, sex, sexual preference, disability, national origin or religion.

...

*Excerpts from Esther B. Fein's report on Writers Rights Day in The New York Times for Wednesday, June 10, 1992:*

"Forget General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and his multi-million dollar book advance ... the average writer in America earns less than \$9000 a year for writing, representatives of several writers' organizations say, and is ignored and abused by publishers.

"... Several groups representing writers declared yesterday 'Writers Rights Day' and staged a two-hour protest in Grand Central

Station, where they signed a Declaration of Writers' Economic Rights and urged writers to band together to defend themselves," Fein reports.

"You read in the papers about the multi-million-dollar book deals that a handful of writers are fortunate enough to get," Erica Jong, president of the Authors Guild, told about 200 people ... "You don't read about the canceled contracts, the writers sued to pay advances back with interest, the writers who worked 4 years or 7 years or 10 years only to have it orphaned when some fancy new Japanese or German conglomerate bought the publishing house and fired the editors who were the authors' only contact.

"The protest brought together several writers' groups that had steadfastly disagreed on how to best help authors [including] ... the Authors Guild, the National Writers Union, the Published Authors Network, the Romance Writers of America and the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America.

"Ten years ago you couldn't have gotten all these groups together," said Susan Cheever, the author. "But the economic situation has become so bad that writers have no other choice but to work together."

Fein further notes that organizers "compared their efforts to the organizing of the Screen Writers Guild in the 1940s," saying they look forward to the day when publishers "would contribute to health insurance and pension funds for authors, the way movie studios must now do for screenwriters."

Fein points out that the NWU "addressed one of the chief complaints of its 3200 members — the difficulty of getting health insurance" by affiliating with the UAW.

She noted that WRD participants "want to establish minimum standards for writers' contracts, including higher and more timely payments, making publishers share the cost of libel insurance, and giving writers fair amount of time to return advances on canceled projects."

She quotes Barbara Raskin saying "We have a lot of work to do among writers, building their consciousness and convincing them that together we have power that we don't have individually. Many writers are afraid of alienating publishers and won't stand up for themselves." \*

*[Special thanks to Robin Rowland for submitting the information on Writers Rights Day.]*

## STATE OF THE ART

## PoMo Prophet

by Andrew Weiner

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Originally published in SF Guide

It's no longer necessary to plow through obscure academic journals to stumble upon the word "postmodern." These days, it's become part of the vocabulary of middlebrow journalists everywhere, from the home-decor magazines to the Sunday supplements to the women's glossies. Still, when our forefathers built the science fiction ghetto, they used some heavy-duty soundproofing. For all the rising babble outside our walls, "postmodern" has rarely been uttered within them.

Well, true, there was an article by Michael Swanwick in *Asimov's* magazine a few years back, billed as a "Guide to the Postmoderns." But Swanwick mostly seemed to use the word as a flashy synonym for "baby boomer." So it was good to see Kim Stanley Robinson confronting the subject head-on in a stand-up presentation for the literary wing of SF fandom at a recent Readercon.

Now, Robinson is an extremely erudite speaker. He knows a great deal about, for example, literary modernism, architectural theory, and art history. He has even made his way through Fredric Jameson's

seminal and legendarily unreadable “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” (*New Left Review*, July-August 1984, for those who care about these things). He has done some very hard thinking about postmodernism, and how it relates to science fiction. I applaud his efforts. But I think he is wrong in some of his conclusions.

Put simply, Robinson sees the history of SF as a time-delayed replay of the evolution of general literary culture. Thus the mainstream novel evolved from 19th Century realism (Dickens, Zola) to 1920s Modernism (Eliot, Pound) to contemporary Postmodernism. Science fiction made a late start on realism with Campbell in the 1940s, reached Modernism with the New Wave of the 1960s, and is only now developing its own postmodernism.

It’s an elegant argument, but I think it glosses over some important details. To paraphrase one member of the Readercon audience: “What about Barry Malzberg?” (Robinson conceded that he was not that familiar with the relevant Malzberg “texts,” but stuck to his own model).

What about Barry Malzberg? I am here to tell you that the Readercon fan was right and Robinson wrong. The first true prophet of SF Postmodernism was Barry Malzberg.

To justify this statement, I will have to provide some kind of operational definition of postmodernism. So here goes. Cultural postmodernism can be identified by a number of characteristics, including:

- A sense of burn-out: the feeling that there’s no future, that everything has been done, that nothing lies ahead except repetition or degeneration. (Jameson called this “inverted millenarism.”)
- A heavy reliance on parody, irony and pastiche.
- Obsessive self-consciousness and self-reference.
- The appropriation of previous styles and props, both as an ironic strategy and as a way of avoiding commitment to the “meaning” of a new style.
- A sense of the cultural artifacts it is displacing as meaningless and exhausted.
- Loss of faith in the programs and manifestoes of the past.
- A disbelief in “progress.”
- The use of the above strategies to create apparently desirable and highly marketable artifacts.

Using this set of characteristics as a guide, it’s become clear why, for example, William Gibson is an epitomal postmodern SF writer. With his skillful use of pastiche and collage, allusion and irony, remaking and remodeling, Gibson practically defines the po-mo moment: just as his astonishing arc from would-be literary outlaw to high-fashion commodity defines the po-mo career path.

There is, it must be said, a serious problem with this type of definition, to the extent that it makes no useful distinction between serious artistic or literary intent and nearly unconscious hackery. Thus Laurie Anderson is po-mo, but so are New Kids on the Block; *Robocop* is a po-mo movie, but so is *Police Academy 5*; the AT&T building is po-mo, but so is your local shopping mall with the rococo triangular arch and the green facade; Gibson is po-mo, but so is W.T. Quick. And so on.

Indeed, the current commodification of SF, the blatant ransacking of the past in the rash of “shared world” and sharecropper novels, is very much a postmodern phenomena. Ultimately, it becomes difficult to distinguish between, say, Robert Silverberg writing *Dying Inside* (prototypical SF po-mo with undoubted literary intent) and the very same writer recycling Isaac Asimov and C.L. Moore. But that’s postmodernism for you. In the end, it all blurs together.

It’s also true that postmodernism existed long before anyone gave it a name. Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, John Fowles ... all these guys, in their different ways, were prototypical po-mos. So was David Bowie, back when he was ripping off Lou Reed riffs and Anthony Newley moves, not to mention rummaging through old Heinlein novels. And so, of course, was Andy Warhol.

Within SF, that prototypical role was filled earliest, and best, by Barry Malzberg.

It was John Fowles who made the (thoroughly po-mo) observation that, unlike the Victorians, “we can no longer believe our own fictions.” But it was Barry Malzberg who first climbed up on the wall of the ghetto to tell us that we could no longer believe our own *science* fictions.

Of course Malzberg had both precursors and important contemporaries in making this point. I think in particular of Philip K. Dick, a kind of *idiot savant* of SF postmodernism, an obsessive deconstructor of dumb SF tropes, with a genuinely visionary sense of our cultural disintegration (there is very little in, say, Jean Baudrillard that Dick did not say first). It is very hard, though, to believe that Dick did any of this self-consciously.

I should also mention Michael Moorcock’s Cornelius Chronicles; Robert Silverberg at his most experimental; Norman Spinrad, at least on occasion (if *The Iron Dream* is not postmodernist, then what is?); Zelazny’s charming early pastiches; J. G. Ballard with his shattered media landscapes, unquestionably an immediate influence on Malzberg; and no doubt many others, too.

But none said it louder or more often than Malzberg.

One could mention the obvious high points, such as *Galaxies* (as that astute Readercon fan mentioned *Galaxies*), *Beyond Apollo*, or *Herovit’s World*. Along with a handful of other titles, they are indeed among Malzberg’s best and most lucid work: obsessively self-conscious and self-referential, endlessly parodic, thoroughly exhausted. Kim Stanley Robinson should spend some time with these texts.

But in a sense Malzberg’s true po-mo genius comes through most clearly in his lesser works, in the dozens of nearly interchangeable books that he rushed on to the paperback racks in the early 1970s masquerading as “science fiction.”

Consider, for example, a book like *On A Planet Alien* (1974). Looks like science fiction. Talks like science fiction. “They came to civilize barbarians — and were made into gods” (front cover blurb); “FOLSOM’S PLANET — An Alien Land Yet So Familiar” (back cover blurb).

One imagines the innocent SF reader sidling up to it at the paperback rack. And yet one needs to read only a few pages to discover that it is not science fiction at all, but instead an initially convincing but ultimately disquieting *simulation*. Much the same could be said of nearly all Philip K. Dick’s mid-career work. The difference is that Malzberg was, one has to believe, doing it deliberately.

I do not mean to suggest that *On A Planet Alien* is a great novel (although it’s by no means a bad one). I doubt that even Barry Malzberg would suggest as much. But it is a superbly po-mo piece of commodity-making.

Malzberg was far ahead of his time in this. Today the paperback racks are filled with almost nothing but simulations of science fiction (and fantasy) novels, both conscious and (largely) unconscious.

In the end, of course, Malzberg’s simulations proved a little too disquieting, or unsatisfying, for the general SF readership; and Malzberg withdrew from the field, perhaps exhausted with his own exhaustion.

None of this should be understood as a commentary on Malzberg’s “literary” merits. For the record, I should say that I admire his work greatly, although not without reservations. There were simply too many books like *On A Planet Alien*, and too few like *Galaxies*. And yet his vast output is shot through with flashes of brilliance. And when he was good he was *very* good. See, for example, if you can find it, the short story collection *The Man Who Loved the Midnight Lady* (Doubleday, 1980), much of which bears comparison with the best of literary short fiction.

Of course, the great thing about postmodernism is that one can no longer really make such comparisons. With the right packaging, one could easily imagine Barry Malzberg re-emerging as, say, the new Paul Auster or Steve Erickson. Or, for that matter, the new Elmore Leonard or Jackie Collins. These days, who the hell knows? One wishes him every success, anyway.

None of which has anything to do with what Malzberg had to tell us, so many years ago: that we can no longer believe in our own science fictions. Did we listen to him? Of course not. Was he right? Absolutely. And more so, every day that goes by. \*



## MARKET REPORT

## Canadian Small Press

by Edo van Belkom

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So you're an SF writer trying to peddle your stories in Canada. Good luck. If your not writing hip first-person present-tense mainstream stories about women finding themselves after some momentous upheaval in their lives, you haven't got a prayer placing a story in the literary magazines like *The Fiddlehead* or mass-market magazines like *Saturday Night*.

Most Canadian SF writers are aware of *On Spec*, the magazine produced in Edmonton by the Copper Pig Writers' Society. It doesn't pay enough for SFWA to consider it a professional publication — pay rate is roughly two cents per word — but it is Canada's top market for SF.

Many writers are bothered by *On Spec*'s use of an editorial board, instead of a single guiding editorial voice, and its insistence that manuscripts be submitted without bylines. My most-recent experience with the board was exasperating. A story came back with the note, "Two of our readers really liked this story." Well, what does it take for a story to get accepted, unanimity? And whose editorial slant is guiding the magazine?

If you have a story that you'd love to see published in Canada, there are alternatives. Most are fanzines paying from half a cent per word or just providing free copies. But if you've got a story that doesn't quite fit the usual genre publications in the U.S. but that you think has some merit, you can always publish it in a small zine and then shop it around in the "Best of" anthologies — more on them in the next column.

Magazines that publish horror include, *On Spec*, *Lost*, and *The Crosstime Journal*, while SF is published in *On Spec*, *The Crosstime Journal*, and *Senary*.

*Senary*, "a literary journal of the fantastic," which was introduced at Context '91, has been slow producing its second issue but it has just recently been printed. The perfect-bound once-yearly "anthology" includes work by SFWAns Charles de Lint and Mary Choo. Payment is a share of royalties.

*The Crosstime Journal* is produced in Calgary by the Imaginative Fiction Writers Association. *The Journal* recently had an update in *Scavenger's Newsletter* saying they weren't receiving enough publishable manuscripts.

*Lost* is a zine produced in New Hamburg, Ontario, that publishes horror — no SF or F — and the editor is looking for surreal, disturbing tales, with plenty of mood and atmosphere.

A magazine for writers of traditional and high fantasy is *Bardic Runes*. *Bardic Runes* pays a half-cent a word and is looking for short stories of 3,500 words or less which must be set in pre-industrial society.

Take your pick —

- *On Spec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*, Copper Pig Writers' Society, Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 5G6.
- *Senary*, Ste. 105 - 9650-20 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, T6N 1G1.
- *The Crosstime Journal*, Colin Remillard, ed.; Larry Gasper, assoc. ed.; Norman Dupuis, poetry/non-fictioned.; 4603 1233-9 Ave. SE, Calgary, Alberta, T2G 5H7.
- *Lost*, Adam Thornton, ed.; 67 Seyler St., New Hamburg, Ontario, N0B 2G0.
- *Bardic Runes*; Michael McKenny, ed.; 424 Cambridge St. South; Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 4H5. \*

## MEMBER INTERVIEW

## Karen Wehrstein

by Robert S. Hadji

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**Robert Hadji:** I'd like to start by examining the development of your first two novels, *Lion's Heart* and its sequel, *Lion's Soul* (Baen, 1991).

**Karen Wehrstein:** I've been working on various forms of this project for sixteen years. I was 13 when I had the initial idea for the character. I thought it was going to be a short story, but it got longer, and it got longer, and it got longer. And as I grew up and changed, it changed. Over the past few years I've managed to work it into something that, to my delight, I've found marketable. I was originally planning to write it as three or four books. I sent Baen the first book, and the outline, and they wanted me to jam it all into one book, as they felt at the time that this was the only way they could market it. So I did. But the final page count in print would have been 782 pages, so they split it in two. That's better than asking me to cut a third, which is what I was afraid of.

**RH:** *Lion's Heart* is a fantasy with a very realistic texture — evident in the depth of characterization and the tactile detail of the world you describe.

**KW:** I should put this world into context, because it's not just my world anymore. I merged my fictional setting with S. M. Stirling's and Shirley Meier's. While we each have distinct visions of our fantasy worlds, we all realize that the three of them fit conveniently together. That was, in part, a social thing, and also probably a marketing thing, to Baen's advantage as much as to ours. Steve and Shirley had already joined theirs when they did *The Sharpest Edge*. We were originally going to call this whole milieu the "World of the Earned Fire," but Baen prefers "Fifth Millennium." That logo is going to appear on future books in the series.

**RH:** What about the project you are currently working on?

**KW:** Well, that's *Shadow's Son*, a sequel to Steve and Shirley's *The Cage*. It's a triple collaboration between us which will come out sometime in 1991. It involves the lead characters from *The Cage* and Chevenga from *Lion's Heart*.

**RH:** Would you care to discuss the actual collaborative process?

**KW:** Well, basically you lock the three writers and three computers in an isolated cottage up north and do nothing but split wood, swim, and write until it's done. We have a kind of division of labour, with each of us doing the scenes that feature a particular character. We get Steve to do descriptions because he likes doing them — and battle scenes, because he likes doing them even better. We copy all the files around on three computers. It's actually quite difficult to organize.

**RH:** Maintaining consistencies of plot and characterization, certainly, but also cultural details and such ...

**KW:** Oh, yes. For instance, we maintain the "Earned Fire Supplemental Dictionary" as an authoritative source for the foreign language words when we spellcheck. We basically use the published works for reference — *Lion's Heart*, *Lion's Soul*, *The Cage*, and *The Sharpest Edge*. Collaboration has its advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages in this case, with three people who have very different ideas, is that you do get the inconsistencies, the richness, the scope — particularly in characterizations, but I guess it's true in more respects

than that. Having three heads is better than one. It's great. We have arguments. A couple of times somebody has come to somebody else and said, look, I'm really frustrated. My character disagrees with another character, or feels bad about something, or frustrated, and I've said, take what you feel about the character, make the character feel it and put it in the book. And that's how it goes.

**RH:** Whereas solo work ... ?

**KW:** *Lion's Heart* was a very simple process: one person sits down at a computer and cranks it out. I had the story so set in my head, having worked with it for sixteen years, though it changed all over the place, that I didn't write it in order. I wrote it scene by scene, whatever scene I felt like writing that day.

**RH:** Are there more books waiting to emerge from that world?

**KW:** Not in Chevenga's life — I killed him off. But he's going to weave in and out as a character in other books. Sometimes as a major character, sometimes as a minor character. And there's another thing about point of view here: the final version of *Lion's Heart* was written all from Chevenga's point of view, but there are other things I want to say about him, that I can only say from other narrative points of view. So hopefully I'll get the opportunity.

**RH:** I'd like to explore your development as a writer.

**KW:** When I was a child I thought that I was going to be an artist, because I drew obsessively until I was about 12 or 13. I realize, looking back on the artwork that I did then and more recently, that they are all illustrations to stories. I was trying to express stories through drawings, because I didn't know how to write yet. At 13 or so, I got good enough at writing to satisfy myself somewhat. And then I started writing in earnest. By 14 or 15, I had a rather long novel about Chevenga. I went through high school, working on it, taking creative-writing courses. I had a creative-writing teacher called Natalie Walker and she predicted that I'd be in print someday, and she was right! So I'm going to send her a copy first. I was very closed about my writing then. When I first started out, it was hidden under a pillow when my parents came in the room. That's how I felt about it.

**RH:** That's interesting. This began as an inner world, a personal vision, yet gradually you moved from telling this story for, and to, yourself, to wanting to tell it, to share it, with others.

**KW:** Yes. I showed an excerpt from what's now *Lion's Soul* to that teacher. She loved it. She gave me a wonderful mark, encouraged me. That kept me going.

**RH:** But you chose to study journalism, rather than creative writing, at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. Do you feel this was beneficial?

**KW:** Oh, absolutely. I think it improved my stuff. I tore it all down to nothing, and built it all back up again, using the good stuff from before and the good stuff from journalism. And the result is somewhere in between. I think that having those two things has enabled me to be versatile with style. I don't have one style. I use several different ones. There's the style in which I wrote *Lion's Heart*; that's not my style, that's Chevenga's style. When I'm writing Chevenga, I'm roleplaying — I'm pretending that I'm him telling his story. Other stories mean other styles, though there'll always be a similarity.

**RH:** Your "post-graduate" studies, so to speak, have been pursued in a Toronto writers' workshop, "The Bunch of Seven." Do you feel this has supplemented your formal training?

**KW:** If anything, I would say the Bunch was my best training ground in writing fiction — fantasy fiction. Every member offers critiques of works-in-progress, and we constantly give each other encouragement, which is every bit as important. We meet somewhere between every

three weeks and monthly. We bring in submissions — a chapter, a short story. We used to read them aloud at meetings, but now we exchange manuscripts, either over the Bunch of Seven computer bulletin board system or hand to hand. We realized that what was written to be read by the eye maybe should be critiqued that way.

**RH:** The Bunch has also used less conventional techniques, at least for a writer's workshop. You do roleplaying, blocking out physical action, say, in fight scenes. But you also use this to explore emotional states of characters. Somewhat like "method" acting exercises, to make things more real.

**KW:** Yes. We do all of the above. The nice thing about roleplaying is that you end up with things that have a more plausible feel to them and a broader scope. Sometimes I've written scenes verbatim from roleplaying. More often, they get modified. As far as roleplaying collaborations go, sometimes it doesn't work that way. Steve, Shirley and I, for *Shadow's Son*, aren't roleplaying at all.

**RH:** What would you consider formative influences on your writing?

**KW:** When I was about 13, I saw a book on my mother's shelf that I knew was going to change my life: *The King Must Die* by Mary Renault, about Theseus, one of my favourite heroes in Greek Mythology. I got very fascinated with Greek Mythology when I was a kid. And Mary Renault is the number-one influence. When I was a teenager, I decided that I was going to teach myself to write by shamelessly aping her in every conceivable way. Back then, if I wrote something, I knew it was good if it sounded like Mary Renault.

**RH:** Which other writers influenced you?

**KW:** Gene Wolfe. I discovered *The Book of the New Sun* back in, oh, 1980. I was incredibly impressed by his style and his command of language. Oh yes, and his delightful strangeness. And James Joyce, and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Ursula K. Le Guin, for style, content, treatment of cultures, all of the above. I have a particular weakness for *The Left Hand of Darkness*. And Kurt Vonnegut. I've always liked him for his absurdity, his contemporary weirdness.

**RH:** What about Joseph Campbell? Specifically, *The Hero of a Thousand Faces*.

**KW:** Well, I wouldn't call it a literary influence. I mean, I've read *The Hero of a Thousand Faces* recently enough to go, okay, here's the epic format, here are the rules, how much does my story fit in. I did notice that what I've written does match up in a lot of ways. But I wasn't consciously writing a classic epic, just what I felt was right.

**RH:** You have a ghost story in the Canadian anthology, *Shivers* [Seal Books, May 1990]. What else have you got in the works?

**KW:** The next solo work I'm going to submit is a novel called *Kal*, which is sort of an urban fantasy. And what it is, which I didn't think it was going to be, is humour. I wasn't trying to write something funny, it just happened that way. A post-technological person, who is a kind of wise-ass, gets flipped through time into a contemporary person's bathroom. We did a bunch of roleplays on what happens. There's two and a half chapters so far. I've also got an idea for a hard science fiction story; I'd like to bring a certain grace to writing hard science fiction. \*

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*Robert Hadji has collected fantastic literature for almost 30 years, has worked as a specialist dealer/consultant in the field, and has had articles published in The Penguin Encyclopedia of Supernatural, Horror: 100 Best Books, Twilight Zone Magazine, and American Fantasy. He also edited the Canadian dark fantasy magazine Borderland and contributed articles to its forerunner, Miriad.*

# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

Publisher: *Who's That Coeurl? Press*



SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
CANADIAN REGION

7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5

Phone: (416) 882-5033 • Fax: (416) 886-1624 • CompuServe: 76702,747 • GEnie: RJ.Sawyer

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## The Canadian Behind The Library of Tomorrow

The Library of Tomorrow is a new SF electronic-publishing venture. For a flat \$5 per month, subscribers will be able to download as much previously published SF as they like. The Library will be available through Internet, commercial online serves, and computer bulletin boards. Twenty-five percent of subscription revenues will go into a pool to pay authors for the use of their work.

The Library's founder is Brad Templeton, a Canadian best known to the computing community for moderating Internet's "rec.humor.funny" the world's most widely read electronic conference. Brad is the son of bestselling Canadian novelist Charles Templeton.

Agent Richard Curtis says, "Brad Templeton has seen the future of electronic publishing, and he's not only figured out the best way to publish fiction in this new media, he's probably figured out the only way." Brad spoke to Robert J. Sawyer about his new venture:

**Robert J. Sawyer:** In Canada, most forays into what one might think of as SF territory — "what if?" scenarios and stories set in the future, such as your father's *Act of God* and *World of One* — are published as mainstream. Will the Library be a solution to the difficulties Canadian writers have in getting SF published domestically?

**Brad Templeton:** Yes and no. My dad certainly doesn't consider his very-near-future stuff to be SF of any sort. I was critical of his first novel, *The Kidnapping of the President*, because it was set in the future and the Secret Service made no use of modern or speculative technology to try to free the President. So it's no surprise that his novels are sold as mainstream. But even Margaret Atwood is sold as mainstream, though some of her books are SF by any definition.

However, to get to the Library — electronic publishing knows far fewer borders than print publishing. People will read from the Library of Tomorrow all over the world, and publish in it from all over. There will be no national borders in the way of submitting or buying fiction.

I don't want to make any misrepresentations about the Library as an instant panacea. At first it will be a small market that pays well per reader but has few readers. Someday, however, this is how the bulk of fiction publishing will work, and in that day we'll see a global market where the minimum-print-run limitations of the Canadian market are not a barrier to the Canadian writer. My dad writes number-one bestsellers and has no problem getting published. That's not true for a good but unknown author who has to convince a paper publisher that her book will sell enough in Canada to pay for the print run. Electronic publishing will eliminate this barrier to entry — though in the end, if you don't sell much you won't make a lot of money. Not much can stop that.

**RJS:** Yours is a small, start-up operation. Why should we as professional writers be interested?

**BT:** Even if it does start small, as any honest man must admit a new and experimental venture might, the key is that we're only publishing existing work, and expect to pay writers a very professional rate *per reader*. This makes it worth doing, even if it starts slow.

**RJS:** Yours is the latest in a series of plans to distribute fiction without using paper. Why should we believe that this one will succeed?

**BT:** The flat monthly rate is the key. People love it. In the electronic media, flat rate is the only path to consumer success. Look at TV, cable, and all the online services these days. People think of flat rate as being free — and they will often pay more for it than they would for pay-to-use services. The big mistake that other electronic-publishing ventures have made is to think that the electronic media are exciting in and of themselves. They aren't. Reading on a CRT is not nearly as good as paper. Reading on a laptop LCD can be as good, but it's certainly not much better. Getting books by computer can be more convenient for many, but not for all. The win is not in the media, it's in the results. The flat-rate scheme is impossible in the print media. And so are the high royalty rates that come from removing the printing and paper industries from the channel.

**RJS:** You're selling "all the SF you can read for \$5 a month," which is great if you're a glutton. But what about connoisseurs?

**BT:** This will entice the connoisseurs. For \$5, you don't buy a single book, you buy a library: all those works are there for you to read whenever you want, right at home. If somebody says, "I suggest you read the following great old short story," then you already have it, have paid for it, and can read it. This is how flat rate works. We expect many people to not get their "money's worth" in terms of how much they pay for a book, but instead to get their money's worth from having permanent "free" access to all the stuff they might want to read. Many people buy a cable channel and only watch one or two movies on it in a month. They're paying far more than it would cost to go to the video store, but they like the idea that 40 movies are there for them each month at no extra cost. Many people subscribe to a flat-rate online service like Prodigy and *never sign on*. They pay to know they can sign on whenever they want at no extra charge.

**RJS:** Okay, how does an author get involved?

**BT:** We're not doing new fiction right now. We're taking this one step at a time and doing existing, published fiction. And we will gladly accept that from big- and small-name authors alike. We will take submissions via e-mail, modem upload, and floppy disks in the mail. If it was published in a professional market, we'll put it in the Library of Tomorrow — it's as simple as that. For submission guidelines, write to P.O. Box 1479, Cupertino, CA U.S.A. 95015. \*

## SFWA NEWS

## Canadian Status

A little update on the status of the Canadian Region of SFWA seems to be in order. First, *the Canadian Region of SFWA does indeed formally and legally exist, and every Canadian-resident SFWAn is a part of it.* The Region was created by a binding vote of SFWA's Board of Directors under the Bova administration, following the unanimous membership vote in favour of establishing the Region taken at SFWA's 1992 Annual General Meeting in Atlanta. The Canadian Region is a done deal.

Second, Robert J. Sawyer was legally elected as Canadian Regional Director during SFWA's 1992 General Elections. Rob's term is three years, beginning July 1, 1992, and ending June 30, 1995.

The only outstanding question is whether the Canadian Regional Director will be a full voting member of SFWA's Board of Directors, as are all the other Regional Directors, or an *ex officio* member, with no vote. Unlike the apportioning of SFWA into regions, which, under SFWA's bylaws, can be done by the Board, the addition of voting Directors must be done by a formal vote of the full membership. (Past President Bova was unaware of this when he earlier proposed that a vote on this question be held at the WorldCon in Orlando this month.)

SFWA Treasurer Mike Capobianco recently polled all the Canadian members about whether having a non-voting Director would be acceptable. Overwhelmingly, that option was rejected. The Canadian members have spoken: they want a voting Director, fully equal with the other Regional Directors. Accordingly, President Joe Haldeman will soon put this question to all SFWA members in a by-mail ballot.

Two other questions will be asked on the same ballot. First, in order to prevent SFWA Balkanization, with new regions cropping up all the time, the membership will be asked to approve a bylaw change requiring the creation of future SFWA regions to need two-thirds majority approval from the Board of Directors.

The second question represents another major breakthrough in Canadian power within SFWA: the members will be asked to affirm that professional sales in the English language to Canadian, Mexican, British, Australian, and New Zealand publishers will be acceptable for active membership in SFWA. (Publications will still have to meet minimum word-rate and circulation requirements.)

Please note that bylaw changes require not just a majority of those voting, but also that *the majority consist of at least one third of all those who are eligible to vote.* In other words, a bylaw change can be defeated by low voter turnout, even if those who do vote are unanimously in favour of the change. Please return your ballot promptly. We've already got our Canadian Region and our Canadian Regional Director; let's finish the job by giving that Director a meaningful voice on the Board, and let's open the doors of SFWA to our colleagues who choose to work for our growing list of domestic markets. \*

## MARKET REPORT

## Year's Best Collections

by Edo van Belkom

So you've written a really-good-story, sent it out to all the top markets like *Omni*, *Asimov's*, *Analog*, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, and *Amazing*, and it's come back each time with a letter that contains the familiar phrase, "It's not quite right for us."

Still, you believe in the story and you try the next level of markets like *Pulphouse* and *Midnight Zoo*. Finally you send it out to a few small-press magazines that pay minuscule word rates or in contributor's copies.

Then you're lucky enough to find a small-press editor who understands your vision. Your really-good-story finally sees print, but is published in a magazine whose three-digit circulation ensures that no

one will ever know how good your really-good-story really is.

But you're in luck. First publication is not the end of your story's life. What you've sold is the right to publish your story once; the story itself is still yours to sell over and over again. And if you still believe your really-good-story really is a good story, there are plenty of "Best of the Year" collections to send it to.

For science fiction writers there's *The Year's Best Science Fiction*, published by St. Martin's Press and edited by *Asimov's* Gardner Dozois. You could try sending your story here, but this anthology is generally known as the best of the year from *Asimov's* with one token story from each of the other major magazines. There has never been any call by Dozois for people to send in their stories from obscure markets. You can try, but your chances are probably pretty slim.

Fortunately, not all best-of-the-year anthologies are so narrow-minded. Karl Edward Wagner's *Year's Best Horror Stories* publishes big-name writers, but it has also become known as the place to find horror's up-and-comers. I speak from experience. My first short story was published in *Aethlon*, a publication out of East Tennessee State University, but I was fortunate enough to have Wagner pick it up for Year's Best 20.

Did he truly pick it up?

No. I sent it to him. Wagner tries to read as many small-press and non-genre magazines as he can, but he welcomes writers and editors alike to send him stories. Not much of a gamble for the price of a stamp.

Another anthology that gives equal consideration to pros and newcomers alike is Ellen Datlow and Terry Windling's *Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* annual from St. Martin's Press. Datlow looks at Horror; Windling reads fantasy. This is a two-time winner of the World Fantasy Award for best anthology and the editors both like looking at stories from obscure publications. This anthology also runs a long list of honourable mentions, so even if they don't take your really-good-story they still might acknowledge that it is one.

Another horror anthology is the British collection *Best New Horror* edited by Stephen Jones and Ramsay Campbell and published by Robinson in the U.K. and Carroll and Graf in the U.S.A. They are currently considering stories for their 1993 volume and want work published between December 1991 and December 1992.

Still for horror writers, there's *Quick Chills*, a sort of best-of-the-small-press anthology. The last I heard they had published three collections. The editors of this anthology encourage editors and writers to send them magazines and stories, disposable manuscripts preferred.

Finally, there's even a market for poets. *Year's Best Speculative Poetry* is a relatively new best-of anthology, the first featuring the best science fiction, fantasy, and horror poetry published in 1991.

Remember, all these reprint markets are for really-good-stories. Don't send anything that hasn't seen print. Also, make sure you include all the pertinent information about your story, especially where and when it was first published and what rights were sold to the story's initial publisher.

Take your pick —

- *Year's Best Horror* (DAW), Karl Edward Wagner, Box 1064, Chapel Hill, NC, U.S.A. 27514.
- *Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* (St. Martin's Press). Horror: Ellen Datlow c/o *Omni* Magazine, 1965 Broadway, New York, NY, U.S.A. 10023. Fantasy: Terri Windling, 781 S Calle Escondido, Tuscon, AZ, U.S.A. 85748.
- *Best New Horror*, Stephen Jones and Ramsay Campbell, Robinson Publishing, 130 Park View, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6JU United Kingdom.
- *Quick Chills*, Bob Morrish, Deadline Press, 22910 Summit Rd., Los Gatos, CA, U.S.A. 95030.
- *Year's Best Speculative Poetry*, Roger Dutcher, PO Box 564, Beloit, WI, U.S.A. 53512. \*

## SELF-PROMOTION

## Sell Your Own Books

Got a bunch of copies of your books you'd like to sell? SFWA member Vonda McIntyre may have the solution. Periodically, she uploads to several computer bulletin-board services a file called "Basement Full of Books," an annotated list of books available by mail from their authors. It costs nothing to be on the list. Vonda says she gets perhaps a couple of orders per week, although less-popular writers can probably expect not quite as robust a response.

Says Vonda: "One of the nice things about the list is its immediacy. I can make changes easily at any time, so if you list a book and then run out, or if you get a new title, the change shows up the same day. It's worth it to list a book even if you have only a few copies."

If you'd like to be included, send Vonda a little write-up about your books. She can take listings by email, disk, or hardcopy to:

Vonda N. McIntyre  
P.O. Box 31041, Seattle, WA, U.S.A. 98103-1041  
CompuServe: 72077,61 · GENie: V.MCINTYRE1  
Internet: mcintyre@yang.cpac.washington.edu

Two Canadian authors are currently listed, myself and Teresa Plowright. Other participating writers include Terry Bisson, Harlan Ellison, Kate Wilhelm, Gene Wolfe, and Jane Yolen. To give you a sample of what an entry might look like, here's Teresa's (I also included review excerpts and prices in my entry):

*Dreams of an Unseen Planet* by Teresa Plowright is set on the imaginary planet Gaea, where a frightened colony has been sent from North America.

Outside the protective white shell of the colony, Gaea appears to be a wasteland shrouded in a dense red atmosphere.

Inside, the colonists maintain falsely bright lives in the face of unforeseen biological problems — most importantly, their inability to bear children, which has led to a reproductive ritual called Estros.

Meanwhile, only the main character, Miera, has any perception that the desolate planet is sentient.

For further information, SASE to: Teresa Plowright, RR#1, D18, Bowen Island, B.C., Canada V0N 1G0, Fax: 604-947-0270. \*

## WRITERS' GUIDELINES

## Edge Detector

*Editor's note: Normally, I'd give short shrift to any non-paying market (indeed, the very phrase is an oxymoron), but I'm making an exception for Edge Detector, published twice a year in Montreal. In content and especially art direction, I find it to be parsecs ahead of On Spec, Canada's other English-language zine. Here are its guidelines:*

*Edge Detector* is looking for well-written provocative SF stories. We'd like to see political, psychological, extrapolative, Cyberpunk, Freestyle, Underground, surrealist, or magic-realist SF. No themes or subjects are considered taboo. Science Fiction is a medium for shaking people's preconceptions, so we want stories that take chances, that have something to say, that aren't safe and comforting. We're not impressed by one-idea sci-fi stories which rely on "twist" endings. We try for a broad definition of "Speculative Fiction," and *sometimes* publish work which is not quite SF, but not quite mainstream, either.

Contributors receive two or more copies and a three-issue subscription. Maximum length: 7,000 words. Sample copies of issues #2 and #3 are available for \$4.00 each. *Edge Detector* is extensively illustrated, and offset-printed in 8½x11" format. It is currently open only to Canadian writers. Glenn Grant, editor, *Edge Detector*, Box 36, Station H, Montreal, H3G 2K5. \*

## WORLD FANTASY AWARDS

## de Lint times Four

Ottawa SFWA member Charles de Lint has four works nominated for this year's World Fantasy Awards: His *The Little Country* is up for Best Novel. "Our Lady of the Harbour" is competing in the Best Novella category. And Charles has two nominees for Best Short Story, "The Conjure Man" and "Pity the Monsters." Congratulations, Charles!

The winners will be announced November 1st at the 1992 World Fantasy Convention in Pine Mountain, Georgia. \*

## SPECIAL EVENT

## Celebrating Judy

At 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 15, the Harbourfront International Festival of Authors in Toronto will honour Judith Merril. Paying tribute will be Pierre Berton, John Robert Colombo, Samuel R. Delany, Michael Moorcock, Fred Pohl, Spider Robinson, and Elisabeth Vonarburg. Tickets are \$6. Box office: (416) 973-4000. \*

## SFWA APPOINTMENT

## Edo van Belkom

Dan Hatch, editor of *The SFWA Bulletin*, has appointed Edo van Belkom of Brampton, Ontario, as the new Market Reports columnist, replacing Lou Grinzo. Edo, who has a degree in Creative Writing from York University, brings to his new role five years of experience as a staff reporter with the Ontario newspapers *The Cambridge Reporter*, *The North York Mirror*, and *The Brampton Times*. Edo's Canadian market-reports column for *Alouette* is reprinted in *Communiqué*, the newsletter published by SF Canada. \*

## JUST RELEASED!

## Ark of Ice

Nova Scotia's Pottersfield Press has just released *Ark of Ice*, a \$14.95 trade-paperback anthology of Canadian SF, edited by Lesley Choyce. Contributors are Margaret Atwood, John Bell, G. M. Cunningham, Candace Dorsey, Douglas Fetherling, Timothy Findley, Phyllis Gotlieb, Catherine Govier, Terence Green, H. A. Hargreaves, Monica Hughes, Eileen Kernaghan, W. P. Kinsella, Tom Marshall, Gar Reeves-Stevens, Spider Robinson, Robert J. Sawyer, Jean-Louis Trudel, Geoffrey Ursell, Sansoucy Walker, and Andrew Weiner.

Pottersfield Press, RR 2, Porters Lake, Nova Scotia B0J 2S0. \*

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

## Bakka Discount Cards

New Canadian SFWA membership cards are enclosed with this mailing. Show your card before your cash purchases are rung up at Bakka, Canada's oldest SF specialty store, and you'll get 20% off.

Bakka recently celebrated its 20th birthday. It's the only SF store in the world to be managed by an active member of SFWA, Del Rey author Michelle Sagara. The store is owned by John Rose, whom we thank for offering this generous discount. *Bakka*, 282 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A1. \*

## MEMBER NEWS

## Muskoka Retreats

SFWAn Karen Wehrstein and her partner Shirley Meier run "Muskoka Writing Retreats" from their home, which sits on 30 forested acres in Ontario's cottage country. When aspirant writers asks you for advice, you might consider referring them to Karen and Shirley.

Those participating in the weekend-long retreats can submit a manuscript in advance, and Karen and Shirley will critique it. A typical schedule, beginning Friday evening at 7:00 and wrapping up at 4:00 on Sunday, includes talks on "The Most Common Mistakes Beginning Writers Make," "How to Get Ideas," "The Craft of Writing," "The Business of Writing," and "The Psychology of Writing." Cost, including accommodation and meals, is \$150.

Karen is the author of Baen's *Lion's Heart* and *Lion's Soul*. *Quill & Quire* calls her "a master of style and depth." Shirley is the author of Baen's *Shadow's Daughter* and co-author of *The Sharpest Edge*, *The Cage*, and *Shadow's Son*. *Raymond's Reviews* on Internet calls her work an "intense psychological study without sacrificing any of the action, colour, and other virtues."

Karen and Shirley can be reached at Muskoka Writing Retreats, Hearthstone Independent, R.R. #2, Huntsville, Ontario, POA 1K0, phone (705) 789-7497. \*

## MARKET OPPORTUNITY

## SF Plays Wanted

Solar Stage, Eastern Canada's only professional theatre specializing in one-act plays, is making an open call for new scripts for its new play festival, *Word Works '93*, which will focus on works of science fiction. Scripts for SF plays of up to 60 minutes in length should be received by December 1, 1992. Include a short biographical note and SASE with your script. *Stephen Coopman, Artistic Director, Solar Stage, 4950 Yonge Street, Box 115, North York, Ontario M2N 6K1, phone: (416) 221-9855.* \*

## CONFERENCE NEWS

## Can-Con '93

When she was in Toronto this summer, I asked Cath Jackel if there was ever going to be another ConText, the literary SF conference held in 1991 and 1989 in Edmonton. She said probably not; most of the organizers are burnt out. But a group in Ottawa seems to have picked up the gauntlet, and is offering the annual "Conference on Canadian Content in Speculative Literature," or "Can-Con." The first one was held last May, with SF Guest of Honour **Donald Kingsbury** and Fantasy GoH **Guy Gavriel Kay**. Next year's, scheduled for May 14-16, will have **Robert J. Sawyer** as SF Guest of Honour and **Shirley Meier** and **Karen Wehrstein** as Fantasy Guests of Honour. For more information, write: Can-Con '93, Box 105, 220 Woodridge Cres., Nepean, Ontario K2B 8G1. \*

## CLOSED MARKET

## Pulphouse

Editor Dean Wesley Smith has announced that, because of an enormous backlog of purchased but not yet published stories, *Pulphouse: A Fiction Magazine* will be closed to submissions for a full year, until September 1993. \*

## OBITUARY

## Northern Lights

I've decided to stop producing my newsletter *Northern Lights: Canadian Achievements in SF*. The third issue, in production now, will be the last.

*Northern Lights* started out in 1982 as an annual overview of Canadian SF news, printed as part of *The Bakka Bookie Sheet*, the quarterly catalog of Canada's oldest SF specialty store. In 1987, *Northern Lights* expanded into a twice-yearly column in *SOL Rising*, the Aurora-Award-winning newsletter of The Friends of The Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy. And, in November 1991, it became a standalone newsletter (ISSN 1188-1860), mailed out with *The Bakka Bookie Sheet* to over 1200 Canadian SF buyers, with several hundred more copies given away in Bakka and at seminars and conventions. In 1992, *Northern Lights* was nominated for the Aurora Award for Best English "Other" work.

## Northern Lights

Canadian Achievements in SF

Issue No. 2

March 1992

## Awards and Honours

How's this for good news/bad news? The bad news is that, at the last moment, Doubleday canceled the hardcover of Robert Charles Wilson's *Bridge of Years* reported last issue, and released the book as a trade paperback instead. The good news is that *Bridge of Years* has been nominated for the Philip K. Dick Award, given to honor the best work of SF published originally in paperback....

The *Ecce* 1991 Recommended Reading List contains five Canadian works. Fantasy novels: *The Little Country* by Ottawa's Charles de Lint (Morrow), Horror/Dark Fantasy Novels: *Blood Price* by Tanya Huff (DAW), First Novels: *The Initiate Brother* by Sean Russell (DAW) and *Into the Dark Lands* by Michelle Sagara (Del Rey), Novellas: *Our Lady of the Harbour* by Charles de Lint (Ascololi).

Only two Canadian works made the preliminary Nebula Award ballot this year (down from five last year), and both were novels: Charles de Lint's *The Little Country* (Morrow) and *The Difference Engine* by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. *The Difference Engine* was recently released in paperback.

## SF at Harbourfront and the Science Centre

The Harbourfront International Readings Series in Toronto will feature local SF writers in March. On March 24, it's Terence M. Green, Michelle Sagara, and S. M. Stirling. On March 31, Tanya Huff and Robert J. Sawyer will read. General admission is \$6, plus GST (free to members of the Harbourfront Reading Series). Readings begin at 8 p.m. in the Brigantine Room, York Quay Centre, 235 Queens Quay West. It's best to order tickets in advance. Box office: (416) 973-4000; info: 973-3000; Membership: 973-4761.

The Ontario Science Centre is holding «SF»: The Science Fiction, Space and Fantasy Show» in March. Robert J. Sawyer will be talking about writing SF on Saturday, March 14, Sunday, March 21, and Sunday, March 22, from 2:30 to 3:30 in Theatre B. Shirley Meier and Karen Wehrstein will be taking turns giving talks on SF writing every weekday from March 16 through 20 at 2:30 in Theatre B. From March 14 to 22, Karen and Shirley will be in the Great Hall daily from 11:00 to 5:00 helping children write SF stories. Louise Hybler organized the festival. All events are free with Centre admission.

## Pioneering Canadian SF

I've come across an interesting piece of pioneering Canadian SF: a time-travel story by paleontologist Charles Hazelius Sternberg. The story, set on the Canadian prairies in the Mesozoic, was first published in 1917 as Chapters 11-13 of his *Hunting Dinosaurs in the Bad Lands of the Red Deer River, Alberta Canada*. A reprint edition was issued in 1985 by NewWest Press, Edmonton, and has an introduction discussing Sternberg's one foray into SF.

A Supplement to *THE BAKKA BOOKIE SHEET* - ISSN 1188-1860  
Published by *Who's That Gooat? Press* - Please send SF publishing news to:  
R. J. Sawyer • 500 Finch West • Suite 301 • Willowdale, ON • M2R 1N1 • ☎ 1382 Robert J. Sawyer

Response from readers was gratifying, but the support from the pro community was less so. Over the years, I sent three separate letters to every Canadian SF pro soliciting news for *Northern Lights*. In the decade that this publicity venue has existed, only about a dozen written news items were submitted by authors; all of the hundreds of others I reported I had to ferret out myself.

Despite the fact that in its final newsletter incarnation, *Northern Lights* reached more Canadians than did *Locus* and *Science Fiction Chronicle* combined, despite its reaching a dozen times more people than SF Canada's *Communiqué*, despite it having been, since 1987, the principal bibliographic resource used by the Aurora Awards committees in producing the annual list of eligible works, despite highlights from it being reprinted in each issue of the major U.S. fanzine *The Astromancer Quarterly*, despite all this, Canadian SF writers didn't see the advantages inherent in having this type of ongoing free publicity vehicle. In the end, it was simply taking me too long to research each issue, and I've decided that, given the apathy on the part of other pros, my time could better be spent on other projects.

I hope at some future date, someone will step forward to produce a new ongoing report on Canadian achievements in SF. Until then, may *Northern Lights* rest in peace. \*

## LIES, DAMNED LIES AND STATISTICS

## Nebula Award Recommenders

Compiled by Barbara Delaplace, Carolyn Clink, and Robert J. Sawyer

Here's a listing of people who recommended works for the Nebula Awards in 1991. In each category, everyone who recommended at least two works is listed, along with the total number of recommendations that person made in that category. Novel recommenders compiled by Robert J. Sawyer and Carolyn Clink. Short-fiction recommenders compiled by Barbara Delaplace.

(Some names have been abbreviated)	4 Steele	2 Stirling	17 Gunn E	2 Boston	6 Aldridge
	4 Swanwick	2 Turzillo	16 McDevitt	2 Egan	6 Athearn
	4 Wellen	2 Watson	15 McKenna	2 Frost	6 Dutcher
<b>NOVELS</b>	3 Anderson Kev	2 Zindell	13 Swanwick	2 Gluckman	6 Kress
	3 Betancourt		12 Daniel	2 Johnson T	6 Moroz
27 Resnick	3 Bujold	<b>NOVELLAS</b>	12 Kelly	2 McKiernan	6 Roessner-Her
27 Hooks	3 Cornell		10 Athearn	2 Millitello	6 Waters
23 de Lint	3 Engh	9 Gunn E	10 Austin	2 Moon	5 Barton
17 Gunn E	3 Fowler	9 Severance	10 Delaplace	2 Rosenblum	5 Casper
14 Sawyer	3 Frazier	8 McDevitt	9 Resnick	2 Russo	5 Frost
13 Paul	3 Haggard	8 McKenna	8 Cornell	2 Sawyer	5 Krueger
12 Kimbriel	3 Kernaghan	7 Delaplace	8 Fowler	2 van Belkom	5 Newman
11 Brandewine	3 Kingsbury	6 Casper	8 Landis G	2 Waters	5 Wentworth
11 Gellis	3 Lewis A	6 Kelly	8 Morlan	2 Wheeler	4 Boston
11 McDevitt	3 Newman	6 Resnick	8 Paul	2 y Robertson	4 Haggard
11 Waters	3 Nicoll	5 de Lint	8 Severance		4 Johnson
10 Krueger	3 Robinson Kim	5 Ecklar	8 Stone	<b>SHORT STORIES</b>	4 Kessel
10 Lichtenberg	3 Severance	4 Austin	8 Tyers		4 Montana
9 Finch	3 Sherman DE	4 Betancourt	7 de Lint	40 Hooks	4 Moon
9 Kagan	3 Sinor	4 Fowler	7 Edelman	38 Resnick	4 Murphy P
9 Moon	3 Smith Jul	4 Frazier	7 Moroz	36 de Lint	4 Scarborough
9 Person	3 Toombs	4 Hooks	7 Soukup	32 McDevitt	4 Van Name
9 St. Andre	3 Turtledove	4 Kress	6 Bohnhoff	20 Delaplace	3 Anthony P
9 Stith	3 Van Name	4 Morlan	6 Casper	18 Morlan	3 Baker
8 Andrews	3 Wurts	4 Roessner-Her	6 Ecklar	18 Swanwick	3 Bowes
8 Austin	3 Zebrowski	4 Rosenblum	6 Yolen	17 Austin	3 Cox
8 Barton	2 Ash	4 Stone	5 Frazier	16 Fowler	3 Gilman
8 Benford	2 Bohnhoff	3 Aldridge	5 Grinzo	15 Kagan	3 Latner
8 McGarry	2 Costikyan	3 Andrews	5 Knaak	15 McKenna	3 Mathews
7 Delaplace	2 Douglas	3 Bohnhoff	5 Person	15 Soukup	3 St. Andre
7 Kessel	2 Dutcher	3 Cornell	5 Stevens-Arce	14 Knaak	3 y Roberston
7 Smith Sher	2 Dyson	3 Howe	5 Van Name	12 Daniel	2 Anderson Kev
6 Bartter	2 Emerson	3 Knaak	4 Barton	12 Kelly	2 Anderson Po
6 Cadigan	2 Greenberg R	3 Landis G	4 Cadigan	12 Frazier	2 Banks
6 King TJ	2 Gribbin	2 Anderson Kev	4 Goonan	12 Tyers	2 Brandewyne
6 McCaffrey	2 Hood	2 Athearn	4 McGarry	12 Yolen	2 Brunet
6 Stone	2 Karr	2 Edelman	4 Smith Sar	11 Ecklar	2 Carter
6 Wells	2 Klein	2 Johnson T	4 Turzillo	10 Bohnhoff	2 Easton
6 Wheeler	2 Landis G	2 Kagan	4 Wentworth	10 Cornell	2 Emshwiller
5 Aldridge	2 Le Guin	2 Lambe	3 Aldridge	10 Dyson	2 Gluckman
5 Baker	2 Marks	2 Moon	3 Anderson Kev	10 Edelman	2 Gribbin
5 Bisson	2 Mathews	2 Paul	3 Anthony P	10 Hegenberger	2 Hendrix
5 Frost	2 McIntyre	2 Person	3 Brunet	10 Paul	2 Hightower
5 Kelly	2 McKenna	2 Sawyer	3 Dyson	10 Sawyer	2 Karr
5 Koman	2 McKiernan	2 Scarborough	3 Howe	10 Stone	2 Kimbriel
5 Lund	2 Miesel	2 Shelley	3 Kessel	9 Cadigan	2 Lethem
5 Mixon	2 Millitello	2 Toman	3 Kress	9 Gunn E	2 McAuley
5 Murphy P	2 Moroz	2 Turzillo	3 Krueger	9 Howe	2 McKiernan
5 Soukup	2 Novitski	2 Tyers	3 Lethem	9 Kale	2 Person
5 Yolen	2 O'Neal K	2 Waters	3 McAuley	9 Landis G	2 Price J
4 Banks	2 Park J	2 Wentworth	3 McMullen	9 Millitello	2 Roberts R
4 bes Shahar	2 Romberg	2 Yolen	3 Newman	8 Costikyan	2 Robinson Kim
4 Easton	2 Rosenbloom		3 Nicoll	8 McGarry	2 Rogers B
4 Gilliland	2 Russo		3 Richards	8 Nicoll	2 Shelley
4 Kress	2 Scarborough	<b>NOVELETTES</b>	3 Robinson Kim	8 Severance	2 Smith DA
4 Kushner	2 Schwader		3 Roessner-Her	8 Turzillo	2 Smith Sar
4 McAuley	2 Sherman Jos	19 Hooks	3 Shelley	7 Schwader	2 Toman
4 Rasmussen	2 Smith DA	19 Kagan	2 Banks	7 Stevens-Arce	2 Vande Velde
4 Roberson	2 Smith Sar		2 Betancourt		2 Wheeler

## MEMBER INTERVIEW

## Robert J. Sawyer

by Edo van Belkom

First Published in Pulsar! Science Fiction

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Rob Sawyer's first novel, *Golden Fleece* (Warner, 1990) garnered raves from many reviewers, including Orson Scott Card, who chose it as the best SF novel of the year. *Golden Fleece* won both Canada's Best-English-Novel Aurora Award and the CompuServe SF Forum's HOMer Award for Best First Novel. Sawyer's next two books were auctioned in 1991, with Ace Books coming out the winner. The first, *Far-Seer* — Book One in his Quintaglio series — was released in June 1992. It also met with glowing reviews: *Asimov's* called it a "tour de force," *Quill & Quire* said it was "a riveting tale; refreshingly original; thrilling, compelling — a real treat," and *The Toronto Star* declared, "Without question, one of the year's outstanding sf books." The sequel, *Fossil Hunter*, will be out in May 1993, and Ace has bought a third Quintaglio book, as well. *End of an Era*, the other book Ace purchased in the 1991 auction, will be published in 1994. A full-time writer since 1983, Sawyer sold his first SF story in 1979 and made the jump to writing SF exclusively 10 years later.

**Edo van Belkom:** You are a hard science fiction writer. Was that something you consciously set out to do or it is the kind of SF that you're most comfortable with?

**Robert J. Sawyer:** The only SF that really appealed to me when I was growing up was hard SF. I was a fan of Clarke and Asimov from day one. I've always had an interest in scientists and right up until the end of high school I wanted to be a scientist professionally. My particular interest was paleontology, but when it came time to actually assess my career goals, I couldn't see spending another ten years in school so that when I finally graduated I could make \$18,000 a year sifting dirt. But I've always been interested in science, and indeed I had an interest in science before I had an interest in SF, so I've naturally gravitated towards SF that has real scientific content to it.

**EVB:** One of the knocks against hard-SF writers is that their characters are often wooden and their sole purpose is merely to advance the plot. You create well-defined characters while still writing hard SF. Is this something you knew you had to pay particular attention to or was it something that came to you naturally?

**RJS:** It was neither, unfortunately. When I started writing SF, even when I first started selling, I was not skilled in characterization. In fact I had no particular flare for it and I think I shared the same drawback that Clarke and Asimov and many other hard-SF writers shared: I thought, gee, the ideas are so exciting that characterization isn't necessary. The thing that appealed to me about SF writing — and I started writing it when I was a teenager — was that here was a literature in which I could do things they never touched on in the high-school English classroom: things of speculation and sense of wonder and alien civilizations and vast starry vistas. In my early twenties I did my first draft of what eventually became the novelette version of *Golden Fleece*. I showed it to Terence M. Green, an established writer, and he took me aside and said, "You know, the science is great. I love your science. I love your speculation, but I don't care about the people in this. I don't believe the characters." This really took me aback because I kind of thought characterization wasn't important in SF. So I've really made an effort for about eight years now to focus on characterization. The greatest thing that happened to *Golden Fleece*, when it was eventually expanded to a novel, was Orson Scott Card picked it as the best SF novel of 1990. Well, I met Card when he was in Toronto last summer and said, "I'm really glad

you liked the novel. I have another coming out, *Far-Seer*." And he said, "Tell me a bit about it." I told him, "Well, you might not like it because it doesn't have quite the same level of mathematics and engineering in it that made *Golden Fleece* such a hard-SF novel." And he said, "That's okay, I didn't care about any of that stuff; the thing I liked most about your book was the characterization." Well, for me that was it. That's when I knew I'd succeeded.

**EVB:** Your second novel, *Far-Seer*, features the Quintaglios, which are basically dinosaurs, tyrannosaurs in particular. In the past, the knock against aliens in SF was that they are more like human beings than alien beings. What makes the Quintaglios different from us?

**RJS:** I live in Toronto, which has a reputation worldwide for being a safe city, and yet I was assaulted outside my apartment building a few months ago. Human beings are incredibly violent. And yet when we look at cultures that don't live in these overpopulated cities, they have far less innate violence. I've always been intrigued by why "civilized man" is such a violent being. I think the reason is that humanity is in essence a carnivorous species that paradoxically doesn't kill its own food. Our food is killed by other people for us and we buy it in these pristine Styrofoam packages with cellophane wrappers. The Quintaglios are my exploration of what if you had a civilization where you didn't have to sublimate that urge to kill? I suspect that rather than being a more savage race, you end up with beings who are more compassionate and fundamentally pacifistic because they've got that way of purging their violence.

**EVB:** Your first novel, *Golden Fleece*, was a critical success, but perhaps not as financially successful as you would have liked. Still, you'd sold a total of five novels before your second book had even seen print. Do you consider yourself fortunate, or is it all part of some career plan that's going along according to schedule?

**RJS:** I'm a big believer in career planning. However, I think my career is going better than I could possibly have hoped for. The recognition *Golden Fleece* got was substantially greater than most first novels get, with rave reviews in everywhere from *F&SF* and *Science Fiction Review* to *The Toronto Star* and *Library Journal*. Those reviews really gave my career a boost, putting me in a position where my second and third books could be auctioned. I think my career is probably two or three years ahead of where it would have been if I hadn't been lucky enough to have *Golden Fleece* noticed.

**EVB:** In the Canadian SF community you have a reputation for doing more self-promotion than many of us are used to. How do answer the charge of being a bit of a hustler?

**RJS:** I want to continue to write SF full-time. I have made my living as a writer since 1983, but most of that was through doing non-fiction and corporate work. I do not believe SF is a buyer's market: this idea that whatever crumbs a publisher might throw our way are more than adequate compensation for what we do because anybody can write SF. That's the most crippling myth that SF writers labour under. I flat-out reject that. So I have indeed undertaken to draw some attention to my work. I did 75 bound galleys at my own expense for *Golden Fleece* which cost me, including printing and postage, about \$500. That's the best \$500 I've ever spent in my life! It was pure self-promotion because my publisher, Warner, wasn't going to do any bound galleys of a first novel by an unknown author. I can trace almost every piece of positive publicity directly to my own intervention. I can trace my sale of *Golden Fleece* to the Science Fiction Book Club directly to my drawing it to the attention of Ellen Asher at the 1991 Nebula Awards Banquet and providing her with a sheaf of reviews. I want to write SF full-time, but I do not want to starve in a garret. I want to make a decent living, and if that means I have to push, I don't think there's anything wrong with pushing. But remember: all you can do is make sure people notice your book. The judgment they pass on it is something you have no way of controlling except by doing the best damn job of writing you can.



**EVB:** When you originally wrote *Far-Seer*, did you have plans for it to be part of a continuing series?

**RJS:** This is going to surprise my editor when he reads this. I had no intention of there being a Quintaglio series. Although I'm accused periodically of being crassly commercial in my self-promotion, I believe in the artistic principles of SF. Basically, I'm against series books; I'm against trilogies. I'm against writers going back and yanking the same teat year after year trying to get more milk out of an old idea. When I was writing non-fiction, I had no qualms about writing whatever somebody else wanted me to write. But people were paying me a dollar a word for my non-fiction — I'll write anything for a dollar a word. But if I'm going to take a cut in pay, which I have, the only reason to do that is to write what I want to write. That said, when I handed in *Far-Seer* to my agent, Richard Curtis, he called me up and said, "I loved the book, but you've killed the main character at the end." I said, "Yes. I thought it was quite poignant." "No, no," he said, "How are you going to do a sequel?" I said I had no intention of doing a sequel — this book stands on its own. He said, "No, we can really push this book if we present it as the first book in a series." I mulled it over a few days and then said, "Okay." So the sequel, *Fossil Hunter*, was written completely from scratch. I make peace with myself because I didn't have some crass plan that I was only going to go so far in volume one, and then milk it a little more in volume two, put a teaser in volume three, and keep jerking people along. I want to give people value for their money by giving them a complete work in every book.

**EVB:** You're against writers going back and yanking the same teat, but your first novel, *Golden Fleece*, was expanded from a novelette.

**RJS:** I was heavily influenced by the experience of two of my friends: Andrew Weiner, who wrote a novella, "Station Gehenna," published in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, and Terence M. Green, who wrote a novelette called "Barking Dogs," also published in *F&SF*. Both of them subsequently expanded their works to novel length. This seemed to be a good way to tackle the process of writing a novel. By the time I had written my first novel, I had published well over one hundred magazine articles. But these had all been pieces of 2,000 words in length. The idea of producing even a 60,000-word novel was incredibly daunting to me. Although my goal had always been to write books, the only way I could see myself doing that was step by step, starting with a novelette.

**EVB:** I know you have many times thought about leaving SF and trying another genre, mystery fiction perhaps. Does that thought still enter your mind every once in a while?

**RJS:** There was a very interesting article in the *SFWA Bulletin* recently by a writer who had written shotgun in a bunch of genres and never made any impact in any of them. And that hit home for me because I don't really believe in genres. I believe in writers' voices and there are things Rob Sawyer would like to say that might fit best in a book that didn't have an alien or a spaceship on its cover. This isn't going to make me popular, but sometimes after I've gone to an SF convention or given a reading, some of the people in attendance strike me as not being the audience that I envisioned when I was writing the work. Sometimes it's depressing to write stuff that you think is powerful and has something to say about what it is to be human, only to find that the audience that you most directly interact with is composed of a significant percentage of people who are socially challenged and somewhat limited in their life experience. I have serious aspirations to my craft, but sometimes the feedback I get from the SF audience is not the feedback that I was hoping for. And I know there's an element of career suicide in saying that, and, on the other hand, every once in a while you get a letter or meet somebody who is the kind of person you had in mind when you wrote the book and that recharges the batteries for another round of going up against people who wear propeller beanies and pointed ears, and want to argue every scientific detail with you but don't know anything about life.

**EVB:** At what point will you say, "Damn the publishers and everyone else, I'm going to write the book I want to write, mainstream or not?" Do you think that will ever come?

**RJS:** I think that point is going to come. I'm really happy with my current publisher, which is Ace. But as my aspirations become wider than the category confines it will be interesting to see whether Ace and I continue to have a completely harmonious relationship. But here's Sawyer's Rule of Writing: the more somebody pays you for something, the less likely it will be something you want to write. I have been paid very large sums of money to write things that haven't interested me in the least. I am quite content to be paid much smaller sums of money to write what I want to write. I will gladly write the third and perhaps more Quintaglio books, but the book I'm going to write after the next Quintaglio book is going to be one hundred per cent for me and for the audience that I envision.

**EVB:** You mentioned Terence M. Green earlier in this interview. He has broken out of what Canadians like to call the "SF Ghetto" by having his most recent novel published by McClelland and Stewart, Canada's biggest mainstream publisher. Do you look to his as the ideal career path, the one you'd like to follow?

**RJS:** A lot of people look down on SF. A lot of people who would be moved or touched by my stories will never read them because there are those words "science fiction" on the spines of the books. Terry Green has broken out in the sense that what he writes has transcended the genre boundaries. Those of us within SF will always embrace him as one of us, but he is also reaching the bank executive, the doctor, the high-school teacher, and the rest of the literate readership who would never touch a book with a garish cover and the initials "SF" on the spine. I want to reach that same audience with at least some of my works. Part of what I do will always have the tropes and conventions of traditional SF and will be packaged as nothing but that. But I want to have the room to reach the whole literate audience, not just that portion that goes into the SF section of the bookstore. Whether I have the talent and whether my publishers have the faith in me for that to happen is something that only time will tell. \*

*Edo van Belkom is a member of SFWA and the Horror Writers of America. He has sold two dozen stories of SF, fantasy, and horror to such publications as Aethlon, Gent, Haunts, Midnight Zoo, Northern Frights, On Spec, The Raven, and Year's Best Horror 20. He lives in Brampton, Ontario, with his wife Roberta and son Luke.*

## 1992 AURORA STATISTICS

Here are final voting statistics for this year's English prose Aurora Awards. The underlined figure is the number of nominations; subsequent numbers are first-place votes in each balloting round.

### ENGLISH NOVEL

1st:	<i>Golden Fleece</i> , Robert J. Sawyer	<u>21</u> 22 23 26 31 39 (w)
2nd:	<i>Blood Price</i> , Tanya Huff	<u>08</u> 17 19 21 24 30
3rd:	<i>The Difference Engine</i> , Wm. Gibson	<u>26</u> 17 19 21 24 —
4th:	<i>The Divide</i> , Robert Charles Wilson	<u>09</u> 11 11 11 — —
5th:	<i>The Little Country</i> , Charles de Lint	<u>08</u> 10 11 — — —
6th:	<i>Kill the Editor</i> , Spider Robinson	<u>09</u> 07 — — — —

### ENGLISH SHORT STORY

1st:	"A Niche," Peter Watts [tie]	<u>06</u> 15 16 16 17 17 18 20 (t)
1st:	"Breaking Ball," Mike Skeet [tie]	<u>04</u> 08 09 11 13 17 20 20 (t)
2nd:	"Baseball Memories," E. van Belkom	<u>11</u> 15 15 15 16 17 17 —
3rd:	"... Kzin," S.M. Stirling & G. Bear	<u>05</u> 10 11 13 13 13 — —
4th:	"... Flying Saucers," Hugh Spencer	<u>04</u> 11 11 11 11 — — —
5th:	"Reaper," James Alan Gardner	<u>07</u> 07 07 09 — — — —
6th:	"Raven Sings ...," Charles de Lint	<u>04</u> 07 07 — — — — —
7th:	"The Water Man," Ursula Pflug	<u>04</u> 03 — — — — — *

## NEWS FROM THE "DON'T TAX READING" COALITION

## Facts about the GST on Reading Materials

Don't Tax Reading Coalition · 260 King St. E., Toronto, Ontario · M5A 1K3 · Phone: (416) 361-1408 · Fax: (416) 361-0643

■ **Canada's new Goods and Services Tax is a brand-new tax on reading.** Books were free of Federal taxes from Confederation until last year. No other product has been hit as hard under GST as reading material.

■ **The tax on reading has reduced reading in Canada over the past year, driven Canadians to shop for books outside the country, and harmed our publishers, bookstores, libraries, students, and writers.** Continuing this tax will reduce our country's literacy, productivity, competitiveness, and prosperity.

■ **The GST is a tax on literacy.** The federal government collected more from this tax on reading material last year than the *total* federal expenditures on publishing and adult literacy *combined*. Most Canadians think their government should support literature and literacy; this government is doing the opposite.

■ **GST is taking books out of the hands of Canadians.** Book sales dropped 10% in the first year of GST. During the last recession, sales of books *increased*.

■ **GST is driving Canadians out of the country to buy books.** Bookstore sales in some provinces have dropped 20% since GST was introduced. U.S. bookstores report that sales to Canadians increased astronomically after January 1, 1991. One store in Vermont now calls itself "Montreal's best English-language bookstore."

■ **GST is silencing Canadian voices.** Book publishers have cut back the amount they publish. The future may bring more closures. Fewer, thinner publications means fewer outlets for Canadian writers, and fewer new voices for Canadian readers. Writing and publishing in Canada has always been a struggle; the GST is the final burden for many publishers, booksellers, and writers.

■ **The GST gives a 7% advantage to American books.** Imported books costing less than \$20 are tax-free. This gives another huge advantage to the enormous U.S. book clubs, who offer almost no Canadian books. The only major Canadian book club has closed since the GST was introduced.

■ **GST stops you from getting books you want.** Some international publishers and distributors have refused to ship to Canada because of the complexity of the tax, and some bookstores have stopped accepting special orders because of the extra costs. The GST has created a barrier where we always had an open border to ideas: it is deciding what you get to read.

■ **A reading tax is an expensive nightmare to administer.** It can't be collected on books being mailed into Canada — Canada Post can't even count them. When it can be collected, it's extremely expensive for the government *and* for Canadians. It can cost up to \$100 for a Canadian library to do the paperwork needed to import a single book. The tax is creating enormous costs for the Government, publishers, and bookstores — costs that wind up being paid by readers and taxpayers.

■ **The GST is creating a black market in rare books.** Collectors are buying outside the country to avoid the tax. The staid world of rare-book dealers reports book smuggling, fake invoices, and "under-the-counter" trading. One Canadian rare-book dealer says his sales have dropped 35% since 1990 — after growing during the last season before the tax was introduced.

■ **Many countries have refused to tax reading.** The U.S. Japan, Britain, Australia, and Ireland are among the many countries that have recognized the value of tax-free reading material. We believe Canada should join these countries and zero-rate all reading material.

**The Prime Minister has the power to zero-rate books (that is, to restore their traditional tax rate of 0%). You can help us persuade him to take this positive step. Please send a card or letter to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Finance — and please contact your own Member of Parliament, as well. No postage is required on mail to MPs when sent to Parliament Hill addresses.**

Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block, 80 Wellington St., Ottawa K1A 0A2

Hon. Don Mazankowski, Minister of Finance  
L'Esplanade Laurier, 140 O'Connor St., Ottawa K1A 0A6 \*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

## Word on the Street

Toronto's third-annual "The Word on the Street" open-air book and magazine fair will be held Sunday, September 27, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., on Queen Street West between McCaul and Spadina. Auto-graphing outside Bakka SF Bookstore, 282 Queen West, will be Charles de Lint, Guy Gavriel Kay, and Robert J. Sawyer; call Bakka at (416) 596-8161 for the specific times they'll be appearing. For general info about Word on the Street, call (416) 366-7241. \*

## NATIONAL LIBRARIES WEEK

## Sawyer Reading

Rob Sawyer will read at the Etobicoke Public Library's Long Branch, 3500 Lake Shore Blvd. W., Toronto, Tues. Oct. 20, probably at 7:30 p.m. (Confirm start time with the library at 416-394-5320.) \*

## AWARD WINNERS

## 1992 Hugo Awards

Novel:	Lois McMaster Bujold, <i>Barrayer</i> (Baen)
Novella:	Nancy Kress, "Beggars in Spain" ( <i>Asimov's</i> and <i>Axlotl</i> )
Novellette:	Isaac Asimov, "Gold" ( <i>Analog</i> )
Short Story:	Geoffrey A. Landis, "A Walk in the Sun" ( <i>Asimov's</i> )
Non-Fiction Book:	<i>The World of Charles Addams</i> (Knopf)
Original Art:	Michael Whelan, cover for <i>The Summer Queen</i>
Dramatic Presentation:	<i>Terminator 2</i> (Carolco)
Professional Editor:	Gardner Dozois, <i>Asimov's SF Magazine</i>
Professional Artist:	Michael Whelan
Semiprozine:	<i>Locus</i> , Charles N. Brown, editor
Fanzine:	<i>Mimosa</i> , Dick and Nicki Lynch, editors
Fan Writer:	Dave Langford
Fan Artist:	Brad Foster
John W. Campbell Award:	Ted Chiang

# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

Publisher: *Who's That Coeurl? Press*



SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
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7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5

Phone: (416) 882-5033 • Fax: (416) 886-1624 • CompuServe: 76702,747 • GEnie: RJ.Sawyer

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## Editorial: The Death of Science Fiction

Theodore Sturgeon's Law: 90% of SF is crap. Unfortunately, like unemployment rates and average global temperatures, I think that number is rising. I blame it on market-oriented forces that are making it harder and harder to find quality SF. Among them:

- A tendency toward overly long books (because publishers can put a higher price on fatter books, and because the SF reviewing community and award-givers have decided to equate authorial ambition with mere length).
- A tendency toward endless repetitions of what was once a good idea. Anne McCaffrey's first Dragon book, *Dragonflight*, is actually a combined volume comprising two shorter works, the novella "Weyr Search" and the novella "Dragonrider." "Weyr Search" tied for the Hugo for best novella of 1968; "Dragonrider" won the Nebula for best novella that same year. In other words, this stuff was cutting-edge and wonderfully acclaimed when it first appeared, but now it's just a cash cow for its author and its publisher. The second *Foundation* trilogy, the ongoing *Rama* saga, and the *Dune* series are more examples of endless repetition.
- A tendency toward junior authors spending what are traditionally one's most productive years turning out work in the mold of other writers, instead of developing their own voices.
- A tendency toward the graying of the SF-reading audience: there's a lot of truth to the old saw that the golden age of SF is when you were 13. There's also a lot of truth to Samuel R. Delany's observation that if you don't start reading SF when you're young, you *can't* start reading it when you're old. SF is failing to find significant numbers of new readers. Part of that is the general decline in North American literacy, and part of it is that the very people fascinated by high technology and computers and strange worlds used to have nowhere to go except SF books, but can now turn instead to computers (gaming and hacking), to role-playing games, and to an endless stream of SF movies. This means that the field is increasingly catering to those who were 13 in the 1950s, an audience rapidly moving towards its retirement years. (This accounts for much of SF's current nostalgia: the publishers are desperate for more Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein, 'cause that's what their aging audience remembers fondly.)

Now, there definitely is some quality work out there. Indeed, I don't even think quality is that hard to get published — I'm sure the editors say, hey, this is pretty good, and it's been a while since we printed anything that was, so, sure, why not?

But my fear is two-fold. First, a person who has become interested in SF through the media, or because of vague childhood memories, will pick up a book from the vast SF rack and be turned off. He or

she will be turned off because the work will almost certainly be crap. You and I know how to find the good ones, but someone new to the field won't have a clue. Yup, you could read a good SF novel a week each week of the year, no doubt. But if you read an SF novel a week picked at random from the rack, you'd never come back for a second year of such torture.

The second is the big-three mentality. Those of us in the field know that names like Orson Scott Card and Michael P. Kube-McDowell and Mike Resnick and Lois McMaster Bujold and William Gibson are the stars of current SF. But, and I mean no offense to these fine authors, the average reader has never heard of them. Yet every literate person within and without the field knows Asimov, Clarke, and (maybe) Heinlein: Asimov, who did no major work after *The Gods Themselves* in 1972; Clarke, whose last truly major work was *The Fountains of Paradise* in 1979; and Heinlein — well, long dead and author in his later years of, um, unusual books.

So what do the publishers give us? Books with Asimov's name on them that aren't by Asimov. Books with Clarke's name on them that aren't by Clarke. And reissues of old Heinlein, bereft of any editorial restraint. Sure, there are some other bestselling writers: Larry Niven, who is sharecropped by Baen; Anne McCaffrey, who is sharecropped by Baen and Ace. There are even authors who have done no significant solo work who have become famous as one of multiple names on a book spine: Jerry Pournelle is an example (his solo work amounts to little more than a couple of Laser Books in the 1970s and the novelization of *Escape from the Planet of the Apes*).

