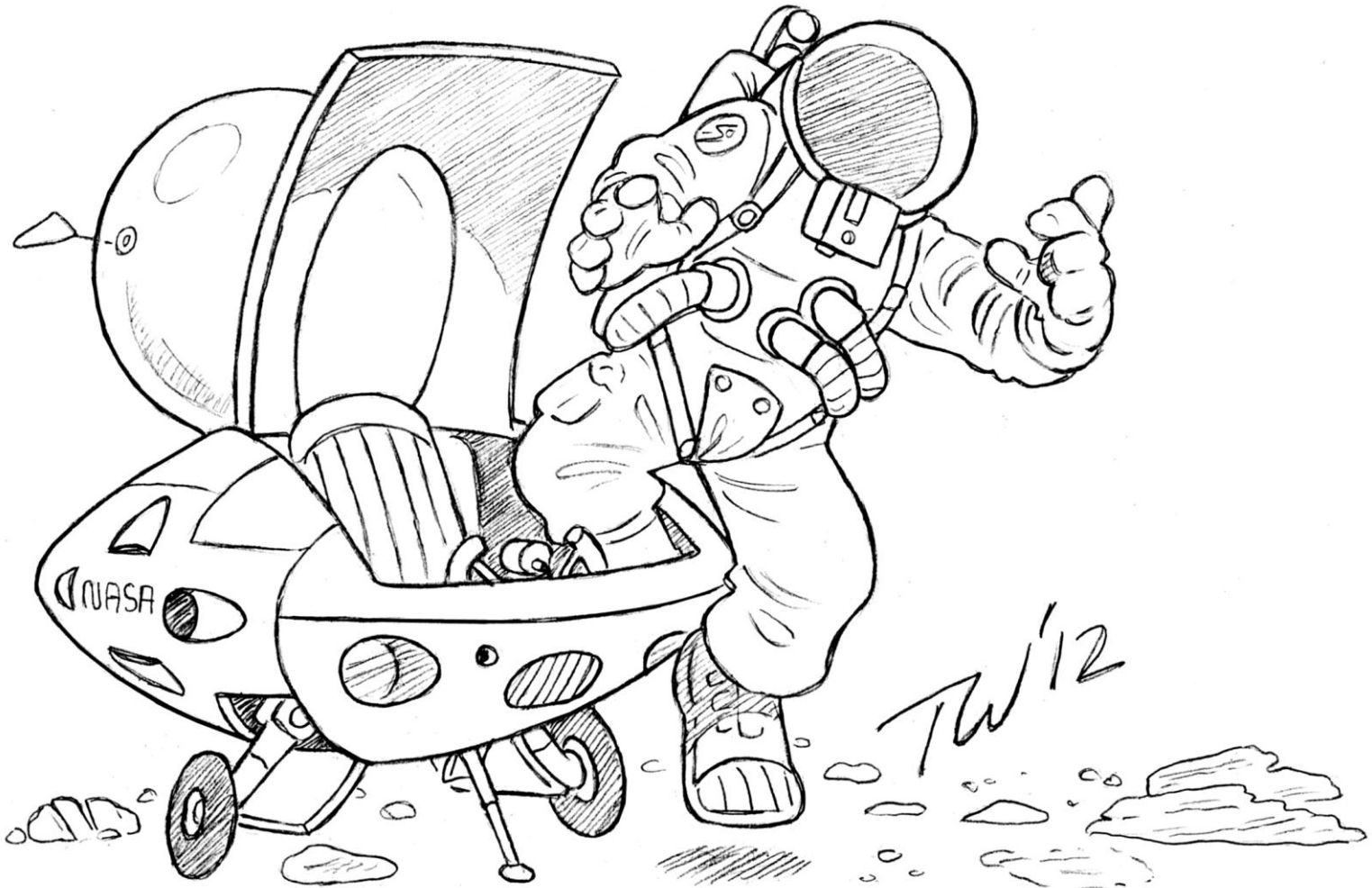


THE DITTO MASTER (?)

A Fanzine Devoted to Reviving the Ditto Convention as a venue for Ghoddminton.

PROGRESS REPORT #1 – October 2015 / A FanMag Publication



“That’s One Small Step....”

For the:

RETURN OF DITTO
IN THE YEAR 2017!

THE 2017 DITTO!

WHEN?

The fall of 2017, probably October 6 to 8 (US Columbus Day/Canadian Thanksgiving weekend.)

WHERE?

Vancouver Lower Mainland Region, British Columbia, Canada.

WHY?

Taral Wayne, one of the founders of Ditto, dared me to host a Ditto.

WHO?

R. Graeme Cameron. I chaired VCON 25 in 2000, for which I won an Aurora Award. VCON typically has 500 to 700 members.

Consequently I've become Chair of VCON 41 in 2016 as a kind of practice run for Ditto. Makes sense to me.

VENUE?

A hotel. Or maybe a motel. But definitely not a pup tent under the Burrard Bridge.

MEMBERSHIP FEE?

Unknown at this time, but guaranteed to be no higher than \$50 US and probably under \$40. Depends on anticipated costs as yet to be determined.

PROGRAMMING?