And yet the publishers do whatever they can to continue to milk the big three: Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein. Almost every SF fan I know pooh-poohs L. Ron Hubbard's posthumous dekalogy — propelled to bestsellerdom by mind-washed buyers, a packaged product, probably not even written by the guy whose name appears in big letters on the cover. But every one of those same criticisms can also be leveled against *Rama II*, *Isaac Asimov's Robot City*, and so on.

The problem with the publishers still emphasizing the big three is that you can't go on doing false collaborations or works "in the universe of" without eventually mining out the vein and being left with nothing.

Here's an analogy for current SF publishing that most SF people will be familiar with: the *Star Trek* movies.

The *Star Trek* TV series was something a lot of people had fond, nostalgic memories of. Rather than making a new big-budget SF vision, Paramount decided, hey, let's play up to that nostalgia, and re-do *Star Trek*. Guess what? It worked. *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, deeply flawed in many ways though it was, made tons of money. Did Paramount go in other directions, giving us new SF visions? It did not. Instead it said, hey, let's give the public more of the same. Lo and behold, we got *Trek II, III, IV, V, and VI*.

And what's happened? Boom. Crash. *Trek VI* is the last. The old cast is simply too old to go on, and Paramount failed to develop

and promote any younger talent during the dozen years it cranked out *Trek* films. The big-screen cash cow is dead.

Consider all the characters introduced in the *Star Trek* movie series, including, just as a few examples, Captain Will Decker; the bald-headed woman, Ilia; Kirk's son David; whale expert Gillian Taylor; the Vulcan-Romulan hybrid Saavik; and Spock's brother Sybok. Every one of them was ultimately killed off, shoved to the background, or simply forgotten in the mad rush to keep yanking the teats labeled Shatner, Nimoy, and Kelly. Sure, some of the new characters had to be dispensed with for dramatic reasons, but if even a handful of them had been developed over the years (heck, if even Sulu and Chekov had been developed over the years), the movie series could have continued, instead of grinding to a halt.

Likewise, you can only milk Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein so long before (a) you run dry, (b) the public finally realizes that two of them are dead, and the other one, sad to say, won't be with us much longer, and (c) the audience who grew up on Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein likewise begins to shuffle off this mortal coil. By thinking only of the cash that can be grabbed today, instead of developing for the future, the SF field might eventually collapse the way the *Star Trek* movie series has.

Proof? I named a bunch of great modern SF writers earlier in this article. Not one of them outsells the work by Gentry Lee published as putative collaborations with Clarke. Gentry Lee is the real super-bestseller SF author today. But will any readers buy his solo books set outside of Clarke's universe when they start coming out? My bet is no, and that as Gentry Lee's career goes, so, sadly will the field as a whole. \*

## MINUTES

# First Annual Meeting

The first Annual Meeting of the Canadian Region of SFWA was held Saturday, July 27, at the 1992 Convention, WilfCon VIII, in Waterloo, Ontario.

The meeting was a casual affair, taking the form of a long lunch at a local deli, with American SFWAn Algis Budrys joining Canadian members James Alan Gardner, Rob Sawyer, and Edo van Belkom. (Not too shabby, given WilfCon had only about 30 attendees by the time the meeting began early on Saturday morning.)

The main topic of discussion was the Winnipeg WorldCon. The question of SF Canada's desire to either host or co-host a writers' suite in lieu of the traditional SFWA suite was raised. It was felt that SF Canada was underestimating the strength of proprietary feeling on the part of old-guard American SFWAns about the WorldCon suite.

This is a political hot potato, capable of engendering ill-feeling with SF Canada — something we all want to avoid. We adopted the position that business concerning the Winnipeg WorldCon is not a Canadian Region issue, but rather a general SFWA issue. Rob was empowered to write to SFWA President Joe Haldeman stating this view (which he did on July 3 — Joe agreed), and to meet with Winnipeg WorldCon chair John Mansfield to also make this clear (which he did on July 28 at WilfCon).

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The 1993 annual meeting of the SFWA Canadian Region will be held at the 1993 Convention, WolfCon VI, Mar 5-7, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. For information on that convention, write WolfCon VI, Box 796, Wolfville, NS, B0P 1X0. (RhinoCon 3 in London, Ontario, withdrew its Convention bid when it changed its date to March 1994.)

The 1994 annual meeting will be held at Conadian, the 52nd World Science Fiction Convention, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Get your WorldCon memberships soon. The current rate of \$85 is only in effect until December 31. Write: Conadian, P.B. Box 2430, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4A7. \*

## SFWA BUSINESS

# Referendum

At long last, here's the wording of the referendum questions going out to all active SFWA members worldwide. You will receive your voting ballot with the December 1992 issue of *SFWA Forum*.

### QUESTION ONE

*Background:* Under SFWA's bylaws, SFWA Regions can be created by a vote of the Board of Directors. In May of this year, the Board, following up on the unanimous recommendation of the April 1992 Annual General Meeting of the Corporation held during the Nebula Awards Weekend in Atlanta, formally and legally created the Canadian Region of SFWA. Later, in SFWA's 1992 elections, a Canadian Regional Director was duly elected.

Currently all Regional Directors except the Canadian Regional Directors are voting members of SFWA's Board of Directors. Although a sense-of-the-meeting vote taken during the 1992 Annual General Meeting overwhelmingly approved granting the Canadian Regional Director a vote, SFWA's bylaws state that the addition of new voting members to the Board can only be done by a full vote of the membership at large. Therefore, the question is now being put to the membership as a whole.

The Board of Directors recommends you vote YES on this question.

1. The Canadian Regional Director should be a voting member of SFWA's Board of Directors. (Yes/No)

### QUESTION TWO

This is pretty straightforward, just clarifying the interpretation of existing rules regarding publication outside of the U.S. and Canada:

2. Publications in the English language in countries outside of North America may be used as credentials for Associate membership only. (Yes/No)

2a. Publications in the English language in countries outside of North America may be used as credentials for Active membership. (Yes/No)

### QUESTION THREE

*Background:* The Board of Directors intends that the creation of a Canadian Region of SFWA be a special case, recognizing the growing numbers of Canadian SF&F writers, the emerging domestic Canadian markets, and the unusual circumstance of Canada sometimes being considered in publishing contracts as a part of the "domestic" U.S. territory, sometimes a part of the "British" territory, and, increasingly, being a territory in its own right. However, some people have raised concerns about the Balkanization of the SFWA, with an ever-increasing number of Regions coming into being. In order to allay fears of the frivolous creation of Regions, the following motion is put forward. (Please note, however, that regardless of this motion, Article VI, Section 3, of the SFWA bylaws already requires that the Overseas Region of SFWA always include the entire Eastern hemisphere. That bylaw cannot be changed without a full vote of the membership.)

3. Subsequent to this ballot, the creation of additional SFWA regions may only be done with the approval of two-thirds of the Board of Directors.

**Finally, an appeal from the President:** A vote changing SFWA's bylaws requires a simple majority with at least one third of the active membership voting. Even a unanimous vote would be meaningless if too few people participated. Please help us out and vote. \*

## WRITERS' WORKSHOPS

## Clarion Reflections

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Clarion, an annual workshop for aspirant SF writers, founded by Robert Scott Wilson at Clarion College, Pennsylvania. These days, the direct descendant of the original workshop is held at Michigan State University, and a second annual workshop called Clarion West, built on the same model, is held in Seattle, Washington. Among the annual workshop's graduates are Kim Stanley Robinson, George Alec Effinger, Vonda McIntyre, and Lucius Shepard, as well as several Canadians, four of whom have been kind enough to share their reminiscences with us.

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JOHN PARK, Ottawa

## Clarion 1978

What to say about my experience of the Clarion workshop, 14 years after the event? It was intense, serious and silly. There were no punches pulled and no egos shattered. Was it memorable? Definitely. Did I learn from it? Yes. Did it resolve my struggle with writer's block and turn me into a productive major writer? Obviously not.

A few memories: A copy of the current manuscript, like the conch in *Lord of the Flies*, being passed from critiquer to critiquer as each spoke in turn (the current victim holding a blue stuffed bunny). Robin Scott Wilson telling someone in the first week, "Everyone has to write this kind of story once. Now you've done it; don't do it again." Trips off-campus for beer and ice cream. Algis Budrys stressing that motivation was the key and expounding his seven-point plot skeleton — but in practice being sympathetic to a much wider range of approaches. Carol Emshwiller, whose work had struck me as abstruse and literary, starting off her week: "You people have got to learn how to write plots." And a visible improvement in the level of writing over the six weeks.

In my own case I was always most comfortable with mood and atmosphere, and the Budrys plot skeleton gave me a landmark as I tried to find my way through the mysteries of story construction. Now I prefer Damon Knight's more inclusive idea of what a story is, and John Gardner's idea of "profluence" rather than plot; but I still have the plot skeleton somewhere at the back of my mind when I'm planning a story.

Clarion teaches what can be taught — which necessarily has more to do with technique and form than with content. A workshop can develop craft; it can't create originality or passion. Of the 20 or so of us, Pat Murphy, Richard Kadrey and Steven Popkes have achieved a fair amount of recognition; I'm still hoping to become an overnight success, and several others have published and are still writing.

Almost certainly each of us took away different things, and most of them were things we would have learned anyway, as long as we kept writing — but not as quickly or as systematically. And with nowhere near as much fun.

(John has published in *Galaxy*, *OnSpec*, *Solaris*, and *Tesseract* 3&4.)

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KATHRYN A. SINCLAIR, Edmonton

## Clarion 1981

**1. Robin:** Our introduction to Clarion. "Boot camp for writers." The first day he throws a hapless Clarionite's manuscript across the room. Horrors! We all cringe. So much for our tender egos!

Huddled in a stifling dormitory room, dripping sweat, I struggle with a story. Down the hall in the common room a couple of people tune up their guitars; the singing begins.

**2. Lizzy:** Doing Aikido rolls on the grass with several eager Clarionites trying to follow suit. I decide to pass on that and go back to my writing.

We escape from the oppressively hot dorm for a few hours by stuffing ten or sixteen or so of us into a Toyota sedan and piling the rest on a motorbike and dashing down the freeway to see *Escape From New York*.

**3. Joe and Gay:** We sing a tender ballad written by Joe: "Locked Up in a Spaceship for a Year Without No Women Blues." With Joe we sing a lot. On the back of my copy of the song I've printed in pencil "Brush Teeth." Was I *that* far gone?

In the middle of the night I take a break from a recalcitrant story to watch a frantic card game in the common room and listen to a new song. The Water Pistols appear!

**4 & 5. Kate and Damon:** Kate attired as the Queen Mum. We celebrate the marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Di by holding our own ceremony. A song, "Charlie," has been written for the occasion. Damon arrives in tinfoil horns . . . the court jester?

The tension grows: there is an ebb and flow of activity from room to room as people seek advice or just a sympathetic ear. Sporadic water pistol skirmishes break out.

**6. A.J.:** He introduces us to poor Sara Jane fiddling in a rain-storm. We drink a lot of beer and draw diagrams and take notes; is this the answer to our problems with structure? Sounds of desperate typing issue from every open door; we are not calmed by his amusing stories of Clarions past. The heat and pressure build up until finally we are pushed over the edge!

**The Waterfight!** Light weaponry is abandoned as more advanced armaments appear. The Lithuanian Gunfighter strides the halls, laser canon at his hip. Heavy artillery is needed to repel the threat; the Waterhoses are mobilized. Fighting surges from room to room and the floor below receives the fallout!

Finally the workshop was over. During that six weeks in the summer of '81 we were helped with our work by six writers who gave generously of their time and energy. I wrote eight stories. We played a lot and sang a lot and made lifelong friends.

Our Clarion ended appropriately, with a new ballad: "The Ball at Clarion '81." Our last act of writing was to contribute a verse each about one of the other participants or an instructor. "One and twenty hopefuls came out to learn to write. They workshopped in the morning and they fooled around all night." And on for 29 more verses.

My copy is waterstained.

(Kathryn has published in *Asimov's*, *OnSpec*, and *Tesseract* 2.)

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JAMES ALAN GARDNER, Waterloo

## Clarion West 1989

The first gathering of the class was on a Sunday night, in a classroom at the top of a 10-storey building on the heights of Seattle. Lots of big windows showed the sun setting over the Seattle skyline, and Orson Scott Card said to us all, "You have entered Faerie-Land."

He went on to explain that the world of Clarion is and isn't real. Like people who stumble into Faerie-Land, you can go to Clarion and come back changed; but the changes can be slippery and not what you think they are. Scott warned that the intensity of the program could make us leap impulsively in unwise directions — leap into romantic entanglements with our classmates, for example, or leap to strange conclusions about how good or bad our writing was.

Faerie-Land.

Well, I know of five marriages that broke up directly or indirectly due to Clarion, in a class of 21 people . . . and I haven't kept tabs on all

my classmates. Several people decided they had no talent and quit writing. On the other hand, our class has also made its impact on the field. Tony Daniel, Wendy Council, Carolyn Ives Gilman, and I have all started professional careers in SF. A few others may break in over the next few years. Faeries are neither good nor bad, they are just powerful forces.

But Rob has asked me for memories of Clarion, not an explanation or defense. So here are a handful of things that will stay with me:

- Scott Card saying wonderful things about my first story (“Reaper,” later published in *F&SF*, February 1991) and, in the same two-hour session, doing a coldly terrifying job of dissecting the work of another student.
- aerobics classes with Karen Joy Fowler.
- lunch at a Mexican bar with Connie Willis, as she explained the origins of “All My Darling Daughters.”
- the constant wonder of Lucius Shepard, a man who defies all description: built like a Satan’s Choice biker, wiping his face with pages from his manuscript during a reading, showing us how to put words on paper; of all our instructors, Lucius was the one who taught me the most about writing, because he clarified so much about how you make descriptive passages work.
- Roger Zelazny diffidently tossing off tricks of the trade at a time when we were so tired we scarcely paid attention, tricks like how to write fight scenes and how to prepare novel outlines.

And did I return from Faerie-Land transformed? Only a little; only aimed in a slightly different direction, my skills broadened by a fraction and my insights deepened by a hair. But I’m a better writer for it.

(Jim has published in *F&SF*, *Amazing*, *OnSpec*, and *Tesseract* 3&4.)

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## CORY DOCTOROW, Toronto

### *Clarion 1992*

“You learn technique in order to forget it” — Kate Wilhelm

I spent one hundred years at Clarion, from 28 June 1992 to 9 August 1992. During that hundred years, I accumulated a great body of knowledge about the mechanics of fiction, much of it self-contradictory. That was interesting but hardly worth a hundred years’ aging compressed into six weeks, not to mention the huge cash outlay.

I also received a great deal of criticism on my writing, from seven-teen fantastic classmates and several brilliant instructors. Again, interesting but not worth it.

I got to eat the execrable food at the Owen Hall Cafeteria, wander the streets of East Lansing, and deal with the thick-thick-THICK Michigan State University bureaucracy. Interesting, but, you know the rest.

However, taken on the whole, Clarion ’92 was worth every penny. How so? It’s one of those elusive things, it slips through the fingers like smoke, something like . . . something like the way you feel when a story is going *right*, just *right*, Hugo-time at least.

Clarion’s not about homogenizing one’s style to some humanist ideal, not about getting that magic “Clarion Graduate” on a cover letter, not about silliness with water-guns. Clarion’s about focusing down on that feeling of *rightness*, holding it, keeping it close to your chest while you sit at the word processor.

No regrets.

(Cory works at Bakka. He’s published in *OnSpec* and *Pulphouse*.) \*

## BOOK REVIEW

# An Odyssey in Time

## by Robert J. Sawyer

Russell, Dale A. *An Odyssey in Time: The Dinosaurs of North America*, University of Toronto Press, 1989.

*This review originally appeared in Quill & Quire.*

The bayous of Saskatchewan. The sand dunes of Nova Scotia. To Dr. Dale A. Russell of the Canadian Museum of Nature, these landscapes are as real as the dusty prairie, the Bay of Fundy. Indeed, his new book, *An Odyssey in Time: The Dinosaurs of North America*, is more about landscapes than dinosaurs, and that distinguishes it from the glut of other dinosaur books on the market. Lowland, upland, swamp, forest: each is a separate world to Russell, a tightly-woven ecosystem. He doesn’t just tell us that *thus-and-so-saurus* was yea long and weighed mumblety tons, as so many others do. No, Russell paints the entire environment, showing how one beast related to another, as predator or prey, as parasite or partner.

Once again Russell has collaborated with Eleanor M. Kish, the Robert Bateman of prehistory (their earlier book, *A Vanished World: The Dinosaurs of Western Canada*, was published in 1977 by the National Museums of Canada). Kish’s paintings are the ideal complement to Russell’s prose, dripping with detail and new interpretations. Her latest crop of brontosaurus have a lean and hungry look that would put Cassius to shame; her full moon over a monsoonal rain pond is painted larger than it would appear in a contemporary sky, and the crater Tycho, formed after the age of dinosaurs, is missing.

Of course, the book must stand on the strength of Russell’s prose. His writing perhaps isn’t quite as solid as the giant columns of a brontosaurus’s legs. No, it’s more like the nimble dancing of his favourite dinosaur, *Troödon*, a fleet fellow that had to keep moving, lest he lose his balance. Every time Russell looks as though he’s going to topple, he pushes ahead and regains a surer footing. Still, he’s got a bit too much of the scholar in him, and his prose periodically wanders dangerously close to academic writing.

He’s self-conscious of this, or so it seems, for he attempts to compensate for his fondness for the passive voice, his flirtation with the polysyllable. In the early part of his book, he spends much time discussing mammal-like reptiles and proto-dinosaurs. These beasts, some our direct ancestors, are not well-known generally, and rather than have the reader trip repeatedly over *thecodont* and *rhynchosaurus* and a dozen others, Russell proposes his own plain-English names. But instead of simply translating the Greek tongue-twisters, he makes up completely new terms: gatorlizards, owlguanas, cowturtles. Ultimately, it’s a disservice to the reader, and even Russell has trouble keeping his menagerie straight: the owlguana miraculously becomes an owlizard at one point.

Russell takes his title seriously: *An Odyssey in Time* is just that, a journey, period by period, through the Mesozoic. He devotes one chapter to the millennia before the age of dinosaurs; then a chapter to their dawn years, the Triassic (stepping far from the North America promised in his subtitle to do so); a pair of chapters to their heyday, the steamy Jurassic, when *Brontosaurus* and *Stegosaurus* held sway; and three chapters to the Cretaceous, the time of *Tyrannosaurus* and *Triceratops*, the period preserved in the rocks of Alberta’s Badlands. His odyssey builds compellingly, with the saurians evolving from tiny reptiles to giants, from just one of many forms of life to the lords of creation. And, as Bogey would say, there’s a wow finish: the sudden extinction of 90% of the life on the planet.

Russell has a storyteller’s feel for his material. He realizes that bones have come to life on his pages, and to stop now for a pedantic examination of theories would break the flow. Instead, he begins his penultimate chapter, “The Extinction of the Dinosaurs,” with a brief note to the reader making clear that he isn’t going to run through the usual litany of explanations that others set up just to knock down.

Instead, he brings the story to a rapid end, diving into the theory he personally favours: the aftermath of a comet impact killed the great saurians and most of their contemporaries. Here, and elsewhere, he shifts into Carl Sagan mode, waxing pseudo-poetic:

When the comet crossed the orbit of the Moon it was moving at a velocity of 30 kilometres per second and the end of the Cretaceous was three hours away. It seemed to hang in the sky like a second moon, or the eye of God, but no dinosaur looked at it with understanding. It suddenly swelled in the sky, and then a dark mantle spread across the firmament.

The prose may be a bit much, but Russell brings to his writing a humility and — dare I say it? — a bone-dry wit that is missing from Sagan's.

In the final chapter, Russell looks for the meaning, if any, of the dinosaurs and their demise. He knows enough not to try to tack a moral on the end of his story, but he does leave the reader with much to contemplate.

All in all, Russell's done it right: in a world full of books about dinosaurs, he's taken a different approach. No protracted debate about warm-bloodedness, no endless thrashing over ideas about the extinctions, no bogging down in charts and statistics. Instead, just a refreshing, vital glimpse at dinosaurs in context, alive, going about their daily business. \*

## BRIEF REVIEWS

# Books for SF Writers

(These reviews by Robert J. Sawyer were originally published in The Canadian Book Review Annual)

Dublin, Max. *Futurehype: The Tyranny of Prophecy*, 1989.

Max Dublin is a research fellow at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. In this, his first book, he takes on the prophets of our age, the self-styled "futurists" who claim to be able to predict what tomorrow will hold. Dublin argues that such prediction can be pretentious, dangerous if followed, self-fulfilling and often driven by hidden agendas on the part of the futurists. He examines in depth the role of futurology in the military (predominantly in the United States), in education, and in attitudes about health. His case is well supported and his warning bells ring loud and clear. As we slide into the third millennium, *Futurehype* is an important book, and one that is ultimately as much about morality as it is about prophecy.

Dickinson, Terence. *NightWatch*, Revised Edition, 1989.

Terence Dickinson is astronomy columnist for *The Toronto Star*. This lavishly illustrated book captures the excitement and grandeur of the night sky, while providing a straightforward system for identifying the constellations. Full-sky star maps are provided for each season. These make heavy use of pointer stars: find two easily identified stars, imagine a line through them and your eye is drawn to the another object of interest.

The book has square pages so the maps can be turned to any orientation. Plastic spiral binding lets the user fold the book in half for easy use. On the pages facing the main maps are paintings showing the full sky as it actually appears. Twenty close-up charts examine small areas in detail. These tell us the names of major stars, how far away each is, and point out galaxies, nebulae, and globular clusters. Objects visible only in binoculars or a small telescope are included as well. This edition has been updated for use through the year 2000.

The book is rounded out with tips for buying a telescope. If you want to know more about astronomy, *NightWatch* is an ideal volume to have. \*

## TRICKS OF THE TRADE

# Public Readings

by Robert J. Sawyer

Most SF writers get called on from time to time to do readings of their work at conventions or public libraries. I've done a couple of dozen readings over the years; here are a few things I've learned.

First, it's a lot easier to read from a printout designed specifically for reading. I make a special printout in big type. The advantages: (1) fewer words per page mean you're less likely to lose your place; (2) if you're reading from a podium, you can place the pages on the podium and read them easily without having to squint. Also, if you're so inclined, you can give the printout away as a souvenir to someone in the audience at the end — this is a little trick I picked up from Steve Stirling; it makes for one happy fan. (Second choice: read from a regular manuscript. Last choice: read from the printed book.)

I always tell people how long the reading will be: "This is the first chapter, and it will take about thirteen minutes." Reason: there will be people in your audience who don't want to be there (dragged out to your reading by their significant others, etc.). I find letting 'em know how long it will take substantially cuts down on the "when will this be over?" shuffling.

Read dramatically, and don't be afraid to change volume. Nothing is more dynamic in a reading than the reader suddenly shouting an exclamation. Conversely, the absolute best reading I ever did was one that ended with the scene from my novel *Golden Fleece* in which JASON, the computer from hell, was trying to sleep-teach a human being into feeling guilty. I read the narration in a normal voice, but for the words JASON was whispering through the headboard speakers I actually did lower my voice to a whisper (albeit a stage whisper, so people could hear it in the back — it helps, by the way, to have a microphone if the audience is going to be more than a dozen or so people). The room was absolutely still, hanging on every word.

Make eye contact. Know your work well enough so that you don't have to be constantly looking at your manuscript. Look at your audience — indeed, at *specific* people in your audience (not just generally out at the room).

Don't be afraid to make subtle additions or changes for the sake of the reading. On a printed page, the alternation of speakers may be clear because of the way you've done paragraphing. If you have to add in a "Smith said," do so — but determine this when you rehearse the piece. Likewise, consider editing out unnecessary exposition: you may have cleverly put stuff into the scene you happen to be reading that doesn't become relevant until later in the book, but if the audience *for the reading* doesn't need to know it, think about chopping it out.

Old radio-person's trick: when changing pages in your manuscript, simply slide them from the to-be-read pile to the already-read pile. Don't bother flipping them over. Yes, when done, your story will be in reverse order, but you can re-collate the pages afterwards. The point is to cut down on paper noise. Also, doing it this way you actually have two pages face up on the podium at once — the one you're just finishing and the one you're about to begin. That lets you clearly see the transition over the page break, so your reading doesn't falter as you switch pages.

Take business cards to your reading. If you read well, someone may come up to you at the end and ask you if you'd be available to read at another venue, or to talk to a class or to a conference. Having a card makes it easy for them to get in touch with you later.

Finally, the best readings are the ones you get paid for. If you've published a novel or short-story collection, you should enquire about getting on the Canada Council's approved list for Public Readings; among the Canadian SF writers already on it are Candace Jane Dorsey, Phyllis Gotlieb, Terry Green, Tanya Huff, Judy Merrill, and me. The Council pays approved readers \$200 per reading plus travel expenses of up to \$800. Send a request for information on registering with the Public Readings Program to The Canada Council, 99 Metcalfe Street, P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8. \*

## SELLING YOUR WORDS

# Invitation Anthologies

by Barbara Delaplace

Most sf authors probably have heard of “invitation-only” anthologies — anthologies that aren’t found in the usual market reports but instead depend on personal solicitation directly from the editor to the writer. Such collections have always been part of the sf/fantasy field, but they seem to have become more common in the past few years.

Many of my short fiction sales have been to these markets, and I’ve found that besides helping pay for groceries, they can be a good way to raise your profile with editors and fellow pros, one of whom could well be in the process of signing a contract to edit an anthology himself and therefore eager to find contributors. They can also be an effective way to stretch artistically, provided you don’t dismiss out of hand one that doesn’t initially appeal to you. Give it some thought instead. It’s possible you may discover a hitherto unsuspected skill at handling military sf, or sf-oriented mystery, or fantasy.

Why do invitation-only anthologies exist? In general, because the editor prefers dealing with a reliable professional, rather than a stranger who may turn out to have bizarre ideas about the editor/writer relationship, threatening mayhem or worse when those expectations aren’t fulfilled. By comparison, a writer who can be relied on to produce a saleable story by deadline, one which needs little or no editing, is a jewel beyond price. (And such jewels may be invited into future anthologies.) But there can be other factors involved as well. Some editors don’t wade through slush piles because they simply can’t afford to: don’t assume anthology editing pays well, because it usually doesn’t. Or the publisher may have set a short deadline, and the editor doesn’t have the time to read many submissions. And some editors are also busy writers themselves, in which case the time constraints may be a result of their previous contract commitments.

Who edits them? Check the shelves of the local sf/fantasy bookstore: almost any editor who has a collection there has probably done one or more invitation-only anthologies. Some of the more familiar names include Martin H. Greenberg, Gardner Dozois, Bill Fawcett, David Drake, Christopher Stasheff, and Mike Resnick.

And how do you *get* invited? Personal contacts are a help here, make no mistake about it. On the other hand, the sf/fantasy field is comparatively small, so it’s not very difficult to make those contacts. Conventions are the obvious places to meet editors; Worldcon, World Fantasy Con, and the major regional conventions tend to have the highest concentrations of editors per square foot.

Another source of contacts is computer networks, which are becoming a major way for people in the business to keep in touch with one another. More and more pros can be found on commercial networks such as Delphi, CompuServe, and GEnie. The last is probably the most popular for the sf/fantasy field, and fortunately for starving writers, is also one of the most inexpensive. A number of publishers — Tor, Ace, and Bantam, among others — have “official” accounts there, where messages can be exchanged with their in-house staff. A few anthology editors online even accept submissions by electronic mail, though this is by no means universal.

Finally, there’s the time-honoured method of writing (or, in this age of modems, emailing) a letter, particularly if you’ve learned of an anthology via the grapevine. A courteous, straightforward note informing the editor of your interest can result in an invitation.

What can you expect in the way of editorial input once you’ve secured that invitation? It depends on the editor and the type of anthology. Martin Greenberg, for instance, simply informs the participants of the anthology’s theme, leaving idea, approach, and execution entirely to the author. Others, like Mike Resnick, are more “hands-on,” happy to suggest different ideas and discuss ways of developing stories from them. Editors of shared-world anthologies, such as Bill Fawcett, of necessity have to operate a little differently since each story must fit into the overall universe of the anthology. In cases like this, the writer will generally receive a so-called “bible,” or general

outline of the shared world, which includes background information on characters, themes, history, and so on. Of course, all editors will inform contributors of deadline, length, word rate, rights purchased, and publication date (if known at that point).

Obviously, make a point of meeting the deadline and length requirements. (It’s amazing how many writers don’t.) While my experience has been that editors are understanding if informed as soon as possible — and *not* just the day before the deadline — about an unavoidable delay, it’s far better to have a reputation for delivering stories promptly. This is no hardship in any case, for deadlines are frequently several months from the time of story assignment.

As for meeting the length requirements, why should that matter so much? It’s because an editor contracts with a publisher to deliver an anthology with X number of words at Y cents per word, with (hopefully) Z dollars in the budget left for herself at the end, the latter being her payment for doing the tedious job of editing the anthology. If several contributors run over the word length, there goes the budget: it comes out of her payment, not out of the publisher’s pocket. Conversely, if everybody comes in short, she has to scramble at the last minute to find more stories. Of course a certain amount of leeway in length is allowed. But if the guidelines said 7500 words maximum and you’ve turned in 12,000 words, it had damned well better be the best story in the anthology or the editor will not be thrilled.

Developing a reputation as a fast, reliable source of “right length” stories can pay off handsomely in the long run. Editors have a solution to that headache of writers who didn’t make the deadline or ran short: a “stable” of dependable pros who can be counted on to deliver the goods in an emergency. The writer who can quickly produce a salable story may find himself part of such a stable — and busy anthology editors always have work for them.

Payment rates generally run from five to seven cents per word; all contributors to a particular anthology get paid the same rate (unless a Famous Author with Clout happens to be involved, in which case said author may get a little more). Payment, at least in my experience, is promptly upon acceptance: the cheque and copies of the contract arrive in the same envelope.

As for rights, it depends on the type of anthology. Most of the contracts I’ve seen for theme collections ask for non-exclusive world rights, with no appearance of the story elsewhere for a year after publication of the anthology. It used to be possible to “double dip” — in other words, to sell first North American serial rights before the anthology appeared — but in the last year or so, publishers seem to have become more reluctant to allow this. Nonetheless, it never hurts to inquire; a resale is always welcome news to the bank account.

Shared-world anthologies are, not surprisingly, a different matter. These are frequently part of a series, possibly with continuing characters, and the series name and/or major characters may be copyrighted to the editor or the packager involved. If subsidiary rights are sold that specifically include a writer’s story or characters, the editor may get a sizable percentage of the payment. Read the contract carefully to make sure of what’s involved.

Finally, a few miscellaneous items. I’ve found that editors seldom ask for story revisions: it’s only happened to me once (though I have heard an editor tell of sending stories back to their authors two or three times before being satisfied with the results).

On the other hand, galleys can be a real problem. Publishers like a fast turnaround but don’t take into account how long mail between the States and Canada can take to arrive. Generally galleys show up — if at all — in my mail box the day *after* the corrections were due. I haven’t yet found a satisfactory solution to the problem, and have made do by explaining the situation to the editor in advance and asking if he or she will check my galleys for me when the time comes.

Contributor’s copies seem to be something of a hit-and-miss situation. Don’t expect more than one (or at very most two) copies, and don’t be surprised to have to ask for them; sometimes a busy editor simply forgets to request contributors’ copies be sent out. Have patience, since it can take time for the publisher to get them mailed.

A closing caveat: this article is based on my own experience, and naturally experience depends on the individual. As always in this field, your mileage may vary. \*



## MEMBER INTERVIEW

## Andrew Weiner

This is Andrew Weiner's twentieth year as a professional science-fiction writer. He's the author of the novel *Station Gehenna* (Congdon & Weed, 1987), the short-story collection *Distant Signals* (Porcépic, 1989), and stories in *Again*, *Dangerous Visions*; *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*; *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*; *Amazing Stories*; *Interzone*; *Ark of Ice*; *Northern Frights*; *Full Spectrum*; and many others. Two of his stories have been filmed as episodes of Laurel Production's *Tales From the Darkside*, and *Station Gehenna* is currently under a film option by Europa Productions, California. A full-time writer whose byline has appeared in many of Canada's most-prestigious periodicals, including *Quest* and *The Financial Post Magazine*, Andrew lives in Toronto with his wife Barbara Moses and his son, Nathaniel.

The interview below was first published in the Japanese fanzine *Psyberboria*. The questions were posed in a letter from Yoshiyuki Tanaka in 1989.

**Yoshiyuki Tanaka:** When did you first start writing SF? Why did you decide to continue to write it?

**Andrew Weiner:** It's hard to put a firm date on it. I can remember writing science fiction short stories for school assignments at age 9 or 10. As I recall, they were mostly about rockets to the Moon, etc. At the time I was reading juvenile science fiction books, particularly those by the British astronomer Patrick Moore. (I grew up in England.)

I suppose I first started sending stories to magazines when I was 16 or 17. I sent them to the British magazine *New Worlds*. I got some encouraging rejection slips from the editor, Michael Moorcock, and later from his associates like Graham Hall and James Sallis, which helped to keep me writing, but I never did sell a story to *New Worlds*.

At that time I was very much under the influence of J. G. Ballard and William Burroughs. I was writing a series of highly condensed and cut-up short stories that were mostly about a burned-out astronaut. A few of these stories were eventually published in university and amateur magazines. One of them, "Empire of the Sun," became my first professional sale (to Harlan Ellison's *Again*, *Dangerous Visions*). I was 18 when I wrote it, and it shows.

I never did find out exactly how "Empire" got to Ellison, but I know it was through James Sallis: I had sent the story to him at *New Worlds*, and he had taken it back to the U.S. with him to read. Somehow it ended up in Ellison's slush pile. Probably *New Worlds* wouldn't have published it anyway.

I signed the contract for the story in the spring of 1969. It wasn't published until 1972. (Lucky I wasn't in *The Last Dangerous Visions*.)

Why I to continue to write SF? A very tough question. I continued to write after selling "Empire of the Sun:" more short stories, half of an abortive novel (later recycled, vastly changed, as a novel-ette, "Getting Near The End"), but I didn't sell anything. In the meantime, I was writing a great deal of rock and movie criticism, for English magazines and newspapers, and getting paid for it. So I tended to spend more time on non-fiction. But I always kept coming back to SF. Perhaps because I had sold one story I thought I could sell another. If I hadn't sold "Empire of the Sun," I'm not sure that I would have persisted.

In the end there was a six-year gap between "Empire of the Sun" (which Ellison bought in 1969) and my second published story, "The Deed" (sold in 1975 to *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, published in 1978). I guess much of what I was writing then was too experimental for the traditional U.S. magazines, and maybe not very good either. At any rate, by the time I wrote "The Deed" I had become a more conventional writer . . . although I hope not entirely conventional.

By then I was living in Canada, and all my fiction since "The Deed" has been written here: initially in Montreal and since 1977 in Toronto.

Why do I continue? I guess because of the possibilities that SF offers, even though so little work published in the field (and I include most of my own work) takes advantage of those possibilities. In fact most SF (again including most of my own work) is a waste of time.

**YT:** What do you think about the meaning of the alien in your work?

**AW:** My interest in the alien is as a metaphor. I have absolutely no interest in attempting to imagine the actual physiology of actual alien species on a planet orbiting a G-class sun with a gravity of 3.2 Earth etc. etc. Nor do I want to read SF that tries to do this. I don't know if there are any aliens out there, but even if there are I'm almost certain we'll never meet them. Aliens are projections of the human mind that play the role once played by angels, demons, and so on. See my story "Going To Meet The Alien" (*F&SF*, August 1987) for a longer diatribe on this subject.

**YT:** I see in your writing the influence of Freud. What would say his most significant influence has been?

**AW:** I studied Freud in university, both his clinical psychology and his theories of social organization. I'm more interested in Freud as a social psychologist, and this interest comes out in my early story "The Deed," which is based in Freud's theories of the "primal horde." There is really no scientific basis for this theory, but it's a wonderful myth, one which sheds considerable light on the workings of leadership, social hierarchy, and patriarchal culture.

There is a Freudian analyst in "Klein's Machine" who thinks that SF is an Oedipal literature (I actually borrowed this idea from the philosopher Philip Slater — see his book *Earthwalk*, 1974). I don't necessarily agree with this. But neither do I disagree.

Freud himself makes an appearance in another story, "Comedians," (about an alternative universe in which Freud is a foul-mouthed comedian). But this story is a joke: and part of the joke is that the behaviourists are at least partly right. Inner drives interact with the external environment to produce different results: now a psychoanalyst, now a comedian . . .

So I'm by no means a pure Freudian. But I do enjoy playing around with his ideas.

**YT:** Are there writers that you would list as major influences?

**AW:** There are many writers who have influenced me over the years, beginning with Patrick Moore.

I suppose the strongest influences within science fiction have been J. G. Ballard and Philip K. Dick. Also the C. L. Moore of "Vintage Season." But I should also mention the British scriptwriter Nigel Kneale (author of the "Quatermass" TV and film series), along with Robert Sheckley, Alfred Bester, Arthur C. Clarke, Frederik Pohl, Ray Bradbury ("The Egg" is a sort of homage to Bradbury), and Isaac Asimov (particularly his SF mysteries). I can see traces of all of them threading through my own work.

Stanislaw Lem's *Solaris* is a major influence on my own novel *Station Gehenna*, although primarily at second hand: I've read the book, but it was the wonderful Tarkovsky movie that made the greater impact, and I don't care for Lem's other work.

Perhaps the last SF writer to have a direct impact on my own work was Barry Malzberg: much of his work is tedious and repetitive, but some of his short stories are excellent, and a few of his books are just wonderful, including *Herovit's World*.

I've also been influenced by writers poised between SF and mainstream fiction: Kurt Vonnegut (particularly the early books) and Walter Tevis (particularly *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, a direct influence on "Going Native").

Outside SF, I would point to Raymond Chandler (I've written a number of mutant private-eye stories), Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, and Graham Greene.

**YT:** Which science fiction authors do you admire among your own generation?

**AW:** I admire William Gibson both as a stylist and as an astute interpreter of the evolving information economy. I think he is by a long way the best we have.

Among the other so-called cyberpunks, Louis Shiner stands out: *Deserted Cities of the Heart* is the best SF novel I've read in some years. I also admire Bruce Sterling as a critic and polemicist, but am less enthusiastic about most of his fiction.

I greatly admired John Kessel's "Another Orphan." I look forward to reading his first solo novel. [1992 AW note: I've read it — *Good News From Outer Space* — and it's great.] Among other contemporary short SF writers, I enjoy Lisa Goldstein, Pat Murphy, Walter Jon Williams, James Patrick Kelly, and Terence M. Green.

**YT:** What do you think about Canadian SF?

**AW:** It's hard to define a separate identity for "Canadian SF," when most of the writers come from elsewhere (Gibson and Spider Robinson from the U.S., Michael Coney and myself from England, etc.) and when most of the work is first published elsewhere.

That said, I can see a Canadian influence on my own work, to the extent that it sometimes deals with issues of survival in a hostile environment (e.g., *Station Gehenna*) and of cultural marginality (e.g., "Distant Signals"). I can't speak for anyone else.

**YT:** Please tell me your reminiscences of some of your stories.

**AW:** "*The Alien Station*" (*Asimov's*, October 1984): This was inspired in part by David Bowie's song "Starman." On another level it's about cultural shifts, like the birth of rock 'n' roll (alluded to in the story) and the impact of the British "pirate" radio stations in the mid-60s. And it's about the loss of innocence: how most movements in popular art, in the end, get co-opted by the marketplace.

I used to write a lot about rock music, for *New Musical Express* and other publications. I stopped doing that when I was around 25: I thought that was too old to be a rock writer. But I still write about music in quite a number of my stories.

"*Klein's Machine*" (*Asimov's*, April 1985): This story took years to write and went through several versions. An earlier version was turned down everywhere. I'm grateful to Shawna McCarthy at *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* for publishing it in the end. I thought it was much too oddball to see daylight.

In part, "*Klein's Machine*" is an imaginary picture of an SF fan. When I started writing the story I knew very little about fandom. I pieced together Klein from the reminiscences of SF writers like Robert Silverberg and Damon Knight in *Hell's Cartographers*, and from the handful of fanzines I had read. I now recognize that this is not an accurate picture of the typical fan. Yet somehow it's psychologically accurate all the same.

"*Going Native*" (*Night Cry*, Winter 1985): This story was bought by TED Klein for *Twilight Zone* but got shunted into a horror magazine called *Night Cry* instead. Almost no one noticed it, but it was bought for the U.S. TV series *Tales From The Darkside*.

I would like to think the story speaks for itself.

"*The Egg*" (*Amazing*, September 1988): I wrote this story soon after ghost-writing a couple of high-school science textbooks: hence all the stuff about "questions for home study." I was thinking of an old Bradbury story about a boy growing mushrooms in the cellar: the robot egg being the late-20th-Century equivalent. Like the Bradbury model, it is profoundly Oedipal. I also thought it was very funny, but no one else thought so. I recall Darrell Schweitzer (formerly of *Asimov's* and *Amazing*) singling it out as "lacking character development." Others thought it was "cute." Only *Amazing's* Patrick Price had the vision — or the poor taste — to publish it. ["*Klein's Machine*" and "*Going Native*" are reprinted in *Distant Signals*.]

**YT:** What are you currently working on?

**AW:** A novel about the near-future called *Downside* that I have been hacking away at on and off for a couple of years now, and that is causing me endless agony. \*

## MEMBER BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Andrew Weiner

**Novel:** *Station Gehenna*, published in hardcover by Congdon & Weed, Chicago, October 1987, as part of the "Isaac Asimov Presents" series. Paperback edition December 1988 from Worldways Popular Library.

**Collection:** *Distant Signals and other stories*, published in trade paperback by Press Porcépic, Victoria, December 1989.

#### Short Stories:

1. "Empire of the Sun," *Again, Dangerous Visions*, Harlan Ellison, ed., Doubleday, New York, 1972 •
2. "The Deed," *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* ("F&SF"), May 1978
3. "Comedians," *F&SF*, February 1979
4. "Getting Near The End," *Proteus*, Richard S. McEnroe, ed., Ace Books, New York, 1981 •
5. "Lost Alaskan Terminal Retreat Blues," *Quarry*, Vol. 30, No. 3, Summer 1981
6. "Station Gehenna," *F&SF*, April 1982
7. "The Third Test," *Interzone*, Summer 1982
8. "The Letter," *F&SF*, November 1982
9. "The Housing Problem," *Leisure Ways*, November 1982
10. "On The Ship," *F&SF*, May 1983
11. "Takeover Bid," *Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone Magazine* ("TZ"), June 1983
12. "Invaders," *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* ("Asimov's"), October 1983
13. "One More Time," *Chrysalis 10*, Roy Torgeson, ed., Doubleday, New York, 1983
14. "Distant Signals," *TZ*, June 1984 \* •
15. "The Alien Station," *Asimov's*, October 1984
16. "Klein's Machine," *Asimov's*, April 1985 •
17. "Going Native," *Night Cry*, Winter 1985 \* •
18. "The Investigation," *Borderland*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Spring 1986
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20. "This Year Next Year," *TZ*, August 1986
21. "The News From D Street," *Asimov's*, September 1986 •
22. "Waves," *Asimov's*, March 1987 •
23. "Rider," *Asimov's*, July 1987 •
24. "Going to Meet the Alien," *F&SF*, August 1987
25. "The Alien in the Lake," *Asimov's*, September 1987
26. "Fake-Out," *Amazing Stories*, November 1987 •
27. "Twenty-Two Steps To The Apocalypse" (with Terence M. Green) *Asimov's*, January 1988
28. "The Man Who Was Lucky," *F&SF*, June 1988 •
29. "The Grandfather Problem," *Asimov's*, August 1988
30. "The Egg," *Amazing Stories*, September 1988
31. "This Is The Year Zero," *Full Spectrum*, Lou Aronica & Shawna McCarthy, eds., Bantam Spectra, New York 1988
32. "Leaving the Planet," *Distant Signals* (collection), Porcépic, 1989 •
33. "Inspiration," *Distant Signals* (collection), Porcépic, 1989 •
34. "Eternity, Baby," *Asimov's*, November 1990
35. "Streak," *Asimov's*, May 1992
36. "A New Man," *F&SF*, July 1992
37. "Changes," *In Dreams*, Paul J. McCauley & Kim Newman, eds., Victor Gollancz, London, 1992
38. "Seeing," *F&SF*, September 1992
39. "The Map," *Northern Frights*, Don Hutchison, ed., Mosaic Press, Oakville, Ontario, 1992
40. "In Dreams," *Asimov's*, forthcoming

\* Made into episodes of the TV series *Tales From The Darkside*  
• Included in Andrew's collection *Distant Signals* \*

## MARKET REPORT

## Ranking the Markets

by Edo van Belkom

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Each year the editors of *Writer's Digest* magazine publish their "Fiction Fifty," a list of the top 50 places for writers to sell their wares.

The magazines are judged on several criteria, ranging from the number of manuscripts they purchase in a year and how much they pay for fiction, to the amount of "Tender Loving Care" stories receive and how much of a showcase the magazine is for your talent.

It's expected that the top magazines in the SF genre would make the list easily, and of course they do. What's surprising about the list however, is the order in which SF's top magazine's are listed. For example, no one would argue that *Omni* isn't the top magazine publishing SF today, but the editors of *Writer's Digest* judged it 25th overall, well behind many less prestigious and lower paying SF markets.

The reasons for this are obvious. For one, *Omni* buys very few fiction pieces in comparison to, say, *Analog*. Another reason is that it publishes few stories by new writers. Finally, it has a very limited range of interest.

Fortunately, *Omni* is only one of twelve magazines included in the top 50 that publish science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

In order, the top SF magazines according to the editors of *Writer's Digest* are:

2. *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*
3. *Pulphouse: A Fiction Magazine*
5. *Amazing Stories*
6. *Analog Science Fiction/Science Fact*
15. *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*
16. *2AM Magazine*
19. *Weird Tales*
25. *Omni*
27. *Aberations*
33. *The Silver Web*
35. *Figment*
43. *Aboriginal Science Fiction*

Not a bad list to go by if you're sending your stories out to markets in descending order.

Be warned however, that just because a magazine is listed in the top fifty doesn't necessarily make it professional. Magazines such as *2AM*, *Aberations*, *The Silver Web*, and *Figment* pay a cent a word or less.

Also, be advised that inclusion in the *Writer's Digest* list can sometimes be the end of a small magazine that is barely keeping its head above water.

For example, a recent market listing of *The Silver Web* by editor Ann Kennedy began with this preface: "The *Writer's Digest* listing in May has elicited such a flow of manuscripts (up to 30 a day), that I have decided to close to submissions until Thanksgiving Day. Response time has increased recently to as much as eight weeks . . ."

Still, publication in a magazine listed in the top 50 that publish fiction is a feather in any writer's cap and these twelve markets should be looked upon as preferred markets when deciding where to submit a story of science fiction, fantasy, or horror, especially if your story has been rejected by your first three or four choices.

Take your pick:

- *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*; Gardner Dozois, editor; 380 Lexington Ave.; New York, NY 10168-0038.
- *Pulphouse*; Dean Wesley Smith, editor; Box 1227; Eugene, OR 97440.

- *Amazing Stories*; Kim Mohan, editor; Box 111; Lake Geneva, WI 53147.
- *Analog Science Fiction*; Stanley Schmidt, editor; 380 Lexington Ave.; New York, NY 10168-0035.
- *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*; Kristine Kathryn Rusch, editor; Box 11526; Eugene, OR 97440.
- *2AM Magazine*; Gretta Anderson, editor; Box 6754; Rockford, IL 61125-1754.
- *Weird Tales*; Darrell Schweitzer, editor; Box 134168; Philadelphia, PA 19101.
- *Omni*; Ellen Datlow, Fiction editor; 1965 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.
- *Aberations*; Jon L. Herron, editor; Box 8040; #13 544 Ygnacio Valley Rd.; Walnut Creek, CA 94596.
- *The Silver Web*; Ann Kennedy, editor; Box 38190; Tallahassee, FL 32303.
- *Figment*; J. C. Hendee, editor; Box 3128; Moscow, Idaho 83843-0477.
- *Aboriginal Science Fiction*; Charles Ryan, editor; Box 2449; Woburn, MA 01888.

. . .

There has been a lot of activity in the SF short-fiction market the past few months and there are a few new magazines on the scene.

Both *Tomorrow* and *Science Fiction Age* are science fiction magazines which debuted at the World Science Fiction convention in Orlando, Florida, in September. *Tomorrow* is edited by Algis Budrys and backed by the *Pulphouse* people, while *SF Age* is edited by Scott Edelman and is already reported to have a subscription base of around 25,000. Both are professional markets paying three to seven cents a word.

Other new magazines publishing SF are *Glimpses*, edited by Mike Haynes, which is looking for all three SF genres, and *Sequitur*, edited by Rachel Drummond, which is looking for fiction that "explores the darker aspects of society, technology, philosophy . . ." *Glimpses* pays a half cent per word while *Sequitur*'s pay scale begins with a minimum payment of \$10.

In anthology news, there are several new open anthologies to take note of:

Marion Zimmer Bradley will begin reading for her newest *Sword and Sorceress* anthology March 1, 1993, and will continue reading through till May 15, 1993.

John Betancourt is editing an anthology called *Two-Fisted Writer Tales*, in which the protagonist of each story must be a writer — and not in a peripheral sort of way, but integral to the plot. This antho opened June 15 and will remain open for some time as he works on other projects for his Wildside Press.

And finally, an interesting anthology few will qualify for is *Colorado Fantastic*, a collection of original and reprint SF/F/H written by writers who currently live in Colorado or who have lived their for substantial periods in the past. Stories must also have strong Colorado settings. The antho is edited by Steve Rasnic Tem and will pay four cents a word. A tough market to fit into, but you never know.

Take your pick:

- *Tomorrow Science Fiction*; Algis Budrys, editor; Box 6038; Evanston, IL 60204.
- *Science Fiction Age*; Scott Edelman, editor; Box 369; Damascus, MD 20872.
- *Glimpses Magazine*; Mike Haynes, editor; Box 751; Bowling Green, OH 43402.
- *Sequitur*; Rachel Drummond, editor; Box 480146; Denver, CO 80246-0146.
- *Sword and Sorceress* 11; Marion Zimmer Bradley, editor; Box 249; Berkeley, CA 94701.
- *Two-Fisted Writer Tales*; John Betancourt, editor; The Wildside Press; 37 Fillmore St.; Newark, NJ 07105.
- *Colorado Fantastic*; Steve Rasnic Tem, editor; 2500 Irving St.; Denver, CO 80211.

## KUDOS FOR CANADIANS

## Award Winners

Canadian works of science fiction and fantasy have won many national and international awards. I'll be distributing the following list of winning works at a seminar for the Ontario Library Association this month. An asterisk (\*) marks works that have won multiple awards.

## Aurora Award

The Aurora is Canada's people's choice award. Ballots are distributed through Canadian SF specialty bookstores and periodicals. Prior to 1991, this award was known as the Casper. Below are all the English-language fiction winners; Auroras are also given to works in French. (In the missing years below, either no award was given or an award was given for lifetime achievement rather than to a specific work.)

;1992 Best Novel: *Golden Fleece* (SF) by Robert J. Sawyer of Thornhill, Ontario. Published by Warner Books, NY, 1990. \*

1992 Best Short Story: "Breaking Ball" (SF) by Michael Skeet of Toronto, and "A Niche" (SF) by Peter Watts of Guelph, Ontario [tie]. Both in the collection *Tesseract*<sup>3</sup>, published by Beach Holme Press, Victoria, B.C., 1990.

1991 Best Novel: *Tigana* (Fantasy) by Guy Gavriel Kay of Toronto. Published by Penguin, Toronto, 1990.

1991 Best Short Story: "Muffin Explains Teleology to the World at Large" (Fantasy) by James Alan Gardner of Waterloo, Ontario, published in *OnSpec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*, Spring 1990; reprinted in *Tesseract*<sup>3</sup>.

1990 Best Novel: *West of January* (Fantasy) by Dave Duncan of Calgary. Published by Del Rey, NY, 1989.

1990 Best Short Story: "Carpe Diem" (SF) by Eileen Kernaghan of Burnaby, B.C. Published in *OnSpec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*, Fall 1989; reprinted in *Tesseract*<sup>3</sup>.

1989 Best Novel: *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (SF) by William Gibson of Vancouver. Published by Bantam, NY, 1988.

1989 Best Short Story: "Sleeping in a Box" (SF) by Candas Jane Dorsey of Edmonton. Published in her collection *Machine Sex and Other Stories*, Beach Holme, Victoria, 1988.

1988 Best Novel: *Jack, the Giant Killer* (Fantasy) by Charles de Lint of Ottawa. Published by Ace, NY, 1987.

1987 Best Novel: *The Wandering Fire* (Fantasy) by Guy Gavriel Kay of Toronto. Published by Collins, Toronto, 1986. This is book two of the "Fionavar Tapestry" trilogy; book one is *The Summer Tree* (M&S, Toronto, 1984) and book three is *The Darkest Road* (Collins, Toronto, 1986).

1985 Best Novel: *Songs from the Drowned Lands* (Fantasy) by Eileen Kernaghan of Burnaby, B.C. Published by Ace, NY, 1983.

1982 Best Novel: *A Judgment of Dragons* (SF) by Phyllis Gotlieb of Toronto. Published by Berkley, NY, 1980.

## British Science Fiction Award

Given annually by the British Science Fiction Association.

1977 Best Novel: *Brontomek!* (SF) by Michael Coney of Sidney, B.C. Published by Gollancz, UK, 1976.

## Arthur C. Clarke Award

A juried award sponsored by the British Science Fiction Association, the International Science Policy Foundation, and the SF Foundation, for the best SF novel published in Great Britain.

1987 Winner: *The Handmaid's Tale* (SF) by Margaret Atwood of Toronto. Originally published in Canada by McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1985. \*

## Compton Crook Memorial Award

A juried award given by the Baltimore Science Fiction Society for the best first novel of the year.

1983 Winner: *Courtship Rite* (SF) by Donald Kingsbury of Montreal. Published by Simon & Schuster, NY, 1982.

## Philip K. Dick Award

An American juried award, given for the best SF novel originally published in paperback.

1985 Winner: *Neuromancer* (SF) by William Gibson of Vancouver. Published by Ace, NY, 1984. \*

## Governor General's Award

A cash award (\$5,000 in 1985), presented by The Canada Council.

1985 English Fiction Winner: *The Handmaid's Tale* (SF) by Margaret Atwood of Toronto. Published by McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1985. \*

## HOMer Award

The HOMer is a people's choice award, given by the 7,000 members of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Forum on CompuServe.

1992 Best Fantasy Novel: *The Little Country* (Fantasy) by Charles de Lint of Ottawa. Published by Morrow, NY, 1991.

1991 Best First Novel: *Golden Fleece* (SF) by Robert J. Sawyer of Thornhill, Ontario. Published by Warner Books, NY, 1990. \*

## Hugo Award

Voted on by the members of the annual World SF Convention.

1985 Best Novel: *Neuromancer* (SF) by William Gibson of Vancouver. Published by Ace, NY, 1984. \*

**1983 Best Short Story: "Melancholy Elephants"** (SF) by Spider Robinson of Vancouver. Reprinted in his collection *Melancholy Elephants*, Penguin, Toronto, 1984.

**1978 Best Novella: "Stardance"** (SF) by Spider and Jeanne Robinson of Vancouver. Part of the novel *Stardance*, Dial, NY, 1979 [reprinted by Tor, NY, 1986]. \*

**1977 Best Novella: "By Any Other Name"** (SF) by Spider Robinson of Vancouver. Part of the novel *Telepath*, Berkley, NY, 1976 [reprinted by Tor, NY, 1988].

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## Nebula Award

The field's only peer award, the Nebula is voted on by the active members of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America.

**1984 Best Novel: *Neuromancer*** (SF) by William Gibson of Vancouver. Published by Ace, NY, 1984. \*

**1977 Best Novella: "Stardance"** (SF) by Spider and Jeanne Robinson of Vancouver. Part of the novel *Stardance*, Dial, NY, 1979 [reprinted by Tor, 1986]. \*

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## Writers of the Future Grand Prize

A quarterly international juried award for new writers, culminating in the annual selection of a Grand Prize Winner.

**1990 Grand Prize: "The Children of Crèche"** (SF) by James Alan Gardner of Waterloo, Ontario. Published in *Writers of the Future, Vol. IV*, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles, 1990. \*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Book Launches

**Toronto:** Bakka Books, 282 Queen Street West, will be launching *Northern Frights* on Friday the 13th of November, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Contributors who will likely be on hand include Carolyn Clink, Terence M. Green, Tanya Huff, Nancy Kilpatrick, Shirley Meier, David Nickle, Edo van Belkom, Karen Wehrstein, and Andrew Weiner, plus editor Don Hutchison.

**Vancouver:** Local SF writers Barbara Delaplace and Sean Russell will be signing at White Dwarf Books, 4374 W 10th Avenue, on Saturday, December 5, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Barbara will be signing copies of the latest anthologies with stories by her: *Whatdunits*, *Aladdin: Master of the Lamp*, and, if it arrives in time, *A Christmas Bestiary*. Sean, the author of *The Initiate Brother*, will be signing copies of his new book, *Gatherer of Clouds*. \*

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## AURORA AWARDS

### Early Nominations

Because Convention is being held so early next year (it's the second weekend in March, some *four months* earlier in the year than the 1992 Convention), nominating ballots for the 1993 Aurora Awards are being distributed now. Deadline for nominations: January 15, 1993. Don't forget to participate! \*

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## FICTION SHOWCASE

### Freedom by Barbara Delaplace

From *Alternate Kennedys*, Tor Books, 1992

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Freedom.

He loved the sea and sky. The vast expanse of empty air and water filled him with an oddly thrilling sense of his own unimportance. Not for him that terrifying insignificance his fellow pilots felt as the ground disappeared beneath them. Here, all things shrank into their true, proper proportions, and freed him.

He smiled wryly to himself. They'd laugh at him if he told them that.

"Free?" they'd ask. "What d'ya mean you feel free out there? Don't you feel free right now? Man, I wish I had what you've got, J.J.: status, money, family connections . . . If those are problems, I could sure learn to live with 'em."

Sure they could.

But if they had all those, they'd also have his father, and he wouldn't wish that on anyone.

He shifted slightly in the cramped, noisy quarters of the cockpit. This was no limousine, that's for sure. But *he* was the one in control here. The powerful engine did *his* bidding, took him to where *he* told it. Took him to where there was just him, the sky around him, the sun above him, and the ocean below. To freedom.

He was never free at home. He always felt like an appendage. Even his nickname, J.J. Short for Joe Jr.: Joseph Kennedy Junior. *He didn't even give me a name of my own.* He clenched a fist. *Just a continuation of the family bloodline, that's me.* The family was more important than the individual.

No, that was wrong. The wishes of Joe Kennedy Senior were more important than the individual, particularly if that individual was his eldest son, for whom he had plans. That's how it had been all his life, it seemed — living out his father's plans for him.

"But I don't like to play football."

"Nonsense, young man — every red-blooded American boy loves football. You'll sign up for the team."

"Sir, I'd really rather sign up for swimming. Coach Roberts says I've got a good chance . . ."

*His father's eyebrows lowered, a dangerous sign, but he kept his voice level. "I said you'll sign up for football. And I'll phone Coach Roberts and tell him you're not going out for swimming."*

"But sir . . ."

"Enough!" *His father's voice was thunderous. "You'll do as I tell you!"*

And he did. Coach Roberts got the phone call, all right, and suddenly showed a distinct lack of interest in the swimming abilities of one Joe Kennedy Jr. He learned an important lesson then: it didn't matter what his thoughts, his wishes, his dreams were. What counted were his father's thoughts and wishes. And later on, his father's wishes had included Harvard and law.

"Law?"

"Of course. What else?"

"But I planned to go into journalism."

"NO!" *His father was furious. "No son of mine is going to waste his time scribbling words on paper! You're going to learn a proper skill, one that's going to be useful to you in the future — not fritter away your time at writing! Lawyers are important. They meet important people, make contacts, contacts you'll need when you go into politics."*

*He tried to assert himself. "Father, I've already applied at*

Columbia.”

“Irrelevant. I decide what’s best for you! You’re going to follow my wishes. That’s the end of this discussion.”

And once again, as always, he’d done as he was told. His friend Dick once asked him, over a cup of coffee in the mess, “But J.J. — why didn’t you just go ahead and go to Columbia?” He grimaced. “Dick, you don’t know my father.”

“So what? With your marks you’d be guaranteed a scholarship. A place to live is no problem — you’d have frats stumbling over themselves to rush you. And even if he cut off your money, there’s lots of on-campus jobs. You’d get by.”

He sighed. “My father has friends in high places — lots of friends — and that includes university presidents. A few phone calls, and I’d be out on my ass.”

“You’re kidding!”

“Oh, they wouldn’t expel me. They’d just call me aside for a quiet chat to explain the situation, how they knew I wouldn’t want to go against the wishes of my father. ‘A fine man, your father. And important to us here at the university.’ You get the picture.”

Dick looked at him with a tinge of envy. “I guess I do. Imagine having that sort of power — just a phone call.”

He smiled grimly. “Trust me, you wouldn’t enjoy it. It comes with price tags, big ones.”

“They might be worth it. I might be willing to give it a try.”

He smiled to himself. Dick might, too. There wasn’t a man in the military who could work harder when he had a goal in mind than Dick Nixon. He checked his compass heading for the umpteenth time. Reconnaissance wasn’t especially exciting, and a flier could easily get lost: too much featureless, empty ocean. You had to stay alert. But at least it got him up here where he could be free in the vault of the sky.

Not that he minded much being down below — much to his surprise, he loved life in the navy. He admitted it: one of the main reasons he’d enlisted was to get away from the all-pervading presence of his father. Then he’d gone to tell him what he’d done, apprehension gnawing at him. But for once his father approved of his actions.

“I joined up today.”

“Well done, Joe. Every American must do his duty to his country. I know you’ll bring glory to the Kennedy name. What service?”

He felt his heart lifting — his father was pleased with him! “The Navy.”

“Excellent! That will look impressive on your record after the war, when you go into politics. Help garner votes.”

His joy suddenly evaporated. Of course, he should have realized. “I hadn’t thought about that. I suppose it will.”

“Of course it will. We’ll make a point of playing up your service record. Make you a war hero.”

“Sir, I don’t think you can make a hero.”

“That will be quite enough, young man. I won’t tolerate impertinence.”

Impertinence. He sighed inwardly. As if he was still a schoolboy, not a man of twenty-five.

“Yes, sir.”

What else could he say?

Even then, Joe Senior had been making more plans for his son, planning to exploit whatever he could to improve his chances of being elected.

Never mind that I have no interest in politics. Never mind that Jack is the one with the charm, the looks, the drive for glory. He’d be a natural, and he’d love every minute of it. He’d make a fine politician, a fine President. Not me.

Somehow he just couldn’t seem to gather enough courage to defy his father. He was powerless against that supreme self-assurance. Yeah, I’d make a fine leader for the most powerful country in the world. Some man you are, Junior. How can you stand up to Hitler and Hirohito when you can’t even stand up to your father?

He found himself idly wondering if Hitler or Hirohito could stand up to his father, either.

“The Bouviers have a daughter. Pretty girl named Jacqueline. Blue-blood family. It’ll be a good match. We’ll arrange a few get-togethers, make sure it gets in the society pages.”

He won’t even let me choose my own wife!

His father was a monster that wouldn’t be denied. That familiar feeling of helplessness surged over him yet again, the feeling of things moving beyond his control.

“Face it, Joe, you’re a weakling.” He suddenly realized he’d spoken aloud; his words would be heard by the entire flight. “Ah, sorry about that, guys. My mind was wandering.”

No response. “Den Mother, this is Alpha Foxtrot Three calling. Come in please.”

The radio remained silent. “Den Mother, this is Alpha Foxtrot Three calling. Come in.”

Nothing. The radio set had been misbehaving for three days now, and each day the mechanics thought they’d got it fixed. He shrugged. Right now, it didn’t seem to matter. He could see the rest of his life stretching before him, all planned out. Planned out by a man who didn’t care a damn for Joseph Kennedy Junior, but only for his own ambition to make the Kennedys the most powerful family in the land. Royalty in a country that had proudly defied royalty.

He laughed bitterly. It wouldn’t even matter if he died right this moment. That wouldn’t stop his father. After all, he had more sons. He’d put on a black arm band and mourn, and then shift his attentions to Jack.

He’d make his dead son a hero who gave his life in the service of his country. He’d make certain the death of Joseph Kennedy Junior would bring even more honor to the Kennedy clan, who never asked (in public) what their country could do for them, but only what they could do for their country.

I’m powerless. No matter what I do, my father will make it serve him.

He craned his neck, glanced down at the immense vista of water. How peaceful and clear everything seemed here. Above was the incredibly blue dome of the sky set with the blazing sun. The firmament created by God, with the greater light that ruled the day.

I wish I could stay here forever.

Never again to worry about his father’s plans, but simply glory in the stark simple beauty of air, fire and water all around him. The thought of having to become earthbound again, of having to carry out all those plans made him feel unutterably weary. Down through all the years of his life, fulfilling someone else’s dreams, never his own.

Then it came to him.

A way to thwart his father. A way to carry out his own wishes. A way that set him free forever.

The one choice he could make, and his father couldn’t stop him. He could make it right now. A last flight to a blessed oblivion.

He set the controls, lowered the nose of his plane. It rocketed toward the wrinkled metal surface of the ocean. His hands clenched the arms of his seat. As the furious drone of the engine grew louder and louder in his ears, he kept his eyes raised to the heavens. In a few seconds, he would finally be at peace. The force of the impact would kill them instantly. He was sorry, truly sorry, about Dick and the others, but as his father had pointed out so many times, once you know what you want, you never let anyone stand in your way. You go out and you take it. And he finally knew what he wanted.

Freedom. \*

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This story originally appeared in the invitation-only anthology *Alternate Kennedys*. **Barbara Delaplace** has contributed to many other such books, including *Horse Fantastic*, *Dragon Fantastic*, *Dinosaur Fantastic*, *By Any Other Fame*, *Alternate Warriors*, *Alternate Presidents*, *Battlestation, Vol. 1*, *The Crafters, Vol. 2*, and *Journeys to The Twilight Zone II*. She lives in Vancouver, and is eligible for the 1993 John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer.

# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

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SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
CANADIAN REGION

7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5  
Phone: (416) 882-5033 • Fax: (416) 886-1624 • CompuServe: 76702,747 • GEnie: RJ.Sawyer  
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## The Writers' Union of Canada

SFWAns working at book-length: I urge you to join The Writers' Union of Canada. Its monthly newsletter is the best source of information about government grants and programs for writers, tax issues affecting Canadian authors, and what's happening in Canadian publishing. As much as I value my SFWA membership, if I could only belong to *one* writers' organization, TWUC would be the one I'd chose. Dues may seem hefty compared to SFWA's, but doing just one booking a year through the Union's Writers-in-the-School's program will cover that cost (in Ontario, you get \$200 for a half-day school visit, or \$300 for a full day, plus travel expenses). And don't forget that it's because of The Writers' Union that you get Public Lending Right payments on your books.

Among the Canadian SF writers who are members: Lesley Choyce, Candas Jane Dorsey, Leona Gom, Phyllis Gotlieb, Monica Hughes, Eileen Kernaghan, Judith Merrill, Spider Robinson, Robert J. Sawyer, Élisabeth Vonarburg, and Andrew Weiner. And, of course, most of Canada's major mainstream writers belong, including Margaret Atwood, Pierre Berton, Farley Mowat, Peter C. Newman, Mordecai Richler, and W. O. Mitchell.

Founded in 1973, The Writers' Union of Canada has over 860 members residing in every province and territory of Canada. The objectives of the Union are:

- to unite writers for the advancement of their common interests;
- to foster writing in Canada;
- to maintain relations with publishers;
- to exchange information among members;
- to safeguard the freedom to write and publish; and
- to advance good relations with other writers and their organizations in Canada and all parts of the world.

TWUC keeps its members informed of issues and legislation affecting their profession and provides them with a means for collective action whenever a joint response to these issues is required. TWUC works to improve the writer's position with publishers, governments, booksellers and buyers. It can act on the writer's behalf when a dispute arises between members and their publishers. It also works to increase literacy in Canada and to promote Canadian-authored books in schools and libraries both at home and abroad. The *Who's Who in The Writers' Union of Canada: A Directory of Members* and the *Writers-in-the-Schools* brochure are used as references by teachers, librarians, reading- and lecture-series sponsors, journalists, and others.

TWUC offers its members the fellowship of other writers across Canada, a national and local forum for professional discussions, and

several specific professional services including help with contracts; a monthly newsletter; touring opportunities (including reading fees); volunteer group life and health insurance; and copies of Union reports and publications dealing with such topics as literary estates and archives, income tax law, literary agent agreements, grants and competitions, anthology rates, and a model trade-book contract. (Non-members can buy copies of these publications; a price list is available on request.)

A few achievements of The Writers' Union of Canada:

- In 1976, the Union reached an agreement with publishers on guidelines for simultaneous submissions, thus enabling writers to more efficiently market their works. In the same year, the Union set a royalty of 10% as the minimum standard for basic hardcover trade-edition books.
- In 1978, thanks largely to Union lobbying, the federal government implemented "Schedule C" — a regulatory weapon which prohibits foreign publishers from dumping remaindered foreign editions of Canadian-authored books that also have a Canadian edition into the Canadian market.
- In 1985, after years of Union prodding, the federal government funded a Public Lending Right system to reimburse Canadian authors for the use of their books in public libraries.
- In 1987, the Union initiated the industry-wide Community Against Censorship, which successfully fought the passage of the federal government's draconian censorship bill, Bill C-54.
- In 1992, the Union introduced its Royalty Audit Project, auditing, at Union expense, the publishers' records of royalty payments on randomly selected members' books (see my letters about this in SFWA *Forum* issue 123, page 21, and issue 127, page 13).
- Currently, the Union is lobbying for the preservation of government funding for the arts and for the removal of the GST on books and magazines.

To qualify for membership, applicants must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants, and have a trade book published by a commercial or university press within the last seven years, or, if published earlier, still in print. Membership fees are \$180 plus GST annually.

The Writers' Union of Canada  
24 Ryerson Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M5T 2P3  
(416) 868-6914

## STATE OF THE ART

**SF - Not!**

by Andrew Weiner

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*(Also published, in a slightly different form, in  
The New York Review of Science Fiction)*

Kurt Vonnegut. Walter Tevis. Doris Lessing. Margaret Atwood. Russell Hoban. Michael Crichton. Paul Theroux. Steve Erickson. Martin Amis. Invaders From Outer Space, all of them, from the point of view of the science fiction community. Invaders from the feared and desperately envied mainstream.

The usual rap against these mainstream invaders is that they write a kind of mock-SF. Ignorant of our great traditions, they constantly re-invent the wheel (nuclear holocaust! mutants! plagues! aliens!). Ignorant or careless of science, they make dumb, obvious mistakes. And so on.

But probably the greatest reason for resentment of these mainstream pretenders is that they are, apparently, more successful than the average producer of category SF. *Their* SF often scoops up big advances, hits the bestseller lists, gets turned into movies. And even when it is not commercially successful, it will at least get reviewed — sometimes favorably — in real newspapers and magazines.

Faced with such incursions, we will often see a closing of ranks, a spirited defense of the borders. Here, for example, that usually astute and open-minded SF critic Norman Spinrad, on Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*:

... even the journeyman genre writer would not perpetrate some of the howlers that Hoban has committed when it comes to the details of his future society. Here, for example, we have isolated British villagers at a very low technological level forever drinking tea and rolling hash in 'rizlas.' Hoban seems never to have considered that the tea and hashish would have to be imported from great distances, and that in such a society paper would be far too rare and expensive to use in rolling joints. (*Science Fiction in the Real World*, p.38)

To be fair to Spinrad, he concedes that "this would be mere nit-picking if the same lack of extrapolative rigor (indeed, I suspect, the ignorance of the concept of extrapolative rigor itself) did not infect the creation of the central core of the novel, the invented patois in which it is told" (especially, one must imagine, by comparison to the invented patois at the heart of Spinrad's own *The Void Captain's Tale*). But this is only to shift the focus from one small nit-pick to another, larger and equally fatuous.

Faced with such criticism one can only imagine Russell Hoban responding: Who gives a fuck?

This is, more or less, what the late Walter Tevis told me when I interviewed him a decade ago for the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. Tevis, perpetrator of a Planet On The Other Side Of The Sun (in *The Man Who Fell To Earth*), and of other lapses in extrapolative rigor, told me that he was "not in the least interested" in traditional hardware-based science fiction, "but the furniture of fantasy delights me. I see in it possibilities for psychological realism. I'm also very drawn towards mythology and folklore and religion. Science fiction, as far as I'm concerned, is something of a religious medium. You can't make any logical or rational distinction between an angel and a visitor from another planet."

To evaluate books like *Riddley Walker* or *The Man Who Fell To Earth* in terms of their adherence to genre traditions is to utterly miss the point. These people are not playing the genre game at all. Nor are they, for the most part, chasing after our (relatively puny) core

readership. Instead they are writing Science Fiction For People Who Don't Read Science Fiction.

"Science Fiction For People Who Don't Read Science Fiction" is a clumsy term that yields no catchy acronym. But what else can we call this stuff? "Mainstream SF"? "Literary fantasy"? "Scientific Romance"? "Visionary Fiction"? For lack of a better term, I propose to call it (after *Wayne's World*) "SF — Not!"