I believe Fridays and Sundays at Dittos are typically devoted to socializing. There will probably be a single track of programming Saturday afternoon.

Programming may or may not include:

- Ghoddminton tournament.
- Old style printing technique demo.
- One-shot at-the-con publication.
- One or two panels.
- Fanzine auction.

CONVENTION PERKS?

May or may not include the following:

- Nifty membership badge.
- Nifty commemorative program book.
- Even niftier fannish anthology.
- Fanzine lounge.
- Hospitality suite.
- One or more room parties.
- Other neat stuff as yet unthunk.

GOAL?

To have fun with peers and like-minded fen in the realm of fanzine fandom and fannish tradition.

THE FUTURE?

If Ditto 2017 works, I may consider holding an annual Ditto-like fanzine fan relaxacon under the title "FanMag" starting in 2018, but only if it is viable.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP?

In terms of people who have absolutely, positively stated they will tentatively definitely attend if possible, maybe, depending.

- R. Graeme Cameron
- Alan Rosenthal
- Garth Spencer
- Felicity Walker
- Michael Bertrand
- Andrew C. Murdoch
- Kathleen Moore

We have almost two years to put this together. I hope I can rely on you to assist.

WHAT I CURRENTLY WANT:

- Your tentative commitment to come.
- Your suggestions for programming.

You can contact me at [Ditto 2017](#)

The one and only Ditto I attended was Ditto 8 in Seattle in 1995.

As proof of how much fun a Ditto can be I offer excerpts from my trip report:

SEARCHING FOR DITTO 8

By R. Graeme Cameron

Friday, November 3rd – 1995

DITTO! One of only two annual conventions devoted to fanzine fandom, the larger being CORFLU. This year (1995), Ditto 8 was being held in Seattle. I couldn't resist. Having stepped down as 'God-Editor' of the BCSFA clubzine and switched my efforts to my perzine SPACE CADET, I just had to go and meet like-minded fans, especially those I trade with, so I could assign faces to names.

But I was nervous. I have seldom visited the States, and this would be the first time I'd be travelling on my own. Having spent a lifetime watching American TV news about rampant crime in the inner cities, I was worried. True, Vancouver has now graduated to gang warfare and drive-by shootings, not to mention the occasional serial killer, but I live here, I know what streets to avoid, whereas Seattle was a complete unknown.

Yet I'd hate to miss Ditto 8....

I confided my fears to Spider Robinson. He suggested I simply tuck the price of a bus ticket home in my sock in case I should be robbed of everything else. (Thieves hardly ever steal your socks, especially the ones you are wearing.)

Ah! Good advice! Better make it thirty dollars, just to be on the safe side. American dollars of course. I opted to enter the US with \$300 American plus a \$1,000 recently acquired extension on my credit card limit (I had to argue them out of giving me twice as much!).

Times were grim, but I was grimly determined to have fun, I tell you. Fiercely determined.

I entered the US via Greyhound bus with \$270 US in my wallet and \$30 US already in my sock (you never know, might get mugged stepping off the bus...)

I told the US Customs Officer I was travelling to an Amateur Press Association convention.

Incomprehension chased boredom across her face and I was waved back on board the bus. Good. Had

she pawed through my carry-on case and discovered the fifty freebie copies of SPACE CADET – who knows what might have happened?

But now I was in America! A foreign country! My keen eyes searched the passing countryside for signs of exotica. Good lord! The grass was the same colour as the grass in Canada! And evergreen trees. They had evergreen trees! And Crows! There were Crows in America! And look at that! Wow! They even had McDonalds in America!

I sat back to think things through. Obviously this alien country business was trickier than I thought. Perhaps it was in the subtler details that the otherworldliness would be evident – what should I be looking for? Then it hit me. Flags! The Yanks are nuts about their flag! Patriotic display is a fine art in their country. Look for the flags!

I did. For the longest time, and nary a one. Odd. Not what I expected. Finally spotted a star-spangled flying from a pole in front of a motel, side by side with a Canadian flag to draw in tourists like myself. Well, that's not unusual. In Canada I can see the same display in front of hotels, only aimed at American tourists. Did this imply similar outlook, similar customs? Hmm, not very exotic.

We passed an aging station wagon driven by an elderly gentleman. There was a huge "Technocracy" sticker on the door of his car. For a moment my heart leaped. Then I remembered, in Vancouver this obsolete fossil of a political movement has its own building (or did, I understand it's for sale now), so nothing uniquely American about the sight. Sigh.

Was there nothing different in America? Nothing peculiar to America? Was America merely a slavish imitation of Canada after all?

Then we passed a sign reading: "VOTE BART FOR SHERIFF!" Aha! You don't see that in Canada! Now I knew I was in a foreign land.

And to digress, one with a truly expensive medical system. I derived great comfort from the fact I had purchased, via the Royal Bank, extra health insurance above and beyond my B.C. medical plan. I tell you, the only way to have fun is first to fully appease your paranoia.

Another important principle for travellers is to empty your bladder as often as possible. I had visions of scurrying through thug-infested Seattle streets desperately trying to find my hotel before my bladder burst – as dark a vision as can be imagined – so when I felt the call of nature I strode briskly to the washroom at the back of the bus.