Works of SF — *Not!* range from books of high literature (Huxley, Atwood, Tevis's *The Man Who Fell To Earth*) to literate popular entertainment (Crichton, Tevis's *Steps of the Sun*, Deighton's *SS-GB*). But they share certain characteristics:

- They are usually much better written than comparable genre works (hence the expression "if it's good, it can't be science fiction:" a proposition that contains at least some uncomfortable truth).
- They usually don't have the words "science fiction" (or a picture of a spaceship) on the cover.
- They feature interesting characters, or at least well-drawn archetypes.
- They are, as the late James Blish/"William Atheling" observed some thirty years ago, typically "about something" whereas "very few science-fiction stories, even the best of them, are about anything ... They show no signs of thinking ... about problems that mean something to everyone." (*The Issue At Hand*, p.145) Thirty years later this is, if anything, truer than ever.
- Science, accurate or otherwise, is incidental to their program, although they may be inspired by scientific and technological imagery.
- They are more widely read and reviewed than all but the brand leaders within category SF.
- People Who Don't Read Science Fiction *do* read these books. They will then say, in all sincerity, "but (*Brave New World*) (*The Handmaid's Tale*) (1984) (etc.) isn't *really* science fiction."

When People Who Don't Read Science Fiction say "but it isn't SF," what they mean, of course, is "this is good. SF isn't good." The Moon landings, the *Star Wars* movies, the persistence of *Star Trek*, the bestsellers by Clarke and Asimov and Herbert, the movies and TV shows, the explosion in paperback SF production, the high fashion gloss of cyberpunk, the upsurge in academic interest in the field ... none of this has done anything to alter the basic flaky public image of science fiction (unless *Star Trek* and the like have reinforced that image).

We can berate these readers for their ignorance and prejudice. We can insist that there *is* good stuff in science fiction (some of it even better than the works of SF — *Not!* I have referred to above), if you look hard enough. We can say all this (as we have been saying it for at least twenty years). But we will not be heard.

Much has been written about the New Wave battle to bring SF out of the ghetto and into the mainstream. Actually, "ghetto" may be a little too strong — too *dignified* — in this context. "Suburb" is probably closer to the truth. By the late 1960s, science fiction was already a comfortable, largely arid suburb of world literature.

I won't rehash those battles now, except to sum up the outcome: We lost. Science fiction remained in the suburbs (although with a new bathroom, and a three-car carport). It never did move to the inner city. It didn't want to.

In a sense, the SF field has said to People Who Don't Read Science Fiction: "We don't need you. You couldn't possibly understand what we're doing, anyway." And in doing so, we have left the field way open for SF — *Not!* Because even People Who Don't Read Science Fiction are at times starved of wonder, and will seek it out one way or another.

There is, though, a certain permeability at the border between SF



and SF — *Not!* Some SF authors (Bradbury, Ballard, Ellison) have been able to cross over to the other side, just as some mainstream writers (like the Jack Womack of *Ambient*) have made the reverse migration.

And even those who publish strictly within category SF may occasionally encounter an SF — *Not!* response, on a purely local level, from friends and acquaintances who Don't Read SF, but who *did* read their stories or books. ("This isn't really science fiction, is it?")

This happened to me, after the publication of my Canadian short story collection, *Distant Signals and Other Stories*. At first, my reaction was puzzled, even a little annoyed. Although lacking the words "science fiction" on the cover, the book boasted a suitably ugly approximation of Sci-Fi Art, and contained stories which had mostly been published in recognized category SF markets. There were not too many spaceships in these stories, but there were plenty of aliens, and a fair bit of time travel. Initially, I would insist that it *was* science fiction, if perhaps of a slightly idiosyncratic nature. Later, though, I learned to go with the flow. Who was I to disagree? Maybe I had been writing SF — *Not!* all along. Maybe, I thought, I should be flattered.

I know of at least one writer who has experienced an SF — *Not!* response from his publisher: Terence M. Green, whose latest novel, *Children of the Rainbow*, is being published by McClelland and Stewart, Canada's largest and most respected mainstream house, as "literary fantasy." (McClelland, you see, does *not* publish "science fiction.")

Norman Spinrad has encountered the SF — *Not!* response, too, and found it quite a disorienting experience. In another essay in *Science Fiction in the Real World* (the most important book of SF criticism of the past decade, for all my own nit-picking above), Spinrad describes the reaction to his novel *Child of Fortune*:

"Many people who are not regular SF readers expressed the same kind of surprised pleasure. 'I don't like science fiction, but I like this book; but then *Child of Fortune* isn't science fiction, is it?'" As Spinrad ruefully observes, *Child of Fortune* "is set several thousand years in the future and takes place on four planets and three spaceships. If that isn't science fiction, what is?" (p.22)

What indeed?

Spinrad's response is to affirm that *Child of Fortune* is science fiction ... "But it is not sci-fi." Sci-fi, that is, in the sense of the action-adventure/Scott Meredith Plot Skeleton/pulp-based children's literature that currently fills up so much of the racks.

Spinrad makes some useful distinctions between science fiction and sci-fi. But he recoils from drawing the logical conclusion: that science fiction (as opposed to sci-fi), hardly exists anymore, and what does exist is almost marginal to the real business of the field. The real business of SF is sci-fi (that is, entertaining action-adventure books, with a sympathetic protagonist pursuing a clear-cut goal through a series of escalating crises, preferably packaged in series and with appeal to adolescents). Perhaps it always has been, although never so single-mindedly as today.

As SF has concentrated on sci-fi, the centre of gravity of the field has shifted. Works that would once have been readily identified as science fiction, but that fail to conform to the current run of product, will often excite a *Not!* response from within the field, although in this case an unfavourable one. If they are not criticized (for unsympathetic protagonists, slow pacing, technophobia), they are often simply buried beneath the mounds of sci-fi flooding the racks.

It's true that genuine, serious science fiction can still be found in the short-fiction magazines; and also at novel length, although from a diminishing number of publishing houses. From time to time we will even get books (like Spinrad's *Child of Fortune* or Kessel's *Good News From Outer Space* or Womack's *Terraplane* or James Morrow's work) with aspirations to match those of the most high-minded examples of SF — *Not!* But finally, such books are marginal items. And, even for the serious SF reader, increasingly hard to find. People Who Don't Read SF will never find them at all (except maybe in Vintage Paperback after the death of the author, as with Philip K. Dick's best work).

To take one recent example, John Kessel's *Good News From*

*Outer Space*. When I read it, I thought "this is like early Vonnegut, but in some ways even better." Kessel's book was published in a dignified, sober way, with no garish sci-fi trappings. It has been well-reviewed within the field. Presumably it has reached its potential audience within category SF: literate SF readers who Don't Read Sci-Fi. But this is a small slice of an already small core readership. And outside the field, the book is all but invisible to a potentially larger audience: people who read Vonnegut (and Tevis, and Martin Amis) but who Don't Read ... you know the rest.

So I can't help wondering whether a book like *Good News From Outer Space* might not do as well or better if it could forsake the SF tag altogether and take its chances out there in the bigger world of SF — *Not!*

It would be a long shot, no doubt. Even assuming a sympathetic mainstream publisher, Kessel would have to go out there as a virtual unknown. Within SF, on the other hand, he has name recognition with at least a segment of the readership. The same would be even truer for a writer with as hefty an SF track record as Norman Spinrad.

Moreover, as Gordon Van Gelder pointed out in his editorial in the April 1992 issue of *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, mainstream writers don't necessarily have an easier time of it. Atwood and Vonnegut are the exceptions; obscurity and equally low advances are the rule. And no doubt there are powerful market forces driving outsiders like Jack Womack or James Morrow *into* the field, even as others yearn for escape. To pursue the SF — *Not!* readership may be to chase after a chimera. So it's not for me to urge Kessel or Spinrad or anyone else to plunge into the mainstream.

But I do wonder whether some people might prefer at least a quiet and dignified obscurity to one involving publication with spaceships on the cover. And I wonder whether those people might include me. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

### John Park

Dr. John M. Park, partner in an Ottawa scientific consulting firm, came to Canada from his native England in 1970 to be a grad student in chemical physics at the University of British Columbia. He spent three years as a Research Assistant with the National Research Council, and has contributed to several prestigious journals. John attended the Clarion Workshop in 1978 (see his reminiscences in the November 1992 *Alouette*). An article by John on writing SF in Canada appeared in *The SFWA Bulletin* in 1982; it's reprinted on page 8 of this *Alouette*. His first SF novel, *Janus*, is currently under submission.

#### John Park SF Bibliography:

"Cages" in *Galaxy*, December 1976

"Der Geist und die Maschine" ("The Ghost and the Machine") in *Kopernikus 11* (Moewig, Rastatt, Germany, 1984)

"The Software Plague" in *Far Frontiers II* (Baen Books, New York, 1985) and in *Cities in Space* (Ace Books, New York, 1991), and, in a French translation, as "La peste logicielle," in *Solaris*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (May-June 1990)

"Retrieval" in *Tesseracts*<sup>2</sup> (Press Porcépic, 1987)

"Spring Sunset" in *On Spec*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1990), reprinted in *Tesseracts*<sup>3</sup> (Press Porcépic, 1990), and, in a French translation, as "Printemps — Coucher de soleil," in *Solaris*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Autumn 1991)

"Falconer" in *Tesseracts 4* (Beach Holme Press, 1992)

"Andor's Whale" in *Tomorrow Science Fiction* (forthcoming) \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## Self-Promotion

by Tappan King

*These comments were originally posted in the "Marketing" topic of the GENIE Science Fiction Round Table (SFRT) on December 1, 1992 (Category 6, Topic 1, Message 61). They are copyright © 1992 by Tappan King and may not be reproduced in any form without the express permission of the author.*

Publishers do very little market research, though they do pay attention to market research done by others. The best-informed publishers have a fairly good picture of who buys what books, but very rarely have modern "deep research" tools, like focus groups and sample modeling, been applied to publishing, let alone SF publishing.

If it sounds like most SF publishers are following the seat of their pants, they are. There are forces of selection at work; if you guess right consistently, you get to keep your job.

What about authors marketing their own work? T. Jackson King's essays in the SFWA *Bulletin* are a very good starting point, but there are some things to bear in mind:

First, the biggest mistake authors make is trying to look like professional marketers, and failing. A good example of this is the ads that authors produce and pay for which try to imitate ads designed by commercial artists. They never end up looking like "real" ads, and as a result, resemble the vanity pieces they are.

Authors who wish to promote themselves should turn their "amateur" status into an asset, and try to project the most genuine side of themselves that they can. I can think of one horror author who produces wacky cut-and-paste flyers on da-glo paper that are so gonzo that they instantly convey naïve enthusiasm.

As to whether or not this sort of self-promotion works, it depends on what you do. Appearances at conventions, on panels, at autographings, have a definite impact on sales. Any time you can give your work a human face, you will be likely to win over readers. I can't count the number of times I've heard someone say "I started buying [author's] books after I heard [him/her] speak at a convention."

Whether ads in program books or fanzines, or flyers on tables, or homemade posters and such work is another matter. It's not clear just how much good the professional equivalents of these things do, so the amateur versions are even harder to quantify.

There are two basic ideas to bear in mind when you're promoting yourself. My nicknames for them are the Momentum Principle, and the Rule of Three.

The Momentum Principle says that an author's reputation is a huge, inert object that needs to be set into motion with a lot of small, repetitive pushes (panels, news stories, meetings with booksellers, GENIE appearances) that ultimately get things going.

The Rule of Three says that people tend to believe things they've heard from three or more apparently unconnected sources. (That's why publishers use advertising, publicity, and sales promotion to sell books. All three set the fourth source, "word of mouth," in motion.)

The bottom line is that there's no way to quantify the effect of any single action, but you can be fairly sure that you'll make yourself more successful if you embark on a consistent, long-term program of self-promotion. \*

## SELLING YOUR BOOKS

## Thunder Books

Leonard J. DeVulder runs a science-fiction mail-order business called Thunder Books in Thunder Bay, Ontario. He's interested in getting new, autographed copies of titles by Canadian authors. Unfor-

tunately, he doesn't have accounts with many publishers, so he'd like to get books directly from authors. I've sold him 10 copies of each of my books at 40% off cover (no returns); I don't make any money doing this, but he does give the books a good push in his catalog, and tells me that all the copies have sold. Terence M. Green has recently started supplying DeVulder with books, too. If you're interested in reaching a few new readers, contact:

Leonard J. DeVulder, Thunder Books, 144 Cox Crescent, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7A 7K8, (807) 345-9560. \*

## READERS WANTED

## The Idler Pub

The Idler Pub in Toronto holds free public readings every Sunday night, for an audience of 60 to 70 people. They're looking to have Canadian SF and fantasy writers participate, and particularly welcome out-of-town writers who might be passing through Toronto.

The Idler does not pay readers (although you do get \$20 worth of credit for food and drink), but you can bring along a stack of your own books and sell them to the audience. Also, if you're a member of The Writers' Union of Canada, you can apply for a reading fee under TWUC's National Public Readings Program (this is another fine reason to belong to TWUC).

The Idler is located at 255 Davenport Road (Davenport and Avenue Road). They like to have three readers in an evening, and each reading usually runs 20 or 25 minutes. The whole event lasts from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m., including time for autographing and book-selling. If you're interested (either alone, or in combination with other writers you know in any field, including poetry), contact Stan Rogal at his home, 24 Silver Avenue, Toronto, M6R 1X8, (416) 538-244. \*

On Sunday, February 28, at 8:00 p.m., Robert J. Sawyer, Edo van Belkom, and Terence M. Green will read at The Idler Pub, 255 Davenport Road, Toronto.

## CAMPBELL AWARDS

## Canadians Eligible

A reminder to Hugo nominators: Canadian SFWAns **Don H. DeBrandt** (*The Quicksilver Screen*), **Barbara Delaplace** (many anthologies), and **Michelle Sagara** (*Books of the Sundered*) are eligible for this year's John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer. \*

## WORLD FANTASY AWARDS

## Judges Announced

World Fantasy Awards are given for best novel, novella, short story, anthology, and collection. The judges for 1993 will be:

Roland J. Green, 4447 N. Ashland, #2, Chicago, IL 60640

Diana Wynne Jones, 9 The Polygon, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4PW, UK

Kathryn Ptacek, P.O. Box 97, Newton, NJ 07860

Steve Rasnic Tem, 2500 Irving Street, Denver, CO 80211

Brian Thomsen, P.O. Box 1261, Lake Geneva, WI 53147 \*

## MARKET REPORT

## Response Times

by Edo van Belkom

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There's nothing more exasperating than having to wait to find out if the story you've just put your heart and soul into is any good. Sometimes you can wait as long as four months just to learn that the magazine you've submitted to has been overstocked for over a year.

There used to be a time people submitted to *Asimov's* because they knew they'd get a personal response from George Scithers within two weeks. But times have changed and with fewer magazines and more writers, lengthy response times (RTs) have become the norm in the SF field.

There are plenty of reasons for long RTs and every magazine has a favourite excuse. In the small press, long RTs are the result of a number of things, most of which have nothing to do with reading slush piles or the production of the magazine. For example, the following was taken from a small-press magazine's update in a 1991 issue of *Scavenger's Newsletter*: "My husband's job was transferred to Atlanta and we are now pretty much settled in our new home. I'm mostly caught up with correspondence, but if you've written me in the last few months and still haven't heard from me, then send a postcard and I'll get back to you ASAP."

Other reasons for slow RTs are similarly personal in nature and often include things like loss of employment and ill health. Sometimes a small-press editor gets in over his head, gets behind in his publishing schedule, allows manuscripts to pile up and finally neglects to respond, period.

Chris Lacher, editor of the semiprozine *New Blood*, is a classic case. Here's two bits from the "Slim Pickins" section of *Scavenger's*, an informal reporting on various magazines by the newsletter's subscribers.

*New Blood*: They lost one story and held another for 150 days, yet the letter that finally did come encouraged the writer to send more material.

*New Blood*: sent a letter saying an issue would be out in June (1991), but nothing has happened as of this writing (October 1991.)

I happen to be a subscriber to *New Blood* and can report that, according to the cards sent out whenever a subscriber writes to enquire, Lacher is *still* hard at work — 18 months later — preparing the next issue of the magazine. As far as I know, he's is still accepting submissions.

The trick with small-press magazines is finding one whose editor acts in a professional manner. One easy way to tell is if the magazine has lasted more than five or six issues.

Fortunately for professional writers, most pro magazines have RTs in the area of one month.

*Amazing* has, without a doubt, the longest response times of any SF magazine. In the most recent "Random Numbers" sampling in *Scavenger's* — a listing of shortest, longest and average RTs for dozens of magazines — *Amazing's* average was 103 days. In *The SFWA Bulletin*, Greg Costikyan keeps track of response times in his "Short Fiction Response Times" column. He reports that *Amazing* is getting quicker, but the average turnaround time is 128 days. In other words, more than four months.

The quickest responses these days come from the new kids on the block. Scott Edelman at *SF Age* has been responding in about a week, prompting some to wonder if he's actually reading submissions. Personal comment on the submissions, however, is proof that he is.

The other quick draw is Algis Budrys at *Tomorrow*. A.J. had been giving personal responses within seven to 14 days, but was so swamped with manuscripts that he is now overstocked. He is still looking at manuscripts, but says not to send anything unless it will kill you not to.

Here's a ranking of magazines solely by their average RTs as

reported in *Scavenger's* and the *SFWA Bulletin*. (The *Bulletin* average RTs are in brackets.)

<i>SF Age</i>	21	(13)
<i>Dragon</i>	22	(26)
<i>Analog</i>	32	(39)
<i>Omni</i>	33	(40)
<i>MZB's Fantasy Magazine</i>	34	(14)
<i>F&amp;SF</i>	47	(64)
<i>Asimov's</i>	55	(46)
<i>Aboriginal SF</i>	64	(57)
<i>Amazing</i>	103	(128)

Unfortunately, *Tomorrow* hasn't been around long enough to show up on these surveys. *Weird Tales* and *Pulphouse* are currently overstocked and not reading.

Of course, these are average RTs. If you want to wait around for a response, try submitting a novel. According to "Random Numbers" the average response from Del Rey is 108 days, while a response from DAW takes about 307 days.

But if you really like to twiddle your thumbs, consider the longest single response time reported for DAW Books, a whopping 1,325 days. The manuscript, no doubt, was lost in the mail. Either that, or it was keeping someone's desk from toppling over.

New markets this time are scarce, but there are a few things of note, one of which should be of particular interest to Canadian writers.

Zebra Books hasn't earned itself the best of reputations among professional horror writers — for more on this ask your friendly neighborhood member of the Horror Writers of America — but they are expanding their publishing operation to include two new lines of young-adult horror fiction.

*SCREAM* and *The Nightmare Club* are series slated to compete with the popular *Fear Street* YA series by Christopher Pike. The guidelines are quite extensive. Those interested in giving this a try should send a SASE for complete guidelines. Zebra says their payments rates are competitive.

Open 'til May 1993 is *Air Fish*, an anthology of new and reprint short fiction from Omega Cat Press. The antho will include a broad range of speculative fiction with short stories to 7,500 words, poems from 50 to 2,000 lines, and vignettes from 250 to 1,000 words. Payment is three cents per word and the 300-page publication is scheduled for late 1993.

Announced in early October is *Rocket Songs*, a poetry anthology about space and space exploration for elementary school kids, edited by Jane Yolen. Poetry can be rhymed or unrhymed, published or unpublished, but must be appropriate to the readership — not simplistic but apprehensible. No closing date announced yet.

And finally, *Northern Frights* is a hardcover anthology of Canadian dark fantasy edited by Don Hutchison and published by Mosaic Press of Oakville, Ontario. The first volume was published in October and has so far met with enthusiastic response and good reviews. Hutchison is currently reading for *Northern Frights 2*, and says he's looking for chilling horror rather than splatter and that all stories must have a Canadian context. The anthology is also open to American writers, but submissions coming from south of the border must be a truly "northern" fright.

Deadline for submissions is May 1993, while publication is slated for October. Payment is \$100 per story for first publication rights.

Take your pick —

- *Air Fish*, Richard Singer, fiction editor, 355 W 85th Street, #24, New York, NY, U.S.A. 10024; Joy Oestreich, poetry editor, 904 Old Town Court, Cupertino, CA, U.S.A. 95014-4024.
- Zebra Books, Alice Alfonsi / John Scognamiglio, 475 Park Ave. South, New York, NY, U.S.A. 10018.
- *Rocket Songs*, Jane Yolen, Box 27, 31 School St., Hatfield, MA, U.S.A. 01038.
- *Northern Frights 2*, Don Hutchison, 585 Merton Street, Toronto Ontario, M4S 1B4.

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## Notes for the Artist

by Robert J. Sawyer

If you've been to my home since last March, you can't have missed seeing the original cover art for my novel *Far-Seer* hanging in my living room. Obviously, I'm quite pleased with the art: the artist, Tom Kidd, got almost all the details correct. There's a reason for this, beyond Tom's professionalism. I took an active roll in the creation of the cover.

Now, I don't have cover control, or even contractual cover consultation, but it is possible for an author to nonetheless have input into the process. Garfield Reeves-Stevens suggested that I prepare notes for the cover artist and submit them to my editor as soon as the book had sold. I did just that, and my editor at Ace was glad to pass them along to the artist.

The response was better than I could have possibly hoped for. The artist, pleased to have such comprehensive material, phoned me from Connecticut to discuss various details, faxed me several rough sketches, and then sent me a photocopy of his final sketch, so that I could make suggestions before he began painting.

I was delighted with how well this went, especially after the truly revolting cover on the paperback of my *Golden Fleece*. I also provided cover notes for *Fossil Hunter*, my new book that comes out this May. Artist Bob Eggleton and I ended up having several long phone conversations about that cover, and he, too, faxed me preliminary sketches.

One very important thing to keep in mind: don't suggest cover compositions, and don't send sketches. The last thing the art director or artist wants is a paper trail showing that the actual appearance of the book cover — the thing they were paid to provide — was somebody else's idea. Limit your proffered input to *written* descriptive points: what such-and-such an object might look like, should the art director, in his or her own best judgment, decide to include that object as part of the cover.

Below are the notes I submitted to Ace for *Far-Seer*. (Oh, and for those who haven't read *Far-Seer*, please be advised that these notes give away a lot of the plot.)

...

## QUINTAGLIOS: The Main Characters

### Evolutionary History

Although not explicit in the first book in this series, the Quintaglios are descended from Earth's dinosaurs. It's common in current Science Fiction to follow the suggestion of Dr. Dale Russell of the Canadian Museum of Nature and suggest that intelligent dinosaurs evolved from small, big-eyed, slender, bipedal dinosaurs, such as *Troödon* (formerly known as *Stenonychosaurus*).

However, this is *NOT* the model I used for the Quintaglios. Rather, the Quintaglios evolved from dwarf tyrannosaurs. That is, their ancestors had the same basic body plan as a miniature version of *Tyrannosaurus rex*: massive heads; short, muscular necks; a stooped gait; stocky torsos; relatively small forward-facing eyes; thick, powerful tails. Unlike troödontids, which kill with their clawed feet, all tyrannosaurs, including Quintaglios, kill with their powerful jaws.

Quintaglios vary from tyrannosaurs in several significant ways, however. Tyrannosaurs have tiny arms, with only two clawed fingers. All terrestrial vertebrates on Earth now have or evolved from creatures with five digits on each hand or foot. In the case of the Quintaglios, the development of the third, fourth, and fifth fingers is no longer suppressed. They have well-developed arms with dexterous five-fingered hands (four fingers and an opposable digit). Unlike humans, though, most Quintaglios are left-handed. The fingers terminate in retractable curved claws, which extend reflexively when the

Quintaglio is threatened, but also are under individual voluntary control (making it possible to extend or retract them in any combination).

Quintaglio feet are much like tyrannosaur feet: somewhat bird-like, with three splayed, clawed toes, and an additional claw spur coming off the heel.

### Skin

Quintaglio hide is much tougher than human skin. It is dry and leathery. As humans have lost most body hair, so Quintaglios have lost most scales and scutes (bony processes embedded in the skin), but these may be present in individuals. Quintaglio skin is almost entirely green, although it may be freckled, mottled, or splotched with brown or yellow in some individuals, and with black in old individuals. The skin tone is darker on the back and upper surface of the tail than it is on the belly and lower tail surface.



### Facial Features

The Quintaglio **head** has a high cranial dome and a drawn-out **muzzle**. The **mouth** is a simple lipless slit running the length of the muzzle, and the nostrils are near the tip of the muzzle. **Teeth** are replaced throughout life and consist of only one type: curved, pointed, with fine serrations on the trailing edge. Quintaglio **eyes** are oval and solid black. Quintaglios have no external ear flaps, but simply have a kidney-shaped **earhole** on either side of the head. Quintaglios have a small salt-secretion gland beneath the surface of the muzzle, but the aperture for it is simply a very tiny hole — almost a large pore — halfway down the side of the muzzle. Except in an extreme close-up view, it would be all but invisible.

### Clothing

Because the Quintaglio hide is so tough and because they live exclusively in a warm, equatorial climate, Quintaglios do not normally wear clothes or shoes for protection, except in special circumstances. However, most do wear decorative **sashes**, which cross over from one shoulder to the opposite hip. At the hip, the sash may contain a carrying pouch. Priests conducting services wear flowing robes instead of sashes; when not conducting services, priests wear sashes marked with bands of color. Members of the royal family, including Dybo and his mother Len-Lends, wear blood-red sashes. Most priestly robes are decorated in swirling patterns of brown, yellow, white, and orange,

representing the banded cloud patterns of a Jupiter-type planet. Master mariner Var-Keenir wears a special gray sash, about eight inches wide at his shoulder, narrowing to four at the hip. Keenir and other members of the *Dasheter* crew also sometimes wear red leather caps over the dome of their heads.

Most sashes are made of leather, not cloth. Saleed's sash is blue-green. Afsan's is yellow and brown. Imperial staff wear orange-and-blue sashes.

## Tattoos

Adult Quintaglios have a variety of dark purple or black patterns tattooed into the side and top of their heads. Note that Afsan, the main character of the first novel, is a juvenile when the novel begins, and so doesn't have any tattoos at first. Specifically, during the hunt scene, he has no tattoos at all. During the first part of the ocean voyage aboard the sailing ship *Dasheter*, he has a **hunt tattoo**. After the ship actually comes to rest beneath the Face of God, he gets a **pilgrimage tattoo**. During all later scenes — including the battle with the sea-serpent, Kal-ta-goot, he should have both of these tattoos.

The tattoo of the hunt, as described in the first novel, goes above the left earhole. The pilgrimage tattoo also goes on the left side of the head, although its exact position is never specified in that novel.

## Size

Like modern crocodiles, Quintaglios continue to grow throughout their lives. There is no one "adult" or "mature" size. Rather, Quintaglios simply get bigger and bigger until they die. A young adult Quintaglio, such as Afsan, might be five-and-a-half feet tall. An old Quintaglio adult, such as Var-Keenir (captain of the sailing ship *Dasheter*) or Tak-Saleed (the master astrologer), might be close to eight feet tall. (Note: Keenir and Saleed are creche-mates, meaning they are the same age, and, therefore, about the same size.)

## Posture

In a relaxed "at-ease" posture, Quintaglios lean back on their thick, muscular tails. In a walking posture, the back slopes forward at an angle of almost 45 degrees. When running, the back becomes horizontal, parallel to the ground, and the tail flies up behind, lifted completely off the ground.

## Individual Variation

Afsan: about 5'5" tall, thin but in no way frail

Dybo: just slightly shorter than Afsan, but quite rolly-polly

Saleed: close to 8' tall, old and wrinkled, somewhat frail. His skin is mottled with yellow and black age spots.

Keenir: also 8' tall, but much burlier. Most of his tail is gone early in the novel, although it grows back during the course of the action. The regenerating tail growth is yellow, and Keenir must use a cane or otherwise support himself. He has a ragged yellow scar running from the tip of his muzzle to his left earhole.

## OTHER ANIMALS: Dinosaurs

Most animals on the Quintaglio world evolved from and still strongly resemble dinosaurs or other animals from Earth's Cretaceous period:

- **shovelmouths** are hadrosaurs (duckbilled dinosaurs);

- **thunderbeasts** are sauropods (brontosaurus);
- **Kal-ta-goot** is a long-necked plesiosaur;
- **wingfingers** are pterosaurs (flying reptiles, such as *Pteranodon*);
- **hornfaces** are ceratopsians such as *Triceratops*;
- **spikefrills** are also ceratopsians, but modeled after *Styracosaurus*;
- **armorbacks** are ankylosaurs.

## THE FACE OF GOD

The Face of God is a Jupiter-like planet, **striped vertically** (from the perspective of people on the deck of the sailing ship *Dasheter*) with bands of beige, yellow, orange, and white cloud. It covers one-quarter of the sky (that is, its widest part extends over 45° of the sky), but goes through **phases** (from top to bottom). The Face does *not* have a ring around it.

## OTHER OBJECTS IN THE SKY

Also visible in the sky are other **moons** of this Jupiter-like planet, which will show visible disks or phases in the sky and cast round shadows in a band up the centre of the Face of God. The Quintaglio **sun** is Vega, a very bright white (not yellow) star. The Quintaglio world is much farther away from it than Earth is from its sun, so Vega appears as not much bigger than an incredibly bright point. The Quintaglio **sky** is pale violet, not blue.

## THE DASHETER: A Sailing Ship

Much of the novels action takes place aboard a large sailing ship, the *Dasheter*. The ship consists of two diamond-shaped hulls, joined by a short connecting piece. The hulls are each four decks high. The *Dasheter* has four masts, two on the port side of the fore-hull, two on the starboard side of the aft-hull. Each mast supports one giant red sail. One depicts Larsk's cartouche, an Egyptian style symbol; another shows his name in hieroglyphics; the third shows Larsk's head silhouetted against the swirling Face of God; and the fourth shows the crest of the Pilgrimage Guild. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

# Spider Robinson

by B. D. Wyatt

Spider Robinson was born six feet tall and weighing one hundred and thirty pounds, a physique he has maintained to this day through a daily regimen of rigorous neglect. The birth took place over three days, his parents having decided to handle him in sections, resulting in the confused horoscope which explains so much of his history and personality.

His parents moved frequently in his youth, but he always found them again. He learned about sex by trail and error, and in fact is currently on trial for one of those errors. In a moment of carelessness he lost his virginity in 1965, but it was returned to him nearly at once.

An English major, confessed folksinger and failed sewer guard, who once spent time in prison for something he didn't do (wear gloves), he became a starving writer in 1972, because he was attracted by the symmetry of spending his time between hot plate and plot hate — and the rest, as they say, is social studies. He has a rabid

lifelong hatred of hatred, power cords, power chords, yum-yums who hang up on answering machines without leaving either message or apology, copy editors who believe in serial commas and people who spell adrenalin with an “e” on the end. His hobbies include paralogism, parataxis, paramnesia and uxorious parabiosis involving purberism and ptyalism.

Some of his less successful early works appeared in *Galaxy* magazine under the name “B. D. Wyatt” — a house pseudonym coined by editor Jim Baen for feeble stories purchased out of charity: an anaphone for “Y. D. Buyit?” — and so when no one else would volunteer to write this bio, he dusted off the name and started typing.

I alternate between writing hilarious books with stark themes that are very popular and lucrative (it is no accident that my name is an anagram for PRODS ONE IN RIBS), and serious novels sprinkled with puns that win Hugos and Nebulas (my name is also an anagram for BORN SO INSPIRED), a phenomenon which simultaneously amuses and depresses me ... and thus reinforces the cycle. The funny stories take place in bars and whore-houses on Long Island (anagram: BONER DIPS? NO SIR!), and are set in the present or near past; the serious stories take place in New York, Halifax and High Earth Orbit, in the near future. It is harder to write a bio than I thought it would be.

Things I’m proudest of: Having been born to Charles and Evelyn in New York in 1948. My eighteen-year marriage to Jeanne (with whom I share, among other wonders and joys, a truly wonderful daughter named Terri, two novels called *Stardance* and *Starseed* — with a third novel in the oven we’ll call *Starwind* — and a pair of Hugos and Nebulas). Having been associated with Jeanne’s Nova Dance Theatre from 1981-1987, and assisting her work as a dancer until her retirement in ’87, and her choreography right up to the present. Six compliments from Robert A. Heinlein, two of them in public. Surviving for twenty years on science fiction writing alone — surely one of the longer running OOMEs (Out-Of-Mind Experiences) on record — with fourteen of my eighteen books still in print. Two other Hugos, a John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer, NESFA’s Skylark Award, the Pat Terry Memorial Award for Humorous SF from the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation, and four grants from The Canada Council. Outpunning Theodore Sturgeon once (and only once). Having a brother in Orlando and a sister in Smithtown, New York, that I genuinely like. Not having lost my hair yet. Being a slushpile discovery, and subsequently friend, of Ben Bova. Being both the first, and possibly the last, Western writer to be paid for use of my work in the Soviet Union. Having been called “the new Robert Heinlein” by *The New York Times Book Review* (bullshit ... but what fragrant bullshit, eh?) Owning a guitar that has been played and praised by Frank Zappa, “Spider” John Koerner, Amos Garrett and Donn Legge. Surviving thirteen Nova Scotia winters. Having been asked to write both the liner notes for Amos Garrett’s R&B album *I Make My Home In My Shoes* and the introduction for Stephen Gaskin’s memoir *Haight Ashbury Flashbacks* (formerly titled *Amazing Dope Tales*).

I have never liked Elvis, seen the movies *Batman* or *Dick Tracy*, or used the word “Not” as a sentence, and it’s too late to start now. I do not believe that we’re all doomed and good riddance, or that nothing happened back in the Sixties, or that a housing development despoils nature any more than a beaver dam, or that any thing of any sort should ever be censored for any reason whatsoever. Some of my favorite writers are Heinlein, Sturgeon, Pohl, Niven, Ellison, Varley, John D. MacDonald, William Goldman and Donald Westlake. I own every recording Ray Charles ever released, and some he doesn’t even know about. I know a coffee almost as good as Blue Mountain at a third of the price, and I won’t tell you what it is. I also know where the best coffee in Australia is located and I will tell you if you’ll promise to score me a couple of hundred pounds when you go. (Geb won’t go near a post office. Interesting man.)

The only other thing I can think of that you might like to know is my new novel *Lady Slings The Booze* came out in November 1992 in Ace hardcover. It opens with the words, “It was noon before they finished scraping Uncle Louie off the dining room tables,” and gets sillier from there. \*

## CLASSIC REPRINT

# Doing Business from the Suburbs of the U.S.

by John Park

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First published in *The SFWA Bulletin*, May 1982

If, as Algis Budrys suggests, Evanston, Illinois, is the limbo of North America science fiction, I wonder what Ottawa is. Merely to establish contact with the quivering heart of the SF organism, to find out that a market has closed, one has to run the gauntlet of two postal services. One of these (the expensive one) has the right to strike, and has been known to exercise that right, at length, leaving manuscripts languishing for weeks in a place like Illinois.

As a city, given that it is further south than Seattle, Ottawa is quiet. I have no real fear of being mugged, or of having my stereo lifted behind my back. The worst that has happened since I moved here was a series of thefts from the apartment block mailboxes. I lost the contents of a return envelope from *Omni* then — not a cheque, fortunately, though I never did find the manuscript; I suppose my readership was up that week by a couple of mail thieves.

Another feature of living in Canada is that I don’t have to change the spelling I learned in England. A sentence such as “The grey centre of the sulphur-coloured amoeba was a metre across” is perfectly good Canajan. I still haven’t got, or even gotten, used to the idea that I should meet *with* a person, and idioms such as “centre around” make me wince.

This starts to become relevant when I try to picture my audience. Can I use a reference to the game of cricket when my readership probably doesn’t know that deep extra cover is between wide long off and cover point? Can I even get away with mentioning the Montreal Canadiens? True, I could ship the story across the Atlantic, or try one of the local markets (and most Francophone Canadian SF writers have to do one or the other), but in the first case the expense and delay of the postal service are inconvenient, and in the second the rewards in terms of dollars and circulation are limited. On the other hand, I can’t write authoritatively about the United States.

If a story calls for a well-realised contemporary setting, the temptation is to compromise, to say, “What the hell, the border’s only an hour away; setting the piece up here will only confuse them” — and produce a generically North American setting (in my case often with transatlantic overtones).

I don’t think I’m alone in this. I recently did a quick survey of half a dozen SF volumes by Canadian residents, looking for discernible Canadian content. I came up with one reference to Hudson Bay and two to the Gaspé peninsula.

I don’t claim this result is definitive, but I think as an order-of-magnitude estimate, it’s not bad. (And I’m sure that a similar survey of Australian SF would yield very different results.) In some cases there were good reasons why Canada should be absent — stories set on other worlds or a remote future, for instance — and in some cases the authors were evidently using their original (British or U.S.) back-grounds. But when a contemporary urban environment did appear, it was either anonymously North American, or explicitly set in the U.S.

In a far more extreme form, the same phenomenon appeared in the movie *The Changeling*, where Vancouver, B.C., had to be disguised as Seattle. I suspect that this reflects laziness on the part of the writer, and assumed laziness of the part of the audience, and I think the trend is pernicious.

If we are going to compromise by fabricating an anonymous setting rather than depicting a real one, purely in order to meet the reader more than half way, we are confirming prejudices when we should be questioning them. We risk homogenising our universe and coming to believe that Canada, Europe, the world, and Hell itself, are no more than suburbs of Chicago. \*

# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

Publisher: *Who's That Coeur!? Press*



SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
CANADIAN REGION

7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5  
Phone: (416) 882-5033 • Fax: (416) 886-1624 • CompuServe: 76702,747 • GENIE: RJ.Sawyer  
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### TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING . . .

## A Vote for Canada!

Twenty-three months after a Canadian Region of SFWA was first proposed, that region is now fully equal in standing with the other four SFWA regions. By a ballot that went to all active members, SFWA has overwhelmingly approved a full vote on the corporation's Board of Directors for the Canadian Regional Director: 475 ballots were cast in favour of giving the Canadian Director a vote, while only 40 opposed the idea. That's 12-to-1 in favour, and not only represents a majority of those who returned ballots but also an *absolute* majority of all Active members. Rarely in the corporation's history has any motion passed so overwhelmingly; even the vote to accept fantasy writing as a valid membership credential passed by a narrower margin. Robert J. Sawyer began a three-year term as Canadian Regional Director on July 1, 1992.

### CANADIAN REGION NEWS

## Director's Report

Here's what your regional director has been doing: ■ Attended SFWA meetings in New York and Orlando. ■ Consulted daily with President Joe Haldeman in the private SFWA Directors category on GENIE. ■ Published *Alouette*. ■ Wrote eight letters to *Forum* about the Canadian Region. ■ Solved a problem related to a Canadian SFWAn's membership status. ■ Negotiated a 20% discount for Canadian Active SFWAns at Bakka. ■ Researched immigration to Canada for an American SFWAn interested in coming here. ■ Sent press releases about the Canadian Region to many publications. ■ Advised *Books in Canada* about Canadian SF, and provided them with an archival photo of Canadian SF writers. ■ Provided *Quill & Quire* with a list of Canadian SF authors and a calendar of upcoming Canadian SF books. ■ Prepared a list of Canadian SF novels for John Robert Colombo's "Writers Map of Canada." ■ Prepared a list of award-winning Canadian SF for Bakka. ■ Helped *SF Age* contact a Canadian writer. ■ Worked on revisions to SFWA's recruitment brochure. ■ Provided a mailing list of Canadian SFWAns to Can-Con '93 ■ Successfully lobbied Ad Astra to change its policy of not providing free memberships to writers' spouses. ■ Successfully handled a grievance on behalf of a member who had not been reimbursed for expenses as Guest of Honour at a convention. ■ Pursued a grievance on behalf of another member over non-payment of a speaker's fee. ■ Provided a new SF bookstore with a list of authors available for autographings. ■ Helped a member register for the GST. ■ Distributed info about the Canadian Region at the Ontario Library Association's 1992 meeting and at the 1992 conference of the Ottawa Independent Writers. ■ Distributed copies of a member's Nebula-eligible short-fiction on CompuServe and GENIE. ■ Provided extensive information to the 1993 Aurora Awards committee on works published in 1992. ■ Nominated Edo van Belkom for the post of SFWA *Bulletin* Market Reports Columnist. ■ Hosted a reception for visiting west-coast SF writers Dale Sproule and Sally McBride. ■ Hosted a party for the Toronto-area 1993 Aurora nominees. ■ Advised a member on an appropriate fee to charge for addressing a high-school class. ■ Organized a night of public SF readings at The Idler Pub, Toronto. ■ Consulted with one member about the contract offered by ClariNet's Library of Tomorrow, and helped another format files for submission to it. ■ Met with SFWA Western Regional Director Diana Paxson while she was in Toronto. ■ Wrote to TVOntario supporting *Prisoners of Gravity*, which was facing cancellation. ■ Advised two members about agents. ■ Advised a new member on likely markets for a first novel. ■ Wrote to the Canada Council protesting changes to its Public Readings Program (the Council has now reversed the changes). ■ Consulted with Winnipeg WorldCon chair John Mansfield. ■ Consulted as needed with Jean-Louis Trudel on issues of concern to both SF Canada and the Canadian Region of SFWA. \*

### 1993 WINNERS

## Aurora Awards

The 13th-Annual Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards (the "Auroras") were presented March 14 at WolfCon VI, Nova Scotia. The Canadian Region of SFWA hosted a party for the Toronto-area nominees at Rob Sawyer's and Carolyn Clink's place, coinciding with the ceremony in Nova Scotia, with Allan Weiss phoning in the results.

Here are the winners. The voting statistics for the English-language professional categories appear on page 12.

English Novel: *Passion Play*, Sean Stewart  
English Short: "The Toy Mill," David Nickle & Karl Schroeder (T<sup>2</sup>)  
English Other: *Tesseract<sup>4</sup>*, Lorna Toolis & Michael Skeet, ed.  
French Novel: *Chroniques du Pays des Mères*, Élisabeth Vonarburg  
French Short: "Base de negotiation," Jean Dion  
French Other: *Solaris*, Joël Champetier, réd.  
Artistic: Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk  
Fanzine: *Under the Ozone Hole*, Johanson & Herbert, ed.  
Organizational: Adam Charlesworth, Noncon 15  
Fan Other: Louise Hypher, SF<sup>2</sup> show, Ontario Science Centre

Next year's Aurora Awards will be given at the WorldCon in Winnipeg. The Best Novel awards, and possibly the Best Short Story awards, will be presented as part of the Hugo Award ceremony. \*

## LOBBYING

## PLR in Jeopardy

The Canadian government is cutting back on Public Lending Right payments to authors. Action is required now to restore this program to health. For some of us, PLR payments are a nice supplement to our American advances and royalty cheques. But for authors dealing with Beach Holme, Pottersfield, Québec/Amérique, or the other Canadian small SF presses, cumulative PLR payments can easily exceed all advances and royalties. The existence of PLR is an important part of what makes a domestic Canadian SF industry possible.

In February, a total of 6.9 million dollars was disbursed to 8,393 Canadian authors by the Public Lending Right Commission as compensation for revenues lost by those authors in 1992 because of free library circulation of the 37,000 books they had written.

The PLR system works like this: each year, authors register with the Commission the titles of the books they've had published. The Commission then chooses at random ten mid-sized libraries from coast to coast, and checks their card catalogs. If at least one copy of a given title shows up in a library, the author gets one share of that year's PLR money. If all ten libraries have copies, the author gets ten shares for that title. Authors can accrue shares for all the book they've written, but the maximum an author can collect in total is 100 shares.

Once the total number of shares is known, the annual Government grant to the PLR program is simply divided by the number of share claims to produce the share value. This year it was \$43.70. So, if you had written three books, one of which had shown up in six out of ten libraries, and two of which had shown up in four libraries a piece, you'd have earned 14 shares, or \$611.80. (For more on the PLR, see the article on page one of the March 1992 issue of *Alouette*.)

The PLR program was founded in 1986, after intensive lobbying by The Writers' Union of Canada and other organizations. At that time, the Federal government committed to ongoing funding of it. However, the government is now renegeing on its commitment. Based on the projected growth rate (more titles are registered each year, of course, and new authors join the program) and the government's recent 10% funding cut to the Canada Council (which operates the PLR Commission), average cheques for 1993 will be 18% smaller than the ones that just went out. Even if there are no further cuts, cheques for 1994 will be down a further 8%, and for 1995, they'll be reduced yet another 8%.

That means for every \$100 of PLR payments you got for 1992, you'll receive only \$69 in 1995. More: the maximum per-author payout will drop by over \$1,200 — from \$4,370 for 1992 to just \$3,032 for 1995.

The PLR Commission is a model of government efficiency. Only 5.84% of its budget is spent on administration (including mailings to authors and the actual inventorying of libraries); everything else is disbursed directly to Canadian writers.

The person responsible for the cuts in PLR payments is Canada's Federal Minister of Communications, Perrin Beatty. I urge all Canadian writers to make this an issue during this election year. Please send a short personal note to Messrs. Beatty and Mulroney, with a copy to your own Member of Parliament, protesting the reduction in PLR funding.

Even if you don't yet have book-length works, please do this. If you ever expect to benefit from this program, please help to make sure it's not eroded away.

Please write to:

Perrin Beatty  
Minister of Communications  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Brian Mulroney  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

\*

## NEWS NOTES

## This 'n' That

*On Spec's* next theme issue will be devoted to hard science fiction. Deadline: August 31. Maximum words: 6,000. Submissions must be in "competition format," with title only on the manuscript and the author's name and address on a separate cover sheet. *On Spec*, Box 4727, Edmonton, AB T6E 5G6.

In 1995, the National Library of Canada will have a special exhibition on Canadian science fiction and fantasy, prepared by museum consultant Hugh Spencer and bibliographer Allan Weiss. As part of this, Dr. Weiss is preparing a bibliography of *all* Canadian SF&F novels and short stories, including work by pro writers that appeared in fanzines (even if it did so before they became pros). He would appreciate receiving a copy of your complete bibliography. Allan Weiss, 3865 Bathurst St., Apt. 1, Toronto, ON M3H 3N4.

The Ontario Arts Council has released a flamboyant book called "Understanding the Assessment Process." It explains how decisions are made in the awarding of OAC grants. For a free copy, call the Council's Communications and Research Department, (800) 387-0058.

SFWA needs a new Canadian Area Coordinator for its Circulating Book Plan. The CBP is a great way to keep up with what's new and exciting in SF, and to become an informed Nebula voter. Publishers mail their latest hardcover (and some paperback) releases to the coordinator, who can read whichever ones he or she likes. Periodically, he or she bundles up all books received and mails (or hand delivers, if in the same city) to the next member on the list, who does the same thing, passing them on to the third member, and so on. The final person on the list deposits all the books with a SFWA designated library (for Canada, that'll probably be The Merril Collection in Toronto). You don't get to keep any of the books, but for the cost of delivering them to the next person in the loop, you do get to read as many of them as you wish. If you'd like to be the Canadian coordinator, or just one of those who receives books in turn (although being coordinator is no more difficult, and you get the books *first*), please contact the CBP director, Thomas A. Zelinski, 516 26th Road S., Arlington, VA, 22202-2506, (703) 836-2006, or email TOMAS on GENIE.

*Quill & Quire* has introduced a new ad type: "Singles" are 1/12 of a page (2 1/4 x 4"), and appear in either the "Reviews" or "Books for Young People" sections. Cost is \$100, including layout and typesetting. You just provide art (author photo or cover flat) and the text. Contact June Chipman, *Q&Q*, (416) 360-0044, Fax: (416) 360-8745.

The Canada Council now has a toll-free number: (800) 263-5588.

New address for *Books in Canada*: 130 Spadina Ave., #603, Toronto, ON M5V 2L4; Phone (416) 601-9880; Fax (416) 601-9883. (And don't forget that this month's issue is devoted to SF.)

*Analog* and *Asimov's* SF magazines have moved to 1540 Broadway, 15th floor, New York, NY 10036. The Science Fiction Book Club has moved to the 23rd floor at the same address. Bantam Spectra will move to that building in April.

Conadian, the 52nd World Science Fiction Convention, to be held in Winnipeg, September 1-5, 1994, is looking for articles for its Progress Reports and Program Book. They're eager for pieces about Canada, Canadian SF, histories of Canadian fandom, and so on. There's no pay for submissions used in the Progress Reports, but your work will be seen by 3,500 Hugo-voting SF readers; the Program Book may end up being a paying market. Contact John Mansfield, Chair, Conadian, P.O. Box 2430, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4A7, or J.MANSFIELD4 on GENIE. Winnipeg-native Joel Rosenberg will be SFWA liaison for Conadian. \*



## Special Report: THE ONLINE WORLD

by Barbara Delaplace

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Computer networks? Why bother with them? After all, they can take up a lot of time, and they're expensive. Besides, there aren't really that many folks online anyhow. And they're hard to learn to use, right?

Well, it all depends. Yes, networks can be incredible time-sinks, if you're not careful about how you organize your usage of them. And they can be expensive and hard to learn, if you don't take some simple steps to get maximum bang for your connect-time buck. As for folks online — depending on the network (and the time of day), you can find almost no fellow pros at all, or a couple of hundred writers and editors.

There are all kinds of networks out there, from local bulletin boards all the way up to commercial nets and the incredibly vast — and constantly growing — Internet. I'll be discussing the three commercial computer networks I subscribe to, since those are the ones I'm most familiar with.

For me, computer networks have been an invaluable aid to my career. I live in Vancouver, which means you can't get much further from most of the major centres of pro sf activity and still be on the same continent. Through the nets, I've gotten market information, made professional contacts, sold stories, heard the latest industry gossip, submitted letters and articles for sf newsletters, and, not incidentally, made many new friends in the field — and all without the cost of an airline ticket. Of course, when I *do* fly to conventions, it means that much of my groundwork has already been done and I'm able to make the best use of the all-too-limited-free time at a con in discussing business face-to-face with my colleagues.

Furthermore, online communication is *fast*. You're not limited to Canada Post's somewhat erratic delivery schedules: I've submitted stories to anthologies via email (electronic mail) — and had them accepted literally within hours. Time-zone differences are irrelevant: instead of lining up a business phone call at a time (and phone rate) convenient to *both* you and a colleague, you can simply discuss it via email at times convenient to *each* of you. Not only that, email can work out to be much cheaper than a phone call, provided you're using an automated program. (More about automated programs below.)

For instance, Rob Sawyer and I exchanged several email messages via CompuServe about this article. Thanks to that three-hour time difference between Ontario and B.C., our schedules are not in synch. Since he works at home full-time, he usually logs on twice a day: in the morning (his time) when I'm still fast asleep (my time); and in the evening (his time) when I'm still at my day job. On the other hand, since I work away from home, I tend to log on once a day, late in the evening (my time) when he's gone to bed for the night. With email, that wasn't a problem; each of us found the other's replies waiting when we next logged on.

(Incidentally, I delivered this article via email as well, which Rob imported directly into *Alouette's* layout. Thus, it saved him from having to re-keyboard the whole thing.)

Then there's the advantage of what one writer called "the vast group mind" of the forums, special interest groups, or round tables of the various networks. Networks have *large* subscriber bases. This means if you're looking for information about a particular topic, you may very well find it online. A request for data about nearly any subject can net you well-informed responses from a surprising range of knowledgeable people in a matter of hours. (It can also, unfortunately, net you responses from "experts" who don't know a damned thing about the subject but think they do; you do have to winnow the chaff from the wheat.) This can save much research time by pointing you in the right direction to books, articles, or experts to contact.

## NETWORKS: PLUSES AND MINUSES OF EACH

Which network? This can provoke religious wars among users, who often have very strong feelings about which network has the best-informed group of sysops (systems operators — the "hosts" who run the forum or roundtable) and members or which is the worst rip-off in recorded history. My own feeling is that it depends very much on context — what you're using the network for.

For example, CompuServe has the fastest system response time and the fewest "hangs" or other connect problems. So it's probably the best place to download that vast new Windows shareware database program you're interested in trying out. Furthermore, CompuServe has a very large number of commercial software and hardware companies online with their own dedicated forums, where you can get information and help from company reps and more-experienced users. These forums also have software libraries with upgrades, "patches" or fixes for program bugs, utilities, add-ons, and more — all for the cost of downloading.

For sf writers, CompuServe has two forums of interest: the SF/Fantasy Forum and the LitForum. The former is devoted entirely to sf/fantasy, both written and on tv/film; the latter has a message section devoted to speculative fiction and, overall, the writing game in general. Both have writers' workshops; both have libraries with many files of interest to writers. The SF/Fantasy Forum has a special message section for members of SFWA only.

CompuServe has the drawback of being considered the most expensive of the commercial networks, though the cost can be reduced with the use of automated programs. On the plus side, it has a Practice Forum that is free of connect charges, so that users can get the hang of navigating around a forum and learning the various library and message commands without having to worry about the connect-time clock ticking away.

Finally, while there are a number of pros who subscribe to CompuServe, they are not terribly active in the SF/Fantasy Forum itself. CompuServe seems to act more as a resource for other purposes: software/hardware support, news (a number of major U.S. newspapers have online editions), and so on. There *is* lots of activity among sf fans in the SF/Fantasy Forum; it's largely media oriented, though lit fans seem to be a gradually increasing presence.

For the sf pro, the GENie network's Science Fiction Roundtable (SFRT) is undoubtedly *the* place to be. Thanks to flat-rate pricing and a now-discontinued free-flag program for SFWAns, there are more sf writers and editors on GENie than any other network. Nearly all the current slate of SFWA officers subscribes to GENie, and several of the major publishers in the genre have "official" online presences. This is the place to go for market information, gossip, news, chitchat, and flamewars (verbal fights that flare up and die down like brush fires). Most of the authors online have their own message areas where they, and assorted online friends, discuss what they've been up to or how the latest novel is going.

GENie is regarded as the most inexpensive network to subscribe to, and this has made the Science Fiction RoundTable a victim of its own success. Complaints about network slowdowns and hangs are very common, and the original SFRT has fissioned into three, with rumours of a further split in the works. Between the slow network response time and the huge number of messages posted daily — several thousand in one roundtable alone — it can be a daunting task for the new user trying to find her way around. The First Science Fiction RoundTable, abbreviated SFRT1, is the one of main interest to sf/fantasy writers, and is where the writing, publishing and authors' topics can be found. According to experienced users — and I can vouch for their advice — the best way of dealing with the overwhelming amount of information available is to (1) ruthlessly shut off any topic of only minor or intermediate interest, leaving only those of major importance to you, and (2) set a limit for yourself on the amount of time you spend in reading and responding to messages. Otherwise madness lies waiting — to say nothing of using up time you *should* have spent writing.

I subscribe to the Delphi network for one reason: the Wednesday night science fiction conference, where the same group of

writers/editors has been meeting for several years now. A online con for when you can't afford to attend a con, discussion ranges from the latest news of sales, to industry gossip, to advice for the seriously aspiring sf/fantasy writer who drops in. This all happens in the Science Fiction SIG (SIG = special interest group), which has the usual message base and software libraries as well. Message-base activity of interest to the professional writer is very slow.

I've mentioned automated programs several times in this article. All networks are aware of their users' complaints about the cost of connect time and all offer software designed to make interfacing with their particular network less expensive. These programs, known as "navigator" or "automated" programs, are specifically designed to allow you to automate online chores: picking up and answering email, visiting message boards to pick up/leave messages, and uploading/downloading files from the libraries. Once set up, you simply start the program, which automatically logs on, picks up waiting mail, visits the forum/roundtable/SIG to get new messages posted in the message base since your last visit, downloads any files you have requested, and logs off — all in far less time than the you could do so by manually typing in the commands. Then you can read and reply to mail and messages at your leisure, offline, without worrying about that expensive connect-time clock ticking away. Once you've written all your replies, the program will log back on and post them for you in a minimum of time.

CompuServe has the widest range of automated programs available, both in terms of types of computers supported and in price, which can range from free for the downloading to around \$80. There's probably a program for your machine at a price you can afford somewhere in a CompuServe software library; your best bet is to start by checking in the forum devoted to your particular computer. For MS-DOS users, the most popular are TAPCIS and, for users with 386 or faster computers, OzCIS; for Mac users, NAVIGATOR is the program of choice.

GEnie has an automated program called ALADDIN (free for the downloading) available for DOS-based machines, as well as Amigas, Ataris, and Macs.

Delphi has two DOS-based programs (MESSENGER and MESSENGER LITE) that I know of; being the owner of a DOS machine myself, I don't know what the situation is for other machines.

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Here's a basic summary of price and contact information about the three networks I've mentioned in this article. Things to note:

- If you're thinking of subscribing, contact the networks for more information; prices can change, though the networks generally give plenty of notice about pending rate changes. Most important, keep your own particular online requirements in mind when deciding which subscription package gives you the best value for your connect-time dollar. As you'll see below, prices vary widely and pricing structures aren't totally comparable.
- If at all possible, try to connect to the networks through their own local node phone numbers. Though all three nets allow connection through DataPac, it can add enormously to your online costs. Canada has far fewer local nodes than the U.S. but more are added all the time. If there's no local node in your city, periodically phone the network to see if one is being considered.

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## COMPUSERVE

**COSTS:** CompuServe has two pricing plans, the Standard and the Alternative. All price quoted below are in U.S. dollars.

1. Standard Pricing Plan: flat fee of \$8.95/month, which includes unlimited connect time for a wide range of services — including most email services but not access to most forums; neither the sf forum nor

the LitForum is included as part of this deal. New members get the first month of usage for free. Services such as the sf forum that are *not* included in the Standard plan are always so marked on system menus and are charged according to baud rate as follows:

300 baud	\$6.00/hour
1200 or 2400 baud	\$8.00/hour
9600 baud	\$16.00/hour

There are also surcharged services which charge fees for use in addition to the connect rates mentioned above. These include databases such as IQuest.

2. Alternative Pricing Plan: a pay-as-you-go approach. There is a \$2.50 monthly "membership support fee;" then the user is billed at these hourly connect rates for all services (including email):

300 baud	\$6.30/hour
1200 or 2400 baud	\$12.80/hour
9600 baud	\$22.80/hour

Surcharged services are not included in these rates, but are charged in addition to the connect rates.

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS:** CompuServe can be contacted for membership information at 1-800-848-8199; ask for Representative 186. CompuServe has local nodes in the following Canadian cities at the indicated baud rates:

City	300/1200	2400	9600
Edmonton	403-466-4501	403-466-5083	
Montreal	514-374-8961	514-374-5340	514-722-8119
Ottawa	613-837-5427	613-830-7385	
Toronto	416-752-4150	416-265-8035	416-269-0198
Vancouver	604-738-5157	604-737-2452	604-739-8194

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## DELPHI

**COSTS:** Like CompuServe, Delphi also has two pricing plans. All prices quoted below are in U.S. dollars.

10/4 Plan: \$10/month, which includes the first four hours of use each month. Additional usage is charged at \$4/hour.

20/20 Advantage Plan: \$20/month, which includes the first 20 hours of use each month. Additional use is \$1.80/hour. There is *no* refund of the monthly fee in either plan, and unused time is *not* accrued for use in subsequent months.

This is not the whole story for Canadian subscribers, though. So far as I know, all Canadian nodes currently connect to Delphi through Tymnet, and there is a Tymnet surcharge applied to *all* connect time:

Home Time (7 p.m. to 6 a.m. local time, all day weekends and holidays): \$1.80/hour. Office Time (6 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays local time): \$12.00/hour.

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS:** To get membership information for Delphi, phone toll-free 1-800-544-4005. Delphi has local nodes in the following Canadian cities:

City	300/1200/2400	9600
Burnaby-Vancouver	604-683-7620	
Calgary	403-232-6653	403-264-5472
Dundas	416-628-5908	
Edmonton	403-484-4404	
Halifax	902-492-4901	
Hull-Ottawa	613-563-2910	613-563-3777
Kitchener	519-742-7613	
London	519-641-8362	
Montreal-St. Laurent	514-747-2996	514-748-8057
Quebec City	418-647-1116	

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Toronto	416-365-7630	416-361-3028
Windsor	519-977-7256	
Winnipeg	204-654-4041	

**Special Report: THE ONLINE WORLD**

# McLuhan and ISDN

by Robert J. Sawyer

## GENie

**COSTS:** All prices quoted here are in *Canadian* dollars, and GENie charges its Canadian customers GST.

GENie's "GENie\*Basic Services" fee is \$5.95/month. Provided you stick to the services marked with a "\*" on the menu — including the Science Fiction Roundtables and email — this one fee covers unlimited connect time in non-prime time.

Services *not* part of Basic Services are charged at the following rates: 300/1200/2400 baud: Non-Prime Time (6 p.m. to 8 a.m. local time; all day weekends and holidays): \$8.00/hour. Prime Time (8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays local time): \$16.00/hour.

9600-baud: Non-Prime Time: \$22.00/hour. Prime Time: \$39.00/hour. (GENie\*Basic Services pricing does NOT apply at 9600 baud.)

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS:** To get more information about GENie or a sign-up kit, call GENie customer services at 1-800-638-9636.

GENie has local nodes in the following Canadian cities:

City	300/1200/2400	9600
Calgary	403-232-6121	403-261-2875
Edmonton	403-488-9550	
Halifax	902-453-6496	
Hamilton	416-527-3324	
Kitchener	519-654-2230	
London	519-438-2901	
Mississauga	416-858-1230	416-858-2015
Montreal	514-333-1117	514-333-8138
Ottawa	613-563-4479	
Quebec City	514-529-4868	
Toronto	416-515-8192	
Vancouver	604-683-6992	604-684-6201
Victoria	604-388-3961	
Winnipeg	204-942-6690	

If you're interested in subscribing to either CompuServe or GENie, feel free to contact me: I'll be happy to arrange for you to receive information pamphlets or start-up kits. \*

**Special Report: THE ONLINE WORLD**

## Members' Email IDs

C = CompuServe; G = GENie; I = Internet. (Internet is a network that links universities and high-tech companies. CompuServe addresses can be reached through Internet. Change the comma to a period and add "@compuserve.com," like this: 76702.747@compuserve.com.)

- L. Armstrong-Jones ... G: L.Armstrong-
- J. Brian Clarke .....G: J.Clarkel1
- Scott Cuthbert .....G: S.Cuthbert1
- B. Delaplace .....G: B.Delaplace ■ C: 76347,3134
- James Alan Gardner .. I: jim@thinkage.com
- Ruth O'Neill .....G: Ruth.ONeill
- G&J Reeves-Stevens .. C: 76264,1520
- Robin Rowland .....C: 70471,336
- Michelle Sagara .....G: M.Sagara ■ I: mms@gpu.utoronto.ca
- Robert J. Sawyer .....G: R.J.Sawyer ■ C: 76702,747
- Karl Schroeder .....I: karls@aurora.physics.utoronto.ca
- S. M. Stirling .....G: S.M.Stirling
- Edo van Belkom .....G: E.Vanbelkom

According to John Robert Colombo, compiler of *The Dictionary of Canadian Quotations*, the two best-known Canadian quotations are "the global village," referring to the knitting together of the world through telecommunications, and "the medium is the message," an observation that the fundamental characteristics of a particular form of communication, rather than the content, determine what a person experiences.

Both of these phrases were coined by the late University of Toronto English Professor Marshall McLuhan. He became a communications guru in the 1960s with his innovative theories about the effects of mass media on thought and behaviour.

A lot has changed in the twelve years since McLuhan died, especially in the ever-advancing field of telecommunications. Today, instead of the discrete media he wrote about — video, audio, the printed page — we're at the dawn of the age of ISDN, the Integrated Services Digital Network.

This international public system will combine what McLuhan called "hot" media (high-information-content forms requiring little sensory involvement and contemplation) such as print and packaged audio, and "cool" media (lower definition, requiring more user involvement) such as telephone and interactive video.

What would McLuhan have made of ISDN? Hugh Innis, Professor of Economics at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and the son of McLuhan's mentor, Harold Innis, admires McLuhan greatly. "But he had the good sense to die at the right time," he says. "Neither he nor his theories would have been treated well if he had hung around much longer. For instance, his theory of social change holds no water at all. Despite his predictions that the global village would mean the collapse of the church and individual states, both are alive and well."

Derrick De Kerckhove, on the other hand, thinks that McLuhan is still "enormously relevant" today. De Kerckhove is co-director of the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology at U of T. "True, Marshall wasn't tuned into the newer technologies, but nobody has yet made a better attempt at understanding the electronic age," he says.

Herbert Marshall McLuhan was born in Edmonton on July 21, 1911. He reached a level of popular fame enjoyed by few other academics, becoming the subject of a *New Yorker* cartoon and appearing as himself in Woody Allen's movie *Annie Hall*.

Honours were heaped upon him: he was a companion in the Order of Canada and a Schweitzer Fellow at Fordham University. Tom Wolfe called him the most important thinker since Newton, Darwin, Freud, Einstein, and Pavlov.

Although he didn't rise to prominence until the 1960s, he presented the foundations of his communications theories in his 1952 book *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*. His later books, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (for which he won the 1962 Governor General's Award for Literature), *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), and *The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (1967), expanded on his ideas. From 1946 until his death on New Year's Eve, 1980, he taught at the University of Toronto.

McLuhan never specifically discussed ISDN, but he surely predicted its potential when he wrote: "Our extended senses, tools, technologies, through the ages, have been closed systems incapable of interplay or collective awareness. Now, in the electronic age, the very instantaneous nature of co-existence among our technological instruments has created a crisis quite new in human history. Our extended faculties and senses now constitute a single field of experience which demand that they become collectively conscious."

That certainly sounds like the integrated world of ISDN, but McLuhan wasn't a futurist. Robert Arnold Russel, President of the Consortium for Creativity and Innovation, knew him well. "I asked him once, 'if, as you claim, each medium contains the one that pre-

ceded it, what is the next medium?" He was stunned by this and mumbled something about 'new media glare,' a term he'd made up on the spot to explain why one couldn't foresee the next medium, which, of course, turned out to be the universal digitization offered by ISDN. McLuhan didn't understand what digitizing would mean, allowing all types of media to be treated in the same way. Nor did he understand the personalizing of media that was forthcoming through personal computers and videocassette recorders, which made mass media accessible on an individual demand basis."

If McLuhan failed to grasp all the implications of the digital revolution, perhaps it's because he felt ill at ease with the instruments of the electronic era. In a memorial radio program on Toronto's CJRT-FM broadcast eleven days after McLuhan died, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute professor Don Gillies, who was a member of McLuhan's *Media in Society* seminars at U of T's Centre for Culture and Technology from 1969 to 1971, told a revealing story:

"At Ryerson in 1971, he asked a couple of us to do some videotape with him in a variety of media settings. We began to do some very open, free-form work — for instance, putting McLuhan in the studio control room and having the cameras on the floor shoot him through the windows. After two or three sessions, McLuhan appeared to be very unhappy with the media hardware. He complained, for instance, about the irritation from the high-frequency whistle that you sometimes get in that sort of electronic environment. Pretty quickly his agent told us that we couldn't be experimenting with Marshall in this manner, and that was the end of it. I think he was pretty uncomfortable with modern communication technology."

Still, perhaps an outsider — McLuhan abandoned training in engineering to become an English literature scholar — can best see broad trends. He felt, for instance, that movable type changed the world, giving rise to nation states. "Typographic man," as McLuhan dubbed those who lived before the electronic age, subdivided all processes into little components that had to be categorized, not unlike an old typesetter's case with separate cubbyholes for each letter.

On the other hand, he felt that we — "electronic man" — had to grasp processes as a whole, since to subdivide instantaneous communication would result in a gross misinterpretation of it. In fact, said McLuhan, if we could just adjust our minds to the idea of instantaneous information, we could "escape into sheer understanding."

ISDN will provide instantaneous information in spades, and it will do so across several media. This would have made McLuhan happy, for he felt that dealing with only a single medium — especially print — was a form of self-hypnosis (psychologists sometimes define hypnosis as the filling of the field of attention by one sense only).

"McLuhan noted that we have a single nervous system that coordinates all our senses and all conscious and subconscious systems," says De Kerckhove. "With ISDN, we're seeing a reunion of the separate parts — TV, radio, telephone, computers — into a sensory synthesis that Marshall would have considered much more appropriate to human beings."

De Kerckhove believes that the unification of computer peripherals worldwide through ISDN will knit McLuhan's global village even tighter. "Consider what video alone, in the form of television, has managed to accomplish: everyone has already been everywhere in the world by watching TV. But it's a narrow picture, defined by what information we thought we needed. For years, people just thought of Kuwait as a petroleum-producing country. But with recent events, we now know about the Kuwaiti monarchy, too. With ISDN, we will have faster and cheaper access to all kinds of information. Perhaps that will result in more accurate, fuller pictures."

Unfortunately, such instantaneous information is less conducive, McLuhan felt, to analysis and consideration. Information that comes quickly has to be taken at face value if one is to keep up with the flow.

Such ready access could also lead to what McLuhan called "information overload." ISDN will support hypertext (a term that McLuhan would have loved, for he relished in word play), the pulling together of related words, data, sounds, and pictures from myriad sources. Hypertext will, by its nature, be redundant. But McLuhan would have known how to deal with it, judging by what he once told CBC-TV: "There is an enormous redundancy in every well-written

book," he said. "With a well-written book I read only the right-hand page and allow my mind to work on the left-hand page. With a poorly written book I read every word."

Kelly Gotlieb, husband of SFWAN Phyllis Gotlieb and a computer scientist at U of T, was a member of the McLuhan Program's graduate faculty. He suspects McLuhan would recognize that ISDN is not a new medium *per se*. "But he would be fascinated by the differences inherent in the components of the network," says Gotlieb. "For instance, he would have recognized that there are very different protocols and habits depending on whether you're using an ordinary telephone or a picture phone. He would have called them very different media, and that means you get very different messages."

Gotlieb believes McLuhan would have foreseen the emergence of a new kind of etiquette around the picture phone, determining under what conditions it would be rude not to have a picture to go along with the voice. "Consider the etiquette for interrupting," says Gotlieb. "With a voice phone, if somebody says something that outrages you, you still let him go on serially. But on a picture phone, he can see your outrage and he might stop. That kind of difference would have interested Marshall."

McLuhan would also have been fascinated by the etiquette that has built up around electronic-mail networks — "netiquette," as it's come to be called (another term McLuhan would have enjoyed).

It takes a skilled writer to transmit jokes and irony with just words. On many email networks, beginning with the UNIX-based Internet, others have overcome that problem by transmitting a stylized facial expression along with their text messages. A colon/hyphen/right-bracket combination like this :-| represents a sideways smiling face as eyes, nose, and upturned mouth, meaning the message should be taken lightly. Using a semi-colon instead of a colon like this :-| connotes a sly wink. Unhappiness can be shown with a left bracket instead of a right, like so :-|. There's even a poker face like this :-| for those times you want to be deliberately inscrutable, or indicate that you are holding your feelings in check.

"These are voluntary controls," says Gotlieb. "When the bandwidth goes up in ISDN, I think we're going to have to develop the appropriate netiquette for it. If, as Marshall said, the medium really is substantially more powerful than the message, its own rules will develop."

Netiquette may seem like a small detail. McLuhan would have been equally fascinated by the big picture. "With ISDN, like any medium, Marshall would look for problems and find them," says Derrick De Kerckhove. "He'd say, perhaps, that television was an open, generous medium, pouring images and dreams out at you. By contrast, the computer is not generous. You have to give to it, pour your insides into it, eviscerating yourself. He might say that the open, easy-going Sixties were that way because television was the dominant medium. And he'd say the closed, me-generation, yuppie Eighties happened because the demanding computer was the dominant medium."

McLuhan might have drawn other conclusions, too, according to De Kerckhove. "He might have made parallels between ISDN and the automobile. Cars started out as a tool, then became an art form. They were refined, became faster and more efficient. But when a technology reaches its saturation point, it flips into a contrary form and becomes an irritant. Today motorcars crawl through our cities, hampering all forms of movement. Marshall would see the good and the bad in any medium — or in a collection of media, such as ISDN."

Certainly McLuhan would have preached caution when people talk about ISDN as a purely positive force. As he said shortly before he died, "In the Eighties there will be a general awareness that the technology game is out of control, and that perhaps man was not intended to live at the speed of light."

Regardless of such warnings, ISDN is on its way. Exactly what Marshall McLuhan would have thought about it we'll never know. But, according to Hugh Innis, "We desperately need another McLuhan to give us some ideas about where the new media are going. Nobody is providing his kind of stinging, probing overview. Without a McLuhan to see the big picture, we're traveling blindly into the future."

## Special Report: THE ONLINE WORLD

## Writers Online

by Robert J. Sawyer

Originally published in *Database Canada*, February 1991

A freelance writer is an instant expert. He or she has to be. After all, an editor may call on Monday and say, "Give me 2,000 words about hog farming in Ontario by Friday!" Before the writer can talk knowledgeably about that issue, he or she has to become intimately familiar with it. That used to mean a trip to the library, poring over all sorts of documents, trying to learn all things hoggish in a manner of hours.

Not anymore. Increasingly, freelance writers make direct use of online databases. For instance, most of Canada's top magazine writers belong to the Periodical Writers Association of Canada. PWAC struck a deal with the online service QL/Systems to waive sign-up fees and monthly minimums for its members. Now, QL (which originally stood for "Quick Law") is best known for its legal and government databases, and those can be quite handy, but what particularly attracts PWAC members to QL is access to all Canadian Press stories back to the early 1980s. With a well-targeted search, a freelancer can get a complete rundown on past press coverage of any issue in a matter of minutes.

Of course, old facts and figures are of no use to a freelancer, except for a historical overview, but a quick online scan of back newspaper articles provides a list of contacts — government offices involved, industry pundits, and so on. Using the Canadian Press database, the freelancer quickly comes up-to-speed on the topic, and has in hand a good initial list of interview subjects.

If more background information is required, again the freelancer may let his or her modem do the browsing, instead of actually heading out to the library. Some libraries now have their card catalogs online, available for public dial-up. I use Yorkline, the interactive catalog for York University, since I happen to live near the campus. It's free and openly available to the public. No account or password is required to access it. Using the catalog lets me quickly find out what books are available on any subject, but, just as importantly, Yorkline tells whether their copy of the book is checked out. Time is money for the freelancer, and knowing that a trip to the library *won't* be fruitful is almost as important as finding out that it will be.