Or should I say cubicle? There I was, standing in the swaying bus attempting to take a leak, holding on to a bar with my left hand, holding on to the appropriate appendage with my right, shins braced against the sharp edge of the toilet platform, staring down a deep well at turbid green waters sloshing about below, trying to urinate.

The bus lurched. The toilet platform cut into my shins. "Ow!" I cried. The bus lurched. Click! The door unlocked, and banged open. "Damn!" I shouted, and slammed the door shut. Locked the door. Click! The bus swayed. Shins again. "Ow!" Lurched the bus. Click! Bang! The door was open. "Damn!" Slam! Lock it again. Click! Leaped the bus. "Ow!" Click! Bang! "Damn!" Slam! Click! "Ow!" Click! Bang! "Damn!" Slam! Click! "Ow!" Click! Bang! "Damn!" Slam! Click! Etc.

It took me the longest time to concentrate sufficient presence of mind to convince my bladder to empty.

Ghod only knows what the Japanese tourists sitting beside the washroom thought I was up to.

Refreshed, or at any rate sweating with relief, I staggered back to my seat, having experienced my first adventure. After a mere 3 & 1/2 hours of travel, a glimpse of tall towers in the distance. For the next while we were embraced by the I-5 embankments, all at once we were sweeping past Lake Union and the autumn leaves on Queen Anne hill shining glorious in the sun. What a sight! And the Space needle! Look at those office towers!

We turned off on the Stewart Street exit. I determined my position on the map I pulled out of my pocket, a card with a cut-out portion of a Seattle map glued on to it, detailing the immediate area around the hotel.

In my mind I had practiced my routine: scoot out the front door of the bus station, turn left, go west a

couple of blocks, pass under the monorail, then find the hotel somewhere to my left. Dang if it didn't work. Nothing like advance planning to give you confidence.

Besides, my first impressions as I walked down Stewart were good. The buildings around me seemed a nice mixture of modern towers and well-kept older structures with nifty decoration, and there appeared to be more space between buildings than in Vancouver, even the sidewalks seemed wider, and the pedestrian and vehicle traffic less congested. Gee, could Seattle be a better city than Vancouver? Or was I just punch-drunk with fatigue?

The Mayflower Park Hotel (built in 1927) had a pleasantly ornate facade and looked kind of expensive. I rushed up the steps and through the lobby to the front desk, where I was quickly embraced by the 'Disney'-politeness America is famous for. In Canada sales clerks and counter staff are surly at best, and sometimes rude, whereas in the states such people, at least in the hospitality industry, cultivate the delightful habit of pretending to be glad to see you. Or so I had been told, and it was nice to run into evidence of this. An artificial welcome, but hey, I'll take habitual politeness over hostility any day.

Glad to have arrived, pleased with the hotel, I entered room 401, flung my carry-all on the bed and ripped open the curtains of the window to enjoy my first hotel view of the city streets.

Aww, shoot. All I could see was a grungy brick wall ten feet away across a light well. If I looked straight up I could see an outline of sky and the tips of three office towers. Straight down: the top of a dirty skylight. To the left: assorted ventilation machinery. To the right: windows of other lucky tenants.

I resolved not to open the window but rely on the wall vent for fresh air (though maybe it drew its air from the fans I could see outside my window?). A minor setback. Didn't let it get me down. Wanted to enjoy the con, I tell you.

I returned to the desk and asked about the con. The woman on duty pointed at a sign and said "It's all posted." I saw a listing of rooms, 'Green Room', 'Rose Room', etc., but there didn't seem to be any activity listed.

I went up to the mezzanine to check out these rooms. Empty. Nothing. Well, it was early yet.

Then I went downstairs and discovered a ballroom full of weird-looking people. Huzzah! The convention!

"Are you the Ditto crowd?"

Eighty strangers looked up from their deliberations around assorted tables to stare at me.

"No! We're the N.C.L.S. people!"

Oops! Evidently I had stumbled upon a clandestine meeting of the NATIONAL CUCKHOLDS & LIARS SOCIETY and boy were they pissed! They didn't know who I was, and I didn't know who they were, so we were even. I backed out lest they lynch me.

A trifle shaken, I took refuge in 'Clippers', the hotel restaurant, and waited to be deluged with the legendary commercial hospitality (as previously mentioned). I waited a long time. The waiter seemed more interested in laughing it up with his buddies than in serving customers.

After a half hour of fatigue-sodden patience I was startled awake by said waiter asking if I had anything in particular in mind. I managed to communicate the concept of a menu, and fifteen minutes later when he drifted by, the precise aspect of the menu I was interested in.

While the giant ground sloth they evidently employed as a cook toyed with what would eventually become my food, I stared blankly out the window.

When my hot turkey sandwich finally arrived, it turned out to be cold and tasteless. The french fries, on the other hand, while equally cold, were admittedly tasty. Good enough. I wolfed everything down and tipped 20%. Determined to have a good time! Even if I had to pretend!

Still the public rooms were devoid of activity. I passed through the mezzanine and walked down the corridor connecting the hotel to the Westlake Center (or 'Centre' as we'd write it in Canada) housing "hundreds of shops" (as the Ditto 8 flyer put it). There were only 80 shops. I felt vaguely cheated.

Especially when I entered 'Suncoast Motion Pictures', a video store. Many films available in the States are not available in Canada, so I had been looking forward to snapping up some rare goodies, like maybe "Attack of the Crab Monsters." Everything in the store was run-of-the-mill stuff, readily found in Vancouver. Another minor disappointment.

Checked out the common rooms again. Nothing.

Nada. Zip. ARRGH! Was I even in the right hotel?

Beginning to feel trapped in a Twilight Zone episode. In fact, it WAS twilight. The sun was going down. I figured, hey, I don't want to walk around Seattle at night, why not go out for a brief walk while the sun was still up?

So, zombie-like I stumbled out of the hotel and lurched down the hill to Pike Street Market, innumerable locals scattering out of my path. Sometimes fatigue-dementia can be very handy.

Quick look at the market. Lots of trendy junk ala Gastown in Vancouver. Thank Ghod I was travelling alone. The market would be a nightmare were I in the company of someone who liked to shop.

Then I hit upon the idea of seeking out the Seattle Art Museum so that I could visit it tomorrow without wasting time trying to find it.

I stalked South along Second Avenue. Bit disturbed to notice hordes of office workers pouring into a cave entrance buried in a hill. Underground rapid transit? Or volunteer sacrifice in some Lovecraftian maze of unspeakable horror?

Before my mind could fathom the truth of the matter (probably just as well) I passed the back of the Art museum. Wow! What a building! All sorts of vertical fluting and terracotta details and such. Post-modern Etruscan. Make a great club house!

The entrance was on First Avenue. I observed a large sign opposite the museum reading "Luscious Ladies Will Undress For You." Nothing to do with the museum, unfortunately.

Then I thought, "Hey, I'm here. Why not go in?" (To the museum, not the luscious lady display.)

As soon as I'd paid the \$6 fee and started up the incredibly long 'palatial' flight of stairs leading to the exhibits, I realized I'd made a huge mistake. I was so tired I could barely focus my eyes. So I decided to take a quick gander, intending to come back the next day for a more detailed study (which I never did).

I raced through the entire museum in 20 minutes, spending about 60 seconds per gallery. Wowee! Something baroque! And there's something modern!

Too bad I didn't have time to give anything a second glance. I had the vague impression the museum guards were giving me disapproving looks. What was their problem? Weren't obvious morons allowed to look at art? However briefly?

Actually, to be fair to myself, I did linger for a few seconds before some of the more impressive exhibits.

The Mesoamerican cases showed pottery pieces I'd studied but never actually seen, like Nayarit tomb figurines and jolly old Xipe Xotec, the male fertility God (and patron of the Tlacaxipehualiztli festival in case you forgot) who always wore the flayed skin of one of his sacrificial victims (sort of an Aztec Santa Claus...well, sort of... wore a red suit).

And the classical stuff was pretty cool too. I particularly liked the portrait bust of the Emperor Claudius. Rather daft-looking lad was he.

Headed North along First Avenue. Noticed some more interesting signs, like: "50 Beautiful Ladies! And 3 Ugly Ones!" and "Live Girls!" I should bloody well hope so. An exhibit of dead ones would be unnerving, to say the least.

Staggered back in to the hotel, still grimly determined to have a good time. Still no sign of obvious congoers.

I checked the public rooms one last time. Empty. (How was I to know about ten minutes after I left they began to fill the Green Room with fanzines?) I couldn't find anybody! Yet I still wanted to have fun. What to do?

The obvious thing. I returned to my room to watch TV for the rest of the night. First thing I discovered, no Canadian channels! The hotel is missing a bet there. Tourists from the deep South would find

Canadian TV an amazing piece of exotica, but then, maybe not. I've heard that Americans generally don't hold with funny foreign stuff. In Vancouver, on the other hand, cable services provide more American channels than Canadian.

After a while, as I lay spread-eagled on my bed, it occurred to me that I'd travelled a couple of hundred miles deep into the most powerful nation on Earth in order to watch an hour-long documentary on Dung Beetles.

Still, learned something new. Did you know that Dung Beetles flying through the night, when they take it into their tiny little brains that maybe it's time to descend to the ground, simply tuck their wings under their carapace and plummet straight down, smugly secure in the knowledge that sooner or later they will, in point of fact, land? Certain convergent similarities with fandom it seemed to me.

Eventually I tired of all this good fun and took a bath. After relaxing in the warm, soothing waters for about twenty minutes I discovered \$30 in now extremely soggy bills clinging to my ankle. Ah, the consequence of Spider's advice!

Yes, I had tucked the money into my sock. But (you'll be glad to know) I had taken off my socks before getting into the bathtub (the rest of my clothes as well, in case you were wondering). I'd failed to notice the money still hanging on via my ankle hairs. Somehow symbolic of this day in its entirety.

Sigh.

I take one last look out the window before climbing into bed. Something like a full Moon is shining between the 'horns' of one of the office towers visible above the lip of the light well. Weird. Downright eerie in fact.