Card catalogs are all well and good, but I want to know if the book will be useful before I actually go out to get it. For that, I use Book Review Digest. It's a service from H. W. Wilson Company offered on the consumer online service CompuServe through a joint effort with Telebase Systems, Inc. For two dollars, Book Review Digest gives me up to 10 titles meeting any search criteria I want; for another two bucks per title, I can get synopses of major reviews of a book, letting me know immediately which volumes might make good background reading and, just as importantly, which authors could be useful interview subjects.

Librarians are wonderful about answering general reference questions over the phone, but sometimes nothing beats browsing an encyclopedia. A print encyclopedia is an expensive purchase and gets out-of-date rapidly. Many freelancers use computerized encyclopedias instead. The most readily available is *Grolier's Online Encyclopedia*, with 32,000 articles, updated quarterly. It's available as part of the basic flat monthly fee through both CompuServe and GENie.

Indeed, interactive services such as CompuServe, GENie, and Delphi are increasingly popular with freelancers. When I was a freelance editor for *The Financial Times of Canada*, I had my writers submit articles to me via electronic mail on CompuServe — a local call from all major North American cities, and far more convenient for both the writer and myself than arranging for us both to be home at the same time so that we could do a direct modem transfer.

Plesman Publications, responsible for many high-tech trade magazines and newspapers, has taken this a step further, providing a special

section on their Computing Canada Online bulletin-board service for their writers and editors to swap manuscripts and exchange electronic mail. CCO also allows, in another section, readers of Plesman periodicals to talk directly with the writers.

Increasingly, I find that the commercial online databases are my best allies: they represent a community of experts from all over the world who "network" not just in the computer sense, but in the business sense as well, gladly sharing their expertise.

Let me give you an example of just how useful access to these experts can be. My first science fiction novel, *Golden Fleece*, was published in December 1990 by Warner Books, New York, as part of the Questar Science Fiction line. I made heavy use of CompuServe, my online service of choice, in creating this book.

*Golden Fleece* is set aboard a Bussard ramjet, one of the very few theoretically possible types of starships. The Bussard ramjet was proposed in the early 1960s by physicist Dr. Robert W. Bussard. Well, I'd run into Dr. Bussard purely by accident in CompuServe's WordStar Forum, a section in which people who use the same word-processing program I do come to share tips and help solve each other's problems. This was too good to pass up: I told Bussard through CompuServe's electronic-mail service that I was writing a novel based on his creation. He referred me to some excellent sources, and agreed to read the story and offer his comments.

For one plot twist, I wanted to propose a universal computer virus, a type that could infect any computer designed by any race anywhere in the galaxy. I asked on CompuServe for help in identifying the characteristics such a virus would need to have. Several professional programmers piped up with the kind of expert feedback I couldn't possibly have gotten as efficiently (or as cheaply!) any other way. I also needed to describe a death by radiation exposure. High-priced U.S. specialists gave me all kinds of information on that topic for free.

More: the novel has many specific dates in the years 2170 and 2177 A.D. for which I had to know the day of the week. Unfortunately, the perpetual calendars I had didn't go that far into the future. I also needed some help with identifying certain prime numbers, as those were the key to decoding alien radio messages that feature in the plot of *Golden Fleece*. I asked on CompuServe. Within hours, one user in Buffalo wrote me a quickie find-the-primes program and another in New York City dug up a public-domain perpetual calendar that went far into the future. He sent it to me via electronic mail so that I could get the weekdays I needed.

Other freelancers I've spoken to agree: once you get over the initial hump of learning how to use your modem, how to log on, and how to search efficiently, online databases become indispensable tools for the writer trying to make a living in the information age. \*

## Special Report: THE ONLINE WORLD

## Using Aladdin

by Robert J. Sawyer

Aladdin is the free navigator program for GENie, which is the most-popular online service among SFWAns. If you'd like a copy of MS-DOS Aladdin, let me know and I'll mail you one. Once you've got Aladdin, these notes should be enough to get you started with it.

To install Aladdin, make two new subdirectories on your hard drive. One will be for storing the Aladdin program; call it C:\ALADDIN. The other will be for storing the messages and email you download from GENie; call it C:\GENIE. Now, copy all the Aladdin files to the C:\ALADDIN subdirectory and type "ALADDIN" at the DOS prompt to get started. You'll see the Aladdin Opening Screen. There's a box on the left labeled "Main Menu." For setting up Aladdin, you've got to play with two of the options listed under "Configuration," namely:

F5 Aladdin setup

F6 RoundTable setup

First choose < F5 > for Aladdin setup. Make your screen look something like this (515-8192 is the Toronto GENie number; use the correct one for your city from the list on page 5 of this issue):

```

GENie PC Aladdin 1.62
RoundTable editing window
RoundTable Information:
  Genie page number: 470
  RoundTable Name: Science Fiction & Fantasy RT 1
  Auto pass 1 options: CN
  Autopass 2 days: SUMTUWTHFSA

RoundTable files:
  Aladdin work files: C:\ALADDIN\SFRT1
  Input archive file: C:\GENIE\SAVED.SF1
  Output archive file: C:\GENIE\FROM-ME.SF1
  Auto-save messages? N

Software library settings:
  Default path: C:\GENIE\
  Last file date: 930301

```

Insert your own User ID, password, and GE Mail address; all of these things will have been provided as part of your GENie sign-up kit. For your BBS Nickname, just put your own first name.

Under "Modem options," make sure you've set the right "COM: port" for your computer (1 is most likely correct; if not, try 2). Also make sure the "Speed" setting matches the baud rate you want to use your modem at (and is a speed your modem is actually capable of). Finally, ATDT is the correct "Dial command" if you have a touch-tone phone line; if you have a pulse line, use ATDP instead.

That's it for basic GENie setup. Hit < Esc > to save your settings. Now you're back at the Main Menu. Hit < F6 > for "RoundTable setup," then choose "A" for "add a RoundTable." You'll be presented with the "RoundTable editing window."

There are in fact three Science Fiction RoundTables on GENie. SFRT1 is the one of most interest; it's where the private SFWA categories are and is devoted to printed science fiction. SFRT2 is devoted to film and television. SFRT3 is all about fandom and cons. We'll just set up SFRT1 for starters; it's the only one I bother to visit myself. Fill in the blanks on screen like this.

```

GENie PC Aladdin 1.62
GENie/Modem/Options Configuration menu          Config [1] of [1]
Genie options:
  Phone number: 515-8192
  User ID: XTX00000
  Password: *****
  GE Mail address: RJ.SAWYER
  BBS Nickname: Rob
  Prompt character: "?" (63)
  Break character: ^C (3)

Video options:
  Long screen EGA: N
  Suppress "snow": N

RoundTable options:
  Use usual marks? N
  Use Zmodem? Y

Editor options:
  Default to insert? Y

GE Mail options:
  Always pick up mail? Y
  Automatic Zmodem? Y
  Input archive file: C:\GENIE\
  Output archive file: C:\GENIE\FROM-ME.EM
  Downloaded Mail Path: C:\GENIE\

Modem Options:
  COM: port (1 or 2): 1
  Speed: 2400
  Reset command: ATZ
  Dial command: ATDM
  Command terminator: ^M
  Connection message: CONNECT
  No connection: NO CARRIER

Aladdin options:
  Script file name: SCRIPT.TXT
  Address list file name: ADDRESS.TXT
  Connect log file name: CONNECT.TXT
  Time-out (seconds): 120.0

```

The key is the "Auto pass 1 options," which tell Aladdin which operations to perform automatically. "C" means "check to see if there are any new messages (but don't actually read them)" and "N" means "download any new messages in topics I've marked (more about this later) or previously replied to." You can see other options by pressing < F1 >, but C and N are the two most commonly used. Hit < Esc > to save, and < Esc > again to return to the Main Menu.

Finally, let's write your very first GENie electronic-mail message. We'll ask Martha Soukup, the SFWA sysop on GENie, to give you access to the private SFWA categories, and we'll send a copy of the message to me.

Select < F2 > ("GE Mail menu") from the Main Menu, then "W" to write a message. You'll see a fresh screen on which to compose your message, complete with blanks for "To," "From," and so on. Fill in the blanks like this:

```

To: SFWA-SOUKUP
cc: RJ.SAWYER
Subject or file: Access to SFWA Categories
Path/File: (leave this blank)

```

Then just type a little letter to Martha, telling her you're a SFWA member and you'd like access to the private categories. She'll let you in, usually that same day. Hit < Esc > when you're done.

Okay, we're all set. Now, let's call GENie!

From the main menu, hit "1" (one). That "performs automatic pass 1," meaning it dials GENie, logs on, and then performs the operations you specified on the RoundTable editing window under "Auto pass 1 options" (CN, remember?), checks for mailing waiting for you (because on the F5 Aladdin setup screen, you put a "Y" next to "Always pick up mail"), sends any messages you've prepared (either for the SF RoundTable or for mail), and logs off. (Note: the first time you visit a RoundTable, things will be very slow indeed as the RoundTable is "initialized" for you. Be patient.)

Once Aladdin is finished, and has logged off, you'll be back at the opening screen.

First, look next to the line that says "F2 GE Mail menu." If there's a little chevron (») next to the F2, it means Aladdin downloaded some personal email for you. Press < F2 > to read it.

Now, look at the "RoundTables" list on the right side of the screen. The top line in the list should say:

```
>A Science Fiction & Fantasy RT 1
```

Hit "A" to select that. You'll see a new screen. Near its bottom is a "Topic management" menu, which includes this option:

```
M Mark topics found by C
```

This "C" is the same C you put in the "Auto pass 1 options" earlier, meaning "Check for new messages." Hit "M," and you'll see the list of topics currently being discussed in the RT. They'll all be marked "Keep," which means "do nothing." Have a look at the other options at the bottom of the screen. You can select "N" for "read new" (new since the last time you read this particular topic — might be *hundreds* of messages, if you've never been in this topic before) or "A" for "read all" (again might be hundreds of messages). But a good way to start in a topic that's new to you is with either "L" (to just read the last message), or "D" for date, followed by a YYMMDD date code. You'll want to use something like DATE > 930301 ("after March 1, 1993"), meaning all messages posted on or after the specified date. I usually select a date about one week into the past; more and you risk being flooded with messages.

Note that you only have to pussyfoot around the first time you read a topic, and you're only pussyfooting to avoid 500 messages pouring into your machine. On subsequent reads, "N" (for new) would be the choice, and for any topic you reply to, you'll get new messages automatically. If you want to always see messages in a specific topic, without having to select "N" again after every Aladdin session, choose "M" to "mark" the topic.

You'll also want to trim your topic list. "P" will permanently ignore a topic, so that you'll never see an update of its status again (you can turn this back on later if you like by editing the master topic list, item J, from the SFRT 1 menu in Aladdin); and "C" will cancel an entire category (such as all messages about *Star Trek*). Note: these preferences are stored on GENie's computers, *not* your PC. If you don't log on for 30 days, your preferences will be cleared.

Now that you've chosen what you want to read, hit < Esc > to return to Aladdin's Main Menu, then press < 2 > to perform automatic pass 2. Pass 1, which we did earlier, executed your default commands, "CN." Pass 2 gets the actual text of messages you want to read. Once Aladdin has logged off, select "A" for the SF RoundTable, and "R" to read the messages. If you want to post replies to messages, simply hit "R" while the message you want to reply to is on screen.

See you online!

✴

## MEMBER PROFILE

## J. Brian Clarke: Alberta Speculator

J. Brian Clarke emigrated to Canada from Birmingham, England, in 1952, settled in Calgary, and joined a local firm of mechanical consulting engineers. He married a Calgary girl, Marguerite, raised a family of three, and still has not the slightest desire to live anywhere except in the foothills city.

An avid science fiction reader since his childhood (especially *Analog Science Fiction / Science Fact* and its predecessor, *Astounding Science Fiction*), Brian became interested in writing, started by firing off short stories in all directions (without success, to his extreme chagrin), and finally hit the jackpot when John W. Campbell, Jr., published "Artifact" as the cover story in the June 1969 issue of *Analog*.

But long before "Artifact," Brian would probably have abandoned his literary ambitions if it was not for Campbell's gentle encouragement. If that great editor thought there was even a smidgeon of worth in a submission that crossed his desk, he would respond with a personal rejection letter. As subsequent submissions improved (presuming they did, of course), the letters became longer and more encouraging — until finally they were replaced by a cheque.

It was so simple in those days. No contract, no hassles, just the money!

After a second sale to Campbell, and one to the late and much lamented *Galaxy* magazine, the markets seemed to dry up for a while until Stanley Schmidt took over *Analog*'s editorial chair.

Then, in rapid succession starting in February 1984, the "Expediter" series of stories appeared — nine of them, including four which were cover stories, and one ("Flaw on Serendip") which was the first runner-up for the 1990 Aurora Award for Best Short Form in English. More recently, Stan published the first two of Brian's new Alphanauts series.

"Testament of Geoffrey," part of the Expediter series, was published in the Moscow publication *Inventor and Innovator*. So far, the writer has not seen a single ruble, although he has a copy of the magazine. Seeing one's name in Russian is a strange experience.

A Spanish editor bought "The Return of the Alphanauts," paid for it, but never published it. Apparently his publisher folded when one of the partners absconded with the company funds (according to a long and slightly hysterical letter from said editor).

"Earthgate" was the lead story in Donald A. Wolheim's 1986 *Annual World's Best SF*, and in March 1990 Brian's novel *The Expediter* was published by DAW Books. Because that novel was cobbled together from six of the *Analog* stories, Brian has never been entirely satisfied with the result. If time and circumstances allow, he intends to go back to square one and rewrite the whole thing as a seamless work.

Currently Brian has three novels looking for a publisher. Two of them (*Waxman's Daughter* and *Waxman's Brothers*) are set in the same universe as "Artifact," Brian's first published story. The third, *Logjam*, is SF with a semi-religious theme.

Brian is a Fellow of the British Interplanetary Society, a long-time member and a past president of the Calgary Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *On Spec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*. In the latter capacity he reads submissions by up-and-coming Canadian writers (plus one or two who have already arrived), and tries hard not to remind himself of the depressing fact that many of these talented people are the competition.

If there is anything more satisfying than the creative act of writing itself, for J. Brian Clarke it has been the opportunity to read and discuss his stories at SF conventions and several Calgary high schools. Despite their too-often bad press, the young people of this country are great! \*

## STATE OF THE ART

## Breaking the Rules by Andrew Weiner

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Originally published in *Short Form*, February 1990

Orson Scott Card recently expanded his story "Lost Boys" (F&SF, Oct. 1989) into a novel (HarperCollins, 1992). In doing so, Card changed the narrative from first-person, ostensibly about his own life and family, to third-person, about some clearly fictitious characters. Card was heavily criticized for his choice of narrative voice in the short version, but here Andrew Weiner defends that decision.

In the October 1989 issue of *Short Form*, Pat Murphy takes Orson Scott Card to task over his short story "Lost Boys," calling it, among other things, "fundamentally flawed, rotten at the heart ... a heart-breaking cheat."

In essence, Murphy accuses Card of breaking all the rules: the rules, that is, of properly decorous fiction.

Similar thoughts ran through my own mind as I first read "Lost Boys." What is Card *doing* here? Is this supposed to be *true*? If it isn't, *why* is he doing this?

And, much like Murphy, I thought: This is all wrong. A writer shouldn't use himself as a character in a story, shouldn't use the details of his own life to lend it conviction. A story should stand alone: it shouldn't need an Afterword to explain and justify it. And so on.

*Shouldn't. Should. Shouldn't.*

But then I thought: This story works.

For quite a while now, I've been having problems reading science fiction. The magazines piled up unread. Every so often I would pick up an issue and work my way through a few stories, reading as though through a fog, sometimes admiring a particular piece of writing or a new change on an old theme, even then remembering almost nothing of what I had read. Nearly everything seemed so formulaic, so predictable, so *unbelievable*.

A very few stories managed to cut through this haze. "Lost Boys" was one of them. Another (which I'll get to in a moment) was Bruce Sterling's "Dori Bangs." Both these stories, in their very different ways, break the rules.

Orson Scott Card could easily have written "Lost Boys" the conventional way. Call the narrator, say, Pete, give him a job as, say, a software developer (you really *shouldn't* write stories about writers: people will think you're writing about yourself. Probably they will anyhow, but why make it so easy for them?), set on everything else.

The story would still work. It would still get inside family life in a profound and moving way (I think almost every parent can resonate to the "lost" child, both as metaphor and as threat). It would still deliver its expected quotient of suspense and chills. It would still be one of Card's most powerful short stories.

But you would lose something. You would lose that momentary suspension of disbelief as you read the first few pages of the story and you wonder: did this really happen?

All science fiction and fantasy, of course, is supposed to create that suspension of disbelief. Almost none of it does, once you get past the age of twelve. Who really believes in Lazarus Long or Gully Foyle or Ender Wiggin? We're all postmodernists now. We may be entertained, but we're not going to *believe*.

So I can't find it in myself to criticize Card for wanting to write a story that, just for once, someone might actually believe, even for only a few minutes.

Sure, it's a trick, a stunt akin to rolling down Niagara Falls in a barrel. And sure, he'll never get away with it again. But he pulled it off once.

And I can't help but read a subtext in Pat Murphy's criticism (and in the comments attributed to other workshop participants). It's as if, at some level, they're saying, "That sonofabitch Card really had me

going there for a moment. You know, I could have done that, too, except that *it's against the rules.*"

Because, with all due respect to Pat Murphy, I didn't believe in her Rachel for a moment. But I did, just for a minute there, half-believe Orson Scott Card.

If Card had turned "Lost Boys" into conventional horror fiction, we might have admired the story, but we wouldn't have believed a word of it. We would have thought: Card has come up with a wonderful metaphor here. Maybe he lays it on a little thick in the Christmas Eve section. But on balance, here is a modern ghost story that actually works, one that you could mention in the same breath as Robert Aickman ... And so on.

These are all significant pleasures of the text for mature, post-modern readers. But they are quite different in kind from the pleasures that Card does deliver, which are considerably more regressive: that enjoyment of sinking down, however briefly, into the fictional world beneath the surface of the text, and believing, if only for a moment, that this fake world might possibly be the real world, that these lies might actually be true.

Card reminds us, in other words, of something that we all once experienced, long ago in the mists of personal time, in reading, or listening to, a "story." The fact that the story Card has to tell here is one of steadily growing horror doesn't make that pleasure any less real.

There's a certain irony here in finding Card, perhaps our most vocal defender of traditional story values, using what I must call a "trick" (and Pat Murphy calls a "cheat") to deliver this payoff. But it's also entirely consistent. Because these days, how else are you going to make people believe your stories, short of grabbing them by the throat and insisting that *this really happened?*

Having broken one set of rules, it is necessary for Card to break another. He must append to "Lost Boys" an Afterword in which he explains that the story is not actually true. Unlike Pat Murphy, I can only read this Afterword as an integral element of the story rather than an inadequate (if "genuinely moving") apologia. By commenting on his own text, Card kicks the story up to a whole new level of meaning. Exposing his own lies, he turns them into psychological truths.

Orson Scott Card is not someone you would usually think of as an experimental writer. But "Lost Boys" is a genuinely experimental story, one that tests the outer limits of what we call "fiction." So, in a very different way, does Bruce Sterling's "Dori Bangs" (*Asimov's*, September 1989).

"*The following story is a work of fantasy,*" warns the author's note at the front end. "*It is not reportage ... the author himself clearly has an artistic axe to grind — so don't take his word at face value...*"

Where Card feigns realism, Sterling gleefully regales us with lies: "comforting lies" is what he calls them. And where Card's tone is one of painful sincerity, Sterling's is knowing, flip, and at times almost insufferably hip. Like Card, Sterling breaks plenty of rules here. But he tells us about it as he goes along.

"Dori Bangs" is a fantasy about what might have happened if two real people, both of whom died young and alone, had managed to connect in real life. The two real people are Lester Bangs, a rock critic, and Dori Seda, an underground cartoonist. I had heard of Lester Bangs, but not of Dori Seda. I'm not sure that the average reader of *Asimov's* has heard of either one of them. The question is whether or not this matters.

When I laboured as a rock critic, Lester Bangs was one of my idols. Greil Marcus had greater insight, perhaps, and was certainly more lucid. But Bangs was rock and roll. Reading Marcus you might learn something. But only Bangs could make you howl with laughter. See, for example, "James Taylor Marked For Death," in Bangs's posthumous Marcus-edited collection *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung* (Knopf, 1987). As a critic, I might aspire (only aspire) to be as good as Marcus. But no one could hope to touch Lester Bangs (although they tried, God knows).

So I cared about Lester Bangs. And I was sad when he died. And I could understand why Sterling would want to make him live again, if only for a moment. And those who knew and cared about Dori Seda no doubt felt the same. But I still had to wonder: was that reason enough to write this story?

In Sterling's conceit, Lester Bangs doesn't die alone in his apartment of an overdose of Darvon on top of flu on top of too many years of hard living. Instead he goes to San Francisco and meets Dori Seda, who as a result doesn't die of flu on top of auto injuries on top of too much equally hard living. Instead Dori and Lester eventually get married, and Dori Seda becomes Dori Bangs.

Dori and Lester have their problems, like most people, but they work through them. Ultimately they give up self-destruction ("awfully tiring"), get quasi-regular jobs, "eat balanced meals, go to bed early." Lester finishes the novel he always dreamed of writing, but it gets "panned and quickly remaindered." Finally he dies, after some 33 years of extra Sterling-given life, shoveling snow off his lawn.

What we have here, in other words, is an alternate universe story in which the Germans don't win, and the Romans don't invent the steam engine. None of that world-shattering stuff. Just two people who live on rather than dying young, not always happily, not for ever after.

It seems a lot of work, somehow, to approach such a muffled conclusion. But Sterling knows exactly where he's going.

A year after Lester's death, Dori has a vision of The Child They Never Had. "Don't worry ..." The Child tells her, in Sterling's best bit of Bangs pastiche, "... you two woulda been no prize as parents."

Dori asks The Child if their lives *meant* anything. "... were you Immortal Artists leaving indelible graffiti in the concrete sidewalk of Time, no ... you were just people. But it's better to have a real life than no life."

All of which serves to set up Sterling's meditations on the Meaning of Art: "Art can't make you immortal," The Child tells Dori. "Art can't Change the World. Art can't even heal your soul. All it can do is maybe ease the pain a bit or make you feel more awake. And that's enough ..."

I quote from this exchange at some length, not only because it breaks a whole bunch more rules (*don't* put words in your characters' mouths; *don't* lecture your readers, except maybe in *Analog*), but because it's such wonderful stuff. It bears very directly on the life of Lester Bangs, who really did once think that rock and roll could Change the World (so did I, so did I) and maybe died, in some sense, of his own disillusion. It bears also, for those who care about such things, on the career of Bruce Sterling as Chief Propagandist of cyberpunk. And, in a broader sense, it bears on every one of us engaged in writing these "comforting lies."

This in itself might be enough to justify the risks Sterling takes in this story. But there's more. In the final paragraphs, Sterling makes his most omniscient authorial intervention of all (yeah, he really shouldn't) to remind us that Dori and Lester really did die, although "simple real-life acts of human caring, at the proper moment, might have saved them both ... And so they went down into darkness, like skaters, breaking through the hard bright shiny surface of our true-facts world."

I have never thought of Bruce Sterling as a particularly emotional writer. His best work has a coolness of tone at times reminiscent of Wells or Stapledon. (*Islands In The Net* is at its weakest, for me, when it tries so heroically to focus on the characters' personal relationships.) But "Dori Bangs" is most affecting and true at the same moments that it is being most artificial and contrived and self-consciously hip.

I don't know exactly how Sterling does this, and I'm not sure that he could do it again, or that he would want to. But it was the best story I read that year.

No doubt Bruce Sterling is going to run into some heavy flak for the violations of conventional narrative that he perpetrates in "Dori Bangs" — and it wouldn't surprise me to see Orson Scott Card in the firing line. But both authors are in a sense writing their way out of exactly the same dilemma.

I don't really have much of a conclusion to offer here, except the obvious and rote one, which is that rules exist to be broken, if you have good enough reason to do so, and if — a sizeable if — you can find an editor willing to go along with you. I do know that Card and Sterling made *me* feel more awake, and that's worth more to me than proper narrative decorum. \*



## MARKET REPORT

## New Markets

by Edo van Belkom

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Some short stories have extended lifespans and are reprinted in anthologies a dozen or more times over the course of their author's career. Most stories, however, aren't so lucky. They're usually on and off the shelf in less than a month before being relegated to obscurity where their only hope of revival is the publication of a collection of the author's short stories or being reprinted in a narrow-focus anthology edited by Martin H. Greenberg somewhere down the road.

Until now.

Electronic publishing is in its infancy, but many professional writers and agents feel it is the future of the publishing industry. Canadian Brad Templeton is getting in on the ground floor and currently in the process of creating *The Library of Tomorrow*, an electronic library service that will make writers' works available to readers in the form of computer files they can read on their computer screens or print on their printers. [See the interview with Templeton on page 1 of the September 1992 *Alouette*.]

In a nutshell, *The Library of Tomorrow* will operate like this: authors who submit their work will have it filed in the library where readers who pay a fee of \$5 per month will have unlimited access to download as many stories or novels as they wish. Payment to authors is then made from a royalty pool according to the number of times a work has been downloaded. The more popular your work is in relation to the other authors' works in the library, the more royalties you earn.

Templeton is offering two incentives to authors who sign up in the first year, so the time to join publishing's new wave is now. Works placed in the library during its first year of operation earns a 5% royalty bonus, and if the author has had any work in the library since its first year of operation, all works receive a further 10% "pioneer reward" royalty bonus. Templeton is interested only in work previously published in professional SF markets. The submission format is a bit detailed; send a SASE to Templeton for guidelines, or download file 5876 from the SFRT libraries on GENie.

If more traditional markets are more your speed, there's a new professional SF magazine about to hit the stands. *Expanse Magazine* will be a full-sized magazine premiering early in 1993. They do *not* publish fantasy or horror. *Expanse* is promising to pay between five and eight cents per word on acceptance for first North American serial rights and non-exclusive world English-Language serial rights. Stories of 2,500 to 5,000 words preferred; short-shorts are acceptable, as are longer works on occasion. They also plan on publishing classic reprints from the pulp era, convention reports, and interviews.

The first issue of *The Sci-Fi Channel Magazine*, a magazine for subscribers of the American cable channel, is now out. Editor John Davis is looking for non-fiction articles (query first) of 2,000 to 3,000 words that focus on the psychology and sociology of SF, fantasy, and horror. He's also looking to a lesser extent for fiction. He will consider short-shorts and stories up to 5,000 words, but prefers work around 3,000 words. Payment: 10 cents per word on publication.

Claudia O'Keefe has begun reading for *Ghostide 2*, a follow-up to her successful *Ghostide* anthology. She is looking for dark fantasy, intelligent horror, and some suspense. All stories should have traditional structure, but no clichés. She's not afraid of gore or four-letter words, but prefers alternatives to "bad-boys in leather" horror. She is *not* interested in young-adult stories or those with juvenile protagonists. Payment is 4¢/word for stories from 3,000 to 30,000 words.

O'Keefe is also editing an anthology entitled *Mother*. The anthology will be made up of horror stories about Mom, or moms in horrific

situations. She's open to all schools of horror and dark fantasy. Stories need not have traditional structure, but vignettes are out. Payment is four cents per word for stories to 20,000 words.

George Hatch has an interesting theme for *Noctulpa 8*. Subtitled "Eclipse of the Senses," the anthology will contain stories involving characters whose lives are devastated by the sudden dysfunction of one of the five senses. This includes stories that deal with insidious diseases, gradational deformity, sensory deprivation/overload, progressive mutation, etc. Hatch likes aggressive writing styles that grab the reader by the throat in the opening paragraphs. Dislikes include S&S, heroic fantasy, and hi-tech SF. Payment is three cents per word upon publication for stories from 1,000 to 5,000 words. Query on anything longer. Market opens April 1. Do *not* send anything before then.

An update from the editor of the Canadian horror and dark fantasy anthology *Northern Frights 2*. Don Hutchison says the book is about half full. He's looking for full stories with well-rounded characters, rather than vignettes or "idea" stories. The book is scheduled for October with payment of a flat \$100 per story.

Staying with horror, *Tails of Wonder* (originally announced as *Sharp Tooth*) is a small-press zine set to debut this month. Editor Nicolas Samuels says he's interested in fantasy and SF up to 6,000 words, poetry, art, and illustrations. He will also accept non-fiction relating to the SF field as well as letters to the editor. Payment is an honorarium of \$5 and two contributor's copies for one-time rights.

At the other end of the spectrum is deep space — *Deep Space Nine*, that is. John Ordovery at Pocket Books is looking for published novelists to write novels on a *work-for-hire* basis about the *Star Trek* spinoff *Deep Space Nine*. Pocket is overstocked on *The Next Generation*, but is looking for *Deep Space Nine* and classic *Trek*. There are two approaches for submission: a) through your agent, or b) by sending one of your novels along with your proposal. Ordovery will send you a *Deep Space Nine* bible upon request.

And finally, Algis Budrys has purchased *Tomorrow Science Fiction* from Pulphouse. Budrys favours beginning authors since he knows other magazines have rejected good stories because they only have so much room for unknowns. Payment is three to seven cents per word, with four cents a word being the usual rate; minimum payment is \$50. Each issue contains 60,000 words of SF, fantasy and horror, but no jokes, poetry, cartoons, or columns. Unfortunately, Budrys says he's pretty much bought up for the foreseeable future. (A subscription note: Budrys is offering SFWA members a professional rate of \$15 for six issues plus a free copy of the first issue. This saves \$3, plus the \$3.95 for issue number one.)

Take your pick —

- *Library of Tomorrow*, Brad Templeton, P.O. Box 1479, Cupertino, CA, U.S.A. 95015-1479 (Internet: publisher@clarinet.com; GENie: B.TEMPLETON).
- *Expanse Magazine*, Steven E. Fick, 7982 Honeygo Boulevard, Suite 49, Baltimore, MD, U.S.A. 21236.
- *The Sci-Fi Channel Magazine*, John Davis, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO, U.S.A. 80011.
- *Ghostide 2*, Mother, Claudia O'Keefe, P.O. Box 55024, Sherman Oaks, CA, U.S.A. 91413.
- *Noctulpa 8*, George Hatch, 140 Dickie Ave., Staten Island, NY, U.S.A. 10314.
- *Northern Frights*, Don Hutchison, 585 Merton St., Toronto, ON, M4S 1B4.
- *Sharp Tooth*, Nicolas Samuels, P.O. Box 23, Franklin Park, NJ, U.S.A. 08823.
- *Star Trek* Department, Pocket Books, John Ordovery, editor, 1230 6th Ave., 13th floor, New York, NY, U.S.A. 10020.
- *Tomorrow Science Fiction*, Algis Budrys, editor, P.O. Box 6038, Evanston, IL, U.S.A. 60204. \*

## FICTION SHOWCASE

## Spring Sunset

by John Park

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Previously published in *On Spec*, Spring 1990, and in *Tesseract* 3

That wavering fleck of dark on the other side of the river was a bat, she realized, the first of the evening. On the path to the falls, the woman paused and rested on her stick. Around her, trees and tree shadows seemed to blur and shift as sunset faded into moonrise. There was a bench ten paces behind her, but she was afraid that if she went back and sat down, she wouldn't have the will to straighten her knees again and finish the climb. Then she would have to call Armand on the intercom, and he would bring the carrier and make a fuss, and remind her of the things they could do with artificial joints these days.

But they could do things with eyes too. She could still see the bat flickering among the branches on the far side of the river. Ten years ago, even with her vodka-bottle spectacles, the scene would have been a roaring purple blur. Now she could see the loom of the moon beyond the bat, and knew that if she chose, she would be able to pick out the orange pinhead of the planet rising beside it. The eyes were good at seeing, all right. But like all new things, they had their deficiencies.

She started up again, moved through a net of tree shadows. The river was loud, swollen with spring. Its roar covered the creak of her breathing. A tree trunk rolled past her, and the water glittered darkly around it. Back up at the island, the bank must be crumbling. The waters were tearing at the milestones of her life and carrying them away. She felt the new anger ache, like a life stirring within her. Ahead, the tree reached the edge of the falls. It hung there a moment, and one of its limbs twisted into the air. Then it tilted and slid out of sight.

At the top of the path was a cleared area, with three wooden benches overlooking the falls. She intended to sit there and think, until she had to go back. But when she reached the place, she was not alone.

Standing, he was taller now than she had realized, and thin. Even furled in those dark protective bundles, he was thin. She thought for a moment of rose bushes wrapped in sacking against the frost.

The lower part of his face was hidden by a respirator to let him breathe the air that was alien to him. His eyes were protected by lenses that caught the moonlight like silver coins.

"I thought you'd come here," he said, and though his voice came through a machine from alien flesh, it was still a young man's.

"I come here to be alone," she said. "You should know that. This place is full of memories. My memories."

"I wanted to be sure of finding you, before I go back finally."

"I wish you hadn't," she said. "I don't like being reminded I'm sand in an hour-glass." She leaned on her stick and coughed. "I saw another tree go over the falls just now. Every spring it happens, and they can't stop it. They can't stop things being worn away and washed over the edge."

"But something always replaces them."

"Now the replacements push their way into our lives, push us out of their way, before we're ready. And even if we resist, they get into our bodies, they change us. You don't believe in a soul, but I know — when you change a body, you change more. And they won't stop. They give us new eyes, these marvelous eyes, but they won't stop — rebuilding, always something new, always pushing — pushing."

He had not moved, but now the moonlight tilted and slid from his eyes. "It's just one modified chromosome," he said, "and some prosthetics." His voice had gone cold. "You're being melodramatic. It's just enough to let us live and breathe there. We're not a threat, we'll

be too busy living our own lives, but we'll remember where we came from. We're something new, a new possibility — nothing more or less. The world has gained something through us."

"I have lost," she said, and wondered if her voice would hold. "I have lost my son."

"If you feel you have."

She stabbed her stick into the ground. "You have so much faith, don't you, in your new marvels. Let me tell you what I found out about these eyes they gave me. I found it out recently, quite recently, something I never expected to discover. They're wonderful optical instruments — I don't doubt much better than the originals were. But the tear glands don't work properly. Did you know that? They don't respond to the sympathetic nervous system. That's why I can look at you now, and see you clearly. Even now, like that. Like that —" then her voice did fail her and she turned away.

Moon shadows wavered across the earth in front of her. When he moved at last, he rustled in his protective clothing like dead leaves in a wind. There was a brief touch on her shoulder, and then, after a while, the sound of leaves again, fading.

The shadow turned and darkened as the moon rose. At last she lifted her head and faced it — and the orange speck that was rising beside it. She stared at that ancient, rusty world through those marvelous eyes that would not weep, until she could imagine she saw the markings on its surface. An owl drifted across the moon, hunting.

"Be careful," she whispered, but heard only the roar of waters. \*

## AURORA AWARDS

## Voting Stats

Here's the voting breakdown for the 1993 Aurora Awards in the English-language fiction categories. Any Canadian citizen can vote, provided they have paid a \$2 voting fee.

A remarkable win for Sean Stewart's small press *Passion Play*. It received a staggering number of first-place votes (23 more than the novel with the second-highest number of firsts this year — a novel that, incidentally, had been a #1 *Globe and Mail* bestseller; 27 more than any English novel last year (that is, it got more than double the number of firsts of even the winning novel from 1992); and 25 more than any English novel the year before).

Indeed, it set an all-time record for first-place votes in any Aurora category in the thirteen-year history of the award, by close to a factor of 2, yet, as the subsequent balloting rounds show, enjoyed no support from fans of *Children of the Rainbow* and picked up only two votes from *Blood Trail* fans (the other fourteen of whom all preferred another title). In the final round of voting, it did, however, pick up nine *Song of Arbonne* fans, but the other 27 of them (three out of four) also preferred either a different title, or no title at all.

## ENGLISH NOVEL:

1st:	<i>Passion Play</i> , Sean Stewart	53 53 53 55 64 (w)
2nd:	<i>Far-Seer</i> , Robert J. Sawyer	29 29 34 44 50
3rd:	<i>A Song for Arbonne</i> , Guy Gavriel Kay	30 30 30 36 —
4th:	<i>Blood Trail</i> , Tanya Huff	16 16 16 — —
5th:	<i>Children of the Rainbow</i> , Terry Green	05 05 — — —
no award		04 — — — —

## ENGLISH SHORT STORY:

1st:	"The Toy Mill," Nickle/Schroeder	15 17 18 18 27 29 37 (w)
2nd:	"Couples," Eileen Kernaghan	25 26 26 26 29 30 35
3rd:	"Farm Wife," Nancy Kilpatrick	21 21 22 22 22 24 —
4th:	"Seeing," Andrew Weiner	18 18 21 21 21 — —
5th:	"Ants," Alan Weiss	15 16 16 16 — — —
6th:	"Blue Limbo," Terence M. Green	08 08 — — — — —
7th:	"Hopscotch," Karl Schroeder	05 — — — — —
no award		09 09 09 — — — — *

# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

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SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
CANADIAN REGION

7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5

Phone: (416) 882-5033 • Fax: (416) 886-1624 • CompuServe: 76702,747 • GEnie: RJ.Sawyer

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### EDITORIAL #1

## The End of Alouette

This is the last scheduled issue of *Alouette*. When I began this newsletter, I promised six bimonthly issues paid for out of my own pocket. I've now more than fulfilled that promise.

Sincere thanks to all who contributed articles: Barbara Delaplace, Eileen Kernaghan, and Spider Robinson from British Columbia; Gar and Judy Reeves-Stevens from Los Angeles; J. Brian Clarke and Kathryn Sinclair from Alberta; Jim Gardner from Waterloo; Cory Doctorow, Terry Green, and Bob Hadji from Toronto; and John Park from Ottawa. Thanks, too, to Toronto's Robin Rowland and Ottawa's Charles de Lint for letters. Special thanks to my two columnists: Toronto's Andrew Weiner ("State of the Art") and Brampton's Edo van Belkom ("Market Reports"). Also, many thanks to my wife, Carolyn Clink, who, as in all my endeavors, was of great help to me. Finally, a very special thank you to Andrew Weiner, who donated the mailing costs for issue number three.

I think a lot has been accomplished in these pages. Through *Alouette's* interviews and profiles, you've hopefully gotten to know many of our members better: B.C. SFWAns Barbara Delaplace, Eileen Kernaghan, and Spider Robinson; Alberta's Brian Clarke; Ontario's Phyllis Gotlieb, Terry Green, Karen Wehrstein, John Park, Rob Sawyer, and Andrew Weiner; and Montreal's Don Kingsbury were all spotlighted in *Alouette*. And through our Fiction Showcase, you've had a taste of the work by writers from both Eastern and Western Canada: Campbell nominee Barbara Delaplace, *Writers of the Future* winner Jim Gardner, Clarion graduate John Park, and Aurora nominee Edo van Belkom. One of my goals for *Alouette* was to help build a sense of community amongst Canada's SF professionals through greater familiarity with each other's work.

Another goal, of course, was to put money in your pockets, through market information, business-related news, and so on. At least four *Alouette* readers registered for the Public Lending Right after reading my article on that topic in the first issue, several have begun registering with The Canada Council Public Readings Program after my mention of it in issue five, some of you have made sales to markets you first heard about through Edo's columns, and I hope several of you will heed the advice about registering for the GST presented in this issue.

I've had lots of fun doing *Alouette*, and I thank the great many of you who expressed your appreciation. I wish I had the time and money to continue doing this newsletter, but SFWA designates no portion of dues for regional activities, and, besides, I've got my own novels to write. Still, whenever the need arises, you can be sure that I, as your Canadian Regional Director, will be in touch. And remember — I'm here to serve you, so by all means contact me whenever SFWA or myself can be of help to you. \*

### EDITORIAL #2

## Domestic SF? You Bet!

I recently heard someone claim that there's no such thing as a domestic Canadian SF and fantasy market. That's nonsense, even if you set aside the large array of French publications. Consider what was published domestically in English just last year: 29 works in *Tesseracts 4*, 18 pieces in *Northern Frights*, 22 stories in *Ark of Ice*, and 28 pieces in three issues of *On Spec*. That's a total of almost 100 pieces, all paid for, all published domestically. Are there ten times that many open paying slots for short SF&F in the States? Perhaps. Twenty times? No way. On a per capita basis, we have a short-form market about the same size as theirs.

But wait: surely 1992 was a fluke, right? Wrong. A new volume in the *Tesseracts* series has been published every second year since 1984. *Northern Frights 2* is now almost full. Starting in January of this year, *On Spec* has switched to a quarterly schedule. Granted, *Ark of Ice* was a standalone book, but it was Pottersfield's third volume of short SF, and, anyway, *Shivers 2*, another Canadian dark-fantasy collection, is in the works for 1993.

Ah, but what about novels? Well, in 1992, McClelland & Stewart published Terry Green's *Children of the Rainbow*. Viking Canada brought out the worldwide first edition of Guy Kay's *A Song for Arbonne* (which debuted at #1 on the *Globe and Mail* bestsellers' list); Viking's edition was completely separate from the American Crown edition or the British HarperCollins one. And Beach Holme, which has been building a respectable line of SF titles, released *Passion Play* by Sean Stewart, and then sent the author on a three-city promotional tour, something U.S. SF publishers rarely do.

(Indeed, all three of these books made the Aurora ballot, meaning that, for the first time, there were more domestically published English novels nominated than there were American-published ones.)

More: Both Bantam U.S.A. and Ace proved the legitimacy of first publishing in Canada. Bantam brought out Élisabeth Vonarburg's *The Silent City* under their prestigious *Spectra Special Editions* imprint, and Ace bought U.S. rights to Sean Stewart's *Passion Play* — both books had previously been published here by Beach Holme. Likewise, Garfield Reeves-Stevens's novels originally published in Canada continue to be reprinted by Warner in the States.

Canadian SF&F also continues to appear in the little magazines that are the backbone of CanLit, journals easily as prestigious as a *Pulphouse* or an *MZB's Fantasy Magazine*. In 1992, Jim Gardner and Lance Robinson both placed genre tales with *The New Quarterly*, for instance. And then there are nascent markets, such as Alberta's *Senary* and Quebec's *Edge Detector*.

No, there can be no realistic question about whether a separate Canadian market for SF exists — which, of course, is *exactly* why we need a Canadian Region of SFWA. \*

## OPINION

# Speculative Fiction: Beyond The American Event Horizon

by Terence M. Green

Originally published in *Books in Canada*, March 1993

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I'm a Canadian, born and living in Toronto. My third book, *Children of the Rainbow*, was published by McClelland & Stewart in March, 1992. (My previous novel, *Barking Dogs*, had been issued by St. Martin's Press in New York.) Everything leading up to the publication of *Children of the Rainbow*, as well as the curious trajectory that followed its release, has certainly provided me with the proverbial front-row seat from which to view the confusion in space and time where Canadian publishing transects Speculative Fiction. It has, in the vernacular, been a slice, a buzz, a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.

And I think it's time somebody set a few things straight.

Admittedly, *Children of the Rainbow* utilized the literary conceit of Time Travel — a staple of the SF genre — by having two people displaced in time; nevertheless, to the editors at M&S who acquired and worked on the novel, the book had a distinctly different "feel" from traditional science fiction. I know this because they told me, and we discussed it often, trying to decide how to categorize it, how to present it — to both the book industry and to the readers. Because of this different "feel," and because of its clear anchorage in waters as diverse as those charted by Melville, Defoe, Swift and even Samuel Beckett, there was genuine concern on the part of the editors that it not sink beneath the deluge of American science fiction that rolls across the border in such regular, indistinct waves.

And so in our wisdom, we agreed that the term Speculative Fiction should do the trick — alerting readers, browsers, reviewers, etc., that something slightly different might be afoot. After all, the term already had much widespread acceptance, and many illustrious proponents. Why, even the Toronto public library system boasts the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy — a collection of over 50,000 items. Its head librarian, Lorna Toolis, a teacher and editor in the field herself, tells me that there was a real desire, spearheaded by Judith Merrill herself, to retitle it the Merrill Collection of Speculative Fiction, but that in a vote of the library's patrons, the present name won out due to its wider recognizability. In Ottawa, the specialty bookstore dedicated to the field, The House of Speculative Fiction, has been in operation for at least the decade that I have been aware of it. And as long ago as 1957, Robert A. Heinlein, the avatar of American SF, said in a lecture at the University of Chicago: "the term 'science fiction' is now part of the language ... we are stuck with it ... although personally I prefer the term 'speculative fiction' as being more descriptive."

I could bore you with pages of examples attesting to the roots and the growth of the term, among writers, editors, librarians, publishers and booksellers alike. Clearly, many think it an interesting alternative.

But why have so many cast about for an alternative?

And where did this term Science Fiction come from? (C. S. Lewis, in trying to analyze stories calling themselves science fiction, broke the term down into four sub-species, acknowledging vast differences between their intentions and achievements; the highest of these, which is the area of concern here, dealt with the imaginative impulse as old as the human race: to visit strange regions in search of beauty, awe, and terror.) Certainly, H. G. Wells's novels of ideas needed no unique name to describe them when they first appeared.

The fact is that "science fiction" emanated from one Hugo

Gernsback, an American, in 1926. He founded the pulp magazine *Amazing Stories*, and coined the word *scientifiction* to describe its contents. The magazine became an immediate commercial success, and the label quickly evolved to become *science fiction*. He published stories that are virtually unreadable today — so poorly written and melodramatic are they — with the avowed intention of interesting young boys in scientific careers.

Do you feel the same shudder that I do?

It is difficult to discuss science fiction as a professional publishing field in Canada because it scarcely exists (sporadic forays from small presses: Beach Holme — née Porcépic; Pottersfield), and the Canadian professional writers continue to publish it in the States. But American publishing houses deal with it the same way that they deal with every other field: by categorization into genres. Science fiction, horror, fantasy, romance, mystery, western, men's action — even Best Seller is a category preordained by advertising and promotional budget (*à la* Ivana Trump). This is the American Way.

The commercial genre that fills the racks of the science fiction section at your local bookstore is Uncle Hugo's grandchild. Or, seen another way, it is like the family-owned business that has grown successfully by offering a specific formula, that caters to a target market in the manner of a fast-food franchise.

*Pizza Pizza*, anyone?

Fast food often hits the spot. But it is not the same thing as sophisticated dining. And reviewing who has the best donut shop in town, as opposed to determining where one might wish to linger three or four times a year over exotic cuisine, is quite a different process.

Consider: Margaret Atwood pens *The Handmaid's Tale*, set in the future Republic of Gilead — the former United States, now an intolerable theocracy.

In *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, Doris Lessing portrays a woman witnessing the end of urban civilization from her window.

Martin Amis writes *Time's Arrow*, in which a man awakens from death, recovers his health, grows stronger, younger, and lives his life backwards as time flows in reverse.

Likewise, there is a difference between American genre science fiction, and books like Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984*, Hugh MacLennan's *Voices in Time*, and even Voltaire's *Micromegas*.

Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, J. G. Ballard's *Memoirs of the Space Age*, Kingsley Amis's *The Alteration*, Paul Theroux's *O-Zone*, C. S. Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet*, Walter Tevis's *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*, Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Brian Moore's *Catholics* ...

There is no label affixed to any of these books. They use time travel, the future, dystopias, alternate worlds, interplanetary travel — all the tropes and conventions of the genre — in telling their stories, and often end up in the science fiction section of your local bookstore. Yet books such as these, with significant literary aspirations, are clearly not within the commercial category known as Science Fiction. (Even John Updike, writing in *The New Yorker*, expressed puzzlement when trying to describe Martin Amis's *Einstein's Monsters*, finally settling on science fictionish.)

And although Atwood, Orwell or Amis's works can be recognized for what they are, it was never as easy for someone like Philip K. Dick, whose books were all labeled science fiction during his lifetime. Only now are they being reissued by Vintage Books in Mainstream format.

It's time to shake off Uncle Hugo's American publishing shackles.

A label is merely a convenience, often imprecise; but it is also an admission of distinction.

Speculative fiction, simply put, is a different stream, mixing pigments from various genres, borrowing conventions for metaphoric utility, cross-breeding, and ultimately moving away from formula fiction into Literature.

Call it fantastic fiction, literary fantasy, visionary fiction, magic realism. Call it speculative fiction. Call it whatever you like. Just don't force it to be science fiction as defined by the American publishing industry.

Things just aren't that simple.

And oh, yes ...

We were talking about my book, *Children of the Rainbow*, when we started this.

Back to front-row centre.

Review copies were duly sent out and duly received. And the sad truth is that a lot of book-review editors and reviewers are still wearing Uncle Hugo's American blinkers. At *Books in Canada*, to the credit of editor and reviewer alike, this was not the case (reviewer John Degen wrote: "the book is most definitely a work of speculative fiction.") *Quill & Quire* managed to find someone knowledgeable (reviewer R. John Hayes: "This speculative fiction is reminiscent of Arthur C. Clarke but is less grounded in science, more in metaphysics, mythology, and mysticism.") At *The Globe & Mail*, on the other hand, Uncle Hugo's victory over our perceptions must be deemed complete. The book was handed to Jack Bell, editor of the *Globe's* FAXsummary and InfoFAX, who, according to the copy accompanying a review, "finds science fiction a comfort in his declining years."

Rarely have I seen such a hatchet-job. The sneering and self-righteous vitriol were astonishing. The review ended with the baroque observation, "And after all, the publisher did label the work 'speculative fiction' — the literary equivalent of *caveat emptor*."

I licked my wounds, and life went on. Or so I thought. Within days, I had received two phone calls from fellow writers saying that "this guy has done this before". Done what? I asked. Gone on the rampage over the term "speculative fiction" in a previous review.

I checked for myself. It was true. Jack Bell, to the best of my research, has reviewed a total of three books — all handed to him by *The Globe's* book review editor as science fiction. He liked one, calling it a 1950s-style juvenile, and ranted about the other two, heaping scorn on the notion that anyone would even deign to stray from the term science fiction, using the books as stones to grind his own personal axe. ("Speculative ... that fat and disappointing word ... There is no such genre as speculative fiction ... CanLit bafflegab ...")

And thus is all our work as editors, publisher, and writer skewered in Canada's National Newspaper, by the shackles and blinders cited above.

M&S, in spite of its strong editorial enthusiasm for my work, decided that they couldn't sell "speculative fiction" by anyone much under the stature of an Atwood in Canada (even MacLennan's book didn't fare as well as hoped), and after the experiment with my novel — within a month of Jack's review in *The Globe*, (and prior to the *Books in Canada* review) — they decided to pass on involvement with my next book, which they had been sitting on for more than six months.

And so it goes.

Thus, born in Toronto, still living here, I've contacted an American agent and am returning, reluctantly, to the American market. We talk about a Recession. We have a recession of perception and understanding here as well. And we are all cheated: publisher, writer, agent, bookseller. And reader.

A slice, a buzz, a poke in the eye with a sharp stick. I think it's time somebody set a few things straight.

*Pizza Pizza*, anyone? \*

of poetry, and has co-authored two non-fiction books.

She and husband Patrick still live in Burnaby, where they operate the lower mainland's most obscure used bookshop ("Neville Books: farther out than most"). The kids are doing just fine. Michael and Gavin are working on their doctorates, Sue is a management journalist in England. Mom is still trying to make it as a writer.

## Eileen Kernaghan Bibliography

### BOOKS

*Journey to Aprilioth*, Ace Books, New York, 1980. (Prehistoric fantasy novel set in bronze-age Europe. Winner of a silver "Porgy" Award from *West Coast Review of Books* for original paperback fantasy.)

*Songs from the Drowned Lands*, Ace Books, 1983. (Prequel to *Journey to Aprilioth*. Winner of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award for 1983/84.)

*The Sarsen Witch*, Ace Books, 1989. (Sequel to *Journey to Aprilioth*. Short-listed for the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award for 1990.)

*Walking after Midnight* (co-authored with Jonathon Kay), Berkley non-fiction, 1990. (Book on reincarnation and near-death experiences.)

*The Upper Left-Hand Corner: A Writer's Guide for the Northwest* (co-author). International Self-Counsel Press, North Vancouver, 1986 (3rd edition).

### SHORT FICTION

"Starcult" in *Galaxy*, November 1971.

"By the Skin of Our Teeth" in *Space and Time*, October 1979.

"The Devil We Know", *WomanSpace* (Feminist SF anthology), New Victoria Publishers (New Hampshire), 1981.

"Thieras" in *Room of One's Own*, Vol. 6, Nos. 1 and 2, 1981.

"The Sorcerer's Child" in *The Window of Dreams: New Canadian Writing for Children*, Methuen, 1986.

"Carpe Diem" in *On Spec*, Fall 1989; reprinted in *Tesseract's*<sup>3</sup>, Press Porcépic, 1990. (Winner, Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award, Best Short Form Work in English, 1990.)

"The Tulpa" in *The Blue Jean Collection*, Thistledown Press, 1992.

"The Weighmaster of Flood" in *Ark of Ice*, Pottersfield Press, 1992.

"Couples" in *Tesseract's*<sup>4</sup>, Beach Holme, 1992.

### SPECULATIVE POETRY IN

*Anthology of Magazine Verse* (Monitor Book Company, 1989); *Golden Isis; A Labour of Love* (Polestar Press 1989); *Light Like a Summons* (Five B.C. women poets) Cacanadadada Press, 1989; *The Magazine of Speculative Poetry; Northern Journey; On Spec; PRISM international; Room of One's Own; The Rhysling Anthology* (SF Poetry Association, 1988); *Senary; Tesseract's* (1985); *Tesseract's*<sup>3</sup> (1990); *Towards 2000: Poetry for the Future* (Fifth House, 1991); and *Walpurgis Night: A Journal of Gothic Horror Poetry*. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

# Eileen Kernaghan

Eileen Kernaghan grew up on a farm outside Grindrod, British Columbia, which does not, as far as she knows, appear on any map. She attended the University of B.C., taught school in the B.C. interior, got married, had three kids, moved to Burnaby, worked as an administrator for the local arts council, and in 1971 when *Galaxy* bought the second SF story she ever wrote (the first has been burned) she decided she should try to make it as a writer. Since then she's published three fantasy novels, the odd short story and a whole mess

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## GST Registration

by Robert J. Sawyer

Canadian SF writers should think seriously about registering for the Goods and Services Tax. If, like me, you make almost all your sales to foreign markets, registering definitely makes sense: since sales outside of Canada are zero-rated (that is, you don't have to collect GST on them), registering for the GST means you'll receive a rebate check either quarterly or annually from Revenue Canada, refunding the GST you paid out on purchases related to your business. Since everything from paper clips to airline tickets for your trips to conventions has GST tacked on to it, it makes sense to get that money back. Registering for the GST is the *only* way to recover that money; you can't claim it in any other way as a business expense.

What if you make sales to Canadian markets? No problem: the law requires your Canadian publishers to pay you 7% GST; all you have to do is provide them with your GST registration number. Does this somehow make you less competitive, since you charge 7% more than non-registered writers? Not at all. The GST is a flow-through tax: your publisher *will* be registered for the GST, and will get a refund from Revenue Canada for the 7% paid to you. (A "flow-through tax" means everyone gets the tax refunded by the government *except the ultimate consumer*; the person who buys the book or magazine containing your work is the only one in the chain who doesn't get a refund.) Magazines such as *On Spec* ask for your GST registration number right on their contracts.

Let's look at a hypothetical case. Say in the first three months of this year you sell a novel to Bantam for US\$10,000, half of which is due on signing; you also sell a short story to *On Spec* for \$100; you spent \$300 on office supplies, books, and postage; and you took a trip to Convention in Nova Scotia, which, all told, cost you \$1,200.

The GST tax return (which you can choose to file quarterly or annually; more about that below) asks you four simple questions: How much money did you make during the reporting period? Answer for our example: \$6510 (US\$5000 converted to Canadian dollars at the current exchange rate of .78, plus \$100 for the *On Spec* sale.)

How much GST did you collect? Answer: \$7 (7% on top of the sale price to *On Spec*; remember the sale to the American publisher is zero-rated, and no tax is collected on it).

How much money did you spend on business expenses? Answer: \$1,500 (the \$1,200 for your trip plus the \$300 for your other business-related purchases).

How much GST did you pay out on those expenses? Answer: \$105 (which is 7% of \$1,500).

Finally, you subtract the amount of GST paid out (\$105 in our example) from the amount you collected (\$7). If the answer is a positive number, you send Revenue Canada that amount. If the answer is a negative number, *Revenue Canada will send you a cheque for that amount*. In our example, you'd receive a cheque for \$97, money that would have been lost if you were not a GST registrant.

The government offers a couple of options for GST filers. First, for small businesses (such as writing), instead of actually calculating how much GST you paid out on business expenses, you can instead use the "quick filing" method: you collect 7% GST on your sales in Canada, but pay only about 5% of it back to the government. The difference, about 2%, is supposed to compensate you for the GST you paid out on business-related purchases.

I don't recommend using the Quick Method. If we'd used it for our example, we'd have had to send Revenue Canada a cheque for \$5, pocketing \$2 out of the \$7 of GST collected from *On Spec*. In other words, you'd have lost \$103 (almost all of the GST you spent on business purchases). The Quick Method is only potentially a good deal if almost all of your self-employment income is from Canadian sources (and, therefore, you take in a lot of GST).

Your other option is quarterly vs. annual filing (this is a new option, introduced in January 1993). Filing quarterly means you get

your refund more quickly. Filing annually means you only have to fill out one GST tax form a year, instead of four. As Edo van Belkom would say, take your pick.

What about capital expenses? If you buy a computer for \$1,700, you'd pay \$119 in GST. Even though you have to depreciate the computer on your income tax return (it's what Revenue Canada calls a "class-10" item, and depreciates at 30% per year), you can claim back 100% of the GST immediately. (This is true regardless of whether you use standard filing or the Quick Method — under both systems you can immediately claim the full GST back for capital purchases.)

Of course, I recommend you discuss matters with your accountant before making any decisions. Still, I find the GST a lot easier to take knowing that I'm going to get it back whenever I buy a book or a magazine or a piece of software or a bookcase or ...

Note: Revenue Canada recently tried to discourage one Canadian SF writer from registering for the GST. The reason was obvious: the government didn't want to have to send this person refund cheques after every reporting period. It is your *right* to be a GST registrant; Revenue Canada has no discretion in this matter.

To request GST registration forms, call the Revenue Canada Excise office in your city. Also ask for a copy of the booklet *GST Information for the Arts and Entertainment Industry*.

Montreal: (800) 361-8339 Toronto: (416) 954-0514  
Ottawa: (800) 465-6160 Calgary: (800) 661-3498  
Edmonton: (800) 661-0005 BC (all cities): (800) 561-6690 \*

Rob Sawyer has written about personal finance for *The Financial Times of Canada*, *Report on Business Magazine*, and *Your Money*.

## THE CRAFT OF WRITING

## Scene Lengths

My mother is a statistician and my father is an economist, so I guess I'm naturally predisposed to data analysis.

I recently outlined my sixth novel, *Hobson's Choice*, coming up with 77 scenes for it. I got curious about how many scenes had been in my other novels. Here's what I found:

Book	Total Words	Number of Scenes	Average Scene Length
<i>Golden Fleece</i>	60,000	37	1,620
<i>End of an Era</i>	70,000	46	1,520
<i>Far-Seer</i>	84,000	46	1,830
<i>Fossil Hunter</i>	93,000	105	890
<i>Foreigner</i>	83,000	99	840
Average	78,000	67	1,170

I don't know if there's anything profound in this or not. Starting with my fourth book, I doubled the number of scenes, but halved the number of words per scene.

The big change between my first three books and my fourth and fifth was in narrative strategy. The first three were essentially single-viewpoint, single-plotline books. Numbers four and five were multi-viewpoint, multiple-plotline books; presumably that explains the more frequent scene changes.

*Hobson's Choice* will be a pretty intensive character study, focusing mostly on one individual. In that way, it's like my first three books. On the other hand, it has multiple plotlines, making it more like my more recent novels. Given that mix, it's perhaps not surprising that my outline for it ended up containing a total number of scenes intermediate between my first three and last two books. \*

## MARKET REPORT

## Sell Those Words!

by Edo van Belkom

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We begin this column with a word from Pottersfield Press publisher Lesley Choyce. He's pleased that Pottersfield's latest SF project, *Ark of Ice*, received good reviews from *Quill & Quire*, *The Toronto Star*, *The Calgary Herald*, and *The Vancouver Sun*, as well as from *Asimov's*, *Analog*, and *SF Chronicle*. That success bodes well for future SF publications from this Nova Scotia publishing house.

Says Choyce: "We've had a commitment to SF since way back in 1979 when we published an anthology called *Visions from the Edge*, which I co-edited with John Bell. And we published Terry Green's first book [*The Woman Who is The Midnight Wind*]. I'm pretty much a one-man operation, so that limits the number of books I can publish, but I would be very interested in seeing SF novels or short-story collections from Canadian writers who have a reasonable track record (published books, or stories in literary and/or SF magazines)."

Choyce says writers should query first, but *not* by registered mail or Priority Post because he's on a rural post route. Pottersfield's book advances are \$500 and up. (A similar query for market info sent to Victoria's Beach Holme Publishers went unanswered.)

There's another new SF magazine paying pro rates, and it's called *Advanced Warning*. Published in New York by Graphic Images Press, *Advanced Warning* pays up to \$300 per story, plus five contributor's copies. According to an author who has sold to the magazine, it responds quickly and contracts are favourable to writers. Also, stories get plenty of illustrations.

Alice Alfonsi, senior editor at Zebra Books, is putting together *Terror on Summer Vacation*, to be published in June 1994. It's an open anthology. Submissions should be 5,000 to 10,000 words. The uniting theme: horror stories that take place during the main characters' summer vacations. Your protagonist should be between the ages of 18 and 25 — a college student is fine or a young person who is just getting out in the world. Beach stories are especially welcome. Submit your stories with a cover letter listing writing credits and relevant facts about your background. Payment is a flat fee of \$150.

*Wonderdisk* is a new electronic magazine on Macintosh disks. Payment for stories is \$25 and a year's subscription for stories under 5,500 words; \$35 and a two-year subscription for stories from 5,500 to 8,500 words; and \$50 and a three-year subscription for stories over 8,500 words. *Wonderdisk* is a HyperCard-format stack in the form of a literary magazine. Submissions should be as HyperCard stacks on 800K double-sided disks, or as MacWrite or TeachText files on 800K disks, or as standard hardcopy manuscripts.

Finally, *On Spec's* hard-SF theme issue closes August 31. Payment is two cents a word; 6,000 words max. Submissions should be in competition format, with title only on the manuscript and your name and address on a separate cover sheet.

Take your pick —

- Pottersfield Press, Lesley Choyce, publisher, RR 2, Porters Lake, Nova Scotia BOJ 2S0.
- *Advanced Warning*, Neil Feigeles, editor, Graphic Image Press, Murray Hill Station, P.O. Box 1109, New York, NY 10156-0604.
- *Terror on Summer Vacation*, Alice Alfonsi, editor, Zebra Books, 475 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016.
- *Wonderdisk*, Walter Gammons, editor, P.O. Box 58367, Louisville, KY 40268-0367; GENie: W.GAMMONS.
- *On Spec*, Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5G6. \*

## MEMBER NEWS

## Who's Doing What

Lynne Armstrong-Jones (London) did a reading/workshop about shared worlds at the London Central Library, on April 26.

"Tipi Ganoo and Tyler II" by Scott C. Cuthbert (Windsor) will be in the June *Amazing* (under his pseudonym of Andrew Scott).

Charles de Lint (Ottawa) is now vice-president of HWA.

Both Barbara Delaplace (Vancouver) and Michelle Sagara (Toronto) are nominees again for the John W. Campbell Award.

Dave Duncan (Calgary) was interviewed in the April 1993 *Locus*.

Ruth O'Neill (Ottawa) will be attending Clarion East this summer.

*Far-Seer* by Robert J. Sawyer (Thornhill) was chosen by the New York Public Library as one of 1992's "Best Books for the Teen Age," a reference published annually since 1929. Rob will be writing the entry on Canadian SF for Prentice-Hall's *Encyclopaedia Galactica*. A caricature of him appears on page one of the May *Quill & Quire*.

Edo van Belkom (Brampton) has sold 12 short stories so far in 1993, plus two reprints, and an article to *The Report*. His "Baseball Memories" will be reprinted in *The Grand Slam Anthology of Canadian Baseball Literature* (Pottersfield, October 1993). Other stories will appear in *Deathport* (Pocket, September 1993); in *Shock Rock II* (Pocket, January 1994); and in *Fear Itself* (Warner, early 1994). \*

## STATE OF THE ART

## North American SF

by Andrew Weiner

In 1990, Andrew Weiner was invited to provide a comment on the state of Science Fiction for the Polish SF magazine *Fantastyka*. Here's what he had to say:

North American SF continues to move in two directions. On the one hand, commodification and on the other, dissolution.

Conventional genre SF has evolved into a sometimes profitable but basically uninteresting form of packaged goods: writing (and art direction) become adjuncts to marketing formulae. As you have surely heard, it becomes more and more difficult to sell a book that does not (a) have a spaceship on the cover; (b) form part of a trilogy or other sort of series; (c) deal with absolutely conventional generic SF materials. The occasional innovation (e.g., so-called "cyberpunk") is quickly co-opted and reduced to the same formulae. Short SF is in somewhat better shape aesthetically, but has probably never been in worse shape as a commercial proposition.

If there is any reason to feel optimism for the future of SF, it is at the very margins of the genre, where the field begins to dissolve and merge itself with certain elements of what we know as the "mainstream:" "magic realism," surrealism, postmodern narrative strategies and so on. I think of such writers as Martin Amis, Margaret Atwood, Kurt Vonnegut (once mistakenly labeled as an SF writer), Michael Ondaatje, Garcia Marquez and the other South Americans, and so on. Within SF, the writers who seem most capable of joining with them to create a new form of speculative literature include John Kessel, William Gibson, Pat Murphy, Lucius Shepard and of course J. G. Ballard. This convergence is only just beginning. It will accelerate as the death of conventional SF becomes more apparent (the body of SF is brain-dead already, but the limbs keep twitching ... ) \*

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

## WordStar

by Robert J. Sawyer

Many Canadian SFWans — including myself, Charles de Lint, Terry Green, Don Kingsbury, Robin Rowland, and Edo van Belkom — use the MS-DOS word-processing program WordStar. Other SF writers using WordStar include Roger MacBride Allen, Mike Capobianco, Jeff Carver, Arthur C. Clarke, David Gerrold, Jack Haldeman, Vonda McIntyre, Kevin O'Donnell, and John Stith.

Still, many of us have endured years of mindless criticism of our choice, mostly from WordPerfect users, and especially from WordPerfect users who have never tried anything *but* that program. I've used WordStar, WordPerfect, Word, MultiMate, Sprint, XyWrite, and just about every other MS-DOS word-processing package, and WordStar is *by far* my favourite choice for creative composition at the keyboard.

That's the key point: *aiding creative composition*. To understand how WordStar does that better than other programs, let me start with a little history.

## AN INTERFACE DESIGNED FOR TOUCH TYPISTS

WordStar was first released in 1979, before there was any standardization in computer keyboards. At that time, many keyboards lacked arrow keys for cursor movement and special function keys for issuing commands. Some even lacked such keys as < Tab >, < Insert >, < Delete >, < Backspace >, and < Enter >.

About all you could count on was having a standard QWERTY typewriter layout of alphanumeric keys and a Control key. The Control key is a specialized shift key. When depressed simultaneously with an alphabetic key, it causes the keyboard to generate a specific command instruction, rather than the letter. The control codes are named < Ctrl-A > through < Ctrl-Z > (there are a few punctuation keys that can generate control codes, too). Control codes are frequently indicated in text by preceding the letter with a caret, like so: ^A.

WordStar's original designers, Seymour Rubenstein and Rob Barnaby, selected five control codes to be prefixes for bringing up additional menus of functions: ^O for On-screen functions; ^Q for Quick cursor functions; ^P for Print functions; ^K for block and file functions; and ^J for help.

Now, the first three of these are alphabetically mnemonic. The last two, ^K and ^J, might at first glance seem to be arbitrary choices. They aren't. Look at a typewriter keyboard. You'll see that for a touch typist, the two strongest fingers of the right hand rest over ^J and ^K on the home typing row. WordStar recognizes that the most-often-used functions should be the easiest to physically execute.

To serve as arrow keys for moving the cursor up, left, right, or down, WordStar adopted ^E, ^S, ^D, and ^X. Again, looking at a typewriter keyboard makes the logic of this plain. These four keys are arranged in a diamond under the left hand:

```

  ↑
  E
← S D →
  X
  ↓

```

Such positional, as opposed to alphabetic, mnemonics form a large part of the WordStar interface. Additional cursor movement commands are clustered around the E/S/D/X diamond:

```

  ↑
  W E R
← A S D F →
  Z X C
  ↓

```

^A and ^F, on the home typing row, move the cursor left and right by words. ^W and ^Z, to the left of the cursor-up and cursor-down commands, scroll the screen up and down by single lines. ^R and ^C, to the right of the cursor-up and cursor-down commands, scroll the screen up and down a page at a time (a "page" in the computer sense of a full screen of text).

^Q, the aforementioned quick-cursor-movement menu prefix, extends the power of this diamond. Just as ^E, ^S, ^D, ^X move the cursor up, left, right, and down by single characters, ^QE, ^QS, ^QD, and ^QX move it all the way to the top, left, right, or bottom of the screen. ^W scrolls up one line; ^QW scrolls up continuously. ^Z scrolls down one line; ^QZ scrolls down continuously. And since ^R and ^C take you to the top and bottom of the screen, ^QR and ^QC take you to the top and bottom of the document. There are many more ^Q commands, but I think you can see from this sampling that there is an underlying logic to the WordStar interface, something sorely lacking in many other programs — *particularly* WordPerfect.

Now, for many of these functions there are dedicated keys on IBM PC keyboards. WordStar allows you to use these, if you're so inclined. But touch-typists find that using the WordStar control-key commands is much more efficient, because they can be typed from the home row without hunting for special keys elsewhere on the keyboard. Because of this, many applications, including dBase, SuperCalc, SideKick, CompuServe's TAPCIS and OzCis, GENie's Aladdin, Xtree Pro, and the editor included with MS-DOS 5.0, have adopted some or all of the WordStar interface.

Some keyboards have the < Ctrl > key to the left of the letter A. This makes using WordStar commands very simple. Other keyboards instead have < Caps Lock > next to the A and place the < Ctrl > key below the left < Shift > key, making WordStar commands a bit of a stretch. Because of this, WordStar comes with a utility called SWITCH.COM to optionally swap the functions of the < Caps Lock > and < Ctrl > keys. One of the problems with other word-processing programs is that many commands can only easily be issued through function and dedicated cursor keys, and the locations of these keys changes radically from keyboard to keyboard (for instance, function keys are sometimes arrayed as two columns of five on the left-hand side of the keyboard and sometimes as a continuous row across the top of the keyboard; cursor keys are sometimes clustered in a diamond and sometimes laid out in an inverted-T shape; on laptop computers you may have to press a special < Fn > key in combination with the arrow keys to access < PgUp > and other functions, making using these programs an exercise in contortion). But all one has to do to make *any* keyboard an optimal WordStar keyboard is run the < Caps Lock > / < Ctrl > switcher, if necessary. The locations of the other keys are irrelevant, because you don't need them for WordStar.

On the other hand, WordPerfect's interface forces touch typists to constantly move their hands from the home typing row, slowing them down. To issue a WordPerfect command, you must first press a function key, either separately, or simultaneously with a < Ctrl >, < Shift >, or < Alt > key. Then, for many functions, you must select a sub-function. Now that your hands have moved to the bank of function keys, can you select your sub-function using them as well? You cannot. Rather, you must next reposition your hands to the numeric keys and select your sub-function by number. Finally, you must re-orient your hands on the home row before continuing typing (recent versions of WordPerfect attempt to smooth out this tortuous interface, but it's still difficult to use).

## THE LONG-HAND PAGE METAPHOR

Now, I'm a big fan of the WordStar control-key interface: for text applications, it lets me interact with my computer more efficiently than any other interface I've yet seen. However, I don't think it's this interface that's got me hooked, at least not at the keystroke level. I've written published reviews of all major DOS word processors, and I've concluded that there are other specific strengths that bring me back to WordStar time and again.

Let me speak generally for a moment. I've concluded that there are two basic metaphors for pre-computer writing. One is the long-



hand manuscript page. The other is the typewritten page. Most word processors have decided to emulate the second — and, at first glance, that would seem to be the logical one to adopt. But, as a creative writer, I am convinced that the long-hand page is the better metaphor.

Consider: On a long-hand page, you can jump back and forth in your document with ease. You can put in bookmarks, either actual paper ones, or just fingers slipped into the middle of the manuscript stack. You can annotate the manuscript for yourself with comments like “Fix this!” or “Don’t forget to check these facts” without there being any possibility of you missing them when you next work on the document. And you can mark a block, either by circling it with your pen, or by physically cutting it out, without necessarily having to do anything with it right away. The entire document is your workspace.

On a typewritten page, on the other hand, you are forced to deal with the next sequential character. Your thoughts are focussed serially on the typing of the document. If you’re in the middle of a line half-way down page 7, your only easy option is to continue on that line. To go backwards to check something is difficult, to put in a comment that won’t show when your document is read by somebody else is impossible, and so on. Typing is a top-down, linear process, not at all conducive to the intuitive, leaping-here-and-there kind of thought human beings are good at.

Now, a word processor that uses the typewriter metaphor — WordPerfect is one — might be ideal for low-level secretarial work: proceeding top-down through a document that has been created in content and structure by somebody else. But for one who must start with absolutely nothing and create, from scratch, a coherent document with complex and subtle structures, the long-hand-page metaphor is the way to go.

WordStar’s ^Q (Quick cursor movement) and ^K (block) commands give me more of what I used to have when I wrote in longhand than any other product does. WordStar’s powerful suite of cursor commands lets me fly all over my manuscript, without ever getting lost. That’s because WordStar is constantly keeping track of where I’ve been and where I’m likely to want to go. ^QB will take me to the beginning of the marked block; ^QK will take me to the end; ^QV will take me to where the marked block was moved from; ^QP will take me to my previous cursor position. And, just as I used to juggle up to ten fingers inserted into various places in my paper manuscript, WordStar provides me with ten bookmarks, set with ^K0 through ^K9, and ten commands to jump to them, ^Q0 to ^Q9.