I fall asleep circa 11PM, having missed the fanzine activity in the Green Room, the Hospitality Suite on the second floor, the partying into the wee hours of Saturday morning.

I fall asleep still grimly determined to have a good time.

Now you know why I call my perzine "SPACE CADET."

Saturday, November 4th – 1995

Awoke. First train of thought in head: This is the convention hotel. Somewhere in this hotel is the convention. How do I find it? Ask at the desk? Nah, too obvious. It's Saturday. What happens at conventions on Saturday mornings? Nothing. Everyone is lying in a drunken stupor... except for the few smug early risers. Where are they liable to be? Breakfast? Nah, not if there's free food to be scarfed in the... HOSPITALITY SUITE! Aha!

I went down to the lobby by elevator, then marched up the stairwell to the second floor to begin my exploration of the hotel. Why not simply take the elevator to the second floor to begin with? It's more fun to come down the elevator, tromp through the lobby and disappear up the stairwell.... That way the hotel desk clerk gets to think: "Hmmm, something going on here, but what?"

No matter! I found the hospitality suite! There WAS a convention! As I entered the room I asked: "Is this the hospitality suite for Ditto 8?"

Before anyone could reply, I zoomed over to the salmon and bagels and began stuffing my face – thus reassuring one and all I was a fan and not a mundane slumming.

Observing the amount of food I was shoving toward my gullet, Doug Faunt quickly introduced himself and suggested we have breakfast together in the hotel restaurant (I think with an eye to preserving Hospitality's budget). Grateful to finally have someone to talk to, I eagerly went along.

In the course of our subsequent conversation I quickly discovered that – like many a travelling fan – Doug had in his luggage two tins of canned Haggis, which he was bringing back from England.

I'd been corresponding with Harry Andruschak about this very subject! Seems Haggis is illegal in California, and Harry wanted to know if canned Haggis existed, and was it available in Canada? Here was Doug telling me anyone could mail-order it from Harrods of London. Immediately after I returned home I emailed Harry with the information.

Doug and I also talked about zine fandom. He denied that there was anything cliquish or elitist about the old guard, commenting that they were just a small

group of people who had been around for many years and gotten to know each other very well. All it takes is time... and some ability to say hello.

Doug then informed me that the FANZINE ROOM was open and worth checking out. I hot-footed to said room in the mezzanine and paused in the doorway, mouth agape and eyes bulging.

"Look at all the freebies!" There were thousands of them. Hot damn! But when the first one I perused turned out to be issue #1 of LOCUS my mind finally clicked into gear. Display zines. These were display zines. Touch. Read. Do not take. Oh well.

I gazed upon the assembled multitude, a mighty library in itself, and sighed. How could the fanzine room I was planning for VCON 21 possibly compare?

Still, there were a number of excellent freebies, "THE INCOMPLEAT TERRY CARR" for instance, and I quickly, not to say voraciously, gathered them up, and left a few SPACE CADET's strewn about in return. SC's cover was attractive and appropriate I thought, as it was by Ditto 8's GoH Taral Wayne, so I had high hopes people would pick it up if only for that reason.

Next I checked out the HOSPITALITY SUITE again. This, of course, was the traditional post-con name dropping prep-event arranged for my benefit. Except that I'm very shy in the presence of people I've never met, and a room full of such was quite daunting.

Armed with handfuls of SPACE CADETS, I made Herculean efforts (from my perspective) to introduce myself. I pressed my zine on the likes of Roger Wells (whom I'd seen at VCONS), Andy Hooper, Marci Malinowycz, George Flynn, Alan Rosenthal, Don Fitch, Art Widner (whom I'd met at Westercon 44) and others, only to discover this had been done by everyone on Friday night, and no one had any copies of their latest zine left to hand out. Still, I found my zine to be a good icebreaker.

I was particularly impressed with veteran fan Art Widner's zine-reception technique. He simply turned away to expose several large empty pockets on the back of his vest, into one of which I plunged my zine. A clever, practical fannish invention. No need to put down food or drink, the zine-devouring vest does your collecting for you.

I know I talked for some time with Joyce Scrivner about Vancouver fandom in the old days, and I discussed the upcoming first issue of FHAPA with its OEs Lindsay Crawford and Faye Manning. Then people started to break for lunch and I ran off to keep a 32-year-old date....

When I was twelve years old, I spent a lazy summer-of-63 afternoon rocking slowly in a couch hung from the rafters of a shady veranda facing the calm, silvery waters of Lake Simcoe near Barrie, Ontario (my birthplace), sipping lemonade, and browsing through a pile of recent National Geographics.

One of them was the September 1962 issue. Articles included: "I Fly the X-15, Half Plane, Half Missile" (Neato!), "Strange Little World of the Hoatzin" (Weirdo!), "Early America as Seen by Her Native Artists" (Dullsville!), and "Seattle Fair Looks to the 21st Century." Cool!

I didn't know this was one of the smaller World Fairs, it looked pretty futuristic to me. After all, the next century was way far off. I knew, for instance, that by... say... the year 1996, I'd be spending my summer vacations, not in a cabin by Simcoe's shore, but in a cozy little dome on Mars. Sigh.