Other WordStar cursor-movement commands, some of which were mentioned earlier, make life extraordinarily easy (left and right end of line, top and bottom of screen, top and bottom of document, forward to specified character, backwards to specified characters — all touch-typable, all issued without ever taking my eyes off the screen). And its robust find commands run circles around WordPerfect’s (for example, WordPerfect can’t find a single word without also finding that same string of characters if it’s embedded in another word).

If I want to make a note to myself, WordStar lets me simply type it in my document. WordStar will not print a line beginning with double periods, like so:

.. check the length of Jupiter’s year

However, there’s no way I can miss such a comment when I re-edit the document. Until recently, WordPerfect didn’t allow that — again, it tripped on the typewritten-page metaphor: if you put something in the document, it assumes you must want it in the final printout. (Hidden comments, another feature provided by both WordStar and WordPerfect, don’t provide this same functionality, although they do have their uses.)

The typewritten-page metaphor is a machine-in-control situation: you must do what the machine wants you to do. Block marking is a perfect example. In WordPerfect, if I want to mark a block, I am forced to think through a serial sequence of steps, and execute them in turn. Now, that’s fine for straight secretarial work, but when one is *creating at the keyboard*, one wants to capture the most fleeting of thoughts, the most complex of ideas, before they evaporate into the ether, lost for good. The human-machine interface must let me stop

and get a thought down, not force me to hang on until the computer is ready for me to go back to thinking.

WordPerfect requires that I decide whether I want to cut or copy a block, then immediately mark the beginning of the block, then immediately mark the end of the block, then immediately position the cursor at where I want the block to go, then immediately move the block, and then find my way back to the place where I was originally working. From the moment I decide I might, perhaps, want to do something with a block of text to the moment I actually finish that operation, WordPerfect is in control, dictating what I must do.

WordStar, with its long-hand-page metaphor, says, hey, do whatever you want whenever you want to. This is a good spot to mark the beginning of a block? Fine. What would *you* like to do next? Deal with the block? Continue writing? Use the thesaurus?

After another half hour of writing, I can say, *ah hah!*, this is where I want to end that block. And two hours later I can say, and *this* is where that block should go. I’m in control, not the program. That’s clearly more powerful, more intuitive, and more flexible than any other method of text manipulation I’ve yet seen implemented in a word processor. That WordStar lets me have separate marked blocks in each of its editing windows multiplies that power substantially: imagine doing a cut and paste job between two versions of a paper document, but being told that you could only have one piece cut out at a time. Madness! Yet that’s what WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, and others would force you to do. (In WordStar 7.0, you can even, in essence, have two marked blocks per window, toggling between them with the “mark previous block” command.)

Over the years, it’s become clear to me that writers work in unique ways. Little things make a big difference to how effectively they can interface with their machines. WordStar provides a vast suite of customizability options — hundreds of things ranging from which specific punctuation characters are jumped over when moving the cursor by words, through how much help to provide the user, to whether the inches/columns indicator in the status line should update instantly as you type, or (in case you find that visually distracting) should wait quietly until you pause for a length of time you specify before updating. It’s important that the writing tool adapt to the writer, not the other way around. WordStar is strong because it can fit me like a comfortable old shoe, and then make itself over completely to fit somebody else just as well.

Finally, to come back to the keyboard interface, I think WordStar is the least *modal* word processor I have ever used. On long-hand paper, writing and editing are one fluid task: there’s no barrier to discourage you from switching between adding new material and modifying existing material. On a typed page, these tasks are quite distinct, especially with non-electronic typewriters. To change a word is a completely different spectrum of activities, and, therefore, a completely different mindset, from simply adding new words.

Many word-processing programs hark back to the decidedly modal days of Liquid Paper: they have me input new material from the main typing area, but for editing make me move my hands from that area to the cursor pad, the function keys, or a mouse, and then step through layers of menus (as WordPerfect and Microsoft Word do) or switch to a command line (as XyWrite and Nota Bene do). These typewriter-metaphor programs compartmentalize writing and editing in an unnatural fashion. The human mind does not distinguish between these activities in any gross way; neither should the program.

WordStar’s adoption of the long-hand-page metaphor provides its strength in this area, too. On a WordStar-friendly keyboard (one with < Ctrl > adjacent to the “A” key, or one that has been remapped using the SWITCH.COM utility mentioned earlier), changing between writing and editing modes is as simple as pivoting one’s left pinkie. It’s effortless and does not cause a switching of mental gears. The distinction between the modes is no more distracting than the lifting of ball-point from paper to reposition one’s pen. Writing and revising are a continuum. WordStar supports that, whereas, again, competing programs demands that I adapt to their method of doing things, instead of the other way around.

For me, it’s clear: WordStar offers a more productive approach *at its most fundamental design level* than does its competition. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

## Phyllis Gotlieb

by Andrew Weiner

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December 1, 1984

Phyllis Gotlieb has the longest track record of any SF writer currently working in Canada. "It might be argued," wrote David Ketterer in John Robert Colombo's anthology *Other Canadas*, "that Ms. Gotlieb is Canadian science fiction." And yet she remains much better known in Canada, if she is known at all, for her poetry (four books have appeared to date) and CBC radio plays.

Actually, Gotlieb stopped writing poetry some time ago. She can even tell you the exact date she completed her very last poem, "Was/Man" (included in her short-story collection, *Son of the Morning*). It was April 4, 1977. "The poetry came unasked for," she says, "and it went unasked for, too. It was getting nearer and nearer to science fiction, and finally got absorbed in it."

It was poetry that led her into science fiction in the first place. It was 1949, and she had writer's block. She was not, at the time, a great SF reader, although she had read her fair share as a child. Born in Toronto in 1926, she had grown up in and out of the movie theatres her father managed in the east end, reading leftover copies of *Weird Tales* and *Doc Savage* from the theatre candy store. Still, her husband, Kelly Gotlieb (now a professor of computer science at the University of Toronto), suggested she try her hand at writing SF.

It didn't come easily. She "plugged and plugged away at it" for years, in between raising three children. She would wipe the Pablum off the Babe-Tenda feeding table, wheel it into the kitchen, put her typewriter on it and hammer away. It took until 1957 to sell her first SF short story. By then, her poetry, unblocked, had already appeared in such leading Canadian literary magazines as *The Canadian Forum* and the *Tamarack Review*.

It might seem a jump of more than a few light-years from the *Tamarack Review* to *Amazing Stories*, the granddaddy of the U.S. pulp magazines. But Gotlieb finally managed it with the help of a New York agent, acquired on the recommendation of another magazine editor. Her first short-story sale brought her \$85 (U.S.), less \$8.50 for her agent's commission.

More short stories followed, and in 1964, her first SF novel, *Sunburst*. But still it didn't come easily. "I really made my agents run for their money," she says. It took two and a half years, in fact, before *Sunburst*, the story of a group of mutant children with fantastic mental powers, found a publisher. "Who wants to read about a bunch of psychopathic kids?" one asked. It earned her a \$2,500 (U.S.) advance, which was quite good for a first SF novel in 1964, and has since sold more than 300,000 copies around the world, making it by far her most successful book.

There was a twelve-year gap before the appearance of her next SF novel, *O Master Caliban!*, in 1976. Those years were occupied with poetry, plays, and short fiction and with her one and only conventional novel, *Why Should I Have All the Grief?* A well-reviewed story about Holocaust survivors, it achieved only dismal sales. "Everybody said, 'Phyllis, why don't you do a mainstream novel?'" So I spent four years writing it, got a \$400 advance, paid my agent off, paid to have it re-typed twice, and I must have cleared a good \$19."

Not that her science fiction has been that lucrative, either. Her U.S. advances have risen steadily from \$3,000 for *O Master Caliban!* to \$5,000 for *A Judgment of Dragons*, published in 1980; \$7,500 for *Emperor, Swords, Pentacles*, published in 1982; and \$9,000 for *The Kingdom of the Cats* (1985). But each of these novels represents a year or more of work. Moreover, these are advances against future royalties. And with typical sales of about 2,500 copies per book, she rarely "earns out," or makes any extra money over and above, her

advances. (She does receive additional income from foreign sales.) "Editors like me, but readers don't necessarily," says Gotlieb of her densely written work. "They want an easy read for the plane, and I don't write the easy stuff. I attack it as an art form."

Since *Sunburst*, all of Gotlieb's novels have been set within the same future universe, a universe of far-flung planets administered by a sometimes shambling bureaucracy known as the Galactic Federation, of "GalFed." A galactic federation is a classic cliché of the old pulp SF, but in Gotlieb's hands, it becomes something quite different. Where the pulps showed us a galaxy run by white male middle-class Americans, Gotlieb's GalFed is a polyglot melting pot of weird and wonderful alien species. Among her most appealing creations are the intelligent and sometimes telepathic cats of the planet Ungruwarkh, which form the thread linking her last two novels and the forthcoming *Kingdom of the Cats* into a loose trilogy.

Although she is by no means, then, a hard science-fiction writer, she does a surprising amount of research, reading about "geography, geology, weather, cloud formation, genetics, geophysics" and talking at length with scientists in creating her aliens and their worlds. "Most of the time, I want them to be just like they would be if they were that kind of people. But sometimes I'll say, 'Phooey, I'm going to have fun with this.'" She goes into great scientific detail, for example, when describing the bioengineering of a group of human frog-people in *Emperor, Swords, Pentacles*, but in the same book invents a species of alien shape-changers who "have absolutely nothing to do with science at all."

Phyllis Gotlieb has fun creating these wonders, and she hopes that her readers have fun with them, too. "But primarily," she says, "I'm a moralist. Although that's a terrible thing to say." The fast-paced battles and chases in her books lead toward the solution of her characters' moral dilemmas. Her characters are very often adolescents, whether in body or mind, coming to grips with what it means to be a responsible adult. And even the nastiest of her villains typically turn out to be spoiled and misunderstood children at heart.

So her books have very little to do with predicting the future. "I consider science fiction a mirror of the present, a mirror of people's fears. When people ask, 'Where do you get your ideas?' I say, 'From real life.'"

She could, of course, write about real life in more conventional ways. And she has, particularly in her early poetry. "Science fiction allows me to explore things," she says, "to figure out what's going to be in the heavens. I live one of those sober middle-class, middle-aged, bourgeois lives in a dull suburb. But there's a lot of wildness in my head, a lot of darkness, and I can get that out there in a disciplined way."

As she wrote in her book *Doctor Umlaut's Earthly Kingdom*:

"I sell phantasmagoria  
... I am the stranger  
the fate-arranger  
the visionary under glass"

\*

## CANADIAN REGION NEWS

## Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting of the Canadian Region of SFWA will be held at Ad Astra 13, Scarborough, Ontario, probably on Saturday, June 5 at noon; check with Rob at the con to confirm time and place. (A quick survey showed that Spider Robinson was the only Canadian SFWA definitely planning to attend this year's Convention in Nova Scotia, so I've opted for a more central location. Since Dave Duncan is one of the Guests of Honour at Ad Astra this year, at least one representative of Western Canada will be able to attend.)

Next year's Annual Meeting will be held in Western Canada, at Conadian, the World SF Convention in Winnipeg. \*

## OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

## Ontario Hydra

by Robert J. Sawyer

In October 1992, so that I could concentrate on other projects, I stepped down as coordinator of Ontario Hydra, Canada's oldest association of science-fiction professionals. I'd held this position since the group's founding eight years previously, producing recruitment brochures, mailing labels, and three editions of the organization's annotated membership directory. D. Larry Hancock is temporarily serving as the group's coordinator until a long-term replacement can be found. As my final act, I prepared this history of Hydra, which I'm sharing now with Canadian SFWAns in hopes that perhaps similar groups might someday exist across Canada.

Hydra was founded by Judith Merrill, famous for the 13 "Year's Best" SF anthologies she edited. Early in 1984, Judy sent a memo to a bunch of what she called "good SF heads," inviting us to join her for "the First Night of Hydra North," Sunday, April 29, 1984, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Said Judy: "The Toronto area 'SF Pro' population has reached a sort of critical-social mass." She proposed what turned out to be Canada's first association of SF professionals, a group patterned after New York City's Hydra Club, founded in late 1947. That Hydra's members included founders Lester del Rey and Fred Pohl, plus Judy, Harry Harrison, Willy Ley, Fletcher Pratt, and George O. Smith.

Of the original Hydra Club, Judy said, "The word *networking* was not yet current, but that's what it was, and more — supplying pleasure and stimulation, as well as useful contacts, for many of us for many years." Our own Hydra has tried to provide these same things.

Our first gathering was held at The Free Times Café, 320 College Street. Judy's original invitation went out to 21 people, and my recollection is that 15 or so showed up. A good time was had, and we agreed to meet again.

After much discussion, we decided to hold future gatherings on Monday nights, various other nights being ruled out for a variety of reasons (I remember Thursday nights being scratched off the list because Terry Green was a big *Cheers* fan — ah, the days before VCRs were common).

I was given the job of being the group's coordinator, charged with organizing gatherings, inviting new members, and so on. At the outset, I did all the mailings myself, but in Hydra's second year I got the individual hosts to take care of sending out their own meeting invitations on mailing labels that I provided.

We decided that meeting in a restaurant really wasn't the atmosphere we were looking for, and adopted a policy of getting together instead in members' homes. We'd originally tried monthly gatherings, but soon found that a quarterly schedule was more to people's tastes. We agreed as a general rule to get together on the second Mondays of January, April, and July, and the first Monday (because of Thanksgiving) of October, with meetings usually beginning around 7:30 p.m.

Of those who Judy invited to that historic first gathering at Free Times, only John Robert Colombo, Phyllis Gotlieb, Terence M. Green, Robert J. Sawyer, and Andrew Weiner remain members to this day (I, in fact, have the honour of being the only person to have attended every single Hydra meeting). Members who joined in the early years and still attend regularly include short-story writer Gustav A. Richar, who comes all the way from Pointe-au-Baril for our meetings, and horror expert Bob Hadji.

Lots of interesting people have shown up at Hydra gatherings, including anthologist Alberto Manguel, Montreal author Donald Kingsbury, American SF writers Roger MacBride Allen and George Alec Effinger, University of Toronto SF professor Peter Fitting, author Robert Charles Wilson (prior to his move to B.C.), authors Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens (prior to their move to Los Angeles), *Cosmos* artist Jon Lomborg (in whose house we once held a

meeting, even though Jon wasn't there), Ottawa writer John Park, and animation expert Reg Hartt (who also once hosted a meeting, along with a special showing of cartoons). Sadly, two Hydrans have passed away since the forming of the group: SF novelist Edward Llewelyn-Thomas and fantasy poet Gwendolyn MacEwen.

Our membership has grown slowly, and not always steadily. I remember our July 1987 meeting at Andrew Weiner's home at which the turnout consisted of Andrew, Terry Green, and myself. Still, I worked hard over the years to increase our numbers (including sending letters of invitation to all Canadian Members of SFWA and all members of SF Canada, as well as to every previously overlooked or emerging pro I could find in the Toronto area). For the January 1988 meeting, Terry Green produced a four-page mailing in hopes of rustling up more interest in the group.

Our membership evolved as time went on: gradually, we lost most of those who didn't actually write SF — the booksellers, critics, teachers, and so on began to drift away, whereas more and more members of Toronto's burgeoning community of SF writers started to come out. Judy's original group of "good SF heads" had become almost exclusively professional writers and editors.

Early on, Hydra had been largely ignored (although Taral Wayne did make snarky comments about us in one of his fanzines, decrying the notion that pros should want to get together socially without fans present). But by 1989 we were attracting a lot of attention, and I often got requests from fans and aspirant writers for permission to attend Hydra meetings. A formal membership policy seemed to be in order, so I coined one: Hydra was to be exclusively for established *professional* science fiction and fantasy writers, editors, and critics; it would be open only to people who have been paid money for their work in these areas. Of course, we were still a social group and all of our current members would always be welcome.

And still Hydra grew: In 1989 we averaged 12 attendees per meeting; by 1990, that number had grown to 18; in 1991, average attendance surged to 34; and last year we averaged 30 people. In the fall of 1985, our mailing list had 26 names on it; by the end of 1991, it had grown to 49 names. Some of those, though, hadn't been to meetings for years. After written notice of my intentions, I dropped 15 names who hadn't attended at least one gathering during the previous year.

Despite our growing size, the same four people ended up hosting the vast bulk of our meetings: Rob Sawyer (eight times), John Robert Colombo and Andrew Weiner (seven times each), and Terence M. Green (six times). They also bore the costs of mailings, beer, wine, soft drinks, and munchies. Of course, those costs were minor when we were a small group, but starting with our January 1992 meeting, we introduced a policy of asking attendees to each kick in two dollars.

Over the years, Hydra members have been invited to several special events (including a book launching on April 26, 1989, for Gar Reeves-Stevens's *Nighteyes*, held at *Tour of the Universe* in the basement of the CN Tower). We've also all been offered free admission to some area SF conventions. And at our January 1991 meeting at John Colombo's place, the crew of TVOntario's *Prisoners of Gravity* recorded interviews with Hydra members.

Judy's original name for our group, Hydra North, lasted for a long while, but several of us objected to its branch-plant sound, so we changed it in 1987 to *Toronto Hydra* — Andrew Weiner's suggestion, and a pun on the name of the electric-utility company.

By 1992, we had a lot of members coming from outside Metropolitan Toronto, and so we changed our name again, this time to *Ontario Hydra* (still a utility-company pun, and, incidentally, an anagram for "Hardy Oration"). Hydra generated a spin-off in 1991: Freelance, a similar association for comic-book professionals. If you're interested in that group, contact D. Larry Hancock, who runs it as well.

Hydra has been great fun, with 40 meetings held to date, including the most-recent one on April 12, 1993. Canadian SFWAns: if you're ever going to be in Toronto on one of our regular meeting dates (again, the second Mondays of January, April, or July, or the first Monday of October), by all means come out to one of our gatherings. Hydra coordinator Larry Hancock can be reached at: 153 Woodington Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M4C 3K7, (416) 696-7275. \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## What's in a Name?

by Edo van Belkom

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What's in a name?

If you're a science fiction writer, it's probably a middle initial.

Science fiction, more than any other genre, seems to be teeming with writers who use middle initials in their bylines.

The simplest explanation for the popular use of the middle initial is that two of the genre's greatest writers — and biggest names — both used them: Robert A. Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke.

Whether the use of middle initials by Heinlein and Clarke alone caused the proliferation of middle initials is arguable, but there is an undeniable trend in SF for new writers to expand their names to include middle initials and middle names.

In the January 1993 issue of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America *Forum* (#129), three of the four SFWA members who had their membership status upgraded to Active had middle initials. A random opening to a page of the 1991-92 SFWA Directory (page 13, which, as it turns out, is the page on which the address of Heinlein's estate appears) shows a total of 38 names listed of which 17 have a middle initial. Of the rest, one has a first initial before a proper name, one uses two initials instead of a first name, and four use two proper names. Just 16 members use first and last names only.

Canadian Robert J. Sawyer, author of *Fossil Hunter*, says Heinlein and Clarke's use of the middle initial was precisely the reason he decided to use one when he began selling SF at the age of 19. It was a decision he has come to regret.

"My favourite SF author, then and now," says Sawyer, "was Arthur C. Clarke. Since Clarke used a middle initial, I thought I would too. In retrospect it's been a mistake. I've got over 200 publications to my credit, and in about ten per cent of those the middle initial was dropped by accident. You end up sounding anal retentive if you're always telling people not to forget the middle initial, or making a fuss if they leave it out."

A classic case of a publisher getting a name wrong can be found in John Gregory Betancourt's 1988 Questar novel *Johnny Zed*. Betancourt is listed as John Gregory Betancourt on the cover, John G. Betancourt on the spine, and John Betancourt on the inside title page and page headers.

Of course, everyone has had their name misspelled at some point. Even someone with a name as simple *Manhattan Transfer* author John E. Stith has had his name mangled by those who think it was *already* been misspelled. "The most consistent error I see is misspelling of Stith, with Smith leading the pack," he says. "Since that most common error results in people seeing my name as John Smith, that, too, helped me decide to use the middle initial."

But even authors whose names are so distinct that they could do without any excess baggage still use the dread middle initial. However, while Jefferson P. Swycaffer, author of *Warsprite*, and Sydney J. Van Scyoc, author of *Deepwater Dreams*, both use middle initials, their use has been more out of necessity than a blatant decoration to an already baroque *nom de plume*.

"Why the middle initial?" says Swycaffer. "Well, it helps distinguish me from my father, whose name is L. Jefferson Swycaffer. I had several letters published in the opinion section of the local newspaper without my middle initial and his neighbours all thought he'd written them. I've been careful not to let him take the blame for my novels."

Van Scyoc went through life as Joyce until her first day of school in the mid-1940s when her teacher decided she'd be called Sydney because the class already had a Joyce. Years later, when she began writing science fiction, the use of the name Sydney seemed like a perfect way to enter the SF genre on a level playing field with the male writers of the day.

"When I began submitting stories to the science-fiction magazines in 1959, it was obvious that I should present myself as Sydney. Joyce might never get a fair reading, much less a sale. There were not many identifiably feminine bylines in the genre magazines of that day, but I have no idea now whether the perceived gender of my name made a difference."

Whether it's made a difference or not, women have been changing their pen names to obscure their gender since English author Mary Ann Evans used the name George Eliot for her 1859 novel *Adam Bede*.

For years, the most common gender-neutral moniker in SF had been the use of two initials instead of a first name: A. C. Crispin, R. A. McAvoy, M. K. Wren, and C. L. Moore. However, while two of today's most prolific female novelists, C. J. Cherryh and S. N. Lewitt, use initials rather than their first names, neither uses initials to hide her femininity.

"I use initials," said Cherryh, author of *Yvgenie*, "because it makes signing things easier. After about the fiftieth time writing Carolyn Janice Cherryh, the fingers begin to go. I started this back in my teaching days and just carried it over into my writing. The final 'H' was added at the request of my first editor. He felt that Cherry sounded too much like a romance writer."

Editors are to blame for a lot of bylines that authors aren't happy with. "I had always planned to write under my full name," says Shariann Lewitt, author of *Cybernetic Jungle*. "On my first book, they misspelled my name on the cover. I then got a call from my editor saying that Marketing didn't like my name. They weren't trying to hide the fact that I was a woman; if my name were Kate or Liz I would be fine. But since they didn't like Shariann, we had to do something — in twenty minutes.

"In twenty minutes there really isn't much you can do about it. The editor suggested initials. I was not happy with that, but I wasn't prepared with any alternative. Then the editor sprung the next surprise. Apparently, you're not permitted to have only one initial. There must be at least two. My parents neglected to give me a middle name. So the 'N' stands for 'Nothing' because that's what's there — nothing at all."

Plenty of men use initials instead of their first names and, as one might suspect, this has caused its fair share of gender confusion. *Marching Through Georgia* author S. M. Stirling never gave much thought to the use of initials instead of Stephen.

"I decided to publish under S. M. Stirling because that's the way I always signed my name. Quite a few fans have mistaken me for a female writer — as much because I often use female protagonists as the initials, although I think they were also a contributing factor. It doesn't bother me; in fact, I was rather flattered — it showed I was getting the voice right."

Robin W. Bailey has also been mistaken as being a woman as much for his gender-neutral name as for the fact that his early novels all featured female protagonists. It's a misconception he's been trying to correct for much of his career. "When I sold my first book, a lot of my readers thought I was female. Critics and reviewers all used the 'she' pronoun. I got a lot of reactions from fans I met at conventions that amounted to 'You mean you're a guy?' That reaction, of course, was coloured by the fact that my first three books involved female protagonists.

"Enter Robert Asprin and Lynn Abbey. They asked me to join the group of *Thieves World* writers. Well, my *Thieves World* character also turned out to be a woman, reinforcing the idea that Robin W. Bailey must be a woman. By this time the 'Robin W. Bailey — female fantasy writer' was beginning to grate a little bit. So in the next *Thieves World* volume, I changed Robin W. Bailey to Robin Wayne Bailey, figuring that half the readers would think Wayne was my maiden name, but the other half might actually catch on that I was a guy."

Like S. N. Lewitt, *Guns of the South* author Harry Turtledove is another writer who has an interesting middle-initial story. His was in the pseudonym given to him by his first book editor. "The name Eric Iverson wasn't my idea. I had the pen name foisted on me by my editor at Belmont-Tower books, to whom I sold a sword-and-sorcery

novel in 1979. He said no one would believe ‘Turtledove.’ I kept the Iverson name — with a middle initial of ‘G’ for ‘goddamn’ — afterwards for a couple of reasons: (1) I was labouring under the delusion someone had read a Belmont-Tower book, and (2) I was publishing academic non-fiction under my own name, and thought a pen name might be useful.

“I became Harry Turtledove again when Lester del Rey bought my four fantasy books that make up *The Videssos Cycle*. He said that if I wanted to stay Iverson, he wouldn’t publish them. Since I didn’t think he was bluffing, I reverted to my own name. I am, I dare say, one of the few writers who has had both a pseudonym and his own name imposed on him.”

To be fair, editors aren’t always pushing pen names on authors. When Canadian T. S. Huff sold her first novel, *Child of the Grove*, to Donald A. Wollheim, he convinced her that Tanya Huff was an infinitely better name for a writer of fantasy.

Of course as Shakespeare once wrote, “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” and *Starship Troopers* would have read just as well had it been written by Robert A. Heinlein, Anson MacDonald, Lyle Monroe, Caleb Saunders, or John Riverside.

Perhaps the biggest consideration an author should make regarding his or her name has nothing to do with middle initials or the gender it intimates to the reader. Perhaps the answer to the question of ‘What’s in a name?’ is much less philosophical.

“If I had to do it all over again,” says Sawyer, “I’d write as simply Rob Sawyer. The shorter your name, the bigger the letters it will be written in on your book covers. This may seem an egotistic concern, but you can’t succeed in publishing without building name recognition, and the bigger your name is on the bookrack, the more likely the consumer is to notice and remember it.” \*

## HUMOUR

# Light Bulb Jokes

by the staff of Tor Books and Mike Resnick

*How many writers does it take to change a light bulb?*  
“Change it? I’ll move to another publisher first!”

*How many editors does it take to change a light bulb?*  
Only one — but first she has to rewire the entire building.

*How many art directors does it take to change a light bulb?*  
Does it *have* to be a light bulb?

*How many copy editors does it take to change a light bulb?*  
The last time this questions was asked, it involved art directors. Is the difference intentional?

*How many marketing directors does it take to change a light bulb?*  
It isn’t too late to make this neon instead, is it?

*How many proofreaders does it take to change a light bulb?*  
Proofreaders aren’t supposed to change light bulbs; they should just query them.

*How many cyberpunks does it take to change a light bulb?*  
Only one — but he thinks he’s an army.

*How many Old Wave writers does it take to change a light bulb?*  
All of them: one to change it, the rest to sit around complaining that the old bulb was better.

*How many agents does it take to change a light bulb?*  
Just one — but he has to stand on the shoulders of 80 downtrodden writers to reach it. \*

## AWARD NEWS

# Canadians hit HOMers

On May 1, 1993, the winners were announced for the third-annual HOMer Awards, voted on by the 7,000 members of the SF Forum on CompuServe, the world’s largest commercial online service.

The award for Best Novel of 1992 went to *Far-Seer* by **Robert J. Sawyer** of Thornhill, Ontario. The award for Best Short Story of 1992 went to “Black Ice” by **Barbara Delaplace** of Vancouver, B.C.

(And **Andrew Weiner** of Toronto was one of five finalists in the Best Novella category for his “Seeing.”) \*

## GOLDEN FLEECE

# Mexican Introduction

by Robert J. Sawyer

*Mexican rights to my Golden Fleece recently sold to the University of Guadalajara. I was asked to provide a new introduction for the book, and I used that opportunity to say a few words about the global nature of SF — words that, perhaps, also provide a fitting closing to Alouette.*

Damon Knight, the founder of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, once observed that the most unrealistic thing about SF is the preponderance of Americans. “Almost no one,” said Knight, “is an American.”

Nonetheless, science fiction continues to be thought of as a largely American genre, mostly published in New York, with stories full of American heroes fighting to save the American way of life.

Because I object to this, I’m particularly excited that there’s now a Mexican edition of *Golden Fleece*. I am a Canadian writer, and, as you’ll find as you read this book, my main character, Aaron, is also a Canadian. In this era of global thinking, and particularly as Mexico, Canada, and the United States are involved in North American free-trade negotiations, I think it’s wonderful that a science-fiction novel written by someone at the northern end of North America is being published by a press situated at the southern end, bypassing the United States for this edition altogether. Americans often try to lay claim to having invented modern SF (H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, and Mary Shelley notwithstanding), so it’s important to note that we Canadians and Mexicans can apparently produce the stuff, too, and without their help.

Canada’s seventh prime minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, observed in 1904 that “the Twentieth Century belongs to Canada.” I’ve long been fond of saying that he was a hundred years premature. Few would argue against the notion that both Canada and Mexico — which I had the pleasure of visiting in 1989 — are coming into their own on the world stage. To me, the book you are now holding in your hands is, in a very small way, a symbol of this.

Even so, I suppose I haven’t missed the American influence altogether. *Golden Fleece* is, in large measure, a parable about the American Strategic Defense Initiative — Ronald Reagan’s proposal for computer-controlled orbital weapons systems. One of the key American scientists involved with the Strategic Defense Initiative Research Organization, Dr. David Parnas, resigned his post because he came to believe that SDI was fundamentally impossible. He felt no computer system could ever be made sufficiently free of programming bugs so as to perform properly the first time it was used — and yet defending against a nuclear attack is a task that you don’t get any second chances at. I heard Parnas speak about this when he was visiting the University of Toronto, and his warnings, all but unheeded in the United States, gave rise to the very buggy character of JASON, the computer from whose point of view the tale of *Golden Fleece* is told. I hope you enjoy his story. \*

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# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

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SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
CANADIAN REGION

7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5  
Phone: (905) 882-5033 • Fax: (905) 886-1624 • GEnie: RJ.Sawyer • Internet: rj.sawyer@genie.geis.com  
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## The Great Canadian Royalty Rip-Off

by Donald Maass

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Spring 1994)*

Here's a trick question: Is Canada a foreign country?

If you're talking about sovereign nations, naturally Canada is a foreign country. But if you're referring to it as a market for books produced in the U.S., the question is loaded, and authors and agents who answer wrong may be losing millions of dollars in income.

Publishing pros may not appreciate what a huge market Canada is for books published in the United States. In 1992, U.S. publishers shipped \$702,174,000 worth of books to Canada, more than the total shipped to their next eleven largest foreign markets. Sales north of the border represent anywhere from 5% to 15% of a given book's sales. The ratio tends to be even higher for Canadian authors, who needless to say publicize, promote, and find a larger following in their home country.

However, because U.S. publishers classify Canada as an export territory, they pay authors sharply reduced royalties, similar to those they pay on books shipped to Europe, the Middle East, or Asia. Stranger still, there is no consistency among rates. In some cases it is half the U.S. royalty rate; in others, it is 10% or less of the publisher's net Canadian proceeds (which after a trade discount of 40% or more and the deduction of commissions to independent Canadian sales reps can mean pretty small sums indeed).

Are these royalty cuts in fact justified? Discussions I've had with U.S. and Canadian writers, agents, and publishers suggest not.

U.S. publishers rationalize their reduction of royalties on Canadian sales on several principal grounds:

- 1) It is expensive to transport books there, especially when a transfer between carriers occurs at the border;
- 2) Commissions paid to independent Canadian sales reps take a bite out of revenues (typically 10%);
- 3) The country's population is smaller, more spread out, harder to reach through advertising and promotion — and on top of that a segment of it reads in French;

- 4) The Canadian dollar is worth less than the U.S. dollar. Some U.S. publishers also contend that Canadian distribution channels are not as efficient at servicing remote areas as U.S. channels, and/or that Canadian return rates are higher.

Most of these arguments don't hold up well under scrutiny, and certainly don't seem to support the substantial cuts assumed by authors. Regarding shipping, the blunt fact is that most U.S. books — perhaps 80% — are sent to Ontario, and the rest go mainly to a few metropolitan regions such as Vancouver; these are in southern Canada, and distances covered are frankly less than those covered to many destinations in the internal U.S.

Customs clearance is a hang-up, perhaps, but in the end transporting books is just transporting books. Duties and taxes on U.S. books sent to Canada are not a factor.

In fact, there are none. Duties have long since been abolished, and Canada's Goods and Services Tax, a value-added tax charged on book sales, is only paid by Canadian customers at the cash register. Canadian reps pay it, but can get it refunded. GST may inhibit sales, but U.S. publishers pay nothing out of pocket.

As to the cost of independent reps, the fact is that not all U.S. publishers use them. Some have their own Canadian sales forces. Like the population-density question, this may be a phantom issue.

Currency values and fluctuation may be the weakest rationale of all, since the lower value of the Canadian dollar — generally 15% to 20% less than the U.S. greenback — is more than offset by higher Canadian cover prices, which on average are 30% more than U.S. cover prices. Even allowing for higher return rates, this price differential certainly goes a long way toward easing any higher per-unit cost of sale.

Some publishers complain that they are unable to keep Canadian rights anyway, thanks to aggressive negotiation by agents particularly on behalf of Canadian authors. Most of us I'm sure would agree, however, that in the vast majority of cases U.S. publishers take Canadian distribution rights as a given.

True, many British and some Canadian authors withhold these rights, preferring to work with Canadian houses or to cede the territory to their U.K. publisher. That position, though, comes at a price: the reduction in value of the U.S. contract, and the possibility that withholding Canada may make a U.S. sale in some cases impossible.

Despite this, some Canadian authors, sick of seeing their books published without fanfare in their own country, stick to their guns and work with Canadian publishers at home. Many others, unfortunately, do not have this luxury. Science fiction writers, for example have few

if any choices in their home land. These luckless authors must not only look south for publication, but must also accept less money for their hometown sales into the bargain.

The passage of NAFTA — the North American Free Trade Agreement — by the U.S. congress last fall focussed lots of attention on a potential loss of jobs to Mexico. Agents in the U.S. book trade have not realized, though, that in Canada we are already losing a great deal of income. Trade with Canada is in many respects normal, friendly, and duty-free. Are profit margins for publishers necessarily lower there? Must authors really accept less?

Publishers' rationales for lower Canadian royalty rates are increasingly unconvincing. Canada is not across the ocean, it is right next door. Getting there is easy. They want books. They speak our language. The question is not one of cost; it is one of accepting reality. \*

*Donald Maass is an independent New York literary agent. His Canadian clients include Phyllis Gotlieb and Michelle Sagara. Don thanks Robert J. Sawyer for help with research and background information for this article.*

## JURY NAMED

### Philip K. Dick Judges

David G. Hartwell and Gordon Van Gelder have announced this year's judges for the Philip K. Dick Award, which will honour with a cash award a distinguished original SF paperback published for the first time during 1994 in the USA. A second cash award is given for the runner-up. This year's judges are:

Megan Lindholm, 7102 Harts Lake Road S., Roy, WA, USA 98580

Richard Russo, 835 Peralta Ave., Berkley, CA, USA 94707

Steven Popkes, 24 Cedar St., Hopkinton, MA, USA 01748

Joe Sanders, 6354 Brooks Blvd., Mentor, OH, USA 44060

Robert J. Sawyer, 118 Betty Ann Drive, Willowdale, ON M2N 1X4 (preferred address for books)

Please send copies of eligible works directly to all five judges. The winner and the runner-up will be announced in March 1995. \*

## CRIME WRITERS OF CANADA

### Arthur Ellis Awards



At a banquet at the University of Toronto's Faculty Club on June 1, 1994, the Crime Writers of Canada announced the winners of its eleventh-annual Arthur Ellis Awards. Robert J. Sawyer's "Just Like Old Times" won the juried award for Best Short Story of 1993.

The story originally appeared in both *On Spec's* Summer 1993 issue and the anthology *Dinosaur Fantastic* edited by Mike Resnick and Martin H. Greenberg (DAW, July 1993), and is a current Aurora nominee.

Another Aurora nominee, William Gibson's SF book *Virtual Light* (Bantam, 1993), was short-listed for the Best Novel Ellis, but lost to the conventional mystery novel *Gypsy Sins* by John Lawrence Reynolds of Burlington, Ontario (HarperCollins Canada, 1993).

Sawyer's win marks the second time an SF work has taken home an Ellis. Last year, Sean Stewart's *Passion Play* won the Best First Novel Award (with the Best Novel Award going to *Lizardskin* by Carsten Stroud). \*

## WRITERS LEAVING CANADA

### Brain Drain!

Two of Canada's top SF writers are leaving Canada for the United States.

Sean Stewart of Vancouver is moving to Houston, Texas, later this year (coincidentally, he was born in Lubbock, Texas), so that his American-born wife, Christine, can pursue a post-doctoral fellowship in behavioural neuroscience there.

And S. M. Stirling of Toronto, who was born in Metz, France, and his American-born wife, Jan, are moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in April 1995.

They join Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens, who left Thornhill, Ontario, for Los Angeles a couple of years ago, as well as expatriates from further in the past, including Gordon Dickson, H. L. Gold, Joel Rosenberg, and A. E. van Vogt.

We'll miss Sean and Stephen, and wish them best of luck south of the border! \*

## PUBLISHING NEWS

### Tesseract Line for Sale

The Tesseract Books imprint of Victoria's Beach Holme Press is up for sale, and the likely buyer, according to multiple sources, is a consortium headed by Candace Jane Dorsey of Edmonton. Dorsey was co-editor of Beach Holme's *Tesseract's*<sup>3</sup>, and her short-story collection *Machine Sex and Other Stories* was published by them.

Sale of the imprint would involve transferring ownership of five books currently in press, the physical backlist stock and rights to those books, and the right to use the "Tesseract Books" name and logo. The in-press books are Phyllis Gotlieb's collection *Blue Apes*, a third novel by Heather Spears, a third novel by Élisabeth Vonarburg, a book by Michael Barley, and the long-awaited anthology of French-Canadian SF in translation, *Tesseract's Q*.

"All these books are on hold," says Antonia Banyard, Beach Holme Press senior editor — and they will remain on hold until either a buyer is found or Beach Holme determines that no suitable buyer is going to materialize, in which case the books will be published by Beach Holme. But at present no work is being done on any of them. "We don't want to do any more work editorially if they're going to be taken over by somebody else," says Banyard. Phyllis Gotlieb's *Blue Apes*, announced in the June *Locus* as a July 1994 trade-paperback title, will not be appearing anytime soon, says Banyard.

There is no publicly declared asking price for the line, says Banyard. Rumours suggest that Dorsey (who did not return our phone call) has currently put together funding from a variety of sources totaling \$14,000. Banyard would entertain other proposals, though.

"Tesseract Books definitely will continue, one way or the other," says Banyard, "and there will be a *Tesseract's*<sup>5</sup> anthology, although no editors have yet been chosen for it."

The Tesseract Book line grew out of the 1985 anthology *Tesseract's: Canadian Science Fiction*, edited by Judith Merrill and published by Beach Holme under its old name of Press Porcépic. Sequel anthologies appeared in 1987 (*Tesseract's*<sup>2</sup>, Phyllis Gotlieb and Douglas Barbour, eds.), 1990 (*Tesseract's*<sup>3</sup>, Dorsey and Gerry Truscott, eds.), and 1992 (*Tesseract's*<sup>4</sup>, Lorna Toolis and Michael Skeet, eds.).

The Tesseract backlist includes books by Michael Coney (*Palahaxi Tide*), Tom Henighan (*Strange Attractors*), Teresa Plowright (*Dreams of an Unseen Planet*), Robin Skelton (*Fires of the Kindred*), Heather Spears (*Moonfall* and *The Children of Atwar*), Sean Stewart (*Passion Play*), Élisabeth Vonarburg (*The Silent City* and *The Maerlande Chronicles*), and Andrew Weiner (*Distant Signals and Other Stories*). \*



## CANADIAN REGION BUSINESS

# Director's Report

by Robert J. Sawyer

My term of office as Canadian Regional Director ends on June 30, 1995. Although I'm willing to run for another three-year term, I will also gladly step aside if someone else would like the job. After spending two years lobbying for the creation of the Canadian Region of SFWA, and another three as its first Director, I've had my fill of SFWA's internal politics.

Frankly, the organization seems paralyzed by its traditional way of doing things. As far as I've been able to gather, two past presidents, Jerry Pournelle and Damon Knight, usually select a person they wish to see as the next SFWA president, then pressure that unfortunate soul until he or she consents.

Pournelle argues, vociferously, that once one has agreed to run as president, one should not then be made to jump through hoops for the privilege of being a volunteer, and thus he's adamant that we should have uncontested elections. (T. Jackson King, elections chair when current-president Haldeman was a candidate, came onto GENie soliciting other candidates; he was so roundly harassed by Pournelle for doing this that King resigned from GENie, and from his post. This year, a past SFWA president, Jane Yolen, served as elections chair; she apparently was a more suitable choice, well understanding that her job was to find one, and only one, candidate per position.)

The upshot of all this, unfortunately, is that we end up time and again with presidents who do not wish to be president, who feel bullied into taking the job, who want nothing more than to get through their term of office with as little turbulence and as few confrontations as possible. They behave as lame ducks from day one, and little if anything gets accomplished, much to the frustration of the more proactive members of the Board of Directors.

(In rare cases, the current system instead results in a president who fully understands that there is no real accountability for the office, and who wields power indiscriminately; Ben Bova has often been accused of running such a presidency).

Those of you who have been reading SFWA's *Forum* no doubt have detected that I'm also monumentally dissatisfied with the performance and cost-effectiveness of the office of SFWA's Executive Secretary. I'm put in mind of *Yes, Minister's* Sir Humphrey Appleby — the quintessential entrenched civil servant, who considers his job to be obstruction rather than facilitation — whenever I have to deal with Peter Pautz. I am not alone in this; several other SFWA volunteers, including the *Forum* editors, the *Nebula Awards Report* editor, and a past Nebula jury chair, share my concern, and Contracts Committee chair Raymond E. Feist and past-President Jerry Pournelle have joined with me in calling for a major overhaul of the office and the possible replacement of the incumbent. Although President Haldeman has made a few Band-Aid efforts in this area, I'm unconvinced that we will see any real improvement.

So, when I say to you all that I'd be glad if one of you would step forward and replace me as Canadian Regional Director, I'd also be surprised if anyone actually wants the job. But let me know before next February (when nominations must be declared); I'll only run again if no one else steps forward, and if you do want the job, let's arrange in advance for an orderly transfer of power.

One other thing I should point out, though, for anyone who is considering taking this position: SFWA designates not one dime of dues for regional activities. I've paid for printing and mailing *Alouette* out of my own pocket (with the exception of one issue, the mailing of which was kindly paid for by Andrew Weiner), as well as all other incidental expenses I've incurred over the years. Of course, no one is obligated to do a regional newsletter (I am, in fact, the only one of SFWA's five Regional Directors to do so), and one could, in theory,

claim back other routine expenses from SFWA's treasurer at the end of the year.

I think my record in this job has been pretty good: a lot of effective lobbying has been done (including being partially responsible for SFWA adopting an annual random royalty-audit program, modeled on the one used by The Writers' Union of Canada), many new Canadian members have been brought into the fold, and I've secured some nice additional benefits for Canadian active members.

But there's one duty, as defined in the *SFWA Officers' Guidelines*, about which I have perhaps been remiss: the calling of annual meetings of the Canadian Region.

We did have one in 1991, at WilfCon 8, in Waterloo, Ontario (which was that year's Convention). In 1992, since almost no Canadian SFWAns were attending it, I decided not to have the Canadian Region meeting at Convention (WolfCon 6, in Nova Scotia), but rather at Ad Astra 13, Toronto's regional con. But although there were over a dozen Canadian SFWAns present, none seemed interested in getting together for a meeting.

Frankly, I don't blame them. We're a small, geographically dispersed group, and I receive (and try to promptly deal with) requests from members coast-to-coast all the time. Do we really gain anything by gathering together in one room and debating issues?

This year's meeting would normally be at Conadian, the Worldcon in Winnipeg, because it is also this year's Convention. But we're all going to have a hundred things to do there, and I don't want to burden people's schedules with a *pro forma* meeting. Besides, SFWA's own full Annual General Meeting will be held at the Winnipeg Worldcon Sunday morning, September 4; Canadian members can directly raise issues there, if they wish.

So, if anyone wants me to call a meeting at Conadian, send me a letter, and I will do so. Otherwise, I will simply try to touch base personally with each attending Canadian SFWAn attending during the course of the con, giving you all a chance to apprise me of any issues you think I should be pursuing. \*

## LOBBYING

# Customs Goes Too Far

In December 1993, Canadian SFWAn — and CTV News writer — Robin Rowland phoned me about a story he'd been following: a piece of *domestic* mail sent by an Ontario book publisher to Little Sister's, a gay and lesbian bookstore in Vancouver's west end, was opened and inspected by Canada Customs. This, of course, is outrageous behaviour — and it fell into the Canadian Region of SFWA's purview, because the inspected package turned out to contain an SF novel.

Your ever-scrappy Canadian Regional Director immediately leapt into the fray, sending this letter to Darryl Lavia, Canada Customs Mail Centre, 685 Hamilton St., Vancouver, BC V6B 2R4:

Dear Mr. Lavia:

As Canadian Regional Director of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, the world's largest association of SF writers, with over 1,100 members in 21 different countries, I am writing to condemn Canada Customs's continual, systematic harassment of Little Sister's, a Gay and Lesbian bookstore in Vancouver.

The latest action, as reported on the front page of the December 9 edition of *The Vancouver Sun* — opening and inspecting Little Sister's *domestic Canadian mail* — is an outrage, completely intolerable in Canadian society, and doubtless abhorrent to Canadian voters.

SFWA would condemn this action even if the mail that was opened — a domestic Canada Post shipment from Penguin Canada's Newmarket, Ontario, warehouse, to the store in Vancouver — hadn't contained the science-fiction novel *Shroud of Shadow* by Gael Baudino. You owe Little

Sister's much more than just an apology over this incident. A full, formal inquiry should be held — and by a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister's Office, I am urging that precisely that happen. There is no excuse whatsoever for Canada Customs to be opening anyone's domestic mail. Your organization has stepped far, far beyond the bounds of acceptable behaviour in a constitutional democracy.

Canada Customs has apologized for this breach, calling it an accident. Still, that Draconian department continues to flout our constitutional right to freedom of expression.

The fight goes on: in June 1994, the American Booksellers Association passed a motion condemning Canada Customs for its constant interference with reading materials passing over the border from the U.S. into Canada. \*

## HUMOUR

### Off to a Bad Start ...

Here's a dishonourable mention from this year's Bulwer-Lytton Writing Contest, in which the object is to write the worst-possible opening sentence:

"The shimmering droplets coursing down the windowpane were as wet and copious as the tears clouding Rebecca's vision, and the similarities were not yet at an end — both the window frame and her lovely lashes were rimmed in red, and the pane, like her left eyeball, was glass."

— Tony Stoltzfus of Goshen, Indiana \*

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### 1993: The Dark Side of the Force by Robert J. Sawyer

Any year that sees new books by such brilliant writers as William F. Wu, Timothy Zahn, K. W. Jeter, Roger MacBride Allen, and Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens should be noteworthy. Add to that the long-awaited first collaborative novel by Kristine Kathryn Rusch and Dean Wesley Smith, and 1993 should have been an auspicious year indeed.

(Wu, of course, is known for his wonderful short stories, including "Wong's Curiosity Emporium." Zahn's "Cascade Point" won the 1984 best-novella Hugo. K.W. Jeter's *Dr. Adder* (1984) was an outstanding early cyberpunk work. Roger MacBride Allen's *The Ring of Charon* (1991) was one of the most inventive hard-SF novels in many a year. Gar Reeves-Stevens gave us *Nighteyes* (1989), *Dark Matter* (1990), and several other excellent mainstream SF novels. And multiple-award-nominee Rusch and her husband Smith are the energetic team responsible for the Pulphouse Publishing empire.)

Yes, a distinguished group of authors indeed — and yet not one of their 1993 books made even the preliminary Nebula Award ballot, let alone the list of five finalists.

The reason becomes clear when we mention their 1993 titles: Wu's contributions were *Isaac Asimov's Robots in Time #1, #2, and #3*, plus *Mutant Chronicles Volume 1: In Lunacy* (based on material from Target Games). Zahn weighed in with a couple of *Star Wars* novels. Allen gave us *Isaac Asimov's Caliban*. The Reeves-Stevens wrote *The Day of Descent*, first in a series of books based on the TV

show *Alien Nation*; Jeter's book was also in that series. And Rusch and Smith served up a frothy *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* novel called *The Big Game*.

SF used to be about exploring strange, new worlds. But 1993 was the year in which it seemed to give up the good fight, and finally admit that it had become devoted to exploiting tired, old worlds instead.

The phenomenon of SF being "product" instead of literature began with *Star Trek* novels. When these first started appearing, authors used words like "homage" and "nostalgia" to describe their motives for doing them. But in 1993, that pretense was finally dropped: Pocket announced a forthcoming line of books based on *Voyager*, a new *Star Trek* TV series that will hit the airwaves in 1995. No one outside of the Paramount studios knew the premise of the show, no one had seen even a single frame of it on film, no one could possibly have any sentimental attachment to the material. But the feeding frenzy of authors on GENIE (the computer network on which SFWA has its electronic home) clambering to sign contracts to do books based on that series was a sight to behold.

I don't (much) blame the writers, of course. We've all got to eat. No, the publishers are the culprits here. They pay less in real dollars now than they ever have before for original SF novels — and they often keep those novels in print for only months, or even weeks.

Not that publishers can't get behind books when they want to: Pocket mounted a campaign in 1993 to get the first *Alien Nation* novel onto the Nebula ballot, sending out copies to SFWA members in hopes of getting Nebula recommendations. But how does one assess a volume whose characters, premises, and backgrounds were created by other writers working in other media? For that matter, how does one assess the contributions of writers to books that have a possessive form of Isaac Asimov's name as part of the title?

I'd love to say that 1993 was an aberration. But it wasn't: 1994 and future years are shaping up to be more of the same. See, in 1993, Roger MacBride Allen signed a contract to produce a trilogy of *Star Wars* novels, and another couple of books about Asimov's robots. More power to him — but I'd rather have the rest of his saga of "The Hunted Earth," the ground-breaking original series he began with *Ring of Charon*. Also in 1993, Kevin J. Anderson signed to do a trilogy of *Star Wars* novels. Good work if you can get it, I suppose — but I'd much rather see another mini-masterpiece from him, like this year's Nebula-nominated *Assemblers of Infinity*, which he co-authored with Doug Beason. Dave Wolverton, one of our absolute best authors, has signed on to do a *Star Wars* trilogy, too, while Barry B. Longyear, whose "Enemy Mine" landed him both a Hugo and a Nebula in 1980, has reappeared on bookstore shelves with an *Alien Nation* book.

The SF author I feel sorriest for is John E. Stith. He was a Nebula nominee for 1990's brilliant *Redshift Rendezvous*, and he had an even better novel in 1993 called *Manhattan Transfer*. But that book didn't make it to either the Nebula or Hugo ballot — and I think I know why. Many bookstores have taken to treating the terms *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* as authors' names. Stith's work was no doubt lost in the alphabetical limbo after row upon row of media tie-in books.

Indeed, it's getting hard to find any original SF on shelves groaning under the weight of *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *seaQuest*, and *Quantum Leap* novels; of products licensed by Target Games and TSR; of books in the universes of Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, and Larry Niven; of false collaborations between big-name authors and newcomers; of sharecropping, franchise fiction, and packaged books. It used to be that such fare was the province of hack writers, those who needed a quick buck, and Trekkies who got lucky. Now, though, it's where many of the best and brightest of our younger writers are spending most of their time.

Pocket Books failed in its bid to get an *Alien Nation* novel on the Nebula ballot — but, if things continue, it's inevitable that someday, all too soon, the Nebula Award will be won by a media or gaming tie-in product. The year in which that happens will be the year in which SF literature will be said to have truly died — but when literary historians look back, they'll mark 1993 as the year in which the field's condition became terminal. \*

## MAJOR ANTHOLOGY

## Northern Stars

At Conadian, the World Science Fiction Convention in Winnipeg this September, Tor Books, New York, will be launching a major retrospective hardcover anthology of Canadian science fiction. The book, entitled *Northern Stars*, is edited by David Hartwell in New York and Glenn Grant in Montreal. Here's an advance peek at the anthology's table of contents:

Glenn Grant	Introduction
Judith Merrill	Essay (from the Afterword to <i>Ark of Ice</i> )
Peter Watts	"A Niche"
Phyllis Gotlieb	"Mother Lode"
Élisabeth Vonarburg	"Home by the Sea" (translated by Jane Brierley)
Dave Duncan	"Under Another Moon"
Jean-Louis Trudel	"Remember, the Dead Say"
Heather Spears	"One"
Lesley Choyce	"The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Writer"
Spider Robinson	"User Friendly"
Andrew Weiner	"Distant Signals"
Terence M. Green	"The Woman Who Is The Midnight Wind"
William Gibson	"The Winter Market"
Michael G. Coney	"The Byrds"
Joël Champetier	"Soluble-Fish" (translated by Louise Samson)
Glenn Grant	"Memetic Drift"
James Alan Gardner	"The Reckoning of Gifts"
Donald Kingsbury	"The Cauldron" (excerpt from a novel-in-progress)
Claude-Michel Prévost	"Happy Days in Old Chernobyl" (translated by John Greene)
Charles de Lint	"Pity the Monsters"
Eileen Kernaghan	"Carpe Diem"
Esther Rochon	"Xils" (translated by Lucille Nelson)
Yves Meynard	"Stolen Fires"
John Park	"Retrieval"
Gar Reeves-Stevens	"Outport"
Robert J. Sawyer	"Just Like Old Times"
Daniel Sernine	"Stardust Boulevard" (translated by Jane Brierley)
Robert Charles Wilson	"Ballads in 3/4 Time"
Candas Jane Dorsey	"(Learning About) Machine Sex"
Candas Jane Dorsey	"Afterword: The Author as Asymptote" (from <i>Tesseracts</i> <sup>3</sup> )
Appendix:	Award-winning Canadian SF (compiled by Glenn Grant, Jean-Louis Trudel, Dennis Mullin, and Robert J. Sawyer) *

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

## Discount at 2nd Store

Canada's largest SF specialty store opened in December 1993 at the north end of Metropolitan Toronto — and Canadian active members of SFWA get at 20% discount on cash purchases of books there.

The store, Sci-Fi World, is located at 1600 Steeles Avenue West (a half block west of Steeles and Dufferin, next to the Tim Horton's Donuts), Concord, Ontario, L4K 2M2. It's a wonderful store for browsing: every title on the shelves is placed face out.

The store's phone number is (905) 738-4348, and its fax number is (905) 737-9883. The proprietor is John J. Dimou.

New Canadian SFWA membership cards are going out to all active members, so that they can claim their 20% discount at Sci-Fi World, as well as at Toronto's venerable Bakka. Our thanks to both stores for their generous support of Canada's SF writers! \*

## COMPUSERVE SF&amp;F FORUM

## HOMer Awards

On May 24, Robert J. Sawyer's *Fossil Hunter* (Ace, May 1993) won the Fourth Annual HOMer Award for Best Novel of the Year, voted on by the 18,000 members worldwide of the SF and Fantasy Forum on CompuServe. Last year, Sawyer's *Far-Seer* also won the Best Novel HOMer. The other 1993 novel nominees were *A Season for Slaughter* by David Gerrold, *Beggars in Spain* by Nancy Kress, *Purgatory* by Mike Resnick, and *Manhattan Transfer* by John E. Stith.

Nominated this year in the short-story category was "Modern Mansions" by Vancouver's Barbara Delaplace, from the DAW anthology *Christmas Ghosts*. Although she didn't win this year (the HOMer went to "Mwalimu in the Squared Circle" by Mike Resnick, *Asimov's*, March 1993), she did win last year for her short story "Black Ice."

The Best Novella HOMer this year went to "The Night We Buried Road Dog" by Jack Cady (*F&SF*, January 1993). The Best Novelette HOMer went to "Beast" by George Alec Effinger (from the anthology *Confederacy of the Dead*). \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

Michelle Sagara  
by Tanya Huff

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There are a great many things I could say about Michelle Sagara but as I have a mortgage to pay, I'll stick with those that won't get my arms broken. For example, I'll make no mention of her height.

Michelle is incredibly loyal to her friends, unquestionably loyal to her family, and amazingly tolerant of strangers. She is not, however, at all tolerant of stupidity — it isn't so much that she doesn't suffer fools gladly, as that she doesn't suffer them at all. As a number of people have discovered upon opening their mouths before connecting their brains, she is quite capable and more than willing to rip a pompous or pedantic world view into bloody shreds. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, she's one of the best people to argue with I know. A difference of opinion is never taken personally but rhetoric had better be backed up by fact. This is the only warning you'll get. Please, pay attention.

For some years now, Michelle has been the pragmatic conscience of Bakka Books — untangling the labyrinth of problems and personalities that arise when a small business, in a recession, is staffed with what can only be called individuals. (I could call them something else, but as I was one of them, I'm not likely to, am I?) Michelle's greatest fault is that she doesn't believe she's as good a writer as she is. Some of her short stories deserve awards — "Birthnight" in *A Christmas Bestiary* and "Winter" in *Deals with the Devil* for two. In a just world, people would have sat up and taken notice of her by now. It's not only that she's an incredibly lyrical writer, it's that she has a way of reaching through the unimportant stuff and touching the heart of the matter.

Okay, so she also thought she was writing a short story and ended up with a four book series, but that's not exactly a fault.

Once, on a crowded Saturday afternoon at Bakka, she came out of the back room and very loudly (I was at the cash desk) called me a crawling maggot. I thanked her.

Read her short stories. Read her books. You'll thank me.

"The Books of the Sundered" by Michelle Sagara:

*Into the Dark Lands*, Del Rey, 1991

*Children of the Blood*, Del Rey, 1992

*Lady of Mercy*, Del Rey, 1993

*Chains of Darkness*, *Chains of Light*, Del Rey, 1994 \*

## BUREAUCRATS AT WORK

## PoG Cancelled

Don Duprey, Managing Director of English Programming for TVOntario, the television service of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, has cancelled the network's multiple-award-winning series *Prisoners of Gravity* after five seasons.

*PoG* was created by Mark Askwith, Daniel Richler, and Rick Green, hosted by Green, and produced and directed by Gregg Thurlbeck, with Shirley Brady and Askwith as Associate Producers. The weekly half-hour series explored science fiction and comic books.

Ratings were better than ever, the series was a bargain to produce at just \$23,000 per episode, and awards kept pouring in. A package of ten shows aired recently on several PBS stations in the United States, and Kristine Kathryn Rusch's editorial in the June *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* lauded the show.

As Canadian Regional Director of SFWA, Rob Sawyer sent Duprey a letter protesting the show's cancellation:

On behalf of Canada's science fiction writers, I'm writing to protest in the strongest possible terms the cancellation of *Prisoners of Gravity*.

*PoG* was innovative, intelligent, alternative fare — exactly the sort of thing tax-funded broadcasters are supposed to provide.

The program was inexpensive to produce, and covered fields that no one else in North America was looking at. TVOntario's indifference to the series has been apparent since day one — terrible time slots, constant uncertainty about the show's renewal status, little promotion. Despite that, the show won national and international awards, and, through word-of-mouth, a large and loyal audience — many of whose members doubtless first discovered TVO through *Prisoners of Gravity*.

Canadians spend a lot of time agonizing over the appropriateness of government-subsidized arts. *PoG* was unique, vastly popular, and an important showcase for Canadian writers. The decision to cancel the series only reinforces the most basic argument against "public" broadcasting — that those who control the purse strings often operate from personal agendas, rather than giving the public what it clearly wants. Apparently someone at TVO was embarrassed by having such pop-culture topics as science fiction and comic books on the schedule, and, without accountability to the tax payers who fund the service, decided to cancel what was, in many ways, the best, most innovative, most thought-provoking show on television. Canada's science fiction writers deplore this decision.

Further letters of protest would be most welcome, says Executive Producer Thurlbeck. Write to Don Duprey, Managing Director of English Programming, TVOntario, Box 200, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2T1.

Meanwhile, Thurlbeck and company are trying to place a similar program elsewhere, with Toronto's City-TV a likely possibility. City-TV, run by Canadian media mogul Moses Znaimer, produces and syndicates several magazine-style light-information shows, including MediaTelevision, MovieTelevision, and FashionTelevision. Thurlbeck hopes to get Znaimer to add ScienceFictionTelevision to his lineup. Sad to say, though, *PoG* host Rick Green would not be part of any revived series; he's decided to take this opportunity to move on to other projects. We wish him well.

Now for the good news: on June 6, the CRTC licensed "The Canadian Discovery Channel." That cable-TV channel intends to buy the existing stock of over one hundred *Prisoners of Gravity* programs for airing in prime time, so it looks like series will finally get a national audience in Canada. \*

## CANADIAN AWARDS

## Aurora Nominees

Dennis Mullin and Ruth Stuart, administrators for the 14th annual Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Achievement Awards ("the Auroras"), have announced this year's nominees.

Novels are eligible for two consecutive years, beginning with their year of publication; short stories are eligible for a single year. The Best Novel English and French awards will be presented during the Hugo Award ceremony at the World Science Fiction Convention in Winnipeg, on Saturday evening, September 3, 1994. The other awards will be presented during a separate ceremony earlier that day.

Here are the nominees in the English professional categories:

## Best English-Language Novel of 1992/93:

<i>Virtual Light</i>	William Gibson	(Bantam 1993)
<i>A Song for Arbonne</i>	Guy Gavriel Kay	(Viking 1992)
<i>Far-Seer</i>	Robert J. Sawyer	(Ace 1992)
<i>Nobody's Son</i>	Sean Stewart	(Maxwell Macmillan 1993)

(Sawyer's *Fossil Hunter* also qualified for the best-novel Aurora final ballot, but an author with two works nominated in the same category has the option of withdrawing one, and he chose to exercise that right. Since there was a tie for sixth place, and since the gap in number of nominations received between the top five novels (including *Fossil Hunter*) and the sixth was substantial, the administrators chose not to move up any lower-ranked work to fill out the ballot to the normal five titles.)

## Best English-Language Short Story of 1993:

"Sophie's Spyglass"	Michael Coney	( <i>F&amp;SF</i> , February 1993)
"Body Solar"	Derryl Murphy	( <i>On Spec</i> , Winter 1993)
"Just Like Old Times"	Robert J. Sawyer	( <i>On Spec</i> , Summer 1993)
"Three Moral Tales"	D. L. Schaeffer	( <i>On Spec</i> , Spring 1993)
"Kissing Hitler"	Erik Jon Spigel	( <i>On Spec</i> , Spring 1993)

## Best English-Language Other of 1993:

Al Betz, "Ask Mr. Science" column, *On Spec*  
 "Circle Dance," a poem by Eileen Kernaghan (*On Spec*, Spring 1993)  
 Derryl Murphy, SF book reviewer, *The Edmonton Journal* newspaper  
*On Spec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*  
*Prisoners of Gravity* (TVOntario)  
 Edo van Belkom, Market Reports Columnist, *SFWA Bulletin*,  
*Alouette*, and SF Canada's *Communiqué*

This should have been the Aurora Awards' greatest year for visibility. The Winnipeg Worldcon agreed to mail out nominating ballots to all Canadian members of the Worldcon, along with comprehensive lists of eligible works. The ballots did go out, but *without* the traditional lists of works to choose from; the Aurora administrators didn't get them prepared in time.

Likewise, a thousand final ballots were also to go out to all Canadian members of the Worldcon, along with the con's *Progress Report 6*, with Worldcon members able to vote for free. But the Aurora administrators failed to get the ballots to the Worldcon staff by the May 30 deadline, and so *no* final ballots are going to Canadian members. A giant opportunity has been missed.

However, final Aurora ballots are going out with this issue of *Alouette*. If you are a member of the Worldcon, or of SF Canada, you may vote for free (SF Canada pays its members' voting fees out of their annual dues). If not, you may vote for the token fee of \$2. \*

## MEMBER NEWS

## Who's Doing What

"Feast of Ghosts" by **Mary Choo** of Richmond, BC, appears in the just-published anthology *Northern Frights 2* (Mosaic Press).

**J. Brian Clarke** of Calgary is working on a complete rewrite of his novel *The Expediter* (DAW, 1990), which will include elements from all nine "Expediter" stories published in *Analog* as well as one previously unpublished story. He is also working on a novel-length expansion of two of his non-Expediter *Analog* stories, *Return of the Alphanauts* and *Adoption*.

Brian received \$8.00 for the Chinese language rights to his story *The Second Experiment* (which will appear in *Expanse* magazine in the States). As his agent put it, "Don't spend it all at once."

Brian continues to read for *On Spec* . . . and finds himself very depressed at the excellent quality of the submissions ("I mean," he says, "these are the competition!").

He gave readings at a few Calgary high schools for Alberta Book Week, and found very receptive and enthusiastic audiences. "Of course," he says, "a lot of the kids are already into SF — which means I was probably preaching to the converted."

The 1982 short story "The Byrds" by **Michael Coney** of Sidney, BC, is reprinted in *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*, edited by Ursula K. Le Guin and Brian Attebury. New stories by Mike appeared in *F&SF*'s February 1993 issue ("Sophie's Spyglass") and August 1993 issue ("Die, Lorelei"); the former is an Aurora nominee, and the latter has qualified for the preliminary Nebula ballot. Upcoming stories include "Tea and Hamsters" in *F&SF* and "Most Ancient Battle" in the Greenberg anthology *Phantoms of the Night*. Mike recently completed a new SF novel, *Absolute Power*.

**Barbara Delaplace** of Vancouver has sold "The Hidden Dragon" to both *Galaxy* magazine and the anthology *A Dragon Lover's Treasury of the Fantastic*, edited by Margaret Weis. And "That'll be the Day," co-authored with Jack C. Haldeman, has sold to Mike Resnick for his original Tor anthology *Alternate Tyrants*.

**Charles de Lint** of Ottawa has signed a two-book contract with Tor for a six-figure advance. The two books are *Trader*, sold from an outline, plus an as-yet-unnamed second book. He's also turned in a second "Newford" collection to Tor, with the working title *The Ivory and the Horn*.

March saw the hardcover publication by Bantam of Charles's *The Wild Wood*, illustrated by Brian Froud and also — finally — the North America trade paperback reprint of *Moonheart* (Tor Orb). The mass-market edition of *Dreams Underfoot* was released by Tor in June.

Tor has high expectations for Charles's big book *Memory and Dream* (to be published in September); they're giving it a mainstream push as well as promoting it in the genre. Pan just bought the UK rights and plan to do the same with it next spring.

In April 1994, Del Rey released in hardcover *The Living God*, fourth volume in the "Handful of Men" series by Calgary's **Dave Duncan**. Dave will be one of the professional critiquers for the writing workshop at the Winnipeg Worldcon.

**James Alan Gardner** of Waterloo, Ontario, has sold an SF novella called "The Last Day of the War, With Parrots" to *Amazing*; it's tentatively scheduled for the December issue. Jim will be giving a talk on writing and selling SF at the national convention of the Canadian Authors Association in June. And his first novel, a humorous fantasy entitled *Thief's Passage*, is currently making the rounds, represented by agent Richard Curtis.

Meanwhile, Prentice-Hall published Jim's *A DOS User's Guide to the Internet* earlier this year, and Jim will be turning in a follow-on volume to them, *Internet Anywhere*, by the end of July.

**Phyllis Gotlieb** of Toronto has sold *Blue Apes*, a collection of short fiction, to Tesseract Books, Victoria. Her new story "Among You" appeared in the November 1993 issue of *SF Age*, and her 1981 story "Tauf Aleph" was recently reprinted in *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*.

**Terence M. Green** of Toronto is now represented by Shawna McCarthy of Scovil Chichak Galen. He is working under multiple Ontario Arts Council Writers' Reserve Grants on a novel-length version of his popular story "Ashland, Kentucky."

The story "The Weighmaster of Flood" by **Eileen Kernaghan** of New Westminster, BC, first published in *Ark of Ice*, made the honourable-mention lists in both the 1993 *Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* and the 1993 *Year's Best Science Fiction*; it will be reprinted in the high-school social-studies text *Society Challenge and Change* (Oxford University Press, January 1995).

New SFWA member **Derryl Murphy** of Edmonton is a double Aurora nominee: once for his *On Spec* short story "Body Solar," and again for his review column "Speculative Views" from *The Edmonton Journal*. His next review column will include *Northern Frights 2*, *Nebula Award Winners 28*, and Clarinet's CD-ROM of last year's Hugo and Nebula nominees and winners. After that, he'll be looking at *Towing Jehovah* by James Morrow.

Derryl has presented a proposal to Alberta's NeWest Press to edit an anthology of SF about that province by present and former Albertans. "It has received favourable attention, but much work remains to be done," says Derryl. "This will start out as an invitation-only book, and then I'll get from there if need be."

**Ruth O'Neill** of Ottawa reports that she survived Clarion last summer. Her story "Cancellation" appears in the May-June 1994 issue of the newly revived *Galaxy* magazine, and she recently sold a story entitled "Dear Earthling" to the new children's magazine *Spider*.

*Starmind*, the third *Stardance* novel by **Spider and Jeanne Robinson** of Vancouver, is being serialized in four parts in *Analog*, beginning with the August 1994 issue, with hardcover publication to follow from Ace.

**Michelle Sagara** of Toronto has sold a young-adult short story to Josepha Sherman for her *Orphans of the Night* anthology, a ghost story to *Phantoms of the Night*, edited by Richard Gilliam, and a short piece for *Alternate Tyrants* to Mike Resnick.

In an auction conducted by agent Richard Curtis, the sixth novel by Toronto's **Robert J. Sawyer** has sold to HarperCollins, New York. *Hobson's Choice* was written under an Ontario Arts Council grant, and will be published in May 1995, after a four-part serialization in *Analog*, beginning with the Mid-December 1994 issue. Meanwhile, Rob has signed a new contract with Ace for a two-book hard-SF series; the novels have the working titles *Critical Density* and *The Grand Old Man of Physics*.

New English Library has bought British rights to five of Rob's novels. He has a story in *Sherlock Holmes in Orbit* (Resnick & Greenberg, eds., DAW, early 1995). Rob's *Far-Seer* was an official 1993 Hugo Honourable Mention, and his *Golden Fleece* was a finalist for the Japanese Seiun Award for Best Foreign Novel of 1992.

**Sean Stewart** of Vancouver has won three national awards in three different genres with two books in just over a year: the Aurora and the Crime Writers of Canada's Best First Novel Arthur Ellis for *Passion Play*, and the Young Adult Canadian Book Award for *Nobody's Son* — which is also a current Aurora nominee.

*Nobody's Son* was originally published in Canada by Maxwell Macmillan; Ace will be bringing out a U.S. edition in 1995.

Sean's third book is *Ressurrection Man*, coming from Ace in December. In the "unlikely bedfellows" category, it features blurbs by Ursula K. Le Guin ("A moody, quirky, fascinating fantasy") and

Neal Stephenson, who calls it "Stephen King meets Ibsen," and says, "Something about Vancouver seems to produce novelists who are *sui generis*, each one working all by himself in a new and hitherto unimagined genre. Sean Stewart's work is a case in point — so distinctive and original as to make blurring impossible . . ."

**S. M. Stirling** of Toronto reports that *The Rose Sea*, a collaborative fantasy with Holly Lisle, will be out from Baen in September. And Stephen has turned in *The Sword*, final volume in "The General" SF series he's been doing with David Drake; it should be out in the spring of 1995. Meanwhile, Steve's next solo SF novel, *Heavy Iron*, will be turned in sometime this summer, and he's also writing a near-future SF novel set in California called *Conquistador*, which he expects to turn in late this year or early next. Steve is also working on *Dark Avenger*, a solo sequel to his bestselling collaboration with Anne McCaffrey, *The City Who Fought*. *Dark Avenger* will be Steve's first solo hardcover.

**Edo van Belkom** of Brampton, Ontario, has now sold over sixty short stories, with his most recent sales being to *Alternate Tyrants* (edited by Mike Resnick), *Northern Frights 3*, and the White Wolf Games anthologies *When Will You Rage?*, *Dark Destiny*, and *Death and Damnation*. His 1994 publications include stories in *Shock Rock 2*, *Deadly After Dark* (a volume of the *Hot Blood* anthology series), *Northern Frights 2*, and the *Journal of Canadian Content in Speculative Literature*. Edo recently sold his first novel, *Worm Wolf*. It will be published in late 1994 or early 1995 by HarperPrism, the new SF/F/H line from HarperCollins.

"Messenger" by **Andrew Weiner** of Toronto appeared in the April 1994 *Asimov's*, and his 1984 short story "Distant Signals" was reprinted in *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*. \*

## THE MYTHOPOEIC SOCIETY

### de Lint nominated

Ottawa's Charles de Lint is one of the nominees for the 1994 Mythopoeic Awards, which will be presented by The Mythopoeic Society during Mythcon XXV (5-8 August 1994 in Washington, DC).

The nominees for the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature were announced on June 7. They are:

<i>The Innkeeper's Song</i>	Peter S. Beagle	(Roc)
<i>The Little Country</i>	Charles de Lint	(Tor)
<i>The Cygnet and the Firebird</i>	Patricia A. McKillip	(Ace)
<i>Deerskin</i>	Robin McKinley	(Ace)
<i>The Porcelain Dove</i>	Delia Sherman	(Dutton) *

## NEWS NOTES

### This 'n' That

In June, Quebec writer Roch Carrier, 57, was appointed director of the Canada Council by Heritage Minister Michel Dupuy. Donna Scott, former publisher of *Flare* magazine, will be the Council's new chairperson (a part-time position). The Canada Council disburses over one hundred million dollars in grants to individual artists and arts organizations. The Council's toll-free number: (800) 263-5588.

Cheryl Cohen has replaced Elizabeth Renzetti as book review editor at *The Globe and Mail*, 444 Front Street, Toronto M5V 2S9.

Hugh A. D. Spencer, senior curator of the National Library of Canada's 1995 Canadian SF Exhibition, has been named new President of The Friends of The Merrill Collection of Science Fiction,

Speculation and Fantasy, succeeding Larry Hancock. Your Canadian Regional Director has been consulting with him about having a series of public readings by SFWAns in conjunction with the exhibition's opening in May 1995.

New Canadian affiliate members of SFWA include Salman A. Nensi, until recently the trade publicist for Distican, and John Rose, owner of Toronto's Bakka, Canada's oldest SF specialty store. Welcome aboard!

WilfCon, a small SF convention at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, has been a sort of a right-of-passage for Ontario SF writers for the past decade. Guests of Honour have included Guy Kay (1986), Phyllis Gotlieb ('87), S. M. Stirling ('88), Terry Green ('89), Tanya Huff ('90), Rob Sawyer ('91), Andrew Weiner ('92), short-story writers Lynne Armstrong-Jones, Jim Gardner, Karl Schroeder, and Jean-Louis Trudel ('93), and Michelle Sagara ('94). This year's WilfCon, the tenth, was the last, at least for the time being. We wish con co-chairs Dennis Mullin and Dave Brown well.

In January, CHUM/City contacted the Canadian Regional Director of SFWA for help in lobbying the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to approve its application for "Space TV," a Canadian science-fiction specialty cable-TV channel. A letter was sent on SFWA Canadian Region letterhead to Allan J. Darling, Secretary General of the CRTC in Ottawa. Unfortunately, the Commission chose to award CHUM/City only one of the many applications it requested. They got a license for "Bravo: The Canadian Performance Channel," but not one for "Space." The "Space" application may be resubmitted at a future licensing hearing. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

### Caro Soles by Karl Schroeder

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Many writers strain the boundaries of science fiction trying to capture the Other — the alien, the new, the unexpected. Caro Soles recognizes that the most profound experience of the Other comes when we find it within ourselves. The heroes of her short stories and novels undergo rites of passage in which they discover their true identities by abandoning their socially-bred, "safe" images of themselves. In stories about gender and sexuality, Caro finds the richest terrain for this exploration.

Caro writes with an intense passion and involvement in her characters. She takes great delight in the senses, letting you touch the wood grain and smell candle wax and perfume. It is impossible to stay distanced from her characters, because you enter them, experiencing that heightened awareness that comes as you watch your lover laugh or make the simplest familiar gesture. And in this world of heightened desire, you begin to question desire itself, and all the relations that follow from it.

Caro Soles has written three novels under the pseudonym Kyle Stone. This year will see the publication of *The Initiation of PB500*, *The Citadel*, and *Rituals* by Bad Boy Press, a gay-oriented publishing house. She has also edited two anthologies for Bad Boy, *Bizarre Dreams* (co-edited with Stanislas Tal, 1994) and *Meltdown* (1994), both under her own name.

A native of Toronto, Caro taught French and Spanish at Trinity College, University of Toronto, before turning to writing full-time twelve years ago. \*

**Karl Schroeder** teaches SF writing at George Brown College, Toronto. With David Nickle, he was winner of last year's English-language short story Aurora Award.

## EDITOR INTERVIEW

## Ellen Datlow

by Nancy Kilpatrick

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(Excerpted from the January/February 1994 issue of Horror: The Magazine for Professionals in the Horror and Dark Fantasy Fields)

Ellen Datlow is fiction editor at *Omni Magazine*. She has edited several *Omni* anthologies, as well as *Blood Is Not Enough*, *A Whisper of Blood*, *Alien Sex*, and *Little Deaths*. Together with Terri Windling she has edited six volumes of *Year's Best Horror and Fantasy*.

**Nancy Kilpatrick:** You've got a degree in English Literature and here you are editing SF and horror. How come?

**Ellen Datlow:** Well, I didn't know what to do with a degree in English Literature. The only options I had were being a teacher, which I adamantly did not want to do, and getting into publishing. I had no idea what else you could do with an English lit degree. I still don't.

**NK:** Did you want to be involved with more literary writing?

**ED:** When I first got into publishing, I didn't know much about the science fiction field. I knew nothing about conventions or even magazines. I read a lot of short stories in year's best collections. And I read Harlan Ellison, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne. I knew that science fiction existed as a genre but I didn't want to go into it because I didn't want to be pigeon-holed. I'd always had an interest in all kinds of fiction and I didn't want to be stuck. I purposely did try to get into mainstream book publishing for that reason. When I was in mainstream book publishing, at that time — that was in the early to mid seventies — I didn't want to get into paperbacks, even though I knew it would be really hard to get ahead in hardcover. Most everything published in paperback was a reprint, not original. I don't know much about the development of science fiction as original paperbacks, but as far as mainstream, there were no original mainstream books being published. There was just picking out stuff that was already edited for reprint, and I didn't want to do that.

**NK:** Were you prepared for *Omni*, or did you just plunge in?

**ED:** It's a combination. I knew how office politics worked. I knew about reading and selecting material. I had never worked with short stories before I got to *Omni*. Before I worked for Robert Sheckley I worked for a few months for Ben Bova. I don't think there is any way you can teach editing, except learning on the job. I mean, Ben kind of had me edit something and looked it over and said, I wouldn't do this, and I wouldn't do that. Editing is so subjective. I even took an editing course, but it was useless. No one can sit down with you and say, This is what you should cut out, this is what you shouldn't. You learn that as you're doing it and you either have it or you don't. I'm grateful that I seemed to figure it out.

**NK:** There seems to be two schools of editors, the type who are highly intuitive — a gut reaction — and the ones who are more intellectual — they think it all out. Which side are you on?

**ED:** I think it's different with novels and short stories. I don't know if I could be a good novel editor because I think in a way you have to be more intellectual to figure out the structure. A novel's structure is much more complex than a short story's and I suppose I could do it but I haven't. I think I edit intuitively. I would guess most people do. A lot of people don't edit at all. They'll buy books, but they don't edit them. Or they'll acquire stories but they won't actually edit them.

**NK:** Break down the editing process for us.

**ED:** To me, there are two steps to editing. And I'm not talking about copy editing — that's something completely different. There's substantive editing, which is going over a story and figuring out what flaws there are in the structure and characterization, if the plot's too slow. It's looking at the piece as a whole and seeing if it works as a story that begins and finishes. The other is more fine, line editing, which is going over a story line by line and making sure everything tracks. This is different from copyediting, although you may be doing some copyediting as you do this.

**NK:** Is it more stylistic?

**ED:** I try not to mess with the author's style. It's making sure the author's style is consistent. When I'm line editing is when I may want someone to cut something: I think you should cut a thousand words out of it. And if you want me to tell you where, I'll go over it more closely. I do this if I'm willing to work on the story and if I might want to buy it. If I have no interest in the story I'm not going to go to that trouble, although I might make some suggestions to the author on how to make the story better. I try to make it clear that even though I've made suggestions, it doesn't necessarily mean I'm going to buy the story but that my perception is that by fixing something they can sell that story or at least make it a better story. That's my ultimate concern. I really want people to produce the story they want and communicate the way they want.

**NK:** How did you get into editing horror anthologies?

**ED:** It was purposeful, although I sometimes forget that. I didn't want to do an SF anthology because it would conflict with my job.

**NK:** You have an agent, Merrilee Heifetz at Writers' House. Isn't that unusual, an editor having an agent?

**ED:** I need someone to represent me for the anthologies because I don't know the ins-and-outs of it. I wouldn't want to do the deals. I hate that aspect of it. I make suggestions to Merrilee as to who to send the anthologies to. But *Alien Sex*, for example, ended up with a non-science fiction publisher, Dutton. I have a new anthology that we just sold. I basically had lunch with a few editors I know and I mentioned the idea and someone, whoever said, Oh, yeah, that sounds good. I had Merrilee send the proposal to them.

**NK:** How did you and Terri get together to do the *Year's Best* books?

**ED:** Jim Frenkel approached each of us and pitched his idea, which was to do a "Best Of," including half fantasy and half horror. I thought that was great.

**NK:** What joy do you find in working on anthologies?

**ED:** Buying great stories. Encouraging people to write really good stories that express what I'm hoping they'll express. Every time I get a really good story it just thrills me.

**NK:** What are the horrors of it?

**ED:** Getting a lot of crap. It's horrible wading through stories I know are not appropriate, but then you get one that's perfect.

**NK:** Do you have any aspirations to write?

**ED:** Not at all. When I was in college I guess I wanted to write poetry . . . Nah! Every non-fiction thing I write is an agony.

**NK:** How does the horror side of your *Year's Best* differ from Karl Wagner's *Year's Best Horror* and Steve Jones' *Best New Horror* anthologies?

**ED:** Well, I've looked through Steve's books. I always find other editors' decisions baffling. I know my taste but I don't understand anyone else's taste. I think that I try to cast as broad a net as I can for horror. In a way I feel — I may be wrong — I feel Karl has gotten too esoteric. His taste has narrowed. I don't know if it's a question of doing it for a long time. I'm afraid I'll get burned out and just won't want to read stuff anymore. Or look for more and more obscure sources. I mean, I always look for obscure sources but I find the best horror is from the non-obscure sources.

Steve Jones has a very English point of view. He's said about some of the stories I've taken that he didn't think anyone in England would be scared or horrified by them. In turn, I don't understand why he picks some of the stories he does. What it comes down to is taste.

**NK:** Some writers value editors and other writers despise them. Do you ever feel thrust into the "bad guy" role?

**ED:** Yeah, and again, I'm baffled. I don't understand writers who think I'm out to get them. I find it strange when a writer takes my editing suggestions and turns around and shoves them in my face and kind of insults me. It doesn't happen very often, luckily, but once in a while it gets weird.

**NK:** What's your worst experience?

**ED:** I've had a couple, each time with someone I'd written a critical letter to, maybe a page or so, about their story, and they wrote back abusive letters. It's so shocking when that happens. It's so out-of-the-blue usually that initially I didn't know how to deal with it. Talking with an editor friend she said, you don't want to respond to every point and get back to them, don't do that. Think about it over the weekend and cool down. And she was right. You can't respond because it's irrational. So what I would do is write, Gee, I'm really sorry I hurt your feelings about this, and that's it.

What's aggravating is when these people come back six months later acting as if nothing had happened, not acting as if they insulted you. And just submitting a story blithely and saying, Here's another story. At least one of them did this after swearing he would never send me anything again. They never apologize. And that's what I find just incredible. People like that who do that don't even apologize after insulting the editor.

**NK:** How has editing fiction for *Omni* been rewarding?

**ED:** It gives me an entree to people who I otherwise wouldn't feel comfortable writing to and I've gotten a lot of interesting people to write for *Omni* who, if I was editing for *F&SF* or *Asimov's*, I think I'd have been much more intimidated by. But because I've got *Omni* behind me, I get to meet or get in touch with T. Coraghessan Boyle, Joyce Carol Oates, William Burroughs.

**NK:** Are you only open to "name" writers?

**ED:** Oh, not at all. I'm interested in any kind of writer. I'm just delighted to read people with a fresh voice and energy.

**NK:** Is it frustrating working for *Omni*?

**ED:** It's frustrating only being able to get one story in an issue.

**NK:** A lot of people consider SF "of the mind" and horror "visceral." You're editing both. Does that make you feel schizy?

**ED:** No, I think it all crosses over. Some of the horror I've published in *Omni* is science fiction. And some of the best science fiction is horror. In *Blood Is Not Enough* I used Pat Cadigan's story "Dirty Work," which is definitely a science fiction story, it's from her "pathosfinder" stories, but it's definitely horror as well. It doesn't make me schizy, I find it fascinating. I love to make it all work. Once in a while I'll get a story that I don't know what to do with that

isn't quite right for *Omni*. This happened with M. John Harrison's story I bought for *Little Deaths*. It wasn't really for *Omni*; it was too long. I had two anthologies open, *Black Thorn*, *White Rose* and *Little Deaths*. I got in touch with Terri and said, Is this a fairy tale, and she said, Not that I know of, so we couldn't squeeze it in. Then I thought, humm, is it sexual horror? A lot of things can be justified in an introduction. Maybe this is something I shouldn't give away — a trade secret — but what I do in an anthology is if I really like a story, I'll squeeze it in and justify it after, or find a way to justify it. And if the story's a great story and it works, who cares?

**NK:** So you will actually take stories that come in for *Omni* and shuffle them over to the anthologies?

**ED:** Yeah, I do that if I can't use them for *Omni*. When people send me a story for *Omni* and I turn it down and then they send it again three months later saying, I hear you're doing this anthology, I think, oh God, I read this already! If I'd wanted it for the anthology I would have taken it. Don't send it to me again. I can't turn my brain completely off. On the other hand, I don't like it when people send me stories and say, Use this in anything you want. A story should be focused for something. If it doesn't work for that book venue, that's one thing. I can make the decision to find another anthology for it. I'd rather the author not do that because it leaves kind of a mushy feeling. The power's dissipated when it's not meant for a particular project I'm working on and they say, Here, just look at it.

**NK:** What projects do you have in the works?

**ED:** I'm hoping to do another *Alien Sex* anthology. It hasn't been sold, but the first one did well enough. And it's still selling in paperback, apparently. My paperback editor suggested another one, although I don't know if he'll end up buying it. It made me decide I really did want to do another one. And I already have three stories I want to reprint — it will be mostly originals. I also have three originals I'm holding that I want for it. I'm hoping that will be a go.

**NK:** How would you describe your taste?

**ED:** Someone told me that I like sex and violence, which may be true, but I wouldn't admit it. [Laughter.] I'll admit it.

I hate dull stories. I like edgy stories. Unfortunately, there's nothing that a so-so writer can do about their style but I'm interested in style to a certain extent and if a story is really boringly written, that will turn me off right away. I think a writer can develop a style, but I think they need to work at it. It shouldn't be flat. It should have some kind of a movement to it, even if nothing's happened. The language, I mean, has movement. Lucius Shepard is a terrific writer who can do anything. In his fantasy fiction, he can write beautifully but he can also handle a hard style.

It sounds contradictory, but I like subtlety. I hate satire, I hate heavy-handed material. When I was looking for sexual horror, I told people, I don't want any castration, unless it's absolutely necessary. [Laughter.] I read too many that had two or three castrations. Oh, please, give me a break! Something else has to be happening.

I've actually found that for sexual horror I have more luck with my science fiction writers than with my horror writers. Horror writers are too involved with the effect and not involved enough with telling a story. That's really the main difference I've found between science fiction writers who are writing horror stories and the horror writers. Too many horror writers are too concerned with the final line. They're going only for the effect and that's not a story, it's a vignette, a scene. I want stories. I want an actual plot and something happening in it. Not always, but certainly most of the time. And I think that's something a lot of horror writers have a problem with, from what I've seen from the submissions I get. \*

*Toronto's Nancy Kilpatrick has published more than 50 horror stories in publications including Year's Best Horror and Northern Frights 1 and 2. Her story "Mantrap" won the Arthur Ellis Award last year.*



## PROMOTING YOUR BOOK

## Getting Good Press

by Robert J. Sawyer

Okay, okay — I'm getting tired of being asked what's the secret to all the good press I keep getting. Actually, there are *six* secrets, and I'll share 'em all here.

1) Find some way to define yourself as a big fish in a small pond. In my case, that was easy: there are in fact very few English-Canadian SF novelists (lots of fantasy novelists — de Lint, Kay, Sagara, Huff, Duncan, Russell, etc., etc.), but very few who actually regularly write SF — and most of the few others who do are in British Columbia, thousands of kilometres away from me.

There are lots of other ways to define oneself, of course. I've seen Terence M. Green make effective use of the fact that he's a school teacher who writes SF, Élisabeth Vonarburg make use of the fact that she's a French-Canadian who writes SF that's translated into English, Guy Gavriel Kay make use of the fact that he's a lawyer who writes fantasy, and Michelle Sagara make use of the fact that she's a fantasy writer who has managed a bookstore.

For my own part, when the simple "Canadian SF writer" hook hasn't been enough, I've capitalized on the fact that I was a business writer for glossy magazines before I made a name in SF. Every journalist in Canada immediately sees that there's a story in a writer going from Bay Street to Beta Draconis . . . Just remember: however you choose to define yourself, it's got to be something that makes you appear special in the eyes of the press.

2) "Special" will only get you so far. Find something else that will also make you *newsworthy*. For my Quintaglio books, it was easy. The series as a whole is about intelligent dinosaurs, and it came out around the time of the *Jurassic Park* movie; within days of that film's release, I got on the *CTV National News*, a full hour on CFRB Toronto's "The Andy Barrie Show," a mention in *Maclean's*, and 22 column-inches in *The Toronto Star*. But *Far-Seer*, the first book of the trilogy, also came out in the 500th anniversary year of Columbus's voyage, and it told in part the story of an alien Columbus, so that was a good news hook, too. For local media, simply tying the book into an event like a public-library reading or a bookstore autographing is often enough of a hook.

3) Being thought of as only an SF or fantasy writer will normally just get you coverage in genre publications. So, find some way to make your work appear to transcend genre boundaries. For my first novel, *Golden Fleece*, that was simple: it was an SF/mystery crossover, and that was something the press found immediately appealing. For instance, *The Toronto Star* did a special book-review column headlined "Vicarious Travels with Super Sleuths" that reviewed, most favorably, both my *Golden Fleece* and John E. Stith's novel of a hyperspace starship, *Redshift Rendezvous* — and reviewed them as *mysteries*, not SF. Now, John lives in Colorado, but the crossover SF/mystery idea was appealing enough as a hook to get him reviewed here in the Great White North (and, conversely, to get me reviewed in *Mystery Scene* and *The Droid Review of Mystery* down south).

Likewise, for my Quintaglio series, the fact that they're parables about great human thinkers (Galileo, Darwin, and Freud) again lets the books be treated as being of greater than just genre interest. And for *End of an Era* and *Hobson's Choice*, I'll capitalize on the fact that both books are actually set in Canada.

4) You can't expect the press to hear about you on its own. Send out your own press kits. I used to write such things for corporate clients, so I'm pretty good at it, but they're easy to learn to do. (I generally rely on my New York publishers to take care of American newspapers and the genre publications, but I go after Canadian newspapers and media personally.) Also, get a decent photo of yourself,

not some god-awful passport thing, and send it out with everything. My latest publicity shot has appeared in *Science Fiction Chronicle*, *Books in Canada*, *Quill & Quire*, and many other places, and at least partly that's because (a) it was a good shot, well-lit and with good contrast, and (b) it was accessible — they had it on hand.

5) By the time your book is on the stands (especially if it's mass-market), it's too late for most publicity efforts. It's important to get word out to the media *prior* to the book's actual appearance. A perfect example is having a full-colour caricature of me ending up being the cover illustration for *Quill & Quire's* May 1993 issue. They got a galley of my *Fossil Hunter* months before that issue appeared (at my request, my publisher provided me with extra galleys for the Canadian media), and so were able to review that book during its actual month of release. Now, they'd have probably reviewed *Fossil Hunter* anyway, but no way they'd have put me on the cover of the magazine if they couldn't have had it coincide with the book's release.

Rules of thumb: get galleys into the hands of the genre magazines (such as *Analog*) ten months in advance of release, into the hands of *Books in Canada* and *Quill & Quire* three or four months in advance, and into the hands of newspaper reviewers two months in advance.

6) This is the hardest one, but you've also got to find some way to overcome the media's prejudices. First, there's a real prejudice against SF&F; they're seen as juvenile, or escapist, or poorly written, or crass, or commercial, or (my God!) American. Second, if, like me, you're published in paperback, there's a prejudice against mass-market: many media outlets assume anything of quality must be in hardcover (how soon they forget that possibly the number-one best-selling Canadian novel of all-time, William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, was a mass-market original . . .).

I was extraordinarily fortunate in that my first book, *Golden Fleece*, got some glowing early reviews. Photocopies of those helped me fight these prejudices from the beginning. I've also made use of the fact that I've won five minor awards, appeared in an anthology alongside Margaret Atwood, Timothy Findley, and W. P. Kinsella (*Ark of Ice*), and had some publishing-related news hooks (books auctioned in New York, multi-book deals, foreign sales). But there are so many SF awards, regional awards, best-of-year lists, best-sellers' lists, and so on, that there are possibilities for positioning just about any book of quality as something special, regardless of its publication format.

And, of course, sometimes being in mass-market actually helps. By every measure one might care to use, Charles de Lint is a more successful author than I am. Still, he and I both got starred reviews ("denoting books of exceptional merit") from the May 1993 *Quill & Quire*. But they put a caricature of me, not him, on the cover of that issue. When *Q&Q's* editor contacted me to get photos for the caricature artist to use, he told me why he was using me, instead of Charles: I was receiving my second successive starred review in *Q&Q* for a mass-market paperback. That was a newsworthy occurrence. (As a yardstick, *Q&Q* reviewed sixty-two books that month; only seven got starred reviews, and of those seven, my *Fossil Hunter* was the only mass-market paperback.)

I know all the foregoing sounds like a lot of work, but actually the investment of time and money is small and the return on that investment is large. You want proof? I've concentrated most of my promotion efforts in Canada. Typically, if an English-language genre paperback sells *X* thousand copies in the States, it will sell something like 7.5% of *X* in Canada (Canada's population is about one-tenth that of the U.S., but of course a good hunk of Canadians are French readers). But my books sell between 15% and 20% of *X* in Canada, or *more than double* what one would normally expect. A hundred percent increase in domestic sales is tremendous, of course, and even in the broad picture of the North American market, you can bet that a 7.5% increase in overall sales is well worth having, and makes New York publishers sit up and take notice.

So, that's it: the six secrets of promoting a book. Now, get to work — and good luck!

## MEMBER PROFILE

## Edo van Belkom

by Robert J. Sawyer

First, the name: Edo. It rhymes with Laredo.

Second, the man: he's 32, bearded, a Torontonian by birth, of mixed Dutch and Italian descent.

He grew up in a blue-collar family in an ethnically mixed suburb — a crucible that's given him an excellent ear for accents. When he met science-fiction author George Zebrowski for the first time, he made a friend for life by pronouncing it "Hor-gay Zhev-browskee." Edo's also a devastating mimic, doing impressions of not just TV and movie stars, but Canadian writers, as well.

Edo's degree is in Creative Writing from York University, and there's an irony in that: he is the most practical, down-to-earth wordsmith I've ever met. His constant challenging of classmates' opinions ("That's not the way it works in the real world!") made him less than popular.

But it's an attitude that's served him well. Although he's worked as a police and sports reporter, Edo made the leap from first sale to full-time fiction writer in less than two years. In many ways, he's the ideal of what used to be called, back when the term wasn't disparaging, a pulp writer: he writes stories quickly, often to a given editor's specification, always producing a quality, salable product on time.

What else? Well, he's far thinner than a man who refers to eating as "snarfing" has any right to be. He's husband to Roberta and father to baby Luke. There's a cat living in his house, but he seems content to ignore it as much as it ignores him, so that's okay.

Third, the career: Edo van Belkom's fiction career started with "Baseball Memories." Its initial publication venue was about as obscure as it gets: *Aethlon: The Journal of Sports Literature*, put out by East Tennessee University. But Edo wasn't to dwell in obscurity for long. Karl Edward Wagner picked up "Baseball Memories" for the twentieth annual *Year's Best Horror* collection.

After that, honours seemed to come Edo's way on an almost daily basis. "Baseball Memories" was short-listed for the Aurora Award, Canada's top honour in science fiction and fantasy writing. When Mosaic Press was launching its prestigious hardcover line of Canadian dark-fantasy anthologies, *Northern Frights*, they came to Edo to produce a story to go with the cover painting they'd already bought. He was quickly made a contributing editor of the *Bulletin* of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, and Canadian membership representative for the Horror Writers Association.

And all the while he kept selling stories at a fantastic rate, to markets big and small — stories that were tight and polished and rang true even when they were about incredible things, stories that sent shivers down the reader's spine, or outraged us, or sometimes made us laugh. Stories that were real stories, old-fashioned stories, stories with beginnings, and middles, and ends, and characters we cared about and points to make and language used so elegantly as to be all but invisible.

Edo's work has an incredible range to it. "Baseball Memories" and "S.P.S." are arguably science fiction, of the *Twilight Zone* sort. "Mark of the Beast" and "Blood Bait" are werewolf and vampire tales respectively — each with a new twist, of course. And "The Highway" has no fantastic element at all, which makes its horrors all the more chilling.

Edo's work reminds one of Ray Bradbury, of Dennis Etchison, of Richard Matheson, of Stephen King, of Rod Serling. He takes on writing voices and genres with the same facility with which he adopts accents or does impressions. He tries his hand at everything, fails at nothing, and is always looking for new avenues to explore, and new challenges for both himself and his readers. Put his work on the shelf next to Stephen King, or Barbara Gowdy, or Charles Dickens. They're all story tellers of the first stripe — just like Edo van Belkom.

## Forthcoming Novel

*Wyrm Wolf*, a novel set in the universe of White Wolf Games' role-playing adventure *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, HarperPrism, late 1994 or early 1995.

## Selected Short Works

"Baseball Memories" in *Year's Best Horror Stories 20*, edited by Karl Edward Wagner, DAW, 1992, and *The Grand Slam Book of Canadian Baseball Writing*, edited by John Bell, Pottersfield Press, 1993.

"The Cold" in *Northern Frights 2*, edited by Don Hutchison, Mosaic Press, 1994, and in an upcoming issue of *Eldritch Tales*.

"The Basement" in *On Spec*, Fall 1990.

"Teeth" in *Aberations*, July 1993.

"Lip-O-Suction" in *The Vampire's Crypt*, Fall 1991.

"Mark of the Beast" in *Northern Frights*, edited by Don Hutchison, Mosaic Press, 1992.

"Induction Center" in *Haunts*, Fall/Winter 1993.

"Season's Meeting" in *Midnight Zoo*, February 1993.

"Blood Bait" in *Alouette*, March 1992, and *The Vampire's Crypt*, Fall 1992.

"War Cry" in *Deathport*, edited by Ramsey Campbell, Pocket Books, 1993.

"Scream String" in *Shock Rock 2*, edited by Jeff Gelb, Pocket Books, 1994.

"Wireless" in *Aethlon: The Journal of Sport Literature*, Spring 1993.

"Mother and Child" in *Gathering Darkness*, March/April 1994.

## Upcoming Publications

"No Kids Allowed" in *Twisted*.

"And Injustice For Some" in *The Journal of Canadian Content in Speculative Literature*, Fall 1994.

"Lifeforce" in *Underground*, edited by Neal Barrett Jr., Summer/Fall 1994.

"Sex Starved" in *The Hot Blood Series: Deadly After Dark*, edited by Jeff Gelb and Michael Garrett, Pocket Books, October 1994.

"Lone Wolf" in *Dark Destiny*, edited by Edward E. Kramer, White Wolf Games, October 1994.

"The Highway" in *Fear Itself*, edited by Jeff Gelb, Warner, April 1995.

"Afterli€" in *Palace Corbie*.

"Family Ties" in *Northern Frights 3*, edited by Don Hutchison, Mosaic Press.

"The October Crisis" (a story about Pierre Trudeau) in *Alternate Tyrants*, edited by Mike Resnick, Tor Books, 1996. \*

# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

Publisher: *Who's That Coeurl? Press*

SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
CANADIAN REGION

7601 Bathurst Street · Suite 617 · Thornhill, Ontario, Canada · L4J 4H5  
Phone: (905) 882-5033 · Fax: (905) 886-1624 · GEnie: RJ.Sawyer · Internet: rj.sawyer@genie.geis.com  
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## The Boom in Canadian Speculative Fiction

by *Shlomo Schwartzberg*

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With all the fuss over Michael Ondaatje's sharing of The Booker Prize and Carol Shield's winning The Pulitzer Prize, Canadian influence on — and even domination of — genre publishing, notably fantasy, science fiction, and horror, has been largely overlooked. But it's a strong reality just the same.

Two of fantasy's leading lights, Guy Gavriel Kay and Charles de Lint, are Canadian. American expatriates Spider Robinson and William Gibson are among the best known Canadian science fiction writers and many others, including Robert J. Sawyer, Andrew Weiner, Terence M. Green, Robert Charles Wilson, and Élisabeth Vonarburg, are firmly established in the field, as well. And in horror, a group of young writers, led by Dave Nickle, Edo van Belkom, Nancy Kilpatrick, and Nancy Baker, are making their presence felt in both Canada and the U.S.

All this success is a relatively recent phenomenon; a decade ago only Phyllis Gotlieb, de Lint, and Judith Merril, a longtime writer and editor (Toronto's Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation, and Fantasy — some 50,000 books and periodicals — is named after her), were evident in SF/fantasy circles. Now there are literally dozens of new writers around, regularly popping up in anthologies, both SF and mainstream, ending up on the bestseller lists, and attracting praise from noted American writers, such as Orson Scott Card, who in 1990 designated Sawyer's first novel *Golden Fleece* as best SF novel of the year in the august pages of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*.

Most Canadian fantasy and SF writers attribute the SF/fantasy boom in Canada to the burgeoning popularity of the genres, post late-70s, and *Star Wars*. "There are a lot more books than there were 20 years ago, a lot more writers are being published. There's a real scene in Toronto, Edmonton, and Vancouver," says Sean Stewart, who lived in Vancouver when he wrote *Nobody's Son*. Adds Sawyer, "SF is climbing the best-seller lists; it's more respectable."

The success of Canadian SF writers, particularly that of William Gibson, author of *Neuromancer*, the enormously influential forerunner of the stream of books known as cyberpunk, (his short story "Johnny Mnemonic," came out in a film version in May), has also impacted tremendously on the Canadian writing community.

"It's really simple," says fantasy writer Tanya Huff, who is

currently finishing her twelfth novel. "It's a snowball effect. Some writer, such as Charles de Lint, gets recognized in the fantasy market. Some nascent writer then says I can do that. Out of the six who say it, one succeeds. Now you've got two Canadian writers and it expands exponentially from there."

This jump "is not unique to SF," says Sean Stewart. "It's part of the maturation of Canadian Arts and Letters generally."

All this leads to the inevitable identity question: what, if anything, is distinct about Canadian SF, fantasy, and horror?

William Gibson has only placed one short story of his, "The Wintermarket," set in a future Vancouver, in a Canadian context, and he objects to the very examination of what constitutes Canadian SF. But he concedes that it "is a very touchy topic, as to whether or not there is Canadian SF/fantasy as opposed to the other kind. There are a lot of SF writers in Brazil but nobody reads them. SF is global, and I don't see what purpose it serves to ask about national distinctions other than to produce an article hook."

Others see definite differences between us and them, revolving around the famous "survival" theme attributed to Margaret Atwood, who has written one SF novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*. "The relationship of nature to man is somewhat different from that of the American perspective," says Chicoutimi SF writer Elisabeth Vonarburg. "In Canadian SF, it's a much bigger and more dangerous thing. Nature always wins in the end."

And the way Canadians draw their own characters in their books is different, too, she adds. "We don't have this trend of the competent hero that is so prominent in U.S. SF. We have bumbling heroes, heroes in spite of themselves."

In her novel *The Reluctant Voyagers*, Vonarburg creates a "strange Canada with two provinces, East and West, and one Franco-phone enclave in Montreal, a mythical Quebec where history developed very differently." That's a deviation from the, not surprisingly, political perspective of other Quebecois writers, such as Yves Meynard (winner of *Le grand prix de la science fiction* for his collection of short stories), Jean-Louis Trudel, or Esther Rochon.

Says the French-born Vonarburg, who is one of the few Quebec SF writers to have work translated into English, "I don't see Canada/Quebec as they do, as it relates to my history. Quebec in my books doesn't really exist, it's a phantasm. That's a very individual way of seeing Quebec."

Nova Scotia's Lesley Choyce, owner of Pottersfield Press, says Atlantic Canada, too, has a unique SF-way of looking at the world. "We're on the margins in Atlantic Canada. We're not at the centre of the hustle and bustle. We observe in a detached way other larger cultures and technologies overrunning us."

Setting stories in Canadian cities can also lead to obvious — and logical — differences in how genre subjects are treated. Toronto writer Nancy Baker has had two vampire novels published, *The Night Inside*, optioned by Parisian filmmaker Gerard Ciccoritti, and *Blood and Chrysanthemums*. She's been told her Vampires are "very Canadian. They don't kill every night. They're not required to. You'd have a hard time hiding 365 bodies a year in Toronto whereas the perception is you *can* do that in New York."

Her undead, specifically a young female University of Toronto grad student who has been turned into a vampire, have "normal problems, getting money, living through the night, staying faithful to each other. Those are small problems compared to Anne Rice's vampires, who deal with the meaning of the universe."

There are also certain extremely violent sub-genres of horror that haven't yet crossed the border, she adds. "We haven't produced any splatterpunk novels yet. Maybe we're kinder, gentler horror writers."

Robert Charles Wilson's SF novels, such as *Gypsies* and *Mysterium*, tend to deal with Canadians and Americans cast adrift in alternate Earths where events, such as the assassination of John F. Kennedy, have turned out differently.

That's a deliberate choice of subject, says the American-born but Canadian-raised Wilson. "There are literal and metaphorical border-crossings in my books that come out of my personal experiences. So much of SF deals with clashes of cultures that are strange and foreign. It lends perspective to look at things from the outside and not identify with a single culture." That's especially relevant in Canada, he says, a country that is still trying to determine its own cultural identity.

In fact, Canada's often dull image is being recast by the response of foreign readers to Canadian settings, which they see as exotic, says Charles de Lint, who lives in and often writes of Ottawa. "It's fascinating how interesting the fans find Ottawa. I get letters telling me they're going to spend their vacation here." His Canadian background allows him to be seen in a special light by his foreign fans. "The Americans think I'm British but not too British. The British think I'm American but not too American."

Using Canadian reference points in their books isn't an obstacle to publication in the dominant American SF market, which is where virtually all Canadian writers sell their work. "It's a universal field, says Calgary-based fantasy writer Dave Duncan (*The Reluctant Swordsman*). It's very difficult for Canadian writers of mysteries to get published in the States yet Canadian SF writers are very welcome in New York in the paperback business."

"There's no discussion of ever changing the setting," says Baker. "People in Des Moines have no more experience of New York than of Toronto so why would it matter to them where a novel is set?"

American editors aren't far behind in their appreciation of indigenous product, either, says Don Hutchison, editor of 1994's *Northern Frights 2*, the second in a series of anthologies centred around Canadian horror writers and themes. An astounding five of the book's fifteen stories in *Northern Frights 2* were chosen for the major American anthologies *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* and *The Year's Best Horror* (the latter anthology unfortunately was canceled due to the death of its editor before it could publish its Canadian submissions). This, despite *Omni* magazine's fiction editor Ellen Datlow's assertion that the stories were chosen strictly for quality and not because of their origins. "I'm not sure I do see any sort of difference in Canadian stories, either stylistically or in terms of content, which is not bad, it's not necessarily crucial."

Ironically, says Sawyer, whose sixth book, *The Terminal Experiment*, came out in May, it's only Canadian fans who have objected to his use of local colour, which has included Toronto, Alberta's Dinosaur Provincial Park, and B.C.'s Simon Fraser University. Yet, Sawyer also adds that 15 percent of his total sales — well above the purchasing norm — are to Canadian consumers, who buy more SF and fantasy proportionately than do Americans. And Michelle Sagara, a Toronto fantasy writer (*The Books of the Sundered*), now writing under her married name Michelle West, has noticed that Canadian books are anything but a stigma for the hardcore SF customers at Bakka, the science fiction bookstore where she works part-time. "They tend to pay special attention to Canadian writers."

Canada's daily press also play a big part in getting the word out on newly published SF and fantasy works, says Sawyer. "The Canadian media has been very good to Canadian genre writers. I get reviewed in *The Toronto Star*, *The Edmonton Journal*, and *The Montreal Gazette*. Most American newspapers tend not to review SF at all, but Canadian newspapers don't treat us as second class."

Canadian publishers, however, are another matter. Despite some Canadian releases (Terence M. Green's 1992 time-travel novel *Children of the Rainbow* was put out by McClelland and Stewart), it's the small presses (Nova Scotia's Pottersfield Press, Edmonton's Tesseract Books, Toronto-based Mosaic Press), and the speculative fiction magazines (Edmonton-based *On Spec* and two Quebecois publications, *Imagine...* and *Solaris*) that support budding genre writers in Canada. The publishing industry is castigated by writers for neglecting genre publishing, outside of mystery writing.

"It's very hard to get Canadian publishers interested in any genre work," says Toronto horror writer Nancy Kilpatrick, who sold her novel *Near Death* to Pocket Books in New York. That was advantageous for her, anyway, she says. "They distribute really well up here."

Even if they want to, other writers say they can't afford to separate Canadian rights from American ones when they sell their books. "It would be economic suicide," says Spider Robinson. "I guarantee that the Americans would cut the advance given by more than I would get from Canadian publishers."

"There's not much point in holding the rights back," concurs Kilpatrick.

Guy Gavriel Kay would beg to disagree. The Toronto fantasy writer, who has a law degree, sold Canadian rights for his first trilogy, *The Fionavar Tapestry*, to Canada's McClelland & Stewart and British rights to Allen and Unwin. (He now routinely sells rights to his books separately to British, Canadian, and American houses.)

Kay admits to "yelling" at other Canadian writers to do the same as he has but he also recognizes that it's not so easy for them without his bestselling clout. "I did it from the very beginning, and had a hardcover offer (rare, then and now) from England and Canada before it came from the States."

He has since stood fast against the American publishers, who have tended to divvy up North America into selling zones, which don't include Canada as a separate entity. "They don't like it. They're very unhappy not to get Canadian rights."

Kay, whose latest novel *The Lions of Al-Rassan* has just come out, feels his books get more push in the bookstores if Canadian publishers have their own rights. "Canadian houses put more energy into their own titles and I get far more money from Canadian publishers. They know if they buy my book, they get a national bestseller." \*

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*Shlomo Schwartzberg is a Toronto entertainment writer with an abiding interest in fantasy and science fiction.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

# 1996 Conventions

Of course, there will be many SF conventions in Canada next year, but these two are likely to be of particular interest to pro writers:

- Can-Con '96: The Fifth Annual Conference on Canadian Content in Speculative Literature, Ottawa, May 10-12. P.O. Box 5752, Merivale Depot, Nepean, ON K2C 3M1.
- Con-Version 13, the 1996 Canadian National SF Convention ("Convention," where the Aurora Awards will be presented), Calgary, July 19-21. P.O. Box 1088, Station M, Calgary AB T2P 2K9. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

## Marian Hughes

by Mici Gold

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Reprinted from SOL Rising

Marian Hughes of Mississauga, Ontario, is enjoying the aspiring writers' dream: having only previously published a single speculative-fiction story, she managed to sell her first book. *Initiation*, published by Baen, was released in December 1994. How did she manage such a remarkable start to her career?

"I worked at writing for years, writing for a horse magazine for years," Hughes says. "The editors always just said, 'thank you,' and sent me a cheque. But I would race to see the finished article, and I would sit down with my manuscript and with their typeset version and see how they'd edited it. I learned an awful lot about writing doing that. After a couple of years, suddenly I started getting more requests for stories, because, as my editor said, 'you started to write well.' And, of course, that was from paying attention to the editing of my work.

"I've only written one speculative-fiction short story, because whenever I get an idea, it turns into a novel. It's really hard to get an idea that's small enough to encompass in a short story. In fact, I sent the short story that got published to a publisher in California and got a frustrated letter back saying, 'why are you sending us the first chapter of a book?' As a matter of fact, that short story has been changed — it now is the first chapter of a book."

How was it that *Initiation* was accepted by a major publisher when her only other fiction sale had not yet appeared in print?

"I sent it to Del Rey first, and they rejected it. And then I sent it to Baen. I had not thought to send it to there, because I wasn't sure it was a Baen book. And Stephen Stirling said, 'Well, just because they don't publish exactly that kind of book, doesn't mean it isn't a Baen book. It means it hasn't been presented to them.' He wrote a cover letter for the submission, which, as he said would not get me published, but would get me read." And, then editor Josepha Sherman phoned me up and said, 'Well, we're interested, but there are a few problems.' They wanted me to cut the prologue, and integrate the information it contained into the body of the book. I did that, and sent it back to her. And she phoned me almost immediately and said, 'You didn't get it.' I think Josepha is wonderful, because she could have just said, 'Well, sorry; we don't want it.' Instead, she said, 'You didn't get it.' And I said, 'Well, how about hitting me over the head with a hammer and telling me in no uncertain terms? Don't be delicate about it.' She was really explicit. And so I tried again. And this time, they said it was okay."

Hughes first entertained the idea of a writing career when an effusive high-school teacher recommended that she try to publish a story she had written. Hughes, however, resisted.

"I looked at this short story, and with the typical impetuosity of youth, I evaluated it as being shallow. Because it was. I mean, what does an eighteen-year-old girl, who's lived in a tiny mining camp in northern Ontario, really know about the world? I just wrote a copy-cat story, and it was good, by that standard. But in terms of what I was reading in the library, I knew it wasn't good. So I thought, 'This is ridiculous; she's wrong.' So apart from my non-fiction writing, I didn't write anything until 1979. If only there had been someone around to tell me, 'It's all right, Marian; everybody's first writing is copy-cat writing, and everybody's first writing is shallow until they find their voice.' But I judged it fairly. It didn't match what I was reading in international magazines. So I quit."

She finally returned to fiction writing because she was looking for something to do.

"A friend of mine said, 'Hey, it should be really easy for you to write, Marian. No problem at all, you've got so many interesting

ideas.' And so I started to write. I thought it would be easy, too. I didn't have a *clue* . . . What I produced was appalling. I read it now and I laugh.

"I admire other people's writing, and I think, 'Why can't I write that well?' When I was starting to write, I thought I'd like to write like Anne McCaffrey: a nice, clean, passionate story. But I can't write like that because I get involved in politics, and all my people are real people — not to say that hers aren't real — but my people are complicated people who aren't sure why they're doing some things themselves, and who are balancing family against passion against responsibility against dreaming. I'm finding my own voice, and my own voice is interested in people's rites of passage."

Although it's hard to characterize a writer's style from a single story and book, what comes across in *Initiation* is a strong connection between people and biology and geology.

"I have a bachelor of arts in history," Hughes says. "I took three years of honours history, and then foresaw that women would have no good chance of a job with a history degree. So I switched into honours geography. I've got a master's degree in geography. And I've got a master's degree in special education, specializing in communication problems. I'm very eclectic, and I read history for pleasure. I watch The Discovery Channel for pleasure. My husband is a documentary freak, and we watch between four and seven documentaries a week."

In another novel she's working on, Hughes is using actual events from history that upset her. "I cribbed from bits of history and then changed it to the way I really think it should happen. Ideas fascinate me, politics fascinate me, how people end up doing things that they don't really want to do in the first place fascinates me. People are constantly doing things that they don't really want to do."

Hughes is planning more novels and short stories and hopes to have an established writing career by the time she retires from teaching for the Halton Board of Education. She lives with her husband David and her cat, Owaine, short for Owaine Glen Dower, who was a great Welsh freedom fighter. What did you expect a historian would name her cat? \*

## RISING SUNS

## Seiun Nominees

Two Canadian SFWans are current nominees for Japan's national SF award, the Seiun (which *Locus* calls "the Japanese Hugo").

Robert J. Sawyer's *Far-Seer* (published in Japan by Hayakawa as *Senseishi Afusan No Tomikyo*) is nominated for the Best Foreign Novel of 1994. And Michael G. Coney's "Die, Lorelei" is a finalist for the Best Foreign Short Story of 1994. (The Seiuns only have one short fiction category in which novellas, novelettes, and short stories all compete.) Sawyer lives in Thornhill, Ontario; Coney, in Sidney, B.C.

The full list of eight novel nominees is *The Boat of a Million Years* by Poul Anderson, *The Ship Who Searched* by Anne McCaffrey & Mercedes Lackey, *Free Zone* by Charles Platt, *Far-Seer* by Robert J. Sawyer, *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons, *Manhattan Transfer* by John E. Stith, *Steel Beach* by John Varley, and *The Book of the River* (trilogy) by Ian Watson.

(Independently, *Hayakawa SF Magazine*, Japan's principal SF magazine, surveyed 74 Japanese writers, translators, critics, and fans and produced a list of the top-ten foreign novels of 1994. The Anderson, Sawyer, Platt, and Watson works also appear on that poll.)

The eight short-fiction finalists are "Press Ann" by Terry Bisson, "Understand" by Ted Chiang, "Die, Lorelei" by Michael G. Coney, "And Read the Flesh Between the Lines" by R. A. Lafferty, "Coffins" by Robert Reed, "A Planet Named Shayol" by Cordwainer Smith, "Naming the Flowers" by Kate Wilhelm, and "Even the Queen" by Connie Willis. Some of the nominees were first published long ago in North America, but were first released in Japanese translations in 1994. \*

## WRITING REFLECTIONS

# How I Found Immediate Success and Lived to Regret It

by Augustine Funnell

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*Edo van Belkom scours used bookstores. In some of his recent searchings, he came across not one but two copies of Brandyjack, the only Laser Book written by a Canadian author. Edo sent the copies as a gift to Augustine Funnell, who now lives in Fredericton, New Brunswick, asking in exchange for an essay for Alouette about the book's origin.*

*(Laser Books, launched in 1976, was a mass-market SF line published by Toronto's Harlequin Books — their attempt to do for SF what they'd done with great success for romance. The line was edited by Roger Elwood and had uniform covers by Frank Kelly Freas. The ill-fated imprint published early works by such writers as Piers Anthony, K. W. Jeter, Jerry Pournelle, and George Zebrowski.)*

*We offer sincere thanks to Gus Funnell for sharing his insights into this unique chapter of Canada's SF history.*

Mr. van Belkom, when he asked me to write this little piece, shrewdly sent along two copies of *Brandyjack*, my first book, with the following disingenuous statement: "I don't know of a writer alive who has enough copies of his first novel." Probably true. He probably had *no* intention of bribing me; further had *no* intention of inducing in me a feeling of guilt for accepting two copies of my supposedly in-demand first novel, and then refusing to scribble a little essay on the genesis of its publication. Which is good, because I *do* have enough copies of the damn thing (one is enough), there's really no way on God's green earth that I could be bribed with copies of *that* little item, and guilt is for better folk than I.

So here's the piece, Edo. But in all honesty, and with no intention of manipulating a gee-isn't-he-modest-response, I really don't know why anyone would be interested. Apparently I was the only Canadian to sell a book to Laser, but that's roughly equivalent to being charged with driving while intoxicated: any asshole can do it, but no one brags about it. I read most of the Lasers and liked a few of them, but I often had the feeling that Laser was seen as a dumping ground for books unwanted by other publishers. Perhaps not . . . one would have to ask the other writers. (I should, at this juncture, be entirely clear on one point: with the exception of Laser's series editor, *everyone* at the publisher's office was top drawer; I was treated much more fairly in every way. Anyone can dump on Laser's product, which is subjective and perfectly acceptable, but the people involved have never gotten — and never will — a negative word from me. They were good folks who, alas, hired the wrong man for the key position. Bad judgment is no reason for crucifixion.)

But the book, and how it came to be.

Back in the dim, distant past of the mid-seventies, I was living in the tourist trap town of Gananoque, Ontario, residing in a basement apartment on Henrietta Street, and existing on unemployment insurance, parental handouts, and periodic small cheques from Skywald. Skywald published black-and-white horror comics (*Nightmare*, *Psycho*, and *Scream*, edited by Al Hewetson), and occasionally bought one of my scripts (\$6 a page; average story length, five pages). I spent *all* of my time writing, and it was not uncommon for me to spend ten, twelve, or even fourteen hours a day at the typewriter (not the word processor, not then, not now, not ever). Eleven days' worth

of those hours produced *Brandyjack*. Eleven days to write a novel . . . the sequel, *Rebels of Merka*, was produced in thirteen. And it shows . . . neither book suggests there was an extra minute spent on it. In my defence, however, I wrote a lot in those days, and I wrote quickly; it didn't strike me as unusual in any way that one day I sat down at the typewriter, and eleven working days later got up and said, "There, that's done. Now what?"

My intention, once revisions and proofreading were completed, was to simply type it all out, and begin the tedious submission process. But that quickly became unnecessary. Al Hewetson, my Skywald editor, called me one evening to ask if I had ever considered writing a science-fiction novel. Funny he should ask. Al informed me that he was working on a book for this new SF publisher, Laser Books, and he thought that if I had any leanings in that direction I might consider whipping something into shape. They were, he said, looking for a few good Canadian writers (they settled for me). Al gave me the pertinent details, we chatted a bit longer, and that was it. I wrapped the manuscript, consigned it to the tender care of the U.S. postal service (the Canadian posties were enjoying one of their semi-annual strikes at the time, necessitating a drive to the States . . . thanks, Dad.) Two or three weeks later I got a telephone call from Laser's U.S.-based editor. He liked the book; a contract was in the mail (the Canadian posties were back at what they liked to call work . . . hi, Vince). And shortly thereafter I got a cheque . . . for \$1,500.

And, kids, it really was that simple. Everything fell into my lap without any effort whatever on my part. I wrote the book, someone called to ask if I had one handy, I sent it in, they bought it. Even I am disgusted by the ease of the whole thing. Even more disgusting, when the editor called to ask if I would consider writing a sequel, I told him I was just finishing up the last chapters. He bought that one, too. For less money, but that's another story. (You'll all be happy to learn that the third book was rejected outright, a rare display of editorial acumen from this particular lad.) I've since learned that it just isn't that easy to sell a book, that the months drag by, manuscripts are lost in the mail, in-house cleanings remove from positions of authority people who showed an interest in your work, and sometimes the books just aren't good enough to see print (although as we know, some do anyway). But in the mid-seventies the process by which my first book saw print seemed to me as natural as dirt.

So, Edo, there it is. I'd like to tell you that the book was the result of years of painstaking dedication and effort, that it was something held near and dear to me that finally found a perfect home and resounding success. But the truth is that the book just isn't very good, and getting it published was a snap. Finding your ass with both hands is a more difficult process. So this is a short essay indeed, and I hope you'll forgive my brevity . . . but then, I don't think the book deserves much more anyway. \*

## AWARD NEWS

## Wilson wins PKD

Toronto writer Robert Charles Wilson has won the 1994 Philip K. Dick Award for his *Mysterium* (Bantam Spectra). The PKD Award, chosen by a five-person jury, is given for the best SF novel published originally in the U.S. in paperback. The only previous Canadian winner was William Gibson for *Neuromancer*. Wilson received a \$1,000, plus a free trip to Norwescon 18 in Tacoma, Washington, to pick up his award.

The 1994 judges were Megan Lindholm, Richard Russo, Steven Popkes, Joe Sanders, and Robert J. Sawyer. This year's judges are Bruce Boston, Terence M. Green, Joseph Marchesani, Madeline E. Robins, and Sara Stamey.

Something of a "Canadian chair" on the PKD judging panel has developed of late: each year, individual jurors chose their own successors. Elisabeth Vonarburg was a judge for the 1992 award; she passed the torch to Phyllis Gotlieb for 1993; Gotlieb, in turn, selected Sawyer; and Sawyer chose Green as his successor. \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## TWUC Tours

I strongly recommend that the novelists among us join The Writers' Union of Canada. I listed many of the advantages in the January 1993 issue of *Alouette*, but here's one more: TWUC can underwrite paid out-of-town public readings by its members.

Sometimes, Canadian SF conventions will finance bringing in writer guests by using the Canada Council's Public Readings Program. But, because that program is juried, with strict semiannual application deadlines, and can take months to accept or reject an application, most SF conventions find it awkward to deal with. TWUC's program, on the other hand, automatically approves applications for readings by its members, and does so within days.

This year, the TWUC program was used to bring both Judith Merrill and Robert J. Sawyer to Can-Con '95 in Ottawa, providing each of them with \$400 in funding. So, if you want to refer a concom to someone who has this program, put them in touch with Can-Con's chair, Jim Botte: (613) 765-5781 [home]; (613) 738-1012 [business].

Even most TWUC members don't seem to know about the reading program. But here's all the information you'd need to pass on to any Canadian convention that's looking for a way to bring you to town:

**Requirements:** (1) the host organization must arrange for the author to give at least one free public reading (at a library, bookstore, or other publicly accessible place — a reading as part of a convention doesn't count); this is the same requirement that the Canada Council program has.

(2) The host organization must pay a \$70 administrative fee to The Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC).

**What the writer gets:** a fee of \$200 for doing the reading, plus travel expenses reimbursed up to \$200 (either actual expenses, or at 25 cents per kilometre for car trips).

**How to arrange funding:** first, phone Ms. Kerry Lamond, Tour Coordinator for TWUC, at (416) 703-8982. She's a part-time employee, who is in TWUC's Toronto office Mondays through Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Kerry will tell you if funds are still available for the program (a certain amount of money is set aside for the program at the beginning of each fiscal year; when it's gone, it's gone).

If money is available, she will send you an application form to complete and return, along with the \$70 administrative fee, to Kerry Lamond, Tour Coordinator, The Writers' Union of Canada, 24 Ryerson Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2P3.

(TWUC's application form will specify, just as the Canada Council's does, that the host organization is responsible for the writer's accommodation and meals. Of course, this is by private arrangement with the host; some TWUC members have quietly waived that requirement upon occasion, instead using the surplus over actual gas costs from the travel reimbursement to cover such expenses.)

**Advantages/disadvantages** of the TWUC program over the Canada Council program for the writer: none.

**Advantages** of the TWUC program over the Canada Council program for the host organization: an immediate response instead of having to apply by a specific deadline, then wait months after that deadline for a decision.

**Disadvantages** of TWUC's program over the Canada Council one for the host: participation in the Canada Council program costs the host nothing, whereas taking advantage of the TWUC program costs the host \$70. Also, funding through the Canada Council program is available for any approved Canadian writer; funding through the TWUC program is only available for members of TWUC. \*

## WRITING REFLECTIONS

Writing the  
Quintaglio Ascension

by Robert J. Sawyer

Reprinted from *The Crystal Tower #1*,  
New English Library's SF&F Customer Newsletter

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*Far-Seer*, which is now volume one of the Quintaglio Ascension trilogy, was originally written as a standalone science-fiction novel, and I sent the manuscript to my agent with trepidation. After all, I was asking him to sell a book that had not one single human being in it. Would an audience identify with the characters I'd created?

To my delight, my agent loved *Far-Seer* — but said that the milieu I'd created deserved an entire series, not just a single book. All well and good — except I *hate* series, much preferring to write standalone novels. But my agent kept pushing, and so I set about deciding what I would insist upon in creating a series of my own.

First, I told him I would do no more than three books, with a final, conclusive, overall ending. But more than that, each book would be a legitimate standalone novel (as *Far-Seer* already was), with its own real conclusion, rather than a cliffhanger ending. And I would use a different narrative technique in each novel, so that they would present fresh creative challenges for me.

*Far-Seer* was the story of Afsan, an intelligent dinosaur who was his race's counterpart of Galileo. For the second book, I decided to tackle a dinosaurian Darwin, and in the third, a saurian Sigmund Freud. And as I had in *Far-Seer*, I would up the stakes: for Afsan, discovering the true arrangement of the heavens was not just of scientific interest, but rather a life-or-death issue for his entire world. In the second book (eventually entitled *Fossil Hunter*), I would make the discovery of evolution much more difficult by positing a fossil record that seemed to prove rather than refute divine creation. And in the final volume (*Foreigner*), I would make psychoanalysis — of Afsan — key to avoiding the extinction of my dinosaurian race.

I'd done things in *Far-Seer* I never would have if I'd known it was going to be volume one of a series (most notably, I'd blinded one of my principals and made it impossible for my reptilian characters to lie). But I decided not to go back and change those things: they were appropriate for *Far-Seer*, and I wouldn't dull its edge simply to make the sequels simpler to write.

The Galileo-Darwin-Freud model suggested moving the action ahead by decades between each volume. Getting to revisit characters I'd first portrayed in their youth again at middle age and then near death appealed to me greatly. As for finding a different narrative voice for each book, the extended timeframe took care of that. As Paul Levinson noted in *The New York Review of Science Fiction*:

Sawyer evolves his very style of writing across the trilogy — the first a straight linear exposition, the second alternating story lines between chapters, the third deftly juggling four different story lines within each chapter — a strategy which nicely mirrors the writing styles of the linear Renaissance, dialectic 19th century, and the multi-perspectival 20th, or the milieus of Galileo, Darwin, and Freud on Earth.

Looking back on the finished Quintaglio Ascension trilogy, I am indeed glad that my agent twisted my arm this once. But I do wish I could get him to stop talking about what I should do for my *next* series . . . \*

## Special Report: THE MARKETS

# Transversions: The Stories So Far

by Sally McBride and Dale Sproule

Victoria SFWA member Sally McBride (profiled elsewhere in this issue) and her husband, writer Dale Sproule, have started a new Canadian SF magazine called *Transversions*. The two of them serve as fiction editors, and SFWA's Phyllis Gotlieb is poetry editor. Dale and Sally kindly provided the following news about their magazine.

The Canadian professional SF writing community has been extremely supportive since our first issue.

It began when we put out a call for a poetry editor. A few days after Phyllis Gotlieb came on board, we received a letter from Alice Major also volunteering for the job.

While putting together the first issue we received submissions from a number of writers we admire (not all of which we were able to accept — but all of which we appreciated). Issue 1 contained an all-star line-up including new work from Michael Coney, Charles de Lint, Sean Stewart, David Nickle, and others. Our cover was by Jeff Kuipers, who also did the covers for *Tesseracts 2* and *4*. (We were so disappointed with the way the cover art came out on Issue 1 that we reprinted it on the back of Issue 2 the way it was supposed to look.)

With Issue 2 we went to a full-colour cover. Ann Del Farrish's (you may know her as O'Brian or something else) incredibly detailed artwork "The Wood Witch" is almost legendary in Canadian fandom, but it had never been used as a book or magazine cover. Now it has.

Our lead story in Issue 2 was Eileen Kernaghan's "The Robber Maiden's Story." This was the issue where we went very international, with U.S. authors (and SFWA members) Steve Schlich, Charles M. Saplak, and Steve Carper, plus prolific British dark surrealist DF Lewis. The issue also contained a deceptively plain little story by Vancouver writer L. Johanne Stemo.

Here's the line-up so far for Issue 3. Again a full-colour front and back cover — a dark fantasy painting by Dale Sproule (heck, it was cheap). Our line-up of terrific stories features "Lost in the Mail" by Robert J. Sawyer and "The Woman Who Drew Dead Babies" by Heather Spears. The American contingent is well represented by Loring Emery's very dark "Mal de Ojo," the delightful "Pleistocene Be-Bop Shift" by Joseph Murphy, and the sad and quirky "Divorcing Heavenlea" by Mary Kay Lane.

This issue contains several short-short stories including "Fudagen's Fate" by Steve Davidson, "Leap Year" by Kurt Newton, and "Odd Night at the Esquimalt Inn" by Victoria writer Charles A. McEvoy. The poems so far include "Skylab 1973-1979" by Carolyn Clink, and "Exchange" and "Toboggan Hills" by our most regular contributor (she's had work in every issue) Nancy Bennett. The American poets include Steve Rasnic Tem ("Ulcer"), John Grey ("Storm Mother"), and Kurt Newton ("Insect Dreams"). This time we're featuring two poems, "In the Mine" and "Ares' Seduction," by Irish poet Niall McGrath. We'll probably have more artwork by British illustrator Alan Casey, and Canadian illustrator Cathy Buburuz, and we hope to entice back Ian Cooper. We also have a handful of new discoveries, but haven't firmed up any more artwork deals yet.

We seem to be doing some things right. Many of the authors who have had work in the magazine subsequently subscribed. Ellen Datlow wrote us a very nice note saying she was "very impressed" by the first issue and would be giving the magazine a nice write-up in *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror 8*. And we seem to have received some good reviews in *Factsheet Five*, *SF Chronicle*, *Speculations*, and *Zene* — at least, we've received orders and submissions from many people who read about us in those places.

We really appreciate the positive feedback and support we've received from people like Edo Van Belkom (who put us in his SFWA

market report, bringing us a number of first-rate submissions), B.C.'s *The Lonely Cry* newsletter (put out by Mike Coney, Eileen Kernaghan, Mary Choo, and others) for some great stories and free publicity, Rob Sawyer (for the opportunity to talk about ourselves in *Alouette*), and a whole bunch of other folks (many of whom simply subscribed and gave us some good feedback) including Gerry Truscott, Diane Walton and Rick LeBlanc, Nancy Kilpatrick, and Candace Jane Dorsey. A number of bookstores have been very helpful, including Borogrove Books and Griffin Books in Victoria and White Dwarf and Neville Books in Vancouver, and the magazine is now available at both Sci-Fi World and Bakka in Toronto. If we can get our circulation up to the point where the magazine is self-supporting, we hope to continue for a long time. We're giving ourselves a few more issues to double our subscription list. Then we can work on boosting our rates.

To check out a copy, send \$4.95 to Island Specialty Reports, 1019 Colville Road, Victoria, B.C. V9A 4P5. \*

## Transversions: Guidelines

Every time the magazine begins to assert its identity, we accept a story that falls totally outside of all our preconceptions of what *Transversions* is all about. But when it comes down to it, unpredictability is what the magazine is about. We like to entertain our readers by startling them, disturbing them, making them laugh or smile or cry.

We see too many hitchhiker horror stories and stories which suspend the protagonist in a void/dream/metaphor without making the character strong or three-dimensional enough to care about. This creates a void within a void, which works something like a vacuum cleaner (i.e., it generally sucks). A story's resonance is very important to us. We want stories that are great the first time we read them and even better the second time.

We don't like sex and violence for their own sake, but if it's integral to the story we have bought and will continue to buy stories which deal with these subjects quite explicitly. As long as your story or poem contains at least a glimpse or a hint of the fantastic — be it science fiction, fantasy, horror, suspense, surrealism, magic realism, or the ever-growing "unclassifiable" — it stands a chance of acceptance at *Transversions* — and we've even broken that rule.

We'd rather not look at electronic submissions, but *would* like to know if the story is available on disk — IBM format of almost any file type; Macintosh disks are better than nothing.

We're not likely to accept reprints with previous North American publication credits but will grudgingly look at them.

We don't like simultaneous submissions but will look at them. Please, be professional and clearly mark them as such; at least then we won't be too upset if we want to buy something that turns out to be already sold. Issue 3 is almost full. Look for it in late summer. We will continue to pay one cent Canadian a word for short stories to 10,000 words (payment for longer stories will be negotiated with the sale), and 25 cents a line for poems, for first Canadian publication rights. The rates will not rise until the magazine pays for itself, at which point any profits will be passed along to the writers and artists. We try to respond within two months.

Send fiction to Sally and Dale; send poetry directly to Phyllis:

Sally McBride and Dale Sproule, Editors  
*Transversions*  
Island Specialty Reports  
1019 Colville Road  
Victoria, BC V9A 4P5

Phyllis Gotlieb, Poetry Editor  
*Transversions*  
19 Lower Village Gate, PH#6  
Toronto, ON M5P 3L9



## Special Report: THE MARKETS

## Tesseract 5

*Beach Holme Press of Victoria, B.C., has sold its Tesseract Books imprint to an Edmonton-based consortium called The Book Collective headed by Candas Jane Dorsey. Other members of the consortium include Élisabeth Vonarburg, Mike Skeet, Lorna Toolis, and Robert Runté. Runté will coordinate all future volumes in the acclaimed Tesseracts anthology series, and will serve as co-editor of the next volume. He has issued the following call for submissions.*

*Tesseract 5* is the sixth in an award winning series of original anthologies of Canadian Speculative Fiction from Tesseract Books. (The fifth volume is *Tesseract Q*, translations of Canadian Francophone SF, slated for Christmas 1995 release.) Each volume is compiled by a different editorial team to ensure that the series is broadly representative of the best Canadian SF. Editors for *Tesseract 5* will be Robert Runté and Yves Meynard.

The *Tesseracts* anthology series is open to submissions in either English or French from Canadians, landed immigrants, long-time residents, and expatriates. (Francophone stories will be translated into English for publication if accepted.) *Tesseracts* is open to both short fiction and poetry. While the series has included stories as long as 10,000 words, preferred length is 5,000 words or less; longer works will be considered only if of exceptional quality. Speculative fiction includes the genres of magic realism, science fiction, fantasy, dark fantasy, and fantastique.

With *Tesseracts 5*, this series becomes an annual. Story selection will therefore be made once a year. The deadline for submissions to *Tesseracts 5* is August 15, 1995. Reporting time is 12 to 15 weeks following the August 15 deadline.

Manuscripts must be typed double-spaced on 8½x11" paper, minimum weight 20 pounds. Please include your name, address, telephone number and, where applicable, your fax number and email address on the manuscript. We do not accept electronic submissions.

All manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you wish your manuscript to be returned, the return envelope and postage must be sufficient for this purpose, or the manuscript will be considered disposable, and destroyed. Do not send originals.

If you require acknowledgment of receipt of your manuscript, include an additional self-addressed, stamped postcard. (Or use a stamped self-addressed 9x12" envelope instead and receive a Tesseract Books catalog along with your acknowledgment.)

*Tesseracts 5*  
Tesseract Books  
214-21 10405 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3S2

Sample copies of the previous volumes in this series are available from the same address. *Tesseracts 1* is \$4.95; *Tesseracts 2* is \$10.95; *Tesseracts 3* is \$7.95, and *Tesseracts-4* is \$8.95. Add \$2 postage and handling for each book ordered, plus 7% GST. A catalog of other Tesseract offerings is available free upon request. \*

## Special Report: THE MARKETS

## Artemis Magazine

**About the Project:** The Artemis Project is a commercial venture to establish a permanent lunar base and to exploit the Moon's resources for profit. Our strategy for this project is to use its entertainment value as much as possible to pay for its initial development. The project is sponsored by the Lunar Resources Company of Texas.

An illustrated "frequently asked questions" paper is available for a

business-size SASE from The Artemis Project, P.O. Box 590213, Houston TX 77259-0213. You can also get the text of this paper, without the illustrations, by electronic mail. Send a message to artemis-faq@LunaCity.com. The faq is also available from the GENIE Science Fiction Round Table library.

**About the Magazine:** The magazine is a science and fiction magazine, published by Lunar Resources. It was formed as an adjunct to the Artemis Project, but is an independent entity.

*Artemis Magazine* will be publishing the best science and science fiction based, in some way, on lunar development. The more closely related to the Project, the better, but do not sacrifice a good story or informative article simply to get in a reference to the Project.

**General Guidelines:** Present lunar development in a positive, entertaining manner. The Moon is an attractive goal, to which people want to go. Please remember that we are part of Lunar Resources Company, so stories about colonists bashing the company that got them there probably won't make the cut.

Include an "about the author" paragraph with your manuscript, on a separate sheet.

**Fiction:** We're looking for near-term hard science fiction in which lunar development or life in a Moon colony plays a major role; however, stories need not be set on the Moon. We want well-plotted, character-oriented stories. We're especially looking for stories which put the reader into the lunar-development scenario. Technical accuracy is an absolute requirement, but don't bog down the story with unnecessary technical detail.

We'll consider any length up to 20,000 words. Shorter is better. We don't plan to serialize novels, but might welcome a series of stories based on the same characters. (Think of television situation dramas, rather than epic movies.)

**Poetry:** Keep the project and the purpose of the magazine in mind, and keep it short and not too obscure. Inspire the reader; appeal to his or her sense of wonder.

**Science:** Non-fiction articles should generally be limited to 5,000 words; short is better, but we'll consider longer. Articles can address any topic related to development of lunar industries, including the role of the Moon in further development of space travel. We plan for each issue to have feature articles on several standard topics: the politics of space, transportation systems, exploiting lunar resources, and updates from the other facets of the Project.

Target your work toward a general audience of educated, but not necessarily technically sophisticated, people. Include charts and tables if necessary, and explain them in the text.

A series of articles on the same subject might work, but each must stand on its own. Send a proposal and samples.

Illustrations should be separate from the text, with captions on a separate page.

**Addresses:** Fiction and poetry go to Ian Randal Strock, Editor, *Artemis Magazine*, 1380 East 17 Street, Suite 201, Brooklyn NY 11230. [Strock is former assistant editor of *Asimov's* and *Analog*.]

Science articles should be submitted to David Burkhead, Science Editor, *Artemis Magazine*, Box 831, Akron OH 44304-1873.

**Payment:** We pay on acceptance, 5 to 8 cents a word, depending on length, for science and fiction. \$1 per line for poetry. Since we are still putting both the corporation and the magazine together, there may be some delay before we can definitely accept your work, but once we're up and running, response times will drop.

**A final note:** These guidelines describe what we expect the magazine to be. If you can write a piece that fits this bill, we want you! However, we're also open-minded enough to be interested in a story that contradicts everything said here, and yet won't let us reject it. \*

## Special Report: THE MARKETS

## Sell Those Words!

by Randal A. Dannenfels

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Randy Dannenfels is a member of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature Forum on the CompuServe Information Service who lives in Xenia, Ohio. Every month he uploads a market-report guide. It's one of the best, most-comprehensive, most-reliable, and most-timely in the industry —and, with Randy's kind permission, we're reprinting the May 1995 version of his guide here (Randy's guide also appears in each issue of *Speculations*, a wonderful new magazine for SF writers). To find the latest version on CompuServe, simply GO SFLIT, select the "Pros and Publishing" library, and download file MARKET.TXT.

This is a brief listing of the markets currently open to Science Fiction and Fantasy. For further info on a market, send to the listed address a request (with SASE) for fiction guidelines and/or info about obtaining a sample issue of the publication. The standard format for submissions (typed or computer printout (near-letter-quality or better, left justified only, elite or pica font equivalent, black ink, double spaced on one side only of white typing paper, with a one inch border all around) applies to these markets, unless otherwise specified. Enclose with the submission a SASE with sufficient postage for return of the submission. Obtain International Reply Coupons (IRCs) at the post office for SASEs for foreign markets.

Please send additions, corrections, and comments about this listing via email to Randy Dannenfels on CompuServe at 76114,3530. Also, send recent (last two months) market response times so I can update/fill-in-the RT data. Thanks.

CompuServe and I do not accept liability for the use of this information, and so on and so forth, insert the rest of your favourite disclaimer here.

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SF = Science Fiction, F = Fantasy, DF = Dark Fantasy, H = Horror, SS = Sword & Sorcery, YA = Young Adult, P = Poetry.

Response Times (Shortest/Median/Longest). ■ = New Listing. All email addresses are Internet addresses.

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**PRO MAGAZINES** (paying a minimum of two cents per word, and having a high circulation)

**Absolute Magnitude:** Mr. Warren Lapine, P.O. Box 13, Greenfield, MA 01302. SF. Up to 25,000 words. Action and adventure, like Heinlein, hard SF, prefers over 5,000 words, no time travel or humour. 3 cents per word. 11/26/58

**Adventures of Sword & Sorcery:** Mr. Randy Dannenfels, P.O. Box 285, Xenia, OH 45385. SS. 1,000-7,500 words. S&S action and adventure like Tolkien/Leiber/Kurtz, but with 90's sensibilities, sexual content only as required by the story, but not excessive/porn, include cover letter with credits. 3-6 cents per word. 73/132/156

**Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine:** Ms. Cathleen Jordan, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. SF/F/DF/H. Up to 14,000 words. Ghosts, futuristic, atmospheric, suspense, must contain a crime or the suggestion of one. 7 cents per word.

**Analog Science Fiction And Fact:** Dr. Stanley Schmidt, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. SF. Up to 20,000 words. Science fiction, technological. 5-8 cents per word. 22/30/41

**Artemis Magazine:** Mr. Ian Randal Strock, 1380 East 17 St, Suite 201, Brooklyn, NY 11230. SF/P. Up to 20,000 words. Upbeat near-term hard SF involving lunar development or life on the moon. 5-8 cents per word.

**Asimov's Science Fiction:** Mr. Gardner Dozois, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. SF/F/DF/P. Up to 20,000 words. Character-oriented, literate, thoughtful, no multiple submissions. 5-8 cents per word. 54/110/147

**Beyond:** Mr. David Riley, 130 Union Rd, Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire, BB5 3DR UK. SF/F/DF/SS. Up to 6,000 words, £30 per 1,000 words, send disposable MS and 2 IRCs for reply if outside the UK.

**Cemetery Dance Magazine:** Mr. Richard T. Chizmar, P.O. Box 858, Edgewood, MD 21040. DF/H. Up to 5,000 words. Horrific, cross-genre, dark mystery, disturbing, supernatural, likes Halloween-themed stories, but no clichés, response time slowed due to illness. 3-5 cents per word. 24/31/76

**Century:** Mr. Robert K. J. Killheffer, P.O. Box 150510, Brooklyn, NY 11215-0510. SF/F, 1,000-20,000 words. Literate, intelligent speculative fiction, strong characterization. 4-6 cents per word. 97/130/172

**Crank!** Mr. Bryan Cholfin, P.O. Box 380473, Cambridge, MA 02238. SF/F/DF 3,000-10,000 words. Imaginative literature, surrealism, magic realism, humour. 6-10 cents per word. 7/15/43

**Dragon Magazine:** Ms. Barbara G. Young, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. F/SS. 1,500-8,000 words. Quests, battles, magical warfare, but not clichéd D&D stuff or oriental fantasy, PG-13, send SASE for Disclosure Form which must be included with submissions. 5-8 cents per word. 19/25/40

**Edge Detector:** Glenn Grant, P.O. Box 355, Stn H, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3G 2L1. SF/F. Up to 8,000 words. Convincing extrapolations of the near future, stories that take chances, some Urban/Contemporary F, disposable manuscripts preferred. 5-8 cents per word.

**Expanse:** Mr. Steven E. Fick, 7982 Honeygo Blvd, Suite 49, Baltimore, MD 21236. SF. 1,000-5,000 words. Hard/soft SF, sense-of-wonder, positive, new nations, customs, cultures, philosophies, exploration and introspection, no gratuitous violence or sex, also wants Classic Pulp reprints — send for details. Caution — may be out of business. 5-8 cents per word. 60/73/109

**Interzone:** Mr. David Pringle, 217 Preston Drive, Brighton, BN1 6FL UK. SF/F. 2,000-6,000 words. Intelligent, unusual, innovative. £30 to £35 per 1,000 words. 39/73/102

■ **Lore:** Mr. Michael Beck, #22 - 1917 West 4th Ave, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6J 1M7. SF/F/DF/SS/H. 2,000-8,000 words. Mix genre fiction, various types: adventure, romance, SF, mystery, horror, and westerns, refrain from explicit descriptions of sex or violence, sexism or racism, query before email subs: Michael\_Beck@mindlink.bcca. 3-6 cents (Cdn)/word.