Anyway, the Monorail built for the fair looked supremely nifty to me.

"Silently riding a concrete beam on rubber tires, the electric train makes a bid toward solving city traffic problems..."

Ahh, that Geographic info-packed prose style! Then and there, swinging on the couch, sipping my lemonade, I vowed to someday ride the Seattle Monorail! (Whenever I drink Lemonade I think of the Seattle Monorail. Always a positively Proustian experience.)

Conveniently enough, the downtown terminus was in the Westlake center attached to the Hotel. Eagerly I boarded and found myself a good seat.

Hmm, wider than the Vancouver Skytrain, with more window space. Good so far. Then we started off... and arrived.

Dang! Forgot about the line in the '62 article which read: "Monorail zips 1.2 miles in 96 seconds..." Although time seems to have slowed the thing, as the driver stated our trip lasted two whole minutes. Still, I felt curiously pleased with myself as I got off. A childhood dream fulfilled.

Wandered around the Seattle Center (former World's Fair grounds) for a bit. Leaned over the railing at the Science Centre, and conversed with a suspicious crow while staring at the life-size bronze sculptures of a Triceratops and a Stegosaurus.

I headed for the Space Needle, which looks like a flying saucer on stilts, though Nat Geo preferred "the 606-foot Space Needle rose like a gigantic sheaf of wheat," an image aided at the time by the fact that the two story saucer bit, now white, was originally painted a rusty-red. I don't think the flaming beacon of natural gas on top contributed to the bundle of wheat image, myself. Flame seems to have gone out of late.

The Space Needle certainly looks top-heavy, but its centre of gravity is actually quite low to the ground, what with being anchored by a 5,850 ton block of concrete. The 43 second ride on the elevator isn't all that much shorter than the Monorail trip. But the view! From the observation level at 525 feet I stared down at the toy-like freighters in Elliot Bay, past downtown Seattle to Mount Rainier, studied Lake Washington, etc. etc.

I noted that the older section of Seattle round Pioneer Square seemed rather dark and grungy, foreboding. This is where the train station is located. I had been warned not to take the train, that the bus depot was in a much better (read 'safer') area of town. Years of watching American network news has made me susceptible to such advice. But to be fair, there are sections of Vancouver I routinely avoid.

The last place I expected to experience violence was the Space Needle itself. But on riding the elevator down, just as the door opened and before I began to move, a powerful blow to my back pushed me forward and down, dropping me to my knees on the pavement. I looked up to see an impassive elderly Japanese man in a business suit stalk past with arms folded. I was so angry I nearly shouted "This isn't the goddamn Tokyo Subway!" and "Who won the war anyway?!", but there didn't seem to be any point.

Nothing personal. He'd just cleared the way is all. Talk about cultural shock!

Riding out of the ex-fair on the monorail, I noted that what had been the 'Home Interiors, Fashion, and Commerce Pavilion' was now the antennae festooned headquarters of KOMO TV (I think it was Komo... memory fades), which struck me as an intelligent utilization of a 'temporary' structure.

Back in the Hotel by 2:00 pm. Let the programming begin!

WALL AND WINDOW: FANDOM AND THE "REAL WORLD" with Jerry Kaufman, David Levine & Debbie Notkin.

A panel on how fans relating to the real world. One woman (I forget who) commented, "I'm not ugly, but I don't turn heads either. Yet when I walked into a room at my first con twelve guys shouted 'It's a girl!', and I walked right out."

This led to a general discussion on the number of females in early fandom, with a consensus being reached that the rise of Trekkdom brought in the first flood of women.

David Levine commented that one of the questions you should never have to ask at a convention is, "Where are my pants?"

I brought up how irritating it always is to mention to a mundane that one is a science fiction fan and hear them say, "Oh, so you believe in UFO's too? Great!"

Debbie Notkin quoted Greg Bear as saying "Before you can publish you need to write a million words. Zine fandom is an excellent place to do that."

And somehow, the subject of a certain Westcoast delicacy came up, namely the Gweduc, pronounced "Goodyduck."

As David Levine put it: "What we're basically talking about here is giant ambulatory penises in shells." (The April, 1960 Nat Geo has a photo of a 'Dungeness Bay Digger' holding a Gweduc nearly as long as his arm! Even Madonna would be impressed!)

Which lead to my telling my infamous 'Goodyduck' story.

One day, back when I was a Store Manager for Williams & Mackie Stationery, it was near closing time and I was getting ready to call it quits. Suddenly I hear a strange rustling. Odd. Can't see anyone. I follow the sound to its source. Down one of the aisles is an unkempt man resting on his knees. Beside him, an open plastic container of 'Gooyducks'. In front of him, a row of boxes of elastic bands, one for each size we sell. Carefully, meticulously, he was opening each box in turn, taking out a sample elastic band, and slipping it around a dead 'Gooyduck'. Then, with a heartfelt sigh, discarding the band.

It was sometime before I could bring myself to ask, "Can I help you?"

He shook his head. "I don't think so. I don't seem to be having any luck. I'm looking for a one-size-fits-all-Gweduc rubber band."

I pondered this for a bit. "But rubber bands come in different sizes. And so do 'Gooyducks'."