**The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction:** Ms. Kristine Kathryn Rusch, P.O. Box 11526, Eugene, OR 97440. SF/F/DF. Up to 25,000 words. Strong characterization, literate, relationships, wants to get more humour and SF, overstocked on ghost stories. 5-7 cents per word. 13/63/129

**Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine:** Ms. Marion Zimmer

Bradley, P.O. Box 249, Berkeley, CA 94701. F/SS. 500-7,500 words. Action, adventure, strong female characters, no sexism, strong language or YA protagonists, PG-13, prefers shorter lengths and non-disposable submissions. 3-10 cents per word. 19/36/65

**Non-Stop SF Magazine:** Mr. K.J. Cypret, P.O. Box 981, Peck Slip Station, New York, NY 10272-0981. SF/F/DF. Up to 10,000 words. SF and modern F, literate, the effect of technology on humanity, overstocked. 2-5 cents per word. 57/94/149

**Omni:** Ms. Ellen Datlow, c/o General Media, 277 Park Ave, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10172-0003. SF/F/DF. 2,000-10,000 words. Literate, thought-provoking, no space opera or supernatural. \$1,250-\$2,500/story. 10/39/56

**Playboy:** Ms. Alice K. Turner, 680 North Shore Dr, Chicago, IL 60611. SF/F/DF. 1,000-6,000 words. Serious, contemporary, include cover letter. \$2,000-\$5,000/story. 32/52/89

**Pulphouse Magazine, Mean Streets, and Abrupt Edge:** Mr. Dean Wesley Smith, P.O. Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440. SF/F/DF/H/SS. Up to 9,000 words. Strong characterization, fast moving plot, intriguing settings, cross-genre, reading for all three mags, so also looking for Mystery and Suspense, somewhat heavily stocked. 3-7 cents per word. 11/45/74

**Radius:** Mr. Ewan Grantham, 926 Oakview Lane, Anoka, MN 55303. SF/F/P. Up to 20,000 words. Character-oriented, thoughtful, technological without being tech-centred, send disk along with mailed stories, query if interested in new Shareware Fiction section, include cover letter, email subs (RTF format): grantham@mr.net. 3-8 cents per word. 22/57/87

**Realms of Fantasy:** Ms. Shawna McCarthy, P.O. Box 527, Rumson, NJ 07760. F/DF/SS. Up to 10,000 words. All types of fantasy, preferred length is 5,000-8,000 words, heavily stocked, reading very selectively. 4-8 cents per word. 21/98/140

**Science Fiction Age:** Mr. Scott Edelman, P.O. Box 369, Damascus, MD 20872-0369. SF/F/DF/SS/P. 1,000-22,000 words. Hard/soft SF, magic realism, literate, ambitious, particularly looking for 18,000-22,000 words, uses 1 F-type story/issue (non-contemporary). 4-8 cents per word. 5/7/9

**Tomorrow:** Mr. Algis Budrys, P.O. Box 6038, Evanston, IL 60204. SF/F/DF/H. Up to 10,000 words. Any type of Speculative Fiction, heavily stocked, no cover letters. 3-7 cents per word. 10/12/23

**Valkyrie:** Ms. Liz Holliday, 31 Shottsford, Wessex Gardens, London W2 5LG UK. SF/F/DF/H. Up to 3,000 words. Looking for fiction at the populist end of the spectrum, particularly looking for something (possibly Cthulhoid creeping nastiness) for the Halloween issue, email subs: liz@gila.demon.couk. £20 per 1,000 words.

**Worlds of Fantasy & Horror:** Mr. George Scithers, 123 Crooked Lane, King of Prussia, PA 19406-2570. F/DF/H/SS. Up to 20,000 words. Fiction in the *Weird Tales* style. 6 cents per word. 17/38/102

**Zero Gravity Freefall:** Mr. Daniel Berg, 30210 SE Lake Retreat S Dr, Ravensdale, WA 98051. SF. Up to 7,500 words. Speculative fiction on the future state of humankind, characterization, innovation, experimentation, include cover letter, email subs: danny-boy@genie.geis.com. 3 cents per word.

**SEMI-PRO MAGAZINES** (paying at least one cent but less than three cents per word)

**Cadence:** Mr. John J. Liptow, P.O. Box 8128, Janesville, WI 53547-8128. F/DF/P. Up to 2,800 words. Literary, "grass-roots," non-genre

F, include cover letter, no multiple subs. 1 cent/word.

■ **Deathrealm:** Mr. Mark Rainey, 2210 Wilcox Dr, Greensboro, NC 27405. DF/H. Up to 6,000 words. Classic *Weird Tales* stories, terror-filled, supernatural/occult, monsters, include cover letter, no multiple subs, opens to subs June 1 '95. 1 cent/word.

**A Different Beat:** Ms. Sandra Hutchinson, 7 St. Luke's Rd, Boston, MA 02134. SF/F/DF/H. 100-5,000 words. Stories about law enforcement, cops and others facing the unordinary, mysteries, writers' guidelines available and recommended, particularly looking for humorous short-shorts. 1 cent/word.

**Fantastic Collectibles Magazine:** Mr. Ray F. Bowman, P.O. Box 167, Carmel, IN 46032. SF. Up to 5,000 words. Limited number of stories used in each issue, hard, Campbellian SF, no profanity/sex. 2-3 cents per word.

**Fantasy Macabre:** Ms. Jessica A. Salmonson, P.O. Box 20610, Seattle, WA 98102. DF/H. Up to 3,000 words. Morbid, loneliness, supernatural, menacing atmosphere rather than gore, beauty of terror, no guidelines available. 1 cent/word. 15/37/54 days

**Hobson's Choice:** Ms. Susannah C. West, P.O. Box 98, Ripley, OH 45167. SF/F. 2,000-10,000 words. Technological, hopeful, strong female characters, humour/satire, overstocked, buying very selectively. 1-4 cents per word. 7/21/62

**Horizons SF:** Mr. John C.H. Wong, Box 75, Student Union Bldg, 6138 S.U.B. Blvd, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, V6T 1Z1 Canada. SF/F/DF/H. Up to 15,000 words. Various genres. 1-2 cents (Cdn)/word.

**The Leading Edge:** Michael Carn, 3163 JKHB, Provo, UT 84602. SF/F/DF/P. Up to 12,000 words. No excessive sex/violence/language. 1 cent/word.

**Manifest Destiny:** Mr. David K. Hobaugh, P.O. Box 4066, Greensburg, PA 15601-7066. SF. Hard-core Science Fiction, creditable technology, time travel, genetics, crime, alien civilizations, no graphic sex, include cover letter with bio, subs on disk encouraged, simultaneous subs okay if noted, overstocked. ½-1 cent/word.

**Meng & Ecker:** Savoy Books, 279 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 4EW, England. DF/H. Adults-only fiction using the title characters Meng & Ecker, should write for guidelines/sample copy. 4 cents per word.

**Noir Stories:** Mr. Brian Hall, 1825 Linhart Ave, Unit #12, Fort Myers, FL 33901. SF/F/DF/H. Up to 5,000 words. Suspenseful, fearful, no stereotyped supernatural, steeped in darkness, no splatter-punk or SS, send disposable MS and letter size SASE. 1 cent/word. 8/16/25

**On Spec:** P.O. Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 5G6 Canada. SF/F/DF/H/SS/P. Up to 6,000 words. Preference given to Canadian authors, must be in competition format (author name and phone number only in cover letter, not on story). 1-2 cents (Cdn)/word.

**Phantasm:** Mr. J.F. Gonzalez, 235 E Colorado Blvd, Ste 1346, Pasadena, CA 91101. DF/H. Up to 10,000 words. Horrific, unique, believable, cross-genre, simultaneous subs okay if noted, heavily stocked. 1 cent/word.

**Pirate Writings:** Mr. Edward J. McFadden, 53 Whitman Ave, Islip, NY 11751. SF/F/DF/P. 250-7,500 words. Cutting edge, radical, PG-13, particularly looking for mysteries, include cover letter with credits. 1-5 cents per word. 5/8/11

**Pulp Fiction Magazine:** Mr. Clancy O'Hara, 2023 Hermosa Ave,

Hermosa Beach, CA 90254. SF/F/DF/H. Looking for genre fiction with a spin, that transcends its humble origins. 1 cent/word.

**The Silver Web:** Ms. Ann Kennedy, P.O. Box 38190, Tallahassee, FL 32315. SF/DF/H/P Up to 8,000 words. Thought-provoking, surprising, bizarre, dark, surreal, no traditional monster or revenge stories. 2-3 cents per word. 8/12/25

**Sirius Visions:** Ms. Marybeth H. O'Halloran, 1075 NW Murray Rd #161, Portland, OR 97229. SF/E. 1,000-10,000 words. Literature of hope, visionary, humorous, positive subtext, mystical, upbeat, but not utopian, recently looking for more SF, include cover letter. 1-3 cents per word. 21/58/86

**Skull:** Mr. Mike Baker, P.O. Box 1235, Burbank, CA 90507. SF/DF/H. Up to 5,000 words. Looking for dark fiction, bleak, nihilistic, no clichés, magazine going on hiatus, but still currently accepting submissions. 1-3 cents per word. 39/73/116

**Space & Time:** Mr. Tom Piccirilli, 138 W 70th St, Apt 4B, New York, NY 10023-4432. SF/F/DF/H/SS/P Up to 10,000 words. Hard/soft SF, supernatural and mysterious horror and that which defies categorization, heavily stocked. 1 cent/word.

**Terminal Fright:** Mr. Kenneth E. Abner Jr, P.O. Box 100, Black River, NY 13612. DF/H. 1,500-10,000 words. Supernatural, gothic, occult, ghosts, monsters, demons, not serial slashers, no excessive vulgarity, sex, gore, looking particularly for sinister, loathsome and downright frightening vampire stories, include cover letter, simultaneous subs okay if noted, prefers longer stories and disposable submissions. ½-2 cents per word. 7/32/45

**Thirteenth Moon:** Mr. Jacob Weisman, 1459 18th St, San Francisco, CA 94107. SF/F/DF/H/P Up to 3,000 words. Literary fiction, magic realism, not too genre specific, not space opera/cyberpunk, 1-3 cents per word. 20/42/75

**Thunder's Shadow:** Mr. Erik Secker, P.O. Box 387, Winfield, IL 60190. DF/H. 3 cents per word.

**Transversions:** Editors: Mr. Dale L. Sproule & Ms. Sally McBride, 1019 Colville Rd, Victoria BC, V9A 4P5 Canada. SF/DF/H/P. Strange, quirky fiction that crosses the genre boundaries or comes at it sideways. 1 cent (Cdn)/word. 38/48/79

**The Urbanite:** Mr. Mark McLaughlin, P.O. Box 4737, Davenport, IA 52808. SF/DF/H/P. Up to 3,000 words. Theme for #6: Strange Fascinations, all stories must be set in city or suburbs, SF but not hi-tech SF, surrealism rather than gritty realism, bizarre humour, subtle/sly H, not focused on gore. 2 cents per word.

**Year 2000:** Ms. Blythe Ayne, P.O. Box 84184, Vancouver, WA 98684-4184. SF/F/DF. Up to 3,000 words. Literary, but accessible, myths, magic realism, positive, ethnologic insights, no violence. 1 cent/word. 29/89/120

## ANTHOLOGIES

■ **Darkside: Horror for the Next Millennium:** Mr. John Pelan, 4128 Woodland Park Ave North, Seattle, WA 98103. DF/H. 2,500-10,000 words. Stories that explore either the dark side of the human psyche or the dark side of present society, guidelines recommended. 3 cents per word.

**Dragons:** Mr. James B. King, 50 Basin Dr, Mesa, WA 99343. F/DF/SS. 5,000-15,000 words. Stories centered around dragons, with no explicit sex or explicit language, no guidelines requests. 1 cent/word.

**The Future of History:** Mr. John F. Carr, J.E. Pournelle & Associates, 12190½ Ventura Blvd, Box 372, Studio City, CA 91604. SF. Up to 14,000 words. The rise and fall of civilizations, spanning centuries and star systems. 3-8 cents per word.

**Gothic Ghosts:** Ms. Wendy Webb, 5201 Antelope Lane, Stone Mountain, GA 30087-1206. DF/H. 3,000-7,500 words. Old-fashioned, dripping with atmosphere, character-driven ghost stories, ending must be chilling, unsettling, unnerving, no SF, graphic sex, or gore, deadline Sept. 15 '95. 10 cents per word.

**The Horns of Elfland:** Ms. Ellen Kushner & Mr. Donald G. Keller, 30 St. Mark's Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217. F/DF/SS. Up to 10,000 words. Mythic or contemporary fantasy with musical themes, any aspect of music/musicians/musical instruments/songs. 6 cents per word.

■ **Lankmar: New Adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser:** Mr. Edward E. Kramer, 1017 Mansfield Court, Norcross, GA 30093. SS/DF. All stories should feature Lankmar, Fafhrd, and the Gray Mouser, but in your own style, other characters in Fritz Leiber's Nehwon mythos can be used in addition, story may use characters, places, and events created in your own previous works, but we are not specifically seeking crossover stories, only limitation is your characters must remain factually consistent with Fritz Leiber's, settings from any period in the lives of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser can be used, query for over 10,000 words, deadline Sept. 15 '95. 10 cents per word.

**Leviathan:** Mr. Luke O'Grady & Mr. Jeff VanderMeer, P.O. Box 4248, Tallahassee, Florida 32315. F/DF/H. Up to 10,000 words; query first if more. Journeys into the unknown, whether figurative or literal, beyond genre, experimental, surreal, inventive, no SF, standard monster or fairy-tale stories, if possible send two copies of story, deadline June 30 '95. \$100/story. 5/11/19

**New Altars:** Jewish and Christian based stories: Ms. Sandra Hutchinson, 7 St. Luke's Rd, Allston, MA 02134. Pagan and "other" based stories: Ms. Dawn Albright, 6 Stickney Ave Apt 2, Somerville, MA 02145. SF/F/DF/H. Up to 15,000 words. Speculative fiction of all kinds about religion, particularly need humour, positive, and Judaism or Muslim based stories, guidelines available, query regarding possible reprints. 3 cents per word, 13/33/68

**A Nightmare's Dozen:** Mr. Michael Stearns, Jane Yolen Books, 525 B St, San Diego, CA 92101. YA DF/H. 2,000-5,000 words. No graphic horror, humour a plus, deadline Sept. 30 '95, guidelines recommended. 6 cents per word. 44/58/159

**Northern Frights 3:** Mr. Don Hutchison, 585 Merton St, Toronto, Ontario M4S 1B8 Canada. DF/H. Stories set in Canada, stories can be set elsewhere only if by Canadian authors, soft horror, genuine chills rather than cheap shocks. \$100 (Canadian)/story.

■ **Stranglehold: Pro-Wrestling Horror Stories:** Mr. John Pelan, 4128 Woodland Park Ave North, Seattle, WA 98103. DF/H. 2,500-10,000 words. Stories must encompass both elements described in the title. ½-1 cent/word.

**Writers of the Future:** Contest rules and entries: P.O. Box 1630, Los Angeles, CA 90078. SF/F/DF/SS \$500-\$5,000 plus anthology payment for winners. Send SASE for format/info, or obtain info from published antho. Reports in 8-10 weeks after each quarterly deadline.

## MAJOR BOOK PUBLISHERS

**Avon Books:** Mr. John Douglas, 1350 Ave of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. SF/F. 80,000-120,000 words. At least first 3 chap-

ers and synopsis. 64/75/306

**Baen Books:** Ms. Toni Weisskopf, P.O. Box 1403, Riverdale, NY 10471. SF/F. 80,000-110,000 words. Complete MS and synopsis. 29/52/138

**Bantam Spectra Books:** Ms. Jennifer Hershey, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. SF/F/DF. Query first. 29/58/75

**Berkley Ace:** Ms. Ginjer Buchanan, 200 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016. SF/F/DF. 70,000-80,000 words. First 3 chapters, cover letter, and synopsis, also looking at queries for *Quantum Leap* novels. 36/69/922

**DAW Books:** Mr. Peter Stampfel, 375 Hudson St, New York, NY 10014-3658. SF/F/DF/H. 70,000+ words. Complete MS, cover letter and synopsis, heavily stocked. 34/172/538

**Del Rey Books:** SF: Ms. Shelly Shapiro; F: Ms. Veronica Chapman, 201 E 50th St, New York, NY 10022. SF/F. 60,000-120,000 words. At least first 3 chapters, cover letter and outline. 21/87/249

**Dell Cutting Edge:** Ms. Betsy Bundschuh, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. DF/H. 80,000-100,000 words. At least first 3 chapters, cover letter synopsis.

**HarperPrism Books:** Mr. John Silbersack, 10 E 53rd St, New York, NY 10022-5299. SF/F/DF/SS/H. Query first.

**Roc Books:** Ms. Amy Stout, 375 Hudson St, New York, NY 10014-3657. SF/F/DF. 60k+ words. Overstocked on F. Query first.

**St. Martin's Press:** Mr. Gordon Van Gelder, 175 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10010-7848. SF/F/H. Complete MS, cover letter and synopsis. 45/57/81

**Tor Books:** Mr. Patrick Nielsen Hayden, 175 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10010. SF/F. 80,000-150,000 words. At least first 3 chapters, cover letter and synopsis.

**TSR Books:** P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. SF/F. Hard SF and traditional F., first 3 chapters, cover letter and synopsis.

**Warner Aspect Books:** Ms. Elizabeth Mitchell, 1271 Ave of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. SF/F. 75,000-150,000 words. Query first.

**Zebra Books:** Mr. Pat LoBrutto, 850 Third Ave, New York, NY 10022. DF. 85,000-100,000 words. Heavily stocked. At least first 3 chapters, cover letter and synopsis.

The above info was compiled from data generated by my own submissions and requests, and those of friends and neighbours, electronic and otherwise, and from a variety of other sources.

Some good sources include: *Locus* (P.O. Box 13305, Oakland, CA 94661), *Science Fiction Chronicle* (P.O. Box 022730, Brooklyn, NY 11202), *Scavenger's Newsletter* (519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523), *The Gila Queen's Guide To Markets* (P.O. Box 97, Newton, NJ 07860), *The Report* (P.O. Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440), *The SFWA Bulletin* (P.O. Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440), *Speculations* (1111 W El Camino Real STE 109-400, Sunnyvale, CA 94087-1057), GENie, and CompuServe. \*

**Randy Dannenfels** is the editor of the magazine *Adventures of Sword & Sorcery*.

## Special Report: THE MARKETS

# Reprints Wanted!

Robert J. Sawyer and David Skene-Melvin (editor of *Crime in a Cold Climate*, and past administrator of the Crime Writers of Canada) are putting together an anthology called *Crossing the Line*. This is an entirely reprint anthology of crime stories that are either also SF, fantasy, or horror. (The crime in question doesn't have to be murder.)

We've almost completed the book, but are still interested in seeing additional material. We prefer to get stories on diskette (any size or density MS-DOS disk in any word-processing format, or any common Mac word-processing format — but Mac disks *must* be high-density). If your story is so old (we've got one from 1888!) that it's not on disk, then hardcopy is fine, of course. We'll also look at stories that are scheduled for publication, but haven't actually yet appeared.

The book is currently under consideration at a major Canadian publishing house, but we haven't yet made a deal, and are still tinkering with the story line-up. Since reprints are found money, why not give us a shot? This market closes August 31, 1995. Robert J. Sawyer, 7601 Bathurst Street, #617, Thornhill, ON L4J 4H5 \*

## Special Report: THE MARKETS

# Needed: Literary SF

*Into the Midnight Sun*, an anthology of literate science fiction by Canadian authors, requires quality speculative fiction.

Wanted: science fiction, science fantasy, and experimental prose stories exploring human evolution, set in any dystopian or utopian society, between any series of rising and falling civilizations (think of *Last and First Men* by Olaf Stapledon). Stories should focus on humanist, social, or environmental themes.

The anthology's mission: To reveal the lives of the characters in their times; their struggles, triumphs, tragedies, loves, hates. The integral use of religion, philosophy, sex, or sensuality, politics and/or violence is welcome. Stories can be realistic or surrealistic. Wanted are the stylish (in the vein of Cordwainer Smith), the romantic (*à la* Gene Wolfe), the adventurous (e.g., H. G. Wells), and the humorous (like R. A. Lafferty).

Lengths: 2,000 to 10,000 words, plus one or two novelettes up to 16,000 words. Pay rate is 1 to 2 cents per word upon publication, plus copies. Michael Magnini, Editor, *Into the Midnight Sun*, P.O. Box 66547, Stoney Creek, ON L8G 5E6. \*

## Special Report: THE MARKETS

# New Canadian Press

RiverBend Press is seeking completed SF and fantasy novels, from 55,000 to 200,000 words. No electronic submissions, but do include an email address with your submission, if you have one.

Please send a query letter with a synopsis, the first three chapters, an outline of future volumes if it is a series, and a SASE. The expected response time is less than three months. We pay professional novel rates upon publication, subject to negotiation.

Our SF imprint is Alien Vistas. We are looking for novels that fall into one of these categories: a story set in a culture that has been invented by the author; a story about our Earth culture meeting an alien culture; and a story about science. SF editor: Lynn Jennyc.

Our fantasy imprint is Dragon Moon Press. We are looking for historical fantasy, contemporary fantasy, and epic fantasy novels. Fantasy editor: Gwen Gades.

RiverBend Press, Box 75064, Cambrian P.O., Calgary, AB T2K 6J8; (403) 282-5206; ljennyc@freenet.calgary.ab.ca. \*

## WRITING REFLECTIONS

**And Injustice for Some**by *Edo van Belkom*Reprinted from *Iguana Informer*, February 1995

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## INTRODUCTION

“And Injustice For Some” was the sixty-sixth short story I had written. By the time it found a home, it was the sixty-third short story of mine to be accepted for publication.

As short stories go it’s admittedly not one of my best, but neither is it one of my worst. Trying to be as objective about the story’s merits as possible — and writers can never be truly objective about their own work — I’d say it falls somewhere right in the middle, better than “War Cry” (*Deathport*) but perhaps not as good as “Scream String” (*Shock Rock 2*).

But regardless of the perceived qualities or shortcomings the story might have, I can easily say that no other story I’ve yet written has ever meant more to me, or come straighter from my heart.

What? you say. A story about a superhero?

“And Injustice For Some” was written in February of 1993 in a hospital room on a borrowed portable computer. In January of that year, January 11 to be precise (this date burned into my memory for obvious reasons), a routine x-ray revealed a fist-sized cancerous tumor in the chest of my wife Roberta.

As I write this, I can remember everything about that night as if it were yesterday. It was a Monday night, I had been called to the hospital from an Ontario Hydra meeting (Ontario Hydra being the group of SF professionals in and around Toronto), and had expected to find my wife there and everything to be fine. Instead the emergency department looked empty, the faces of the staff solemn. The doctor who showed us the x-ray revealing the tumor seemed nervous, almost apologetic over the fact that he had discovered something terribly wrong. (The x-ray had been taken merely as a precaution since Roberta had been complaining of minor bronchitis.)

The scene in the story in which Nightshadow looks at the x-ray is exactly the way I had looked at the x-ray. His feelings were my feelings at the time.

We left the hospital and somehow I drove us to my in-laws where our year-old son Luke was already asleep. We did our best to try and function normally — talking, watching some television, but nothing we did felt right.

How could it?

The news had been a devastating blow. Here was a woman just over thirty with a one-year-old child, she had never smoked, never drank, never done an unhealthy thing in her life . . . with cancer. It didn’t seem right. It didn’t seem fair.

Neither of us slept well that night, but Roberta did eventually manage to get some rest. Ironically, it was the same night Mario Lemieux (the Pittsburgh Penguins hockey star) made public his on-going bout with cancer. Roberta watched the news reports and heard how Lemieux would be back on the ice in six to eight weeks. This lifted her spirits considerably.

The next day began with the first of seemingly endless visits with all manner of doctors — from our family physician to several different oncologists, from surgeons to internalists. At this point we didn’t know what the tumor was, even though, looking back on it, I’m sure the doctors already had an opinion they weren’t inclined to share with us for fear of raising false hopes.

Things continued to move quickly, and less than ten days later Roberta checked into St. Joseph’s Health Centre in Toronto for a routine biopsy of the tumor.

And that’s when the real trouble began.

What started out as a simple biopsy to extract a small portion of the tumor for analysis quickly turned into a nightmare. Because the tumor was so large it had pushed several vital parts within the chest cavity out of place. When the doctors went looking for the tumor they accidentally cut into an artery and Roberta had to be rushed by ambulance to Toronto General Hospital where a thoracic team is on standby twenty-four hours a day. They opened up her chest, repaired the artery and took more than enough biopsy samples.

Open-heart biopsy is what I like to call it.

After that operation Roberta spent two days in intensive care and the next two weeks recovering in hospital, while the rest of us spent fearful days awaiting the results of the biopsy. In the interim the doctors speculated that the tumor was possibly one of three types of cancer: Hodgkin’s Disease, Lymphoma, or Thymoma, the first being the most desirable, the third being the least. (Imagine that! A most-desirable form of cancer.)

It was during this time, this period of waiting, that the story “And Injustice For Some” was written.

When people talk about writing or being a writer they often say things like, “I’d like to write, but I haven’t got the time.” Of course, as corny as it might sound, people who truly have the desire to write, have it in their blood. Instead of wishing for the time to write, they make time for it. They simply have to write.

Here I was, spending my days tending to my wife, tubes running in and out of her body and an annoying suction machine running day and night, and still I needed to write something . . . anything.

Perhaps it was a way to occupy my mind during the few moments each day when Roberta would fall asleep, or maybe I was telling myself that for her life to continue everything about our lives had to continue on unhindered.

Whatever the reason, I kept working.

My good friend, SF writer Robert J. Sawyer, borrowed a portable computer from his mother and in turn loaned it to me so I could work by my wife’s bedside. The first story I worked on was the revisions to “Scream String,” published in *Shock Rock 2*, edited by Jeff Gelb.

Shortly after completing “Scream String” I learned of a superhero anthology being edited by Nathan Archer and Kurt Busiek called *Behind the Mask*.

After spending a few days thinking about story ideas I came up with a story about a superhero who discovers he has cancer. It seemed a natural considering the environment I was living in at the time. So, I sent Nathan Archer an outline for “And Injustice for Some.”

He didn’t like the outline for various reasons and told me the chances of him buying the story after it was written were slim.

Still, this was a story I wanted to write, if for nothing else than to capture some of the emotions I’d been feeling during that hellish month.

Now, after re-reading the story in preparation for writing this essay, I’m amazed to find that it’s all there, all of my fears, all of my anger, everything I was feeling at the time. The story reminded me how devastating a blow the event had been in our lives, and I’m glad now that I wrote it. Admittedly, someone else reading the story might only feel some of the emotions that were running through me at the time, while some others might not feel anything at all. No matter, it’s all there for me, and, as Dean Koontz has so often said, writers should write the stories that are important to them.

This one was important to me.

So, I wrote the story on the borrowed portable computer set up on a food table in Roberta’s hospital room and made sure as many aspects of my surroundings as possible found their way into the story. For example, my wife’s room number was East 508, the same room number as in the story, and Code White is Northwestern General Hospital’s code for a dangerously violent person.

When I finished the story I sent it to Nathan Archer with little hope that he would buy it. No surprise, he quickly rejected it. After that I sent it to a few other magazines with similar results. Then I put the story away, which is very unlike me (I rarely give up on stories, my reject champion having now amassed a total of seventeen rejection slips). To tell the truth, I really didn’t care if the story was ever

published in a magazine or not. I wrote the story for myself and it would always be there for me to read whenever I wanted to. So, I put it away and forgot about it — the proverbial trunk story.

Meanwhile back at the hospital . . .

After three weeks of waiting the biopsy results came in and the doctors decided the tumor was Hodgkin's Disease — a curable form of cancer. But the relief over that diagnosis was short-lived as Roberta still had to undergo six months of intensive chemotherapy and another month of radiation treatment.

It was a difficult time, a veritable roller-coaster ride of physical and emotional pain. Roberta underwent twelve chemotherapy sessions every other Thursday. The treatment was aggressive, the combination of drugs literally toxic to the human body, and Roberta was physically incapacitated for up to five days after each treatment. Her hair fell out, she gained some weight, and every other weekend she wondered if it was all worth going through.

I guess I can best sum up that time by saying that when you count slowly, twelve is a very big number.

But, the tumor shrank throughout the chemotherapy and continued to shrink during radiation treatments. When it was all over, tests showed that the tumor was gone and all of the cancer cells had been destroyed.

Simply put, the treatment was a complete success.

Which brings me back to the story and this little essay.

The success of my wife's treatment made me think about the story again, this time with an eye to seeing it in print along with an essay about its creation. I think I just wanted these events to be on record somewhere and I'm grateful to *Iguana Informer* editor Davi Dee who allowed me this opportunity to be more than a little self-indulgent.

I also think that, in a small way, I wanted to provide the ultimate answer to that timeless question — "Where do you get your ideas?"  
Life.

## And Injustice for Some

by Edo van Belkom

The air was full of the smell of death.

Although he was in one of the best hospitals in the city and people were being made well all around him, his super-sensitive olfactory nerves could smell illness and decay almost to the exclusion of everything else.

Or maybe it was the smell wafting up from the wound in his shoulder, the blood and antiseptic clouding his senses and forbidding him to see the hospital for what it was — a place of healing.

The door swung open and Doctor Sawyer trundled in, a large plain brown envelope under his arm.

"What's the good news, doc?"

"Well, Mr. Nightshadow, sir—"

"Please," interrupted the superhero. "Just call me Nightshadow."

"All right . . . Nightshadow," the doctor said, pushing his glasses up onto the bridge of his nose. "The good news is that the x-ray shows that the bullet caused no major damage."

The doctor paused, pulling his lips back in a awkwardly strained smile.

After a moment's silence, Nightshadow felt compelled to break it. "That's great, doc. These punks are getting better armed all the time. I keep telling myself to be more careful; maybe now I've learned my lesson." Nightshadow finished speaking and the awkward silence returned.

"Uh . . . I don't know how to tell you this, but . . ." The doctor's eyes dropped to the floor.

"But what?"

The doctor breathed a deep sigh. "There's something else on the x-ray. It shows a mass in your chest. I'm afraid it might be cancerous."

Nightshadow's eyes opened wide and his jaw dropped, forming a

perfect "O" of disbelief.

"I'm just as shocked as you are."

"Can I see the x-ray?" Nightshadow's voice cracked slightly.

"Sure," the doctor said enthusiastically, as if he were happy to be distracted by the simple task of switching on the lightscreen set into the wall. He slipped the x-ray into the clip at the top of the frame and let the negative fall against the light like a page.

Nightshadow slowly got up off the bed, wincing slightly from the pain in his shoulder, and made his way to the doctor's side.

The doctor remained still and silent as Nightshadow looked at the cloudy black and white image for several minutes. There was indeed something there, a fist-sized mass on the left side of his chest.

Nightshadow felt his mind go numb. His first thought was denial, that it was nothing more than a water mark on the X-ray, but he knew that was simply wishful thinking. Then, as he looked closely at the image, studying every wisp of the ghostlike ball of smoke, he thought back over the past few months.

The realization was sudden, as if another bullet had slammed into his shoulder.

He *had* been a step slower lately, sometimes even finding himself out of breath after a foot chase through the city. He'd always discounted it as age — he was, after all, on the downside of thirty-five — but suddenly growing old was something to look forward to, to cherish.

And what about tonight? Sure he'd had some close calls over the years, but he'd never been caught so off-guard by a punk before. *Never*.

For the first time in his life, Nightshadow knew fear. It coursed through his body like electricity, sending spasms of terror through his body in waves. But then the fear dissipated, giving way to anger. His body slowly became damp with sweat as fury roiled within him. In the end, all he could think was *why me?*

The doctor must have heard him mutter the words under his breath because he felt compelled to answer.

"There is no why," he said. "There's no reason why you have cancer and someone else does not. If you were a religious man I would tell you it was God's will, but since I don't think you're particularly devout, all I can say is it's just luck. Bad luck."

Nightshadow stepped back to the bed and lied down. All he wanted was to be alone with his thoughts. He turned his head away from the doctor so he wouldn't have to look at him.

"You know . . . Nightshadow, you're actually a very lucky man." He paused as if waiting for the superhero to say, "Really, how so?" When he didn't, the doctor continued on as if he had.

"If this had happened to you twenty years ago, you would have been in a lot of trouble. These days cancer isn't always a terminal illness. Even though the tumor looks to be malignant, there's a good chance it could be a lymphoma, maybe even Hodgkin's Disease, and both of those react very, very well to treatment. With chemotherapy and radiation you could be back fighting crime in less than a year."

Nightshadow tried to block out the doctor's rambling. The man was talking about his cancer as if it were just another criminal he had to bring to justice, another bad guy to be put behind bars, another punk who needed his ass kicked.

"They say 'Cancer Can Be Beaten'" the doctor said. "And if anyone can beat it, Nightshadow can."

Sure, thought Nightshadow. I have *superpowers*, but I'm not *superhuman*. Stealth that made him almost invisible at night and an overabundance of physical strength, agility and cunning had helped him stop the odd runaway train, catch countless rooftop prowlers or make city parks safe from muggers, thieves and rapists. But for all his strengths, all his deeds, it had been the newspapers that had dubbed him a *superhero*. In the end he was still human, still susceptible to human disease . . . still as helpless as the next person against the malignant cells that were growing unchecked inside his body.

Doctor Sawyer finished with his paperwork and turned to face Nightshadow. There was a gleeful smile on his face. "My son Billy would kill me if he knew you were here and I didn't get your autograph. Would you mind?"

"Sure," Nightshadow said in a kind of knee-jerk reaction to the

question. He could never refuse a request for an autograph, especially one for a child.

The doctor handed Nightshadow a slip of hospital stationery, then took the shiny gold pen from his plastic pocket protector and gave it to the superhero.

The pen felt heavy, yet delicate in Nightshadow's hand. It was a fine writing instrument, and very obviously an expensive one as well.

The doctor noticed Nightshadow admiring the pen. "My wife gave it to me when I graduated med school. She had to sell the headboard to our brass bed to buy it."

Nightshadow nodded politely.

Just then the hospital's public address system clicked on.

"Code White. East 508. Code White. East 508."

The doctor hurriedly put down his paperwork and ran to the door. "Code White is for a dangerously violent person. Too bad you're hurt," he said with a sympathetic, almost pitying tilt of his head. "We could probably use your help."

"Yeah, too bad," Nightshadow muttered as the doctor rushed out the door.

Nightshadow had thought he'd wanted to be alone, but now that he was, he wanted the doctor, *anyone*, to come back and be with him.

He closed his eyes, feeling the room's walls expand outward, away from the bed in all directions, making him feel isolated, alone with his tumor.

He swore he could almost feel it growing out of control in his chest, attacking the healthy parts of his body with a malicious bent on destroying them.

His mind searched for a reason, his lifestyle perhaps, or something within his genes, but he couldn't think of a reason why he should be stricken with cancer and not someone else.

Again he came to ask the question. *Why?* But this time it was followed by something else, a coda to the question, to his life as a superhero.

"What have I been fighting evil for all this time?" he asked aloud. "I've resisted the temptation to use my powers for personal profit, choosing to live my life championing good. Truth, Justice, The American Way and all that crap! For what?"

He looked at the upper part of his costume hanging down from his waist. The dull black, blue, and gray that usually rippled with bulging, well-defined muscles looked flaccid and limp.

Lifeless.

Dead.

He'd lived his life helping others and what had he gotten for it in return? The equivalent to a knife in the back and a kick in the crotch.

"Thanks a lot," he said, staring up from his bed as if looking through the seven floors of hospital above him and into the star-bright night sky.

He was about to say something else, but the words died in his throat. He knew his voice was mute; there was no one listening. There was no God.

If there was, how could he have let this happen to *him*, Nightshadow, one of the most valiant and heroic warriors in the fight against crime, against evil itself?

It was at that moment that Nightshadow decided that things would change. If he was not long for this Earth he'd make the most out of what little time he had left.

He uncapped the pen and autographed the slip of paper for the doctor's son.

*Billy,  
Go To Hell.  
Nightshadow.*

He smiled.

He'd always wondered how a life of crime differed from one that fought against it. Perhaps he would find out.

He looked at the doctor's pen closely. It couldn't be worth more than a hundred dollars, but its sentimental value to the doctor was much, much higher. In fact, it was practically priceless.

Without a moment's hesitation, Nightshadow slipped into his costume, clipped the pen to his collar and left the hospital . . . under cover of the night. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

# Sally McBride

by D. Ellis

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Victoria's Sally McBride is one of those natural talents. She denies this, pointing out that she wrote a number of "really bad" stories when she was starting out. It's true. She did write one or two quite unpublishable stories, but since then, they've been competent at worst and breathtakingly good when they work.

Sally didn't begin writing until she was in her 30s. While she still looks to be in her 30s, she is definitely . . . older than that. Not only does Sally have two grown children, she's a grandmother who is enthusiastic about the role. According to Sally, her granddaughter Sef is "incredibly cute." And the baby has great parentage. Sef's father (Sally's son) Jason Harlow is a straight-A grad student in astronomy at Penn State and her mother is physicist Cindy Krysac.

To Sally, family is very important. Sal's father is Toronto sculptor E. B. Cox. Her mother, Elizabeth K. Campbell, was a successful poet. And her sister Kathy Sutton was women's world skydiving champion. It may have taken Sally a while to figure out what she wanted to achieve, but her accomplishments are already significant.

Her first published story, "Totem" (*Tesseract*, 1985), was an atmospheric peek into one of the few genuinely North American myths — the Sasquatch. Creating atmosphere is definitely one of her strong suits. Anyone who read "Dance on a Forgotten Shore" in the April 1988 *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* can testify to that. She co-wrote it with Alan Dean Foster, a man known more as "The Entertainer" (*Locus*) than he is for deep character portraiture or rich backgrounds. The story reached the Nebula preliminary ballot much more for its poignancy and cut-it-with-a-knife atmosphere than its glib storytelling.

Only three writers (the other two are Eileen Kernaghan and Rhea Rose) can claim the distinction of being in the premiere volumes of (arguably) the two most influential publications in English-Canadian SF. "Her Eyes as Bright as Unsheathe'd Swords" appeared in *On Spec* #1 (Spring 1989), followed by "Softlinks" (Spring 1991) and "Children in Boxes" (Fall 1991). "Softlinks" was reprinted in the San Diego computer magazine *ComputerEdge* and for a second time in *On Spec: The First Five Years*.

Her breakthrough in the literary world came with publication of "Walk to Bryten" in the Montreal magazine *Matrix*.

Since May of 1991, Sally has been living with fellow writer Dale Sproule (they married in 1992). In that same month, Sally began working on her short story "The Fragrance of Orchids." Two years and some months later, after input and encouragement from a number of editors including Karen Haber and Ellen Datlow, she sold the story to Gardner Dozois at *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*. While the story ended up just two recommendations short of reaching the Nebula preliminary ballot, it won a well-deserved 1995 Aurora Award as the "Best Short Work in English."

Since May 1994, when the story actually appeared in *Asimov's*, Sally has finished (or is in the finishing stages of) almost half a dozen stories and she has completely rewritten the first eight chapters of her first novel *Siege of Dreams*.

She's also written non-fiction for a number of Victoria magazines and co-edited *Transversions*, a showcase for new Canadian literature of the fantastic. She accomplishes all this while holding down a full-time job as an Employment Counsellor at June Allen Employment and Office Xtras, where she gets to meet and interview a steady stream of interesting characters.

Despite Sally's modest literary output to this point, she has continued developing as a strong and unique voice in Canadian science fiction. That her production is accelerating to match the quality of her stories is a cause for celebration.



## Sally McBride Fiction Bibliography:

- "After the First Death" in *Dead of Night Magazine*, forthcoming.
- "The Fragrance of Orchids" in *Asimov's*, May 1994.
- "Monsters" in *Jr. Jays Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1994 (a graphic story co-written with Dale L. Sproule).
- "Walk to Bryten" in *Matrix*, No. 41, Fall 1993.
- "Bake Me a Cake" in *Senary*, 1993.
- "Too Big" in *Focus on Women*, August 1992.
- "Children in Boxes" in *On Spec*, Fall 1992.
- "Softlinks" in *On Spec*, Spring 1991. Reprinted in *ComputerEdge* (San Diego), December 1992, and *On Spec: The First Five Years*, Tesseract Books, 1995.
- "Her Eyes as Bright as Unsheath'd Swords" in *On Spec*, Spring 1989.
- "Dance on a Forgotten Shore" in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, April 1988 (co-written with Alan Dean Foster).
- "Totem" in *Tesseract's*, Press Porcepic, 1985. \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## Landing an Agent

by Robert J. Sawyer

It's very hard to get a good literary agent to represent your first novel unless you have substantial short-fiction or other credentials. And a bad agent can be worse than no agent at all. Most authors sell their first novel by submitting it to publishers (one at a time) themselves; once they've got an offer in hand, they call up an agent.

If you're writing SF, get yourself a New York agent, not a Toronto one (and even if you decided to ignore that advice, don't even think about anyone who lives outside of those two cities: the whole point of having an agent is so that he/she can have lunch with editors on a regular basis; the major editors are in New York and Toronto, so your agent should be in one or the other — as one writer put it, "My agent lives in New York so that I don't have to.")

Top agents in the field include Richard Curtis (who represents several Canadians including me, Charles de Lint, Dave Duncan, and Gar and Judy Reeves-Stevens, as well as such big names as Harlan Ellison); Eleanor Wood; Russ Galen (of Scovil Chichak Galen); and Ralph Vicinanza. There are other good agents, but those would be my personal "A" list. But talk to some clients of any agent you are considering before signing on. The *SFWA Directory* has an index at the back that tells you who represents whom.

Two new agencies that are currently building their client lists are:

Joshua Bilmes  
JABerwocky Literary Agency  
41-16 47th Ave, #2D  
New York, NY 11104-3040  
(718) 392-5985

Richard T. Henshaw IV  
Richard Henshaw Group  
264 West 73rd Street  
New York, NY 10023  
(212) 721-4721

Bilmes used to be with the Scott Meredith Agency; he represents Canadians Tanya Huff and Edo van Belkom, among others. Henshaw used to be Foreign Rights Director with Richard Curtis Associates.

Here's a skeletonized version of the letter I used to land my own agent. I don't say it's an ideal approach, but it worked for me:

Dear [Agent's Name]:

I hope you will be interested in taking me on as a new client. I have completed a science fiction novel called [title] which I would like you to represent.

[Two sentences of description of the novel . . .]

As a sample of my work, I've enclosed a copy of the September 1988 issue of *Amazing Stories*, which has my novelette "Golden Fleece" as the cover story. "Golden Fleece" has made it to the preliminary Nebula Award ballot. [If you've got something impressive you can show him/her up front, do so — but don't send the novel manuscript until asked to do so.]

[Two more short paragraphs summarizing your other credentials, if relevant; I mentioned my successful non-fiction writing career . . .]

I intend to produce a lot of books. I'm already hard at work on my second. [Agents have no use for one-book clients, since almost all first novels sell for peanuts — they make no real money unless you have an on-going career.] I'm approaching you before I query any other agents because I've been impressed by your columns in *Locus*. Having an agent who so clearly understands the forces that are shaping publishing is something I consider crucial. [Let the agent know why you're approaching him/her — something more than "I saw your name in *Writer's Digest*."] ]

I would very much like to send you [title] for your consideration. SASE enclosed.

A few words about commissions: Most agents these days charge 15% commission on domestic sales (and, in the chauvinistic world of US publishing, "domestic" refers to the United States and Canada combined). That 15% cut should be inclusive of all expenses. Some agents charge 10%, but also charge you expenses (such as photocopying, courier costs, long-distance phone costs, and so forth) — that's a better deal, but harder to get. Regardless, never under any circumstances should you pay expenses or any fees up front: the agent only receives money by deducting his or her 15% commission (or 10% commission plus expenses) from your eventual earnings. I recently heard of one agent telling new writers that she was charging 15% commission plus expenses — that's a rip-off; don't agree to it.

Regardless of their domestic commission rate, most agents charge 15% on film and TV sales and 20% (or sometimes even 25%) on foreign sales (including British and translations). The 20% rate is justified because normally two agents are involved (the second one being in the foreign country), and they end up splitting the commission. You should never agree to paying over 25% commission for any type of sale.

Also: the Association of Authors Representatives, which is the professional organization of literary agents, forbids the charging of "reading fees." If an agent asks you to pay a fee for his or her "evaluation" of your manuscript, refuse. Remember, anyone can call himself or herself an agent, and a lot of unscrupulous people do just that, and grow fat off of reading fees. \*

## AWARD NEWS

## Batting 1000

For the third year in a row, Thornhill, Ontario, writer Robert J. Sawyer has won the HOMer Award for Best Novel of the Year, voted on by the 40,000 members worldwide of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature Forum on CompuServe, the world's largest commercial computer network. Sawyer's *End of an Era* (Ace, November 1994) took the prize for 1994; his *Fossil Hunter* had won in 1993 and his *Far-Seer* in 1992.

The other winners this year were:

Novella: Mike Resnick, "Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge"

Novelette: David Gerrold, "The Martian Child"

Short Story: Joe Haldeman, "None So Blind" \*

## AWARD NEWS

## Aurora Winners

The 1995 Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Awards ("the Auroras") were presented May 14 at the this year's Convention, Can-Con in Ottawa. William Gibson's *Virtual Light* won for best long-form work in English, Sally McBride's "The Fragrance of Orchids" took the prize for best-short form work in English, and *On Spec* magazine won for best English "Other."

What follows is a detailed voting breakdown for the 1995 awards. The *italicized* column of numbers gives the tally of nominations received by each work; the subsequent numbers are the votes in each successive balloting round. In each round, the lowest-ranked work is dropped, and the second-place votes on the ballots for that work are promoted to first-place votes, then redistributed as appropriate.

For instance, when *Near Death* was dropped after the first round of balloting, the second-place choices on those thirteen ballots were reassigned as follows: five went to *Virtual Light* (bringing its total from 31 to 36), four went to *Mysterium* (jacking it from 24 to 28), none went to *The Callahan Touch* (leaving it holding steady at 22), and two went to *End of an Era* (bringing it up from 19 to 21). That's only a total of eleven redistributed votes, so two of the thirteen *Near Death* ballots voted for that book as first place, but had no second-place choice. (This method is called the Australian preferential ballot, and is the same system used for the Hugo Awards.)

By the way, because there's been no issue of *Alouette* since last year's awards were presented, we'll note here for the record here that the 1994 Auroras (presented at the Worldcon in Winnipeg) in the three English pro categories went to Sean Stewart's *Nobody's Son*, Robert J. Sawyer's "You See But You Do Not Observe," and TVOntario's *Prisoners of Gravity*.)

Best Long-Form Work in English

Number of voters (in category): 110  
Number of nominators (in category): 89

<i>VIRTUAL LIGHT</i> , William Gibson (Seal, 1993)	14	31	36	41	48
<i>Mysterium</i> , Robert Charles Wilson (Bantam/Spectra, 1994)	11	24	28	34	37
<i>The Callahan Touch</i> , Spider Robinson (Ace, 1993)	11	22	22	26	
<i>End of an Era</i> , Robert J. Sawyer (Ace, 1994)	15	19	21		
<i>Near Death</i> , Nancy Kilpatrick (Pocket, 1994)	21	13			
No Award	—	1	1	1	1

Best Short-Form Work in English

Number of voters (in category): 95  
Number of nominators (in category): 84

"THE FRAGRANCE OF ORCHIDS," Sally McBride ( <i>Asimov's</i> , May/94)	11	31	31	32	43	64
"Small Rain," Paula Johanson ( <i>Prairie Fire</i> , vol. 15, #2)	13	25	25	26	30	
"Fourth Person Singular," Dale Sproule ( <i>Northern Frights 2</i> , Mosaic Press)	15	17	17	22		
"Such Sweet Sorrow," S. Bedwell-Grime ( <i>Writer's Block</i> , Summer/94)	12	13	16			
"Writing Critique," Rebecca M. Senese ( <i>Just Write</i> , May/94)	14	3				
No Award	—	6	6	10	12	12

Best Other Work in English

Number of voters (in category): 120  
Number of nominators (in category): 88

<i>ON SPEC</i> , Barry Hammond et al., eds. (Copper Pig Writers' Society)	20	31	33	47	57
<i>Northern Frights 2</i> , Don Hutchison, ed. (Mosaic Press) (anthology)	21	28	31	40	45
<i>Prisoners of Gravity</i> (TVOntario) (TV series)	14	25	27	29	
<i>Northern Stars</i> , Glenn Grant & David Hartwell, eds. (Tor) (anthology)	14	20	26		
<i>Prairie Fire</i> Canadian SF special issue, <i>Candas Jane Dorsey</i> , ed. (anthology)	16	14			
No Award	—	2	2	2	4 *

## MEMBER NEWS

## Who's Doing What

**J. Brian Clarke** recently sold "Dinoshift" to *Analog*. His agent is currently plugging a revised version of his novel *The Expediter* entitled *David and the Expeditors*, and Brian is currently working on an SF space adventure entitled *The Alphanauts*. Brian is also participating in Alberta's Artists in Schools Residency Program for 1995/96, offering a program on "The Fun of Speculative Writing."

**Michael Coney's** "Tea and Hamsters" was the cover story in the January 1995 *F&SF*; "Bulldog Drummond and the Grim Reaper" is forthcoming in the same magazine. Mike's novelette "The Angel of Marsh End" appeared in the Winter 1995 *Amazing Stories*.

**Barbara Delaplace**, currently living in Vancouver, is marrying fellow SFWAn Jack C. Haldeman II in August. Barbara's new address, effective July 10, is P.O. Box 15057, Gainesville, Florida, 32604-5057. Now that Jay and Barbara will be living in the same city, she comments "There's mourning going on in the boardrooms of B.C. Tel and Delta Airlines!"

**Charles de Lint** is Writer-in-Residence for the Ottawa and Gloucester Public Libraries through 1995 and probably for a month or two into 1996.

Recent publications by Charles include: *Into the Green* in paperback, Tor; "The Forest is Crying" in *The Earth Strikes Back*, Mark V. Ziesing Books; "Dead Man's Shoes" in the paperback edition of *Touch Wood: Narrow Houses, Volume Two*, Warner Books (UK); *Memory and Dream* as a selection of the Science Fiction Book Club; *The Little Country* in a German edition from Wilhelm Heyne Verlag; and a special "Charles de Lint" issue of *Worlds of Fantasy and Horror*, (Vol. 1, No. 2, March 1995), which included an interview with Charles, plus the stories "Where Desert Spirits Crowd the Night" and "The Forever Trees."

Charles also recently had published *The Ivory and the Horn*, a collection from Tor; "In the House of My Enemy" in *The Maiden*, Tor; "Heart-Gold Worlds from Straw," an introduction to Kim Antieau's *Trudging to Eden* collection, from Silver Salamander Press; "The Big Sky" in *Heaven Sent*, DAW; "Coyote Stories" in *F&SF*, June 1995; "Passing" in *Excalibur*, Warner Books; and the essay "Considering Magical Realism in Canada" in *Out of this World*, Quarry Press.

In addition, his "If I Close My Eyes Forever," the first "Newford" illustrated story, penciled by B.C. artist Pia Guerra and inked by William Traxtle, appeared in *Weird Business*, Mojo Press.

Also, Charles continues to produce music reviews for *Dirty Linen* and his regular "Books to Look For" column in *F&SF*. Currently, he's working on his next novel for Tor, entitled *Trader*.

The prolific **Dave Duncan** has three new novels on the stands: *The Cursed* and *Hunter's Haunt* under his own name, and *Demon Sword*, under the pseudonym Ken Hood — a contraction of “Do ye ken who did it?” Dave’s *Past Imperative* is forthcoming in hardcover from Avonova.

**James Alan Gardner**’s recent publications are “Muffin Explains Teleology to the World at Large,” reprinted in *On Spec: The First Five Years*, and the new story “The Last Day of the War, With Parrots,” in the Winter 1995 issue of *Amazing Stories*. He recently spent a day talking about SF and SF Writing at Saugeen District Secondary School in rural Ontario.

**Phyllis Gotlieb**’s short-story collection *Blue Apes* will be published by Tesseract Books in September 1995. Phyllis is serving as poetry editor for the new Canadian magazine *Transversions*, and she ran the poetry round-robin at Ad Astra 15 in Toronto in June.

**Ann Marston Gyoba** of Edmonton has sold her first three books — the Rune Blade trilogy — to HarperPrism. The first volume, *Kingmaker's Sword*, will be published in March 1996, with *The Western King* and *The Broken Blade* to follow. She comments: “Interestingly enough, this was my first novel sale, my agent’s first fantasy sale, and my editor Caitlin Blasdell’s first purchase for HarperPrism.” Ann’s query letter and synopsis for the trilogy appear in issue three of *Speculations*, a new magazine for SF writers, as part of her article “How I Sold My First Novel.” Ann’s short story “Cat” appears in the June 1995 issue of *Through the Corridor* magazine.

**Terence M. Green** has sold *Shadow of Ashland* to David Hartwell at Tor. The novel is based on the short work “Ashland, Kentucky,” which appeared originally in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* and has been reprinted in *Tesseract's*<sup>2</sup> and *Northern Frights*. Tor plans to publish the book aggressively as a mainstream fantasy under the Forge imprint in March 1996, with a hardcover print run several times larger than first anticipated.

Terry’s essay “Family, Identity, and Speculative Fiction” appeared in the recent Quarry Press / National Library of Canada anthology *Out of this World* (May 1995).

**Eileen Kernaghan**’s novel *Dance of the Snow Dragon* was published recently by Saskatchewan’s ThistleDown Press. It received a starred review in *Quill & Quire*, denoting a book of exceptional merit.

**Nancy Kilpatrick**’s novel, *Near Death*, was a finalist for the Horror Writers’ Association’s Bram Stoker Award for Best First Novel of 1994. She has sold a collection of vampire stories to Transylvania Press Inc. (a Canadian hardcover limited-edition publisher) to be in print in 1997.

Under her pen name, she is editing her third and fourth anthologies of erotic horror for Masquerade Books. The first two, *Love Bites* (out now) and *Flesh Fantastic* (out in October) will be followed by *Sex Macabre* and *Seductive Spectres* in 1996 and 1997 respectively.

She has just contracted for her sixth novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, with Masquerade Books.

Recent sales of short stories to anthologies include: “UV” in *100 Vicious Little Vampires*; “Heartbeat” in *100 Wicked Little Witches*; “Sunphobic” in *More Phobias*; “The Case of the Demon Lover” in *Noirotic*; and “Blue Blood Moon” in *Ritual Sex*.

Four issues of a comic she wrote for Brainstorm Comics are being released bimonthly, beginning in June 1995, as part of the comic *VampErotic*.

**Donald Kingsbury** has sold the novel *Historical Crisis*, an expansion of a shorter work, to David Hartwell at Tor.

**Derryl Murphy** continues to review for *The Edmonton Journal*. His “Body Solar” was reprinted in *On Spec: The First Five Years*. During March and April, he was guest critic in the CompuServe Online Writers’ Workshop. Derryl adds, “The lovely JoAnn Staices-

ku has agreed to marry me this coming August, if only to change her last name to something people can spell.”

**Spider and Jeanne Robinson** will be Guests of Honour at the convention Primedia in Toronto, October 27-29, 1995. Spider has recently left Ace Books for Tor.

**Michelle Sagara**’s novel *Hunter's Oath* will be coming out from DAW under the name Michelle West in October 1995. Its sequel *Hunter's Death* is scheduled for July 1996.

**Robert J. Sawyer**’s short story “Just Like Old Times,” which won both the Arthur Ellis and Aurora Awards, has now sold six times: to *On Spec* magazine, and the anthologies *Dinosaur Fantastic* (DAW), *Northern Stars* (Tor), *Dinosaurs III!* (Ace), *A Treasury of Great Dinosaur Stories* (Donald I. Fine), and *On Spec: The First Five Years* (Tesseract Books). His “You See But You Do Not Observe” appeared in *Sherlock Holmes in Orbit* (DAW, February 1995).

Rob has also sold new short stories “Above It All” to Dante’s *Disciples*, forthcoming from White Wolf, and “Lost in the Mail,” which will appear in the third issue of *Transversions*.

Rob’s sixth novel, *The Terminal Experiment*, was published simultaneously in May 1995 by HarperPrism in North America and New English Library in the UK. Just nine weeks after publication, HarperPrism went back to press for a second printing of the book.

Rob’s novel *Starplex* is completed and forthcoming from Ace, and he has another novel under contract to Ace entitled *Illegal Alien*.

In November, Rob wrote an all-new entry on Canadian SF for the CD-ROM version of *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, to be released in September 1995. The new 1,500-word entry replaces the 400-word entry he wrote eight years ago for the *Encyclopedia*’s final print edition.

In August 1994, Rob was offered a lucrative deal to write three novels for Berkley Boulevard under a licensing agreement from Lucasfilm. Although he initially said yes, the contracts were delayed eight months while Lucasfilm’s new lawyers wrangled with Berkley, and when the contracts were ready for signature in April 1995, Rob walked away from the deal. During the interim, he’d decided he preferred doing his own work rather than writing in other people’s universes.

**Edo van Belkom**’s first novel *Wyrms Wolf* was published by HarperPrism in February 1995; it made it to the *Locus* bestsellers list. Signings for *Wyrms Wolf* were held at Sci-Fi World, Smithbooks at Toronto’s Eaton Centre, and (in a joint autographing with Rob Sawyer) at the Canadian Booksellers Association tradeshow.

Edo has signed contracts for two more novels, another for HarperPrism (this time based on the White Wolf role-playing game *Mage: The Ascension*) and one for TSR, a *Dragonlance* novel chronicling the rise and fall of Lord Soth, the death knight.

In short-story news, Edo has sold “The Rug” to the fifth Horror Writers Association anthology *Robert Bloch's Psychos* (published by Pocket Books), and “Grand Guignol” to *Stranglehold: Professional Wrestling Horror Stories* (published by Silver Salamander Press).

Edo also continues to be a master at finding off-beat markets for his horror stories: his “Death Drives a Semi” is in the July issue of *rpm*, a magazine published in Georgia, and distributed at truck stops in the U.S. It has a circulation of 120,000 copies.

Finally, under his pseudonym Evan Hollander, Edo’s first short story collection will be published by Circle Press of Boston in July. *Virtual Girls: The Erotic Gems of Evan Hollander* is a collection of five erotic SF stories — four previously published plus one new story. The collection also features an afterword by the author and an introduction by Steve Dorfman, managing editor of *Gent Magazine*.

**Élisabeth Vonarburg** was interviewed on TVOntario’s *Panorama* on February 16. Her *Reluctant Voyagers* will be published by Tesseract Books in September, and she is co-editor of *Tesseract's Q*, an anthology of French-Canadian SF in translation being published by Tesseract Books in October. \*

## THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

## New US Postal Rates

The United States Postal Service is raising its rates for mail from the U.S. to Canada, effective Sunday, July 9, 1995. Make sure you provide proper postage for return of your manuscripts.

For number-10 SASEs accompanying disposable manuscripts, I suggest the one-ounce US\$.52 rate, which will accommodate up to four standard pages; envelopes with the half-ounce rate will end up postage-due if the editor tries to mail back more than a single page.

<u>Imperial</u>	<u>Metric</u>	<u>US\$ Postage</u>	
postcard	postcard	.40	
0.5 oz	14 g	.46	
1.0 oz	28 g	.52	
1.5 oz	43 g	.64	
2.0 oz	57 g	.72	
3.0 oz	85 g	.95	
4.0 oz	113 g	1.14	
5.0 oz	142 g	1.33	
6.0 oz	170 g	1.52	
7.0 oz	198 g	1.71	
8.0 oz	227 g	1.90	
9.0 oz	255 g	2.09	
10.0 oz	283 g	2.28	
11.0 oz	312 g	2.47	
12.0 oz	340 g	2.66	
1.0 pound	454 g	3.42	
1.5 pounds	680 g	4.30	
2.0 pounds	907 g	5.18	
2.5 pounds	1134 g	6.06	
3.0 pounds	1361 g	6.94	
3.5 pounds	1531 g	7.82	
4.0 pounds	1814 g	8.70	*

## THIS 'N' THAT

## News Notes

The largest science-fiction publisher in the world is now a Canadian company: earlier this year, Montreal-based Seagrams acquired MCA from Japan's Matsushita. Among MCA's subsidiaries were the Berkley Publishing Group, including Ace.

Toronto's Atlantis Communications announced in May that it will apply for a national SF specialty TV channel license later this year. Last year, CHUM/City had unsuccessfully applied for a licence to operate a similar service, which would have been called Space TV. At CHUM/City's request, the Canadian Region of SFWA filed a letter with the CRTC in support of their application.

Ottawa fan Paul Neumann (gonzo@magi.com) has set up a Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Resource Guide on the World Wide Web. Check it out at <http://www.magi.com/~gonzo/cansfrg.html>.

The merger of Coles and Smithbooks has gone through. The new company is called Chapters. It will be building new superstores of 20,000 to 30,000 square feet across Canada. The first will open this fall at Steeles and Yonge in Metropolitan Toronto.

The anthology *On Spec: The First Five Years* was launched in June with events in Edmonton and Toronto. The book is available both as a rack-size paperback and a limited hardcover edition. The publisher, Tesseract Books, has signed a distribution agreement with H. B. Fenn, which is also the Canadian distributor for Tor Books. \*

## PASSING THE TORCH

## And Finally . . .

On Saturday, April 27, 1991, at the Annual General Meeting of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America in New York City, South/West Regional Director Robin Bailey proposed the creation of a Canadian Region of SFWA, fully equal with the existing three American regions and the Overseas region. Bailey proposed that Robert J. Sawyer spearhead the creation of the new region.

It was an uphill battle — prominent American SFWAs including Jerry Pournelle, as well as two Canadian members, opposed the move. But one year later, on April 26, 1992, at the SFWA AGM in Atlanta, Georgia, a formal motion to create a separate Canadian Region was carried unanimously, and the new region officially came into being.

During the 1992 SFWA elections, Rob Sawyer was acclaimed as the first Director of the Canadian Region. He began a three-year term of office on July 1, 1992. However, actually giving the Canadian Regional Director a vote on SFWA's Board of Directors (something all other Regional Directors had) required a bylaw change.

In March 1993, a by-mail referendum of the full membership of SFWA supported giving a vote to Canada by an overwhelming margin of 475 to 40. The bylaws were changed, and, at last, the founding of the Canadian Region was complete.

And now, four years and three months after it all began, Rob Sawyer is stepping down as Canadian Regional Director. Edo van Belkom, who was acclaimed in SFWA's 1995 elections, will begin a three-year term as the new Canadian Director on July 1, 1995. He takes over at Rob's request, and with Rob's full support. (Edo, of course, is the Market Reports Columnist for the *SFWA Bulletin*. He's also Canadian Membership Representative for the Horror Writers Association.)

If you have matters you want Edo to deal with, contact him at:

Edo van Belkom  
52 McMurchy Avenue South  
Brampton, Ontario L6Y 1Y4  
(905) 453-3208 · e.vanbelkom@genie.geis.com

This will probably be the last issue of *Alouette*. SFWA designates no portion of dues for regional activities, and no other SFWA regional director has ever produced a newsletter. Rob Sawyer paid for the photocopying and mailing of all ten issues of *Alouette* out of his own pocket, a total outlay of over \$500 (although Andrew Weiner graciously donated the stamps for the third issue — thanks, Andrew!).

During his term, Rob did a lot of lobbying, including getting a blanket recall of offensive contracts (for SFWA members and non-members alike) from one Western Canadian publisher, supporting the fight by Little Sister's Bookstore of Vancouver against Canada Customs, urging the Association of Authors Representatives in New York to take a strong stand on the rapacious practice by American publishers of paying lower royalties on copies sold in Canada, arranging free memberships for spouses of SFWAs participating on programming at some Canadian cons, and negotiating 20% discounts at Canada's oldest SF specialty store (Bakka) and its largest one (Sci-Fi World).

He also wrote letters of recommendation for members who were applying for grants and residencies, and a dunning notice for a SFWAn who had been stiffed on a speaker's fee. He interceded in several SFWA membership-qualification and membership-categorization problems, arranged for the new independent Tesseract Books to be included in *Literary Market Place*, and produced five editions of the brochure "Award Winning Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy," of which thousands of copies were distributed by Bakka.

It's been a lot of hard work . . . but I'm glad I did it. Our new region is now firmly and permanently established. Edo will safely take it through to 1998, and after that someone else will step forward and bring the Canadian Region of SFWA — and the power and prestige it gives to all of Canada's SF&F professionals — boldly into the 21st century. \*

# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editors: Robert J. Sawyer & Edo van Belkom

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SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA, INC.  
CANADIAN REGION

52 McMurchy Avenue South · Brampton, Ontario, Canada · L6Y 1Y4

Phone: (905) 453-3208 · GEnie: E.vanBelkom · Internet: e.vanbelkom@genie.com

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## Writing Science Fiction That Sells

by Michael A. Burstein

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(First Published in *The Writer*, October 1996)

Science fiction differs from almost every other form of literature in that the writer cannot make any assumptions about the reader's expectations. When you begin to write a mainstream story set in contemporary times, or a story set in a known historical period, you can safely assume that the reader has some familiarity with the background of the world, and you can build your story around that background.

But as a writer of science fiction, you have no such luxury. Almost by definition, you can set your story anywhere or "anywhen." Even if you set the story in "the future," different readers will have different ideas as to what the future will hold. How, then, can a writer create such a world? What kind of characters can be placed in that world, and how can we possibly write stories that will seem authentic to our readers?

I am a relatively new science-fiction writer, with only two published stories and two more sales to my credit. But I turned a critical eye to my first published story, "TeleAbsence" (*Analog Science Fiction & Fact*, July 1995), to try to discern exactly what in it made it a contender. What I discovered were some nearly universal principles for constructing good science fiction.

"TeleAbsence" is about an inner city child named Tony who sneaks into a telepresence school using a pair of Virtual Reality glasses — or "spex" as I call them — that he's stolen from another student. When Tony puts on the spex, he takes on that student's image and persona as far as the rest of the class is concerned. The school is heavenly compared to the dilapidated school Tony attends in New York City. Students can "jack in" from all over the country and experience a classroom environment that can be manipulated almost by pure thought. Textbooks automatically adjust themselves to a student's reading level, and the teacher can shake up the classroom to simulate an earthquake. Tony is desperate to stay, but knows that it is only a matter of time before the teacher and the other students discover the truth.

From this description, you may already have ascertained what I consider the first and most important step in constructing good science fiction, and that is to start with a good *idea*. Science fiction is a more

idea-based literature than any other form of literature is. The idea for this story came from a comment I heard at a science-fiction convention, that by the year 2000 everyone would have an electronic mail address. I wanted to point out that the recent explosion of the Internet into many people's daily lives did not mean free access to information for everyone. But, the basic concept I was interested in, the Internet, was no longer science fiction; it was real science.

So I extrapolated. Instead of the Internet, I created a system of Virtual Reality schools, which had originally been designed as a solution for violence in schools. Instead, the public money to fund them never materialized, and the technology was adopted by private school systems that could afford them. The analogy was solid, but subtle enough for the reader not to feel beaten over the head with my message.

Once I had my idea, I needed to develop the *characters* and *plot* that worked best for this idea. I tend to feel that plot and characters must always be developed together, and in science fiction they must be thought of in context of the scientific or technological advance your story is about. As a general rule, you can get the characters out of your idea by asking the question, *Whom does this hurt?* No one cares to read about someone whose life is made happy by scientific advances; good science fiction comes from stories of everyday people dealing with technological developments being thrust upon them.

To illustrate the power of asking the above question, let me tell you about my original idea for character and plot. I briefly considered writing about a scientist who has a friend, a teacher, who is killed because of school violence. The scientist then goes on to develop the technology for telepresence schools, and all ends happily. I abandoned this idea after less than a page of writing, not only because it says the opposite of the message I wanted to get across, but because the story of a scientist solving a problem is a very old tradition in science fiction, bordering on cliché. Instead, I asked myself who would be hurt by the technological development of VR schools, and realized that it would be those same students who were supposed to benefit from it. Not only did I have a better story, but I had dramatic irony and the ability to show the reader what these schools would be like — all by asking one simple question about character.

Also, in a good science-fiction story, the characters should always be comfortable in their world, accepting situations that seem fantastic to the reader. The classic example is from the opening sentence of a Robert Heinlein novel: "The door dilated." None of the characters in this world of the future are surprised at the thought of a "dilating" door. Such doors are as commonplace in that world as hinged

swinging doors are in ours. When turning on a television set, we don't react by saying, "My God! Moving pictures and words are coming out of that little box!" Nor should your characters react to the everyday technology of their world.

In the same way, Tony in "TeleAbsence" understands exactly what the telepresence school is all about. Yes, he does have the thrill of discovering new things when he sneaks into the school, since he's never been to one before, but he is familiar with the concept. When the story begins, he is completely cognizant of the existence of the telepresence schools. He has heard about them all his life; they are as ubiquitous in his world as a jet airplane is in ours.

The overriding principle in creating a plot is that it must be based on the science-fictional extrapolation of the story. In true science fiction, the story would fall apart if the science were removed.

There is no way that "TeleAbsence" could be about a child who sneaks into a regular school.

Beginning writers often commit this plot error in writing what is sometimes called a "space western." In such a story, a space patroller (sheriff) rides his spaceship (horse) around the galaxy (town), having shootouts with space pirates (outlaws), firing his laser pistol (six-shooter). *If a story does not need to be science fiction to work, then it is not science fiction and should not be written as such.*

Although the same should not be said about the way one works conflict into a science-fiction story, putting elements of science fiction into it can make the conflict much more powerful. In "TeleAbsence," Tony is scared of being found out, but imagines he is safe because the student whose spex he is using can't jack in without them. Then Tony is confronted in a manner very suitable to science fiction, as is seen in the following:

*Tony was interrupted by a sharp buzz, and he looked up. At the front of the classroom appeared an older man with thick grey hair. He headed straight for Tony, a scowl on his face, and Tony looked down again, in fear.*

*He heard Miss Ellis speak. "Mr. Drummond, what are you doing here?"*

*The man didn't answer Miss Ellis. He went right up to Tony and said, "Give them back! They're mine!"*

*Tony shivered. It had been too good to last; now he was going to be found out. This man was obviously Andrew's father, come to get the spex back.*

*"Mr. Drummond!" said Miss Ellis, with an angry tone that was familiar to Tony. "I would appreciate it if you would not interrupt my class to talk with your son! Can't this wait until later?"*

*"This is not me — I mean, this is not my son!" Mr. Drummond shouted.*

*There was silence for a moment. Tony felt Miss Ellis move next to him and Mr. Drummond. "What's going on?" she asked.*

*"This kid stole my — I mean, my son's spex!"*

*Tony looked up at Miss Ellis, and saw her smile. Facing Mr. Drummond, she said, "That's you, isn't it, Andrew?"*

*For the first time since he appeared, "Mr. Drummond" looked uncomfortable. "Ummm, yeah, Miss Ellis. I had to use Dad's spex to jack in. Whoever this is—" he pointed at Tony—"stole my own spex."*

*"Ah-ha. Andrew, go home. I'll take care of this."*

*"Ummm. You won't tell my Dad, will you? I don't want him to know that I've been careless."*

*"No, I won't tell him. Now go. I'll contact you later."*

*The image of Andrew's father vanished, and Miss Ellis turned to Tony. He was on the verge of tears.*

We've seen how to develop the idea, plot, and characters of a science-fiction story, but how do you explain the background of your world enough so that readers will understand and appreciate it? Above all, *avoid the infodump*, an expository lump that does nothing but provide information. When contemporary characters make phone calls or fire guns in a mainstream story, they don't stop to contemplate and explain the technology to the reader. When characters avoid taking the subway or walking through certain neighbourhoods, they don't stop to deliver a treatise on the sociological development of their

hometown.

But what about a science-fiction story? I like to call the technique *painting tiny brushstrokes*. I must admit that I cheated a little, as "TeleAbsence" is set in a classroom, and therefore I can have the teacher explain things to her students; that's a lot more logical than having a 22nd-century police officer delivering an interior monologue on the mechanics of his laser pistol while in hot pursuit. And even in the classroom, I tried to keep such explanations to a minimum. For example, here is an excerpt from a scene where the students are discussing their hometowns in class:

*Since he knew Los Alamos better than East Lansing, Brian chose to talk about his original hometown instead of where he was now. Tony barely paid attention as Brian talked about the joys of small town life and then displayed some pictures from a family photo album that he was able to pull up using his computer. Miss Ellis then discussed the arid mountainous area where the town was located, and how there had been a scientific laboratory there until the year 2010.*

*Janice went next, and again Tony was too scared to pay attention. Janice described San Francisco, and, possibly still thinking about lunch, mentioned the delicious seafood and sourdough bread. Miss Ellis talked about other things, such as the earthquakes that San Francisco had experienced, and the Golden Gate Bridge, which she said had been one of the longest suspension bridges in the country until the earthquake just last year that destroyed it. She showed three dimensional video images of the earthquake, and even made the classroom shake up a bit, so the students could experience a bit of what an earthquake was like.*

Notice the details that are merely implied. What kind of future has the closing of a major scientific laboratory? Why hasn't Miss Ellis mentioned an attempt to repair the bridge? These little details can make the world more realistic. Here's another example, later in the story:

*The following Monday afternoon, Tony took the subway down to Greenwich Village. He had to show a pass at 96th Street in order to continue under the fence, but Miss Ellis had arranged everything.*

That's all that's mentioned. Tony doesn't ruminate over recent history, nor does he explain to the reader why the fence is there and why he needs a pass to go downtown. But the frequent reader of science fiction can draw the appropriate conclusions.