"I need a rubber band that'll fit any Gweduc."

Carefully, cautiously, I inquired, "Why?"

"Well, I own a Gweduc farm," he explained, "and I need to ship 10,000 Gweducs by air. Need something to keep their shells closed."

"How about shipping wires? Twist them tight, fits all 'Gooyducks'."

"No!" he said, beginning to get angry. "I don't want to hurt their precious shells!"

"Ah, I see," I said soothingly, thinking quickly. "I'm afraid we can't help you. Our stock is so limited, you see. But our competition, Grand & Toy, is just two blocks East on Manitoba Street. They have an enormous stock of rubber bands. I bet they carry a one-size-fits-all-'Gooyduck' rubber band."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," he said, a delighted expression on his face. He gathered up his Gweducs and went running out the door. I ran to the door and locked it. Then I discarded all the rubber bands smelling of dead Gweducs. Hope the Grand & Toy people were able to help the guy.

And by the way, I now work for Grand & Toy.

What does a Gweduc farm look like, anyway?
Acres and acres of mud flats?

Anywho, this story got a lot of laughs, and I began to relax, began to feel a part of the convention, as opposed to a mere observer.

THE PRESERVATION OF FANDOM'S
HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY with Dick & Leah
Smith, and Faye Manning.

This was essentially a Timebinders/FHAPA panel. Timebinders being a group of Fhistorians (myself included) devoted to preserving fanzines, and FHAPA the group's Fanhistory APA. (I have since become the archivist for BCSFA/WCSFA, inheriting over 5,000 zines, so it's an area in which I have strong interest.)

Some points of note expressed:

There are very few large collections, and when fans die, their relatives tend to toss the zines into the nearest dumpster, so Rule #1, never throw anything away! If you tire of your collection, give it to someone else.

Photocopying and distributing enhances survivability. Recent US copyright law now grants copyright with the very act of writing, but the consensus was this should not intimidate people into copying for archive purposes.

Placing into an institution is no guarantee, as policies change, shelves get crowded, collections can be dumped.

F.M. Busby brought up the hoary problem of the marching Chinese, if you march them past you ten abreast, the column never ends, because they reproduce at a rate faster than you can count them. Attempts to preserve zines and make them widely available are doomed for the same reason.

ELECTRONIC FANDOM: BOON OR BARRIER

with GoH Taral Wayne (Canada's best known fan artist and zine-pubber, & one of the founders of Ditto), and I think Eric Lindsay (of 'GEGENSCHHEIN' fame), and either Debbie Notkin or Leah Smith Dang! Wish my notes were more complete!

A lot of discussion, some of it highly technical and way over my head. The consensus seemed to be that electronic media was useless, at least from the preservation viewpoint, since technology has a short generational span. I mentioned an example: the C.B.C TV network has tens of thousands of hours of rare programming on an early form of videotape, and only one machine that can run them. No spare parts. No backup. When it breaks down, their archive might as well be thrown away.

Noticed Stu Shiffman, legendary fan artist, asleep in a corner. Ahhh, fannish traditions.

Taral Wayne pointed out that one of the limiting factors in electronic media is that not everyone can afford a computer. I got my obsolete Macintosh SE/30 for \$50. Can't complain.

The most memorable part of the panel was the ten minute conversation I had with GoH Taral Wayne after the panel concluded. I introduced myself with some trepidation. You see, earlier I had mailed him samples of SPACE CADET. He wrote back, "I also remember YOU! You're that fellow in that other fanzine who thinks Furry Fandom oughta be squashed!"

On this occasion I tried to explain that when I wrote in a LoC to Scott Patri, Editor of 'THE ZERO-G LAVATORY': "In fact, you might have to shift your wrath towards a new threat to general SF-Fandom: the growing power of "Furry" fandom, devoted exclusively to... anthropomorphic characters, especially if insufferably cute... Furry fandom is the coming thing, complete with conventions, electronic BBS and zines. Maybe I'm paranoid, but I think this particular egg should be flattened before it hatches..." that I was only kidding, ha ha! I was merely tweaking Scott a bit about his constant anti-Trekdom stance, ha, ha! ha...

"Hmmm, well, I posted it on the net and tore it to pieces," said Taral.

Oh, Ghod.

Still, Taral graciously helped remove both my feet from my mouth and we got along fine after that. After all, he had sent me a wonderful cover piece (depicting futuristic biplanes) for SPACE CADET with the

above mentioned letter. Obviously not a chap to hold grudges.

Anxious to regain face, I tried the old fannish ploy of threatening to send him future issues of SPACE CADET. Ah, but he was far too experienced and agile a fan to fall for such an obvious trap.

"Well, okay," he said, "but I promise NOT to Loc. May NOT even have time to read them. But I DO have one of the larger collections, with an emphasis on Canadian zines. If YOU think your zine is worth preserving, you can send it to me. I can archive it, I suppose."

Never, NEVER attempt to duel with a Master. You can't win.

THE FAN FUND AUCTION with auctioneers Andy Hooper and Dick Smith (I think).