There are two more important points for writing good science fiction. First, make sure you puzzle out all the consequences of the idea you are extrapolating before you sit down to write, or else some astute reader will wonder why, if there is a cure for death in your story, no one seems to mention the overpopulation problem. This is a major problem in TV science fiction such as *Star Trek*: If replicators can create anything people might need, why does there still seem to be a capitalist-based economy? Don't be guilty of this error.

Finally, if you want to write publishable science fiction, try to end on a positive note without losing sight of the story you're trying to tell. I wanted Tony to end up in the telepresence school, which would have been a happy ending, but that wouldn't have made my point. And the obvious, unhappy ending was for him to return to his old school. Instead, Miss Ellis takes him on as a private student in the afternoons. They don't have the advantages that the technology might give them, but the reader feels hopeful for the future. And that's the best way for a science-fiction story to end. ✱

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*Michael A. Burstein, chosen in 1996 as the Best New Writer by the readers of Science Fiction Weekly, had his first published story, "TeleAbsence," nominated for the Hugo Award. His short fiction appears mostly in Analog, although he has made sales to a few anthologies as well, and is working on a novel. When not writing, he teaches physics and mathematics. He and his wife Nomi live in Brookline, Massachusetts, but are also very fond of Ontario.*

## SFWA BUSINESS

# Canadian Regional Director's Report

by Edo van Belkom

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I'm proud to say that during my time as the Canadian Regional Director of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, a Canadian-born writer (A.E. van Vogt) has received the Grandmaster Award, a Canadian writer (Robert J. Sawyer) has won the Nebula Award for best novel, and a Canadian legend (Judith Merrill) was honoured as Author Emerita at the 1997 Nebula Banquet in Kansas City, Missouri.

(Unfortunately, Judy was unable to attend the banquet because of insurance problems relating to a heart condition. She was still the official Author Emerita and was represented at the Nebula ceremony by a long letter read to the attendees. Hopefully, she will have another chance to be so honoured in the near future. But more on that later.)

At first glance, one might think that all of these honours for Canadian writers are merely a coincidence.

Perhaps.

However, I'd like to think that Canadians are finally being justly recognized for their contributions to the field. But if that's the case, then why now?

One reason is obviously the number of Canadians writing and publishing science fiction and fantasy south of the border. More books written by Canadians are being published in the U.S. than ever before, and only the writers themselves can be credited for that accomplishment.

Another reason is the creation of the Canadian Region of SFWA, which came about by the hard work and perseverance of the first Canadian Regional Director, Robert J. Sawyer. He convinced the SFWA Board of Directors to establish the Canadian Region (with full voting privileges) and served as the first Canadian Regional Director.

Since then, Canadian writers of science fiction and fantasy have flourished to the point where they enjoy the best of both worlds. The traditionally American-dominated SF marketplace is now a level playing field for Canadians, and we have all benefited because of it. And while there may be virtually nothing strikingly unique about an SF book written by a Canadian as opposed to one written by an American, Canadian writers still have their own identity and in many cases are able to use that identity to distinguish themselves from the rest of the pack.

As a result, good things have happened in regards to Canadian SF since I have taken over as Canadian Regional Director. And while I'd like to take credit for the accomplishments mentioned above, I can only say that I have enjoyed the benefit of Rob Sawyer's initial hard work.

Having said that, I have undertaken steps to further integrate Canada and make it an active and vibrant part of the North American SF scene. I have volunteered to organize and host the Nebula Awards Banquet in Toronto in 1999.

This event will be the first of three major SF and fantasy-related events to be held in Canada within the next six years: In 2001, the World Fantasy Convention will be held in Montreal, and a Toronto Worldcon bid is currently in the works for 2003.

Sir Wilfred Laurier said in 1904, "The twentieth-century belongs to Canada." If all goes well, the twenty-first century (or at least the first few years of it) will be Canada's, as well. \*

## MEMBER NEWS

# Who's Doing What?

**Julie Czerneda** sold her first novel, an SF adventure entitled *A Thousand Words for Stranger*, to Sheila Gilbert at DAW Books for October 1997 release. Julie also sold her first SF short story, "First Contact Inc.," to the anthology *First Contact*, edited by Larry Segriff, DAW Books, July 1997.

Trifolium Books Inc., of Toronto, is publishing Julie's guide for teachers who use science fiction in their classrooms, *No Limits: Developing Scientific Literacy Using Science Fiction*, this year. The book is based on workshops Julie has given over the years in high schools. She will be presenting excerpts from *No Limits* at the 1997 Science Teachers' Association of Ontario conference this November in Toronto. Julie also edited the companion student anthology, *Packing Fraction and Other Tales of Science and Imagination*, which contains original short SF stories by Robert J. Sawyer, Jan Stirling, Josepha Sherman, Julie Czerneda, and Charles Sheffield, as well as several poems by Carolyn Clink. Julie will be a guest at Contradiction, October 3-5, 1997, Niagara Falls, New York.

**Dave Duncan** of Calgary just approved the page proofs of *Future Indefinite: Round Three of the Great Game*, which will be published in August by Avon. Also coming in August: the mass-market edition of *Present Tense*.

The UK edition of *Past Imperative* (Round One) was published in February by Corgi (Transworld) and appeared as number six on the Dillion SF bestseller list even before *SFX Magazine* hailed it as "the best fantasy novel of the decade."

Dave has turned *A Prize for Achilles* in to Mark James at Avon; it's a historical novel which will be published under a pseudonym.

The first volume of Dave's next fantasy series, *The King's Blades*, has been titled *The Gilded Chain*, and is scheduled for October 1998.

*Demon Rider*, second in the *Years of Longdirk* series by pseudonymous member Ken Hood, will be published by HarperPrism in December. Hood is currently working on Book Three, tentatively entitled *Demon Lover*.

The mass-market paperback of *Shadow of Ashland* by **Terence M. Green** is now out from Forge, with a whopping 270,000-copy first printing. Terry's *Blue Limbo*, a sequel to 1988's *Barking Dogs*, was published by Tor in February 1997.

**Ann Marston** of Calgary will be attending ConVersion in Calgary in July. All three books of her *The Rune Blade Trilogy* (*Kingmaker's Sword*, *The Western King* and *Broken Blade*), published by HarperPrism, will be getting a second printing.

B.C. writer **Sally McBride**'s "There is a Violence" was the lead story in *Tesseract 5*, and her "Hello Jane, Goodbye" is in *Northern Frights 4*.

**Derryl Murphy** of Edmonton had one short story published in 1996: "Day's Hunt" in the fifth issue of *TransVersions*. Eliot Fintushel's review of the story in *Tangent 15* said "... the writing is interesting and rich. Murphy has a keen, underplayed sense of humour ... (and) a fecund imagination, surely ... Kudos to Murphy!"

Nineteen Ninety-Seven is turning out to be a much busier year for Derryl. His critically acclaimed short story "The History of Photography" was reprinted as "His Story of Photography" in *Photo Life*, a gig that paid well but that resulted in nonsensical hackwork by the editors and many letters to the magazine both extremely negative and positive. The reactions were definitely a high water mark in Derryl's career. "Canadaland" appeared in the Spring '97 *On Spec*, and Derryl did a reading at the issue's launch in Edmonton. The next issue of *On Spec* will see his story "Frail Orbits," and then the end of the year will

see not one but two printings of his story "What Goes Around," the first in *Tesseracts 6* and the second in a time-travel anthology from Carroll & Graf. A third reprint due this year is his Aurora-nominated story "Body Solar" in the small-press US anthology *Solar*.

In addition Derryl also has been writing some short-fiction reviews for *Tangent* and has done some reviews for *The New York Review of Science Fiction*. He will be a guest at both Can-Con in Ottawa and ConVersion in Calgary.

**John Park** of Ottawa gave a reading/talk to the Upper Valley Writers' Club in Pembroke on (appropriately) April 1.

Vancouver's **Spider Robinson** sold (and is currently working on) a new novel, *The Free Lunch*, for Tor Books for hardcover and paperback publication.

Meanwhile Robinson's backlist is getting back into print. He will have three titles released in September, two from Tor and one from Baen. Tor will be publishing *The Callahan Chronicles*, an omnibus of the first three books in the Callahan's Place series (*Callahan's Crosstime Saloon*, *Time Travelers Strictly Cash*, and *Callahan's Secret*). Also from Tor is *Callahan's Legacy*, the paperback edition of the latest installment of the adventures of Jake Stonebender and his friends. And finally, *The Star Dancers* by Spider and Jeanne Robinson, is a combined reissue of the first two books in the Stardance Saga: *Stardance* and *Starseed*.

*Callahan's Crosstime Saloon*, a CD-ROM computer game designed by Josh Mandel, will be released by Legend Entertainment/Take Two in Spring 1997. At the designer's request, the game's soundtrack includes four songs written and performed by Spider, accompanied by a studio full of pro musicians led by the legendary guitarist Amos Garrett (of "Midnight At The Oasis" fame).

Upcoming appearances for Spider and Jeanne include: June 20-22 — Smithers Folk Festival, Smithers, BC (performer and part-time MC); July 3-6 — (with Jeanne) Westercon 50, Seattle WA (Music Guests of Honour); August 7-10 — Festival of the Written Arts, Sechelt, BC; October 10-12 — (with Jeanne); NonCon XX, Lethbridge AB (GoHs); Oct 22-26 — (with Jeanne) Vancouver International Writers Festival, Vancouver, BC (10th anniversary; theme: Science Fiction & Fantasy); November 27-30 — (with Jeanne) Darkover Grand Council, Baltimore-area, MD (GoHs).

In July 1997, Toronto's **Michelle Sagara** will have her third title published by DAW: *The Broken Crown*, under the name Michelle West. Michelle also sold the third book in the trilogy (it was a duology, but the first book was too damned long to fit into a single volume — a fact which will be borne out by the 768 pages of *Crown*), as yet untitled, in February, also to DAW.

Michelle has written a few short stories for Martin H. Greenberg's DAW anthologies: "The Vision of Men" for *Fortune Tellers*; "By the Work, One Knows" for *Zodiac Fantastic*; "Kin" for *Olympus*; and "Under the Skin" for *Elf Fantastic 2*.

Her first column for new *Fantasy and Science Fiction* editor Gordon Van Gelder should be delivered shortly. "It's the first one that won't have the more restrictive mandate and title of 'Guilty Pleasures,'" says Michelle, "and I'm curious to see what direction he nudges things in."

*Starplex* by **Robert J. Sawyer** of Thornhill, Ontario, was the only novel to be nominated for both the Hugo and the Nebula awards this year. His *Frameshift* came out in May in hardcover from Tor, and his *Illegal Alien* will be out in hardcover in December from Ace.

In May, Rob turned in his tenth novel, *Factoring Humanity*, to David G. Hartwell at Tor. Rob's next short story is "The Hand You're Dealt" in *Free Space*, edited by Brad Linaweaver and Edward E. Kramer (Tor, July). Rob and his wife Carolyn Clink edited the anthology *Tesseracts 6*, the first volume in the series to contain all-original material (no reprints). Rob and William Gibson read together at the Harbourfront International Festival of Authors in October 1996, and he and Nancy Kress are teaching a week-long SF writing course in July 1997 at the State University of New York's Brockport Campus.

At Christmas time, Calgary's **Alison Sinclair** received word via Millennium/Orion that her second novel, *Blueheart*, had sold to HarperPrism (US). She's just signed with Millennium/Orion for a third novel, also SF, with the working title *Cavalcade*. She will be taking leave from her position at the University of Calgary in June in order to finish the novel and assorted other projects and will return as a full-time medical student next April.

"The Piano Player Has No Fingers" by Brampton's **Edo van Belkom**, from *Palace Corbie 7*, was nominated for the Arthur Ellis Award by the Crime Writers of Canada for Best Short Story of the Year. Other recent publications include "Rat Food" (co-written with David Nickle) in the Spring 1997 issue of *On Spec*, and "The October Crisis" (a Canadian alternate history) in *Alternate Tyrants*.

Edo taught a creative-writing course at Sheridan College in Mississauga, continues teaching short-story writing for the Peel Board of Education's Continuing Education Program, and will be teaching story writing at the Peel Summer Academy (for gifted students) in July.

In May he was Toastmaster at the World Horror Convention in Niagara Falls, New York, and in October he will be Author Guest of Honour at Concinnity '97 in Ottawa. Other convention appearances include Ad Astra in Toronto and Contradiction in Niagara Falls.

Edo's non-fiction book of interviews *Northern Dreamers* is nearing completion and will be published in Spring 1998 by Quarry Press of Kingston, Ontario.

Recent short-story sales include: "Letting Go" to *Brothers of the Night*; "Roadkill" to *North of Infinity* (a story which recently appeared in *Parsec*); "Icebridge" to *RPM for Truckers* (a story which originally appears in *Northern Frights 4*); "Roadside Desistance" to the World Horror Convention program book; and "Hockey's Night in Canada" to *Arrowdreams*.

Toronto writer **Andrew Weiner**'s "The Purple Pill" appeared in the February 1996 issue of *F&SF*. His story "Messenger" was reprinted in *Tesseracts 5* and his "The Map" was reprinted in the anthology *Bloody York*. He sold "Bootlegger" to *Tesseracts 6*. He also sold a collection of short stories entitled *Envahisseurs! [Invaders!]* to the French publisher Orion Editions; the stories will be translated by A.F. Ruaud. The book will be out in October 1997. \*

## AWARDS NEWS

# Aurora Nominees

Here are the nominees for the 1997 Aurora Awards in the English-language fiction categories. Three of the short-fiction nominees are by SFWA members (Bedwell-Grime, Sawyer, and van Belkom); copies of their stories are included with this issue of *Alouette*.

### Best Long-Form Work in English (1995-96)

*Shadow of Ashland*, Terence M. Green (Forge, January 1996)  
*No Quarter*, Tanya Huff (DAW, April 1996)  
*Child of the Night*, Nancy Kilpatrick (Raven, 1996)  
*Starplex*, Robert J. Sawyer (Ace, October 1996; serialized in *Analog*, July through October 1996)  
*Resurrection Man*, Sean Stewart (Ace, 1995)

### Best Short-Form Work in English

"In Your Dreams," Stephanie Bedwell-Grime (*Parsec* Apr-May 1996)  
 "Peking Man," Robert J. Sawyer (*Dark Destiny III: Children of Dracula*, White Wolf, October 1996)  
 "Face Dances," Rebecca M. Senese (*On Spec*, Vol. 8, No. 2)  
 "Memory Games," Dale L. Sproule (*Tesseracts 5*)  
 "The Piano Player Has No Fingers," Edo van Belkom (*Palace Corbie 7: The Piano Player has No Fingers*, Merrimack Books)  
 "Bethlehem," Peter Watts (*Tesseracts 5*) \*



## ON WRITING

# Secret Weapons of Science

by Robert J. Sawyer

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Reprinted from On Spec Fall 1995

Okay — I admit it. I've got an arts degree. There, the cat's out of the bag: despite the cosmology and relativity and paleontology and genetics in my novels, I haven't taken a science course since high school.

But, hey, I'm not alone in that among practitioners of hard SF. Look at Fred Pohl, who writes about artificial intelligence and black holes and quantum theory. He never even graduated from high school. And, yeah, sure, Kim Stanley Robinson, who is detailing the terraforming of our neighbouring world in his *Red Mars* trilogy, is indeed *Doctor* Robinson — but his Ph.D. is in (gasp!) English literature.

So how do we non-scientist SF writers keep up with science? Well, I can't speak for everyone, but I rely on six secret weapons.

First, and most important, there's *Science News: The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science*. You can't get it on any newsstand (although many libraries carry it). I've been a subscriber for thirteen years now, and I credit it with fully half of the science in my novels and short stories.

*Science News* is published weekly, and each issue is just sixteen pages long — you can read the whole thing over one leisurely lunch. Aimed at the intelligent lay person, it contains summaries of research papers appearing in *Nature*, *Science*, *Cell*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Physical Review Letters*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, and hundreds more, as well as reports from all the major scientific conferences in Canada and the United States, plus original feature articles on topics ranging from quarks to the greenhouse effect to Neanderthal fossils to junk DNA. There is simply no better source for keeping up to date.

(Of course, the key is to actually make use of the material. Both Michael Crichton and I read the same little piece in *Science News* years ago about the possibility of cloning dinosaurs from blood preserved in the bellies of mosquitoes trapped in amber. Me, I said "Neat!" and turned the page; Crichton went off and made a few million from the idea.)

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My second secret weapon: *Time* magazine. Yup, that's right: *Time*. Each year, a few issues will have science cover stories. Buy them — they're pure gold. You won't find better introductions to scientific topics anywhere. Recent examples: *The Chemistry of Love* (February 15, 1993); *The Truth About Dinosaurs* (April 26, 1993); *How Life Began* (October 11, 1993); *Genetics: The Future is Now* (January 17, 1994); *How Humanity Began* (March 14, 1994); *When Did the Universe Begin?* (March 6, 1995); and *In Search of the Mind* (July 31, 1995). Not only will each one suggest many story ideas (my eighth novel, *Frameshift* [Tor, May 1997], owes a lot to the two 1994 issues I mention above), but they will also give you all the background and vocabulary you need to write knowledgeably about the sciences in question.

In fact, I find that magazine articles tend to be better than books for giving me what I need quickly and efficiently. And that brings me to secret weapon number three: Magazine Database Plus on the CompuServe Information Service, the world's oldest commercial computer network.

MDP contains the full text of over two hundred general-interest and specialty publications, many going all the way back to 1986. Among the titles of obvious use to SF writers are *Astronomy*, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *Discover*, *Omni*, *Popular Science*, *Psychology Today*, *Scientific American*, *Sky & Telescope*, and, yes, good old *Science News* and *Time*.

In 1994, when I was writing my novel *Starplex*, I needed to learn about "dark matter" — that mysterious, invisible substance that we know, because of its gravitational effects, constitutes ninety percent of our universe. Well, in less than a minute, MDP provided me with sixty-nine citations of articles on that topic, ranging from lay discussion in the newsmagazines *The Economist* and *US News and World Report* to twenty-one articles in — of course — *Science News*. There's no charge beyond normal CompuServe connect-time for generating such a bibliography. You can then either head off to your local library and dig up the articles there for free, or you can download the full text of any that interest you for US\$1.50 a pop. To access Magazine Database Plus, type GO MDP at any CompuServe prompt.

My fourth secret weapon is being a couch potato. When you get tired of staring at your computer monitor, go look at your TV screen. The Learning Channel has several truly excellent science series that they repeat *ad infinitum* (*PaleoWorld* and *The Practical Guide to the Universe* are tremendous; *Amazing Space* isn't quite as good).

My fifth secret weapon is Richard Morris. Never heard of him? Well, he writes science-popularization books. He's not as famous as Carl Sagan or David Suzuki or Stephen Jay Gould, but he's better than all three of them combined. His slim, completely accessible books *Cosmic Questions: Galactic Halos, Cold Dark Matter, and the End of Time* (Wiley, New York, 1993) and *The Edges of Science: Crossing the Boundary from Physics to Metaphysics* (Prentice Hall, New York, 1990) will suggest enough story ideas to keep any hard-SF writer going for a decade or two.

Still, once you've read all the magazines and books, and watched Tom Selleck tell you about cosmic strings, nothing beats talking to a real scientist. Secret weapon number six is the knowledge that many scientists are SF fans. I've never had any scientist I approached refuse to help me. If you don't know any scientists personally, call up the public-relations office of your local university, museum, or science centre and let them find someone who you can talk to.

And when you do have your story or novel finished, ask the scientist if he or she will read it over to check for errors. I'd never met Dr. Robert W. Bussard (inventor of the Bussard ramjet starship) or Dr. Dale A. Russell (curator of dinosaurs at the Canadian Museum of Nature) when I asked them to look at the manuscripts for my novels *Golden Fleece* (which features one of Bussard's ramjets) or *End of an Era* (which is about dinosaurs), but both instantly agreed and provided invaluable feedback. Of course, when your story or book does see print, do be sure to send a free autographed copy to anyone who helped you out. But that's not a secret weapon . . . it's just the golden rule. \*

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Rob's "On Writing" column appears in each issue of *On Spec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*. The text of older columns is available on Rob's World Wide Web home page at: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sawyer>

Column titles to date:

- "Great Beginnings," Spring 1995
- "Constructing Characters," Summer 1995
- "Secret Weapons of Science," Fall 1995
- "Show, Don't Tell," Winter 1995
- "Heinlein's Rules," Spring 1996
- "Seek and Destroy," Summer 1996
- "Two Heads Aren't Better Than One," Fall 1996
- "Speaking of Dialog," Winter 1996
- "Cover Your ASCII," Spring 1997

## MEMBER INTERVIEW

**Michael Coney**by *Edo van Belkom*Copyright © 1997 by *Edo van Belkom*Forthcoming in *Edo's* collection *Northern Dreamers* from *Mosaic Press*

**Edo van Belkom:** You've lived in Canada for more than 20 years and almost all of your work has been published while you've lived in Canada, but I still think there's a strong perception of you as being a British writer. Has that been the case?

**Michael Coney:** I've been asked that question many times and I still don't know the answer; after all, I've written enough short stories set in Canada and the States. It must be something about the style. Unless I'm writing in the present day I try to avoid current North American slang or issues because of their inappropriateness for a tale set in the future. Maybe this strips my style down to a timeless, perhaps mildly pedantic Standard English which people deem to be British. This doesn't apply to my humorous novels, such as *Fang, the Gnome* and *King of the Sceptre'd Isle*, where I made no pretense of authenticity and instead had fun with wild anachronisms. And my current crop of humorous short stories such as "Werewolves in Sheep's Clothing," although using both British and American idioms, are set in Southwest England.

On the other hand, the answers may lie in my inability to write Canadian stories as such. The truth is: I don't really know what a Canadian story is. When I wrote a series of stories for *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* set on Vancouver Island I thought they were Canadian. But no: I was told they were British stories set in Canada. Currently I have a story in *Tesseracts 5* called "Belinda's Mother." It has snow, Indians, possibly even caribou, and it was deliberately written to sound Canadian. We'll see what people think of that.

But then I've just completed a novel titled *I Remember Phallahaxi*. It's set in Southwest England, thinly disguised as an alien world, and why not? It's the story that counts, and current political boundaries and cultures have nothing to do with science fiction, to my mind.

**van Belkom:** Your work seems to have had a particularly receptive audience in the UK. Do you have any explanation for that, other than you being born and raised there?

**Coney:** Yes, my stuff goes over well in the UK, but my biggest market has always been France. I don't think it has anything to do with my place of birth. It's simply that I established a name in those countries before I was published in North America — and when I was published in the States, I was lost among a few hundred other SF writers.

**van Belkom:** You've said that you don't do more than a brief two-page outline of your novels before you begin. Is the process for short stories the same, and have you ever written yourself into a corner, truly not knowing what happens next, or how to get your characters out of a certain predicament?

**Coney:** I've prepared a much more extensive outline for my last few novels. The difference is the computer. I used to find the typewriter incredibly tedious, so I was reluctant to alter anything once it was down on paper. And above all, I couldn't be bothered to type out any kind of extensive synopsis. Now, with word processing, I can write my outline, expand it without having to retype, and shuffle the events and characters around until I've got them the way I want them. Large sections of the synopsis eventually become part of the story itself, without having to key it all in again. I'd have given up writing long

ago if the PC hadn't been invented.

I always construct the ending of a novel or short story first. Since the characters are always progressing toward this ending, they don't get boxed in. Take "Werewolves" as an example. I already knew the characters; I'd used them before. The story's climax would contain a rationale for the werewolves and a chase scene. Obviously that had to be written first; if it didn't work, then the whole story would be a dud. So naturally I planned out the climax, then went back and wrote the beginning and the middle. It all comes of reading a lot of detective stories.

**van Belkom:** So you tend to equate writing to an exploration or an adventure. Has that always been the case?

**Coney:** Yes, it has, particularly with my earlier two-page outlines. Even now, as the outline is expanding into a novel, I find myself contemplating adventurous refinements along the way to entertain the reader. *I Remember Phallahaxi* has a gigantic mining machine bursting from a cliff face and devastating the primitive village on the beach below. Exciting stuff, but how to make it plausible, and necessary to the plot? Well, I'd planned to kill off a character and to show the grief of his son, and to have the hero discover something about them both. All I needed was the setting. And there it was. Rather than have the guy die in bed with black-clad mourners grouped around, boring as hell, why not make it an action scene? The mining machine was due to run amok anyway; I was getting tired of it.

But I never know *all* that is going to happen when I sit down to write the novel. Small refinements and additions occur to me along the way, and I keep a note of these to incorporate in the final version; I'm sure most writers do the same. It all comes in the plotting: the shuffling around of characters and their motivations, and the potential for excitement in the world you've built.

**van Belkom:** Have you tried your hand at other genres besides, SF and fantasy? Mystery or romance, perhaps?

**Coney:** I've written a mystery novel without finding a publisher. I don't blame the publishers for that; maybe it was a lousy story. I had a story in the May 1996 *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* called "Catnap." It's dark humour with a new twist on an old problem; just a one-off thing. My SF stories always have a strong mystery element, so if I removed the SF content from my planning stage I'd feel there was something missing.

Likewise romance: I wrote a Harlequin-style novel but they told me my heroine was "too tough." Well, I thought they wanted them tough these days; they always say so in their instructions. Where the novel really failed was in the use of the familiar Harlequin trigger phrases: the strong square chins and the fluttering hearts. I'd decided to write the real story first and sprinkle all that stuff on later, like garnish. But I didn't sprinkle enough; I felt it was wrecking the story and insulting the readers' intelligence. And Harlequin spotted me for a faker, and they were right.

I once wrote a romantic short story about the jealous reaction of a wife to a husband's memory of an old flame. The point of the story was that the wife had nothing to be jealous of; it was simply a beautiful memory, irrelevant to her husband's present situation. Three women's magazines rejected it with cruel abandon. I loved that story because it had happened to me in real life. So I rewrote it, introducing an SF element. It took on a new dimension which — dare I say it? — convinced me of the richness of SF's potential compared with any other genre — as if I needed convincing. *F&SF* bought the story, called "Sophie's Spyglass."

**van Belkom:** What was it about SF that made you want to write it, and how did you get started?

**Coney:** I started writing SF because it was what I read, back then. So far back, in fact, that I didn't know it was SF. I only knew that my favourite Conan Doyle story was "The Lost World," and I enjoyed Rider Haggard and H. G. Wells, and so on. They didn't call those

books SF, so how was I to know? Much later I was subscribing to the British magazine *New Worlds*, at the time of the New Wave. One month they sent a questionnaire asking readers what they thought of the stories. I wrote in to say I hated the stories — those that I could understand at all — and what had happened to good old SF like Wyndham and Asimov wrote, and who was this J. G. Ballard anyway? And I told them I could do better myself.

Having said that, I gave it a try. I dashed off garbage for two years, then sold a story. It was no less garbage than the others, but it proved to me that *it could be done*. I took a great deal more care with my writing after that, and sold most of what I wrote.

**van Belkom:** In 1986, you published a story in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* called “Memories of Gwyneth” under the name Jennifer Black. Why the pseudonym?

**Coney:** Jennifer Black never wrote anything else. I was experimenting with different points of view in my characters at the time, and it occurred to me to try a different writer’s point of view. So I tried to write from a woman’s point of view — not an easy thing for me because I’m not sure how it differs from a man’s, except when it comes to buying clothes. When I’d finished the story I somehow shrank from putting my name on it. And when “Memories of Gwyneth” appeared in *F&SF*, I challenged a friend — who knows my writing almost better than I do — to identify my story in that issue. She failed after several attempts.

But that didn’t mean the story read as though it was written by a woman. It means, I suppose, that it read as though it wasn’t written by me.

**van Belkom:** You managed a pub in England and a hotel in Antigua. How did this experience help or hinder your early writing efforts?

**Coney:** Running a pub is not conducive to writing. There’s too much to do and too much to worry about. In our days at the Maltster’s Arms, profit margins were low and we could only afford assistance on Friday and Saturday nights. All kind of weird things happen when you run a village pub, but before you’ve had time to incorporate them in a story, the next crisis looms.

The Antigua hotel was different. We had outside funding and an efficient staff. I wrote several novels and short stories in our three years there.

**van Belkom:** When you left Antigua, you could have settled anywhere in the world. Why Canada? Why British Columbia?

**Coney:** A fellow can go crazy living on an island only twenty-four miles across. There’s no intellectual or literary stimulation. By the time my contract with the owners was up, I was desperate to get away. But I didn’t want to go back to England; it was to escape the problems of the Old Country that we’d gone to Antigua.

A lot of the hotel guests were Canadian, and they painted a glowing picture of their homeland. We’d already visited Toronto and the Muskoka area a couple of times — in the winter, to get away from the endless goddamned sunshine and palm-fringed beaches. So when the time came, Canada seemed to be the place to try next.

We stayed with friends in New Jersey and Vermont, made our way to Toronto, then flew west because we figured we’d seen enough of the east, pleasant though it was. We bought a car and trailer in Calgary, drove over the Rockies and down through B.C. to Vancouver, where we went through the immigration process. It was quite simple in those days. It was raining in Vancouver as usual, so we took the ferry to Victoria, and stayed.

That’s why we’re here. There was no conscious decision. It was just the end of the road, literally.

**van Belkom:** Do you prefer writing novels to short stories, and do you have a preference between SF and fantasy?

**Coney:** For many years I preferred writing novels because of the

broader canvas. Then a couple of years ago I started writing short stories again because I had this sudden fear that I’d lost the knack. But they sold well, and I enjoyed writing them. I’ve even managed to write a couple of short stories to order, something I’d always refused to do before. Now, with confidence regained, I have no particular preference.

I much prefer SF to fantasy. I find it almost impossible to write fantasy because, for me, everything must have a rational explanation. Even my two Arthurian novels were science fiction: I invented scientific explanations — albeit far-fetched — for every fantastic aspect of the myths. I have to do that, otherwise I’d be disbelieving my own stories while in the throes of writing them.

I suspect that real fantasy writers believe in God, or at the very least, acupuncture. Nothing wrong with that, but it’s not for me.

**van Belkom:** Your books have some of the most interesting titles in SF. *Friends Come in Boxes* and *The Jaws That Bite*, *The Claws That Catch* are classics. Have you had trouble getting your titles into print, and, if so, what are some of the more outrageous titles that didn’t make it?

**Coney:** The titles you mention were dreamed up by Don Wollheim. He rejected my own titles every single time. And he was right of course. Except that his original title for my *Girl with a Symphony in her Fingers* (the title used in England) was *The Jaws that Bite, the Claws that SNATCH*. It took a frantic call from me to get it corrected just before it went to print and branded me forever as a Philistine. I think Don was thinking of the *Bandersnatch*.

Since Don dropped me, my titles went into decline — because subsequent publishers always used my original titles. I rather liked *The Celestial Steam Locomotive* and *Cat Karina*, and possibly *Fang, the Gnome*, but as for the others . . . well, I could have done with some suggestions from dear old Don.

**van Belkom:** Several years ago you changed your name from Michael G. Coney to Michael Greatrex Coney. First of all, is that really what the G. stands for? And second, why the change?

**Coney:** My full name is Michael Greatrex Coney, to my everlasting shame. It’s worse for my sister, who also bears that wretched middle name that caused me so much trouble at school. It’s not easy to assure virginal schoolgirls of your honourable intentions when the boys are yelling “Sexy Rex” after you.

My writing name is Michael Coney; the initial G. should not be there. I don’t know how it started, but it keeps creeping onto book covers and unbalancing the composition. I’ve learned to make it a big issue when publishers get into cover design.

Okay, so I used Greatrex for *Fang* and *King*. That was because I saw them as a completely different kind of book from my usual SF, and I wanted to distinguish them in some way. Added to which, Greatrex struck me as the kind of name an Arthurian writer might have. So, just the once. Never again.

**van Belkom:** You’ve established your own publishing company, Porthole Press. What was the reason for that, and what can you say about the experience of publishing in Canada?

**Coney:** Porthole Press was initially formed for the publication of my local boat-history book, *Forest Ranger, Ahoy!*, over which I wanted full control. The company went on to publish a number of local-history and child-safety books until I sold it in 1995. What can I say about it all? Well, it was fun for ten years, and I enjoyed designing and putting other people’s books together. Distribution was the big problem; it always is for small outfits. Financially, I did no more than okay; as with writing, there are much easier ways of making money. The company never had the kind of regular publishing schedule to qualify for government grants; I just published books when something came up that interested me. Now that the company is sold, I feel some minor regret but mostly relief. It was an interesting experience, like the pub and the hotel — but it was time to move on. \*

## MEMBER NEWS

# On Winning the Nebula Award

by Robert J. Sawyer

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My life changed forever on Saturday, April 27, 1996, at 10:15 in the evening. That's the moment at which Sheila Finch, the designated presenter of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America's Nebula Award for Best Novel of 1995, opened the envelope and announced, "And the winner is *The Terminal Experiment* by Robert J. Sawyer."

Frankly, I was stunned to win the "Academy Award" of SF. When my name was called, I was sitting at the *Analog* table in the ballroom aboard the HMS *Queen Mary*, moored off Long Beach, California. We'd sat through a surprisingly good banquet (choice of filet mignon, swordfish, or pasta primavera), then a long, boring speech by a NASA scientist (you could tell it was boring because even at the *Analog* table, where you'd expect to find people particularly interested in the space program, one by one each person gave up listening and instead turned to reading the program book), and we'd applauded the winners of the short story, novelette, and novella Nebula Awards (Esther Friesner, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Elizabeth Hand, respectively). Everything was being covered by a TV crew from The Sci-Fi Channel.

On my right was my wife, Carolyn Clink; on my left, Dr. Stanley Schmidt, the editor of *Analog*. Stan, who had serialized *The Terminal Experiment* before its book publication, grabbed my hand and started pumping furiously. "Let me be the first to congratulate you!" Carolyn had to wait her turn . . .

I'd honestly thought I was going to lose. In many ways, the odds were stacked against me. *The Terminal Experiment*, which I'd written on spec without a contract, had turned out to be a very difficult sell: many publishers were nervous about its discussion of the abortion issue (for all its creative virtues, SF in the United States is a business, and books have to sell in the Bible Belt as well as in the North).

*The Terminal Experiment* ended up as a May 1995 mass-market paperback original from HarperPrism, the only American publisher willing to do the book as I had written it. All the other Nebula nominees that year were hardcovers, a fact that gave them greater apparent prestige (I had turned down a hardcover offer from another publisher that had been contingent on my removing the discussion of abortion from my book, something I refused to do). Even worse: HarperPrism USA had sent out no advance galleys or review copies of *The Terminal Experiment*, so the book, although it had been getting rave reviews in Canada, had received no reviews at all in the United States, even in the SF press.

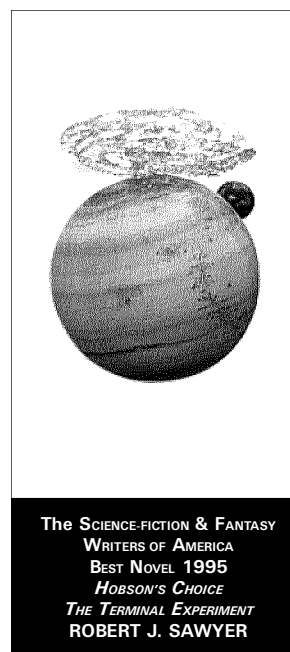
Of the six finalists, four were published by Tor Books — and, in an effort to garner Nebula votes, Tor had sent free copies of all four titles to every one of the 900 active members of SFWA. The other two nominated books — mine, and Walter Jon Williams's *Metropolitan* — were both published by HarperPrism. HarperPrism cooperated with Walter's agent in sending out copies of his hardcover novel to voters. I, on the other hand, was no longer a HarperPrism author, and they were doing nothing whatsoever to enhance my chances of winning.

In previous years, *Analog* had sent voters copies of issues containing nominated stories, including serials. This year, though, in a cost-cutting move, *Analog*'s publisher decided not to send out the issues containing serial installments, meaning I was the only nominee to have no publisher-sponsored mailing of his novel. When I discovered this, on January 31, 1996, I told my wife my chances of winning had dropped to zero. This was a view widely shared: according to one person who was sitting at Tor's table during the Nebula banquet, Tor's

staff felt sure one of their four titles was bound to be the winner.

Still, in retrospect, perhaps I *should* have expected to win. Even without publisher support, there had been unprecedented grassroots enthusiasm for *The Terminal Experiment*. As most of you know, getting nominated for a Nebula is a two-stage process. First, you have to get on the Preliminary Ballot by receiving at least ten signed, public recommendations from other writers. Then all the works on the Preliminary Ballot (for 1995, it contained 22 novels) are voted on by the entire SFWA membership, and the top five, plus one additional work chosen by a jury, become the final nominees, which again are voted on by the whole membership.

Well, prior to 1995, the all-time record for number of Nebula recommendations was 27 (which, as it happens, was set by my 1994 novel *End of an Era*). But *The Terminal Experiment* just kept getting more and more recommendations as the year went on. Indeed, it broke SFWA's database when it exceeded forty, the maximum number that could be recorded; the actual tally, I'm told, was considerably higher. My next closest competitor on the Preliminary Ballot had nineteen recommendations, less than half what I did.



But having large numbers of recommendations usually doesn't correlate with being the winner, or even getting on the Final Ballot. The work with nineteen recommendations — Catherine Asaro's *Primary Inversion* — didn't make it to the Final Ballot; in its year, *End of an Era* didn't make it, either. Indeed, of the other books that did make it to the Final Ballot for 1995, the number of recommendations only ranged from ten (the minimum required) to fifteen.

The final nominees were announced online in the official SFWA area on GENIE on the morning of February 21, 1996. Final Ballots were mailed out immediately thereafter, and were due back on April 3. Voter turnout was the highest percentage this decade, with 344 out of 930 Final Ballots returned. No one except the award administrators knew in advance who the winners were; Carolyn and I flew out to California (at our own expense), hoping for the best.

And then my name was called. Once Stan Schmidt released my hand, I kissed my wife and made my way up to the podium to accept the award: *The Terminal Experiment* had just become the thirty-second book ever to win a Nebula Award, and I was the twenty-sixth author in history (and only the second Canadian resident) to take home a Best Novel Nebula. (Orson Scott Card, Arthur C. Clarke, and Samuel R. Delany have each won two Best Novel Nebulas, and Ursula K. Le Guin has won three, which is why there are more award-winning books than there are award-winning authors.)

I began my speech, which was probably too long, by quipping that

the only man in the room happier than me was David Hartwell of Tor Books, because we'd just concluded a new two-book hardcover deal three days earlier, back when my price was lower.

I then wanted to acknowledge the other nominees; it had, after all, been a real honour just to be mentioned in the same breath as such fine writers. But on my little crib sheet I'd only written down their first names: Nancy, Gene, Walter, John, and Paul. I filled in the last names as I spoke: "Nancy Kress, Gene Wolfe, Walter Jon Williams—" and then I froze. I looked at the scrawled names "John" and "Paul" and was only able to think of "George" and "Ringo." I recovered after a moment — "John Barnes and Paul Park" — and went on to thank editors Stanley Schmidt at *Analog* and John Silber-sack and Christopher Schelling at HarperPrism, and agent Richard Curtis. I then commented that although the room was filled with authors, agents, and editors, the hardest job in all of publishing is being the spouse of a writer (an observation that got a big round of applause), and so I closed by thanking my wife, Carolyn Clink.

My Nebula trophy is a surprisingly heavy block of Lucite nine inches tall, four inches wide, and four inches deep (like Arthur C. Clarke's monolith, the ratio of its width to its height is two-squared to three-squared). Embedded in the Lucite is a swirling galaxy of glitter and two polished spherical stones. One of the stones — a large banded agate — looks like a Jovian planet, and the other, smaller stone, orbits it like a too-close moon, reminiscent of the setting of my novel *Far-Seer*. William Rotsler, the artist who hand-crafts the Nebula trophies each year is famous for making them appropriate for the recipients (the previous year's best-novel trophy, which went to Greg Bear for *Moving Mars*, contained a polished sphere of red sandstone).

The base of the trophy is black, and says in gold letters:

The Science-fiction & Fantasy  
Writers of America  
Best Novel 1995  
*Hobson's Choice*  
*The Terminal Experiment*  
ROBERT J. SAWYER

*Hobson's Choice* is the title under which *Analog* serialized the novel; that this alternative (and, I think, much better) title was included pleased both Stanley Schmidt and me greatly. Nowhere on the trophy does it actually say "Nebula Award" — a fact that prompted writer David Nickle to quip "What are you trying to pull, Rob?" when he first saw it.

Although the award carries no cash prize, I soon discovered that many foreign publishers immediately snap up Nebula-winning novels: within weeks, *The Terminal Experiment* had sold to France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Japan, Poland, Russia, and Spain (and, as one small example of the value of a Nebula, *The Terminal Experiment* sold to Japan for an advance US\$12,000 greater than what my last book got in that country). And my agent says the win will doubtless substantially increase my advance on the next book I sell in the States.

More than that, though, it means, as one of my editors observed, that *The Terminal Experiment*, a book I care about very much, will now likely be in print forever. Winning the Nebula is the biggest thing that's ever happened to me professionally, and I'm grateful beyond words to all the writers who rallied around my book. \*

## AWARDS

# What's Wrong with the Aurora Awards?

by Robert J. Sawyer

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The Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Awards ("the Auroras") have existed in one form or another since 1980. They have become a valuable, internationally recognized way of raising the profile of Canadian speculative fiction.

No SFWAN in his or her right mind would suggest tinkering with the Nebula Award rules again, but at last year's CanVention, ConVersion XIII in Calgary (where the Auroras were presented), a bunch of writers got to talking about what was wrong with the Aurora Awards.

I've been mulling over the issues since then; here's my take on what's wrong with the Auroras, and how they could be fixed. Of course, neither SFWA nor SF Canada has any role in the administration of the Auroras — so chalk what follows up as random musings on the topic. Still, I hope it provides some food for thought.

### THE PHYSICAL TROPHY

The design of the Aurora Award is distinctive, standardized, attractive, and appropriate. The only real complaint ever raised about it is that the trophies take up physical space, which becomes a problem when one person has six or more of them. However, that awards go repeatedly to the same people in certain categories is surely indicative of a problem with those categories and not with the trophies themselves. I believe the pro community should wholeheartedly endorse the current Aurora trophy design.

### THE FAN AURORA AWARDS

Periodically, there have been suggestions from members of the pro community that the fan Aurora Awards be abolished. However, the Auroras are fan-administered awards, and surely it would be inappropriate, as well as unnecessarily belligerent, to suggest to the fans that the categories that recognize their own valuable contributions to Canadian SF be eliminated. Indeed, I believe that pro writers should publicly endorse the existence of the fan awards.

However, it is also true that many publications which might give publicity to the professional award winners will be confused, daunted, or simply turned off by the fan awards. Every year, the Aurora committee sends a press release to many places listing all the winners; every year it is ignored except by *Locus*. Last year, I sent a press release on my own listing only the pro winners; *The Globe and Mail* gave it prominent coverage, and it was also mentioned in *The Toronto Star* and *Maclean's*.

So, while the fan awards should continue, I do believe that the pro community — perhaps through SF Canada — should undertake to send out its own press releases to media outlets that specialize in books, listing only the professional-category nominees and winners.

### THE "OTHER" CATEGORY

The "Other" category has caused a great deal of consternation because of the inability to meaningfully compare the disparate works in this category. There's also a problem with the underlying assumption that every work, no matter how unusual or offbeat, should be eligible to compete for an award.

For instance, while it's true that "Out of this World" was the best exhibition ever at the National Library of Canada on the topic of Canadian SF, it's also equally true that it was the worst exhibition ever at the National Library of Canada on the topic of Canadian SF. Does a unique event deserve an award? How can it possibly compete for one, if it's the only event of its kind?

I believe the "Other" category should be confined to works that

collect short fiction and/or poetry: chapbooks, anthologies, single-author collections, and magazines. These forms are all sufficiently similar to make reasonable comparison possible.

### **LIMITING NOMINATIONS**

In 1996, it took just three nominations to become a finalist for the “Best Long-Form Work in French” and “Best Short-Form Work in French” categories, and just two — perhaps the nominee and his/her significant other — to become a finalist in the “Best Other Work in French” category. Indeed, one of the works that made it to the ballot with only two nominations had two authors — it’s entirely possible that the authors themselves, and no one else in all of Canada, were the only ones to nominate it. These paltry numbers cheapen the Aurora awards, and bespeak an indifference on the part of Francophone voters to the Auroras.

An aggressive stance would be to recommend that the French Auroras be abolished; after all, there already exists a separate series of French-Canadian SF awards, the *Prix Boreal*.

A more conciliatory stance might be to suggest that a minimum number of nominators, and a minimum number of nominations, be required for an Aurora to be presented in any given category. I feel that an Aurora category be declared vacant if fewer than 20 nominating ballots (from 20 different people) contain at least one nomination in that category.

In addition, I suggest that a minimum of ten nominations be required to be named an Aurora finalist, and that any category with fewer than three finalists be declared vacant for the current year. Finally, any category that has been declared vacant for three consecutive years should be removed permanently from the Aurora ballot, only to be reinstated by the normal CSFFA process for adding new categories.

To further reinforce the special significance of Aurora nominations, only two-way ties for last place on the final ballot should be accepted. If there’s a tie for fifth place on the final ballot between three or more works or individuals, none of the works should be included on the final ballot. It should be a real honour to be an Aurora finalist, not something that practically everyone working in that category receives.

### **TERMINOLOGY AND CATEGORIZATION**

The professional Aurora Awards are currently awarded as follows:

Best Long-Form Work in English  
Best Short-Form in English  
Best Other Work in English  
Best Long-Form Work in French  
Best Short-Form in French  
Best Other Work in French

These arcane names are awkward and unmemorable. Never has the “long-form work” winner been anything other than a novel; the long-form category should be renamed “Best Novel.”

Poetry should still be allowed to compete in the “short-form work” category, but this category should be renamed to simply “Best Short Work in English/French.”

And, assuming the suggestion I made earlier is adopted, the best “Other” category should be renamed “Best Collective Work.”

### **NEW CATEGORIES**

Periodically, new Aurora categories are suggested. Among those put forth recently include best graphic novel, best TV show or movie, best poem, and best web site — many presumably with separate French and English trophies to be presented. I believe there already are too many Aurora Awards; adding more simply cheapens the value

of each one. However, when a new category is proposed, I believe the proposer should be required to put forth mock ballots listing full slates of credible nominees for the previous three years in the suggested category: if five truly award-calibre works cannot be found in each of the preceding three years in a proposed award category, clearly there is insufficient quality work being done in that area in Canada to justify an annual competitive award for it.

### **THE TWO-YEAR ELIGIBILITY RULE FOR NOVELS**

Currently, novels are eligible for two years. However, there’s a proposal that may be ratified this year that will prohibit any work from making the final ballot in two different years.

Although, at first blush, not letting works be on the ballot twice seems reasonable, it in fact invites strategic nominating: an author of a 1998 paperback original knowing that he might have to compete against the 1998 paperback reprint of a 1997 hardcover bestseller might encourage friends to nominate the competing work in 1997 so that it gets on the ballot then, thus eliminating it from competition the following year. There’s already enough manipulation going on as is; this proposal simply invites more.

Further, as Aurora Awards official Dennis Mullin points out, the proposed amendment takes the crazy position that the sixth-best novel of 1997 should get another chance in 1998 (because only the top five novels made the 1997 ballot), but the second-best novel of 1997 doesn’t deserve another chance in 1998 (because it lost in 1997).

Although the current unrestricted two-year eligibility system has its flaws, I believe it should be retained *as is* or eliminated altogether.

### **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

I believe only Canadian-resident authors should be eligible for the Aurora Awards; the idea of California’s William Shatner winning one for a Tek novel strikes me as madness, and the list of eligible works is already long enough without padding it with books by Joel Rosenberg or Gordon Dickson. Residency should be defined as at least six months of living in Canada in the two years preceding publication of the work in question. As Dave Duncan points out, giving an Aurora to an American resident who wrote his or her book in the States is as silly as giving Dave a Scottish Award.

### **TIMING OF THE AWARDS CEREMONY**

The Aurora Awards have been presented at various times throughout the year. Because of the need for reasonable nominating and voting periods, and to give works published in December a fair chance, it seems to me that the Auroras should never be presented earlier than April 15.

### **FOUNDATION AWARDS**

The Aurora Awards have achieved major national and international recognition. This has been hard-fought, over a period of sixteen years. No other country has two major SF awards (the assertion that the United States has both the Hugo and the Nebula is spurious: the Hugo is an international award, presented by the members of the annual World Science Fiction Convention, which in this decade has been or will be held in locales as diverse as Winnipeg, Manitoba; Glasgow, Scotland; and Melbourne, Australia; and which in all years has broadly based international voting).

The Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Foundation proposes creating a second, juried English-Canadian award. This will undermine the credibility of the Auroras and confuse the public. I believe writers should at the very least refrain from supporting the effort to establish a second Canadian SF award, and I would prefer to see an outright condemnation of this well-intentioned but misguided idea. \*

## SCIENCE

# On Androids, Cloning, and the Afterlife

by J. Brian Clarke

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These are subjects close to my heart. Not only are they controversial and therefore interesting, they add infinite grist to the writer's mill.

The recent news about the cloned sheep Dolly, and the possibility even human beings can be duplicated by other than "natural" means, has raised issues many people would rather not consider, although for some it confirms the atheistic dogma that there is no God, life is just a chemical accident, and the universe is nothing but a humongous clock running down toward oblivion.

All I can say about that depressing philosophy, is that it is another example of not being able to see the forest for the trees — a kind of intellectual myopia.

OK, so our bodies are biological machines. We have a pretty good idea how they work, what wears out, what can be replaced and what can be fixed. At the same time we still know very little about the brain — that infinitely complex colloidal computer which houses the mysterious entity defined by the all-encompassing statement: "I think. Therefore I am." Whatever that entity is; soul, sense of self or whatever, it seems to exist apart from the brain as a computer operator exists apart from his machine, and — like the operator — continues to exist after the computer is junked. Many writers have tackled this possibility in a strict secular fashion, most recently Robert J. Sawyer in his award-winning novel *The Terminal Experiment*.

So if we build a computer as complex as the human brain, can that computer become aware of itself — in effect hosting its own "ghost in the machine"? This again has attracted the attention of writers, who have great fun asking "what is a person?", and then answering it. A favourite of many *Star Trek* fans is the Next Generation episode "The Measure of a Man," in which a scientist seeks to have Lieutenant Commander Data declared "property," so our favourite android can become subject to experimentation and ultimate disassembly. That futuristic episode is in many ways a reminder of our not-so-distant historical past, in which slaves and even women were considered property.

In written fiction, this is far from being a new idea. *Tales of Hoffmann* tells of a poet who is seduced by a female simulacrum. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is almost a literary cliché. Less known but equally as important is Karel Capek's 1920 play *R.U.R.* (Rossum's Universal Robots), which not only tells how artificial beings ultimately supplant mankind, but introduced the word "robot" into the language.

In the real world, computers have been created to serve mankind. In the foreseeable future, the descendants of those computers may be self-aware entities who are more our partners than servants. So what is so illogical about mankind itself being "created" by a higher form of intelligence? It is a scenario which is certainly not exclusive to the Book of Genesis. In Robert Heinlein's *Job: A Comedy of Justice*, for instance, there is a hierarchy of universes in which the Creator is subject to an even higher being — and so on, ad infinitum. A subclass of that genre postulates an infinite series of parallel universes in which all possibilities co-exist (this is my favourite).

Dogma imposes a straitjacket on the imagination. Although it may be comforting to subscribe to a belief system which lays out everything in black and white — how to live, who is wrong and who is right, what books to read and what books to ban, what you must do to enter Heaven and avoid eternal damnation, etc., etc. — these are rules which impose such a joyless existence, it is small wonder there are fanatics who are willing to sacrifice themselves and their victims so

they can enter a better, less-restrictive world. In the eleventh century, Hasan ibn-al-Sabbath supposedly created a beautiful garden staffed by gorgeous willing females. After a brief sojourn in what they were told was a true vision of the afterlife, men were willing to die as members of Hasan's infamous sect of "Assassins."

Yet whatever the next world is or is not, we live in *this* world and should make the most of it. A writer's function is to hold up a mirror to our world, enabling a reader to examine it as it is, as it was, as it could be, or as it may be. And if the writer still wants to tackle what is beyond, why not? Because no one (apparently) has returned to describe the afterlife, perhaps any work on the subject deserves a title before it is written —

The Last Adventure. \*

## CONVENTION NEWS

## 1997 CanVention

Primedia '97 in Toronto has been designated the 1997 Canadian National Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention ("the CanVention"). This year's Aurora Awards will be presented at this convention, and the 1997 Annual General Meeting of SF Canada will take place there.

Primedia will be held October 31 to November 2, 1997, at the Holiday Inn Markham (note new hotel), 7095 Woodbine Ave., just north of Toronto. Rooms are \$85 per night (single or double). For reservations, call 1-800-HOLIDAY or (905) 474-0444.

Although Primedia has a large film and TV component, it has always included considerable literary programming, as well. Author Guests of Honour this year are Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens.

The Auroras will be presented at 8:00 p.m. Saturday, November 1, following a banquet in honour of the nominees.

Convention memberships are \$25 until September 30; \$35 at the door. Cheques payable to Primedia, 1403-33 King Street, Suite 1403, Weston, ON M9N 3R7; include SASE for reply. Phone: (905) 820-3844. Web site: <http://www.interlog.com/~kcozens/primedia/>. \*

## FICTION SHOWCASE

## Post Toast

by Spider Robinson

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First ever print publication!

Originally posted to alt.callahans on 24 March 1996  
Forthcoming in The Callahan Chronicles (Tor)

Jake Stonebender, proprietor of Mary's Place (spiritual successor to Callahan's Place), has been making music with Zoey and Fast Eddie for over an hour, and his fingers are shot. "Tom," he calls out to the man behind the stick, "Bring me a double!"

Tom Hauptman grins. "Sure thing, Boss," he says. Then, oddly, he turns on his heel and leaves the room, walks through the bead curtain into the back — into Jake and Zoey's living quarters. Jake stares after him in puzzlement.

A moment later Tom emerges with a companion. Tall, unreasonably thin, long of hair and reasonably sanitary of beard, thick glasses, Beatle boots, otherwise clad in an odd mixture of L.L. Bean and The Gap, with long fingers, a splendid guitar around his neck and a vaguely alarming gleam in his eye. He is, in short, a reasonable facsimile of Jake.

"You *did* ask for a double," Tom says, straightfaced, and the bar bursts into thunderous laughter and applause.

"Spider Robinson!" Jake cries. "By da t'underin' Jesus, it's good to see you, mate!"

"Right back at you, bro," says Spider. "Hi, Zoey. Hi, Eddy — Doc — Drink — everybody . . ."

There is a merry rumble of welcome. "What brings you back to Long Island, pal?" Long-Drink McGonnigle calls out. "If you don't mind my asking," he adds hastily, as Fast Eddie stirs on his piano stool.

"I came to give you all a speech, and a toast, and a song," Spider says solemnly, and a respectful silence falls. Tom Hauptman is already pouring the Bushmill's 1608. Spider takes it, walks around the bar and strides up to the chalk line on the floor, faces the crackling hearth. He holds up his shot and looks through it at the fire for a long moment, seems lost in thought. Then he lowers it, untasted, and turns to the assembled witnesses.

"As most of you know," he says, "I come from what Admiral Bob calls a different 'fiction' — a different dimension, a different reality — than this one. My reality is adjacent to and congruent to and very similar to yours, but different. For example, in the 1996 that I come from, the Beatles just put out two new singles."

(rumbles of astonishment and profound envy from all sides)

"With help from Mike Callahan, I visit this fiction once every few years, and get Jake there stoned, and transmute what he tells me about you into stories that I publish as science fiction back in my own fiction. I get to support a family without owning a necktie, and Jake gets the free reefer and someone to listen to him talk: like breastfeeding, the relationship is mutually satisfactory, so much that it has endured for two dozen years.

"So in my fiction, there are a lot of people who have the preposterous idea that I *invented* all of you, that you are all just figments and figwoments of my imagination. To be honest, I haven't done much to dissuade them — because anybody who could think up people like *you* rummies would have to be one hell of a story-teller."

(sounds of raucous agreement from the patrons)

"Well, I recently learned that, to humble me, God created yet another fiction, which is adjacent and congruent and similar to my own, yet different — called USENET — and in *that* fiction, some people seem to have the idea that Spider Robinson is a fictional character *they* invented. They're apparently engaged in rewriting me as I speak, patting me into shape. I only recently got the word: some of them hipped me, and kept it up 'til I finally heard them.

"I'm not complaining: it serves me right. Talk about poetic justice! And they're not even doing a bad job, so far, if you ask me: they actually make me sound pretty interesting. Did you know, for instance, that Robert Heinlein once saved my life? I hadn't . . ."

"But I didn't come here to boast. I came here to tell you all that the seed you used me to plant in my fiction has metastasized . . . to another.

"The denizens of this world called USENET, see, were kind of like Jubal Harshaw's proverbial editor and his soup. Having invented a sci-fi writer named Spider, they decided they liked some of his stories enough to make them real. So, 7 or 8 years ago, they did.

"That's right, jadies and lenthilmen: they whipped up their own Callahan's Place, out of thin air! It's called alt.callahans . . ."

(a *roar* of astonishment and confusion and glee and outrage and disbelief . . . which finally morphs into a long rolling wave of laughter . . . followed by another . . . and another)

"Now, I know what many of you want to hear about. You want me to tell you all the countless little ways their Callahan's Place is different from the one you lot used to drink in, and from Mary's Place here. And there are a lot of differences, and maybe we can talk about them another time. But the things I want to tell you first — the most important things — are the ways their Callahan's Place is *like* yours."

"Do they make rotten puns there?" Doc Webster calls.

"Do dey make music dere?" Fast Eddie asks.

"Do they drink there?" Long-Drink bellows.

"Do they smash their glasses in the fireplace?" Tommy Janssen asks, and the rumble of the crowd indicates that he has come closest so

far to a good question.

"None of that is really important," Jake Stonebender says, meeting Spider's eye. "What about the *important* stuff, Spider? Did they get *that* right?"

The room falls silent.

Slowly, enjoying the suspense, Spider lets his poker face relax into a crooked smile.

"As far as I can tell, they *did*, Jake. At alt.callahans they believe that shared pain is diminished, and that shared joy is increased, just like here. They believe that a snoopy question merits a mild concussion. They help the ones that hurt and make merry with the ones that don't."

(stunned silence in Mary's Place)

"They care about one another, there, 24-7. They don't make any magical claims, but they seem to have compassion by the carload, and they value kindness over hipness. And they use a system of communication that's startlingly like the telepathy you folks are shooting for here. Oh, there's a social disease rampant in their world with a horrid symptom called 'flaming' — but they suffer far less from it than just about anywhere else in their fiction. First-time visitors are not called the 'n-word' there, for instance, as is customary elsewhere. Just like here, alt.callahans seems to be a place where it's All Right To Be Bright, where it's All Right To Be Dull, where it's all right to be any damn thing at all except a pain in the ass. You know the Invisible Protective Shield around this place? The magic force field that keeps out the bikers and dealers and predators and drinking alcoholics and kids looking to raise hell? Well, they've got one too, called a Sysop.

"And yes, they make exceedingly rotten puns there. And some splendid music. And they tell toxic jokes. Don't tell anybody, but I've already pinched a couple."

Doc Webster clears his throat. "Uh . . . how big a joint are we talking about, Spiderman?"

Spider grins. "Nobody knows. This USENET fiction is a truly weird universe, a snake's orgy of nodes and channels and webs and threads, and as far as I know there is no truly accurate census, and alt.callahans runs all through it like kudzu . . . and branches off from there to *another* fiction called — you won't believe this one! — The Web. But the best guess I heard was, well in excess of 61,000 people are regular patrons. It's said to be in the top one percent of bars there, by size, and furthermore to be damn near the only one in the top two percent that doesn't have topless bottomless waitresses and a live donkey show. *This* Callahan's Place probably couldn't be destroyed by *fifty* nukes, all going off at once."

(a vast collective intake of breath nearly extinguishes the fire in the hearth)

"Put it this way," Spider says. "In January of 1995 — their 1995 — these people exchanged more words than I have written about you bozos in two dozen years of doing so for my living. Six and a half *megabytes*."

"What kind of words?" Jake asks.

Spider nods. "Good question. I reached into a pile of their traffic at random and pulled out a message. Someone I didn't know was talking to someone else I didn't know, who was in the end stage of leukemia. He said, 'You are about to go on a wonderful journey through space and time with Mike Callahan and the gang.' He said, 'I envy you the trip.' He said, 'Save me a seat by the hearth, my friend . . .' He . . . I . . . it was . . ." Spider falls silent. His jaw muscles ripple, and he pokes around behind his glasses with a knuckle. "Five deaths, so far," he manages. "And some births . . . and God knows how many weddings . . ." He shakes his head. "And some of the *worst* goddam jokes I ever . . ."

"Hully fuckin' Jesus Christ, *we done it!*" Fast Eddie cries.

"We broke the membrane," Suzy Maser murmurs, thunderstruck.

"Through the Looking Glass . . ." her co-wife Suzi breathes.

"Spider's right," Doc Webster rumbles. "We've metastasized."

"We're loose among the fictions," Long-Drink McGonnigle says with most uncharacteristic sobriety. "We're fucking literally out of this world!"

"All that pain diminishing," Zoey says softly.

"All dat joy increasin'," Fast Eddie adds just as softly.



Jake, with the air of someone quoting scripture, says, “‘God,’ he cries, dying on Mars, ‘we made it!’ . . .” and everyone in the room (recognizing the tagline of a Theodore Sturgeon story famous in nearly every fiction) nods.

Suddenly a spontaneous ovation occurs, a consensual roar of joy and glee and hope and pride that rocks the rafters, shakes the walls, rattles the glasses behind the bar and makes a cloud of sawdust rise from the floor. People fall on each other and hug and laugh and sob and pound each other’s back and pour beer over one another. Jake and Tom were off the mark the instant it began, from sheer instinct, and barely in time: as the blizzard of empty glasses begins to fall on the fireplace, they are busy passing out full ones.

Which reminds everybody that Spider said he has a toast to make. Which reminds them that maybe Spider has more on his mind than just making them feel good. Slowly, hesitantly, the noise dwindles, until the room is more or less silent again.

“So,” Zoey says, “how do *you* feel about all this, Spider? If you don’t mind my asking?”

“Well,” Spider says slowly, “I came here tonight because I didn’t know the answer to that myself. I figured one of you would probably ask me sooner or later, and I know I can’t lie to one of you, so I expected to get my answer here . . . and I have. The answer is, it beats the living shit out of me.”

“What do you *think* of the joint?” Long-Drink asks.

“Dunno, Drink. I’ve never been there in my life.”

“Jump back!” the Drink says. “Why not?”

“Well, basically, you need a good Ficton-Twister to get there. A Ficton-Twister is a highly evolved descendant of the typewriter, and the one I own after twenty-three years of writing science fiction for a living, a Mac II, just isn’t powerful enough to pierce the membrane, as the Doc puts it. I couldn’t get to USENET if I walked all day. The data I was given about alt.callahans amount to a time-lapse film of a couple of years that takes half an hour to watch: you can’t evaluate a place on evidence like that.”

“But what’s your first impression?” Zoey prods. “How does it make you *feel*?”

Spider is slow to answer. Slowly it dawns on those present that for the first time in memory, Spider Robinson is having difficulty finding the right words.

“I feel,” he says finally, “like a man who’s just learned that he has a grown son he never knew existed, by a lady long-forgotten . . . no, a whole *herd* of grown children, with grown grandchildren with kids of their own. He can’t claim the privileges of paternity, because he only meant to entertain the lady, and he wasn’t there when the diapers were full, or the tuition was due — but nonetheless he feels warm and proud, whether he has any real right to or not.” Jake and Zoey exchange a glance. “I . . . put it this way: I feel less useless than usual, lately.”

“Does it bother you that some of them don’t seem to know you from Adam’s off ox — or care?” Merry Moore asks.

Spider grins. “That part fucking *delights* me. The only kind of church I’d be willing to duck into to get out of a driving rain would be one where some of the congregation are a little vague on the Prophet’s actual name, and it’s all right to call him an asshole out loud, but the goddam *doctrine* itself somehow got preserved. I would rather those people remember ‘Shared pain is lessened; shared joy is increased; thus do we refute entropy’ than remember the name of the first idiot to say it. My interest in being worshipped approaches zero . . . from *beneath*.” He looks thoughtful, and sighs through his untouched drink at the dancing flames again. “I admit I do feel just a tad like Moses, camped outside a suburb of the Promised Land, watching his name get misspelled in the history books.” Suddenly he giggles and lowers his glass, rescued as always by his sense of humour. “Then again, that happens in my *own* books, sometimes.”

“Hell, Spider,” Jake says, “I got an idea. You say somebody there hipped you to the place. So you can send them a letter, right?”

“Yeah, sort of. I can e-mail folks who can pass the file through the membrane.”

“So why don’t you write and tell them all about your next Tor Books hardcover about us, *Callahan’s Legacy*? You know, the one

about the night Buck Rogers walked in and started setting hundred dollar bills on fire. Or tell ’em about the hardcover omnibus of your first three Callahan books that Tor will bring out shortly after that. Hell, tell them about the complete list of your books posted in the Compuserve SFLit Forum. If that many people bought a book or two apiece, you could afford a better Ficton-Twister, right?”

Spider shrugs. “I’d like to, Jake. For one thing, I hear there’s some confusion over there about the NON-Callahanian book that just came out, the Baen paperback called *Deathkiller*; I’d like to tell them it’s a combined reissue of 2 related out-of-print novels called *Mindkiller* and *Time Pressure*, slightly revised and updated; and I’d love to explain to them how the story “God Is An Iron” originally grew to become the former of those, and why both books *belong* together; and I’d like to let them know that I’m presently working on a third novel in that fiction called *Lifehouse*. I could mention the computer-game version of Callahan’s Place coming soon from Legend Entertainment, too. I might even remind them that anyone in the world who wants to bother can, for less than the cost of a single hardcover, become a nonattending member of the World SF Convention, and nominate and vote for the annual Hugo Award, thereby strongly influencing the course of modern sf and the income of the winning writers . . . and that even a man with three Hugos could always use a few more. (Ask my friend Harlan.) But there are two problems . . .

“First, they might take all that for an attempt to ‘post a commercial message on USENET.’ This violates a stringent fiction-wide taboo, roughly equivalent to defecating in public after ingesting a prune stew, and punishable by ‘public flaming’ (which I will not describe, but I hear it’s worse than public phlegming) and ‘spamming’ (enough said).

“And second of all, even if they *want* to hear about that stuff . . . suppose I *did* clear enough to buy myself a Ficton-Twister that’ll run System 7, and a whole new whack of compatible software . . . pardon me, I mean, ‘enough magic’ . . . why, if that happened, I’d feel obliged to visit alt.callahans with my new rig and say thanks, and then they’d all know my interworld address. Have you ever tried to answer mail from 61,000 people?”

(a rumble of apprehension as the magnitude of Spider’s problem begins to dawn)

“Even if one percent of ’em were interested enough to bother,” he goes on, “that’s enough man-hours to eat up all the profit 61,000 sales would bring in, right there. Say I only hear from one *tenth* of one percent, and not one of those is a chump: 61 interesting letters a day. The nicest form-response I could design would disappoint or offend many of them — and that’s not even the problem.

“The problem is that I would *love* to answer each one personally and at length, spend every waking minute of every working day chatting with friendly strangers who believe that shared pain is lessened and shared joy is increased, who like to swap compassion and villainous puns, who tolerate the weird, who help each other through real life and real death . . . and who in many cases happen to be familiar with and/or friendly toward my lifework. I had a friend once named Milligram Mulligan — surely dead, by now — who said that the first time he heard the *term* ‘speed freak,’ before he had any idea what that lifestyle entailed, he knew It Was Him. Well, the drug alt.callahans was designed to mate perfectly with my own endorphin receptors. I can easily see myself disappearing up my own anus, (virtually) partying away the hours . . .

“. . . and never publishing another fucking word. Not the Callahan/Lady Sally/Mary’s Place stuff, and not the other fifty percent of what I write, alone and with Jeanne, which is just as good and just as important to me — and hopefully to some percentage of the literate public.

“Even worse, the problem is not limited to USENET. My sister-in-law Dolly tells me *another* Callahan’s Place, smaller but just as cool, recently coalesced in a fiction called AOL . . .

“I hear the Siren call, and my heart aches to heed it . . . but I have a family to feed, and rent to pay, and debt to service, and a deep primordial completely eco-irresponsible compulsion not to rest until the last tree on my earth has been hacked down, sliced into strips, and stained with graffiti of my composition. Gaea forgive me . . .”

"I'm a vegetarian, myself," Long-Drink remarks. "I don't give a damn about animals." He grins sadiistically. "But *I hate* plants . . ."

Ignoring him magnificently, Jake says, "Then there's only one thing to do, Spider."

Spider looks alert. (One of his better impressions.)

Zoey says it for her old man. "You gotta write them one long letter, with no return address. You gotta tell 'em that you love 'em and that you're grateful to 'em and that you wish 'em all well. Tell 'em they make you feel proud and humble and awed and gratified all at the same time, and make sure they know they're never gonna be far from your thoughts as long as you live . . . and maybe ask 'em while they're busy rewriting you to remember that you always tried to be kind to your characters."

(sustained rumble of agreement, at which Spider blushes)

"And you gotta tell them," Tanya Latimer says, "that *we* love them, too, and that we thank them for making us all feel just a little bit less superfluous . . . for making us feel that all our struggles and trials have been *worth* something, have *meant* something . . . even if it's only to people in another world. I don't know about anybody else here, but I —" She catches herself. "No, I *do* know about everybody else here. We're all gonna sleep *good* tonight . . ."

(louder rumble of agreement)

"You have to tell them everything you just told us," Doc Webster said, "and make them a quick toast or two . . . and then tap-dance out the door and go back to work."

(rumble graduates to table-thumping)

"He's right," Jake calls. "Hell, you don't visit US more than every other year or so, and you're always gone as soon as you fill up a floppy. And God knows you're always welcome when you do show. You're the kind of pal, it's okay if a few years slip by."

(thumping becomes cheer)

Spider stands a little straighter, and for a moment looks both older and younger than 47. "Thank you, Jake. Thank you all. As it happens, your advice is exactly my plan." He produces a tape recorder from thin air. "All this is going to be transcribed and sent to alt.callahans, along with a sample chapter from *Callahan's Legacy*. I just felt like it was time I connected you both, this fiction and that one, directly — if only by proxy. Well, anyway, the job is done, so the only thing left to do is make my toast, and then — by way of thanking you and them for letting me pull on your coat-tail so long — to play you all out with a song."

For the first time, he lifts his glass of Bushmill's, and every glass, mug, flask and jelly jar in the room rises in unison with it. The silence is total.

"To all the Callahan's Places there ever were or ever will be,"

Spider Robinson says, "whatever they may be called — and to all the merry maniacs and happy fools who are fortunate enough to stumble into one: may none of them arrive too late!" And he drains his 1608 in a single draught, and hurls his glass into the precise centre of the hearth, where it explodes with a sound rather like a Macintosh booting up.

"*To all the Callahan's Places!*" everyone in the room choruses, and the fireplace begins to feel like Jupiter did when Shoemaker-Levy came to visit . . .

"Wait, one more," Spider calls. "To the guy who found a manuscript called 'The Guy With The Eyes' in the *Analog* slushpile back in 1972, and decided to buy it, and mentor its author — to one of the best sf writers working today: Ben Bova, without whom all of this would not have been necessary . . ."

And another roar goes up from the throng. "*To Ben Bova!*"

And Spider, his hands both free now, slings his guitar back up into combat configuration. "Now I'll just sing you this quick one and go. Jeanne was out of town for a few weeks, and I missed her, so I wanted to write her a love song. The problem was, we've been married twenty years now: there just *isn't* any way to say 'I love you' that I haven't used already, often. So I produced a song called 'Belaboring The Obvious.'

He hits a bluesy A6 chord, and begins to sing . . . and one can't help but sense the words are more than a little apropos to Spider's situation in all *three* fictions:

### BELABORING THE OBVIOUS

by Spider Robinson

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I want to tell you how I feel, love  
But it ain't exactly news  
Got no secrets to reveal love  
But I'm gonna say it anyway,  
'cause I'm alone and you're away  
I haven't got a blessed thing to lose . . .

(so here goes:)

Water ain't dry, the sky goes up high,  
And a booger makes pretty poor glue  
You can't herd cats, bacteria don't wear hats  
— and I love you

Sugar ain't sour, bread's good with flour  
And murder's a mean thing to do  
Trees got wood, and fuckin' is pretty good  
— and I love you

Yeah, I'm belaboring the obvious:  
You will have noticed all the good times  
This is as practical an exercise  
As taping twenty cents to my transmission  
so that any time I want to  
I can shift my pair o' dimes . . .

(but God knows:)

Goats don't vote, and iron don't float  
And a hippy don't turn down boo  
Dog bites man, the teacher don't understand  
— and I love you

Sickness sucks, it's nice to have bucks  
And the player on first base is Who  
Kids grow up, most fellows pee standing up  
— and I love you  
Guess I didn't need to say it  
Just a message that my heart sent  
And I kinda like the way it's  
More redundant than is absolutely  
necessary thanks to the Department  
of Redundancy Department . . .  
(Division of Unnecessary Repetition and  
Pointless Redundancy Division)

(I must close:)

Fun is nice, you can't fry ice,  
And the money will always be due  
Bullshit stinks, and no one outsits the Sphinx  
— and I love you

Livin' ain't bad, and dyin' is sad  
And little we know is true  
But that's our karma — baby, you can bet the farm  
On this: *I do* love you.

And with that, weeping with joy and giggling with sorrow, Spider vanishes back to what he calls reality (what a kidder, that guy), and to his best friend and co-author and oh yes, wife, Jeanne, and their sweet daughter Terri, and life goes on at Mary's Place.

And at alt.callahans, may their shadows be always bent at the elbow . . .

And in

— Vancouver, B.C.

✱