I remember drooling as they laid out the zines. They apologized for the poor selection, but I was quivering with anticipation. Eric Lindsay had brought a set of Don Thompson's 'DON-O-SAUR' all the way from Australia! The club archive had a fine selection we'd received in the late '80s in trade for BCSFAzine, but here was a chance to get the one's he'd produced in the '70s!

And then there were several fine 'SIMULACRUM's by Victoria Vayne, circa 1976, masterpieces of printing. And in general, what is technically known as "a whole bunch of neat stuff."

I bid on nearly everything. I became known as "that man in the corner". At least 75% of the money raised came from my pockets. I had about \$200 US funds left and was determined to spend it. Besides, it was for a good cause. TAFF, I think.

Anyway, I had money to burn. The pile of zines mounted on my lap. They were sold in lots. I wound up with about a hundred.

One in particular I had my eye on. So did Jerry Kaufman. "HUITLOXOPETL" by Meade and Penny Frierson circa late '70s. Interesting title, sounds like the name of an Aztec deity, though nothing I can find in my sources.

This particular issue details at length the origins and development of characters like 'Simple J.

Malarkey', 'Snively', 'Sis Boombah' and 'Sarcophagus Macabre' in the POGO Comic Strip written and drawn by Walt Kelly of beloved memory.

As a lifelong Pogo fan, this was a 'Must buy!' Unfortunately, this was Jerry Kaufman's view as well. We pawed through it together before the auction started, our drool turning the pages prematurely brown. Nervously, I wondered if I had enough money to outbid Jerry.

During the auction Andy Hooper's hand often strayed to the lot containing 'HUITLOXOPETL', Jerry and I would lean forward, half-rising out of our seats, and Andy's hand would pass on to another lot. Every time this happened the air grew electric with tension.

I noticed Jerry was becoming quite agitated. Was he going to storm the stage? He stood up... sat down again... stood up, bobbed about, agony written on his face... then suddenly rushed from the room.

Hah! Victim of his bladder! This was my chance! Would the Fannish Gods smile on me? YES!!! Andy's hand rested on the lot in question. "And for this pile of crudzines..."

"TEN BUCKS!" I screamed.

Momentary silence. Somewhat taken aback, Andy said, "Uhh, sure, okay. Any other bidders?"

"FIFTEEN BUCKS!" I yelled.

"Fine, whatever," Andy said, warily handing me the lot.

Jerry Kaufman came racing back into the room. He plunged back into his chair, turned his gaze eagerly to the spot where HUITLOXOPETL had rested... His face darkened. "Damn, damn, damn damn!" He mouthed.

He turned to glare at me suspiciously. I tried to keep a straight face. One shouldn't gloat in public.

Magnanimously, I let him hold HUITLOXOPETL for a few seconds after the auction.

But just so I don't appear a complete bastard, I do intend to photocopy it for him one of these days. Especially after he reads the above.

HOSPITALITY SUITE

This time it was quite crowded, especially when the Vanguard people (Seattle Club?) showed up. Felt a bit claustrophobic. Made myself feel secure by talking only to the people I had previously met.

Eric Lindsay did come up and snap my picture, but then he snapped every one's picture. I wondered, was this just his way of introducing himself? Did he even have film in his camera? Just a random thought.

Speaking of Australian fans, Jean Weber, long famous for "WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE", was pointed out to me sitting on a couch. I wanted to introduce myself, but there was a solid wall of people in front of her and I thought, 'Oh well, maybe later.'

Never do that at a con. Often, as in this case, there is no "later".

At 9:00 PM it became time for:

TEN FANZINES THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

This was a play written and directed by Andy Hooper, loosely based on "Ten Days That Shook The World" which was an account of the Russian Revolution, or more accurately, the 'Bolshevist' coup.

This of course is the Fannish version, involving time travellers and Fandom's first attempt to take over the world to establish a Gernsbackian universe with a helicopter in every garage. At least, I think that's what it was about.

There were maybe 40 people in the audience, at least 20 'performers' reading their parts, and maybe 4,000 variations of Russian accents projected with great gusto and energetic enthusiasm. Thoroughly entertaining stuff.

This was the third time Andy's play has been performed, the first two occasions being Silvercon and ReinCONation. It is classic fan writing, easily on a par with the play version of 'THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR'. I don't know if Andy has it available in print, but if not, he should. I'd love a copy for the BCSFA/WCSFA archive. I wish I'd thought to ask for one of the scripts at the time, but I was exploring the limits of fatigue and wasn't thinking clearly.

Then back to:

THE HOSPITALITY SUITE

It soon became apparent every available cubic inch of space was not enough. Evidently the convention attendees had been cloned, perhaps more than once. A couple of times, in search of elbow room, I clawed my way out to go down the hall to the Smoking suite where Art Widner and F.M. Busby were holding court, but the blue-grey haze of smoke repeatedly drove me back.

Nearly midnight. Dead tired. Time to call it a night. I paused one last time at the fringe of the multi-human blob pulsating in the hospitality suite. This fanboy needed sleep.

As I got off the elevator and trundled up the hall to my room, I thought, "Gee, maybe if I'm really lucky I can catch a rerun of that PBS special on Dung Beetles."

And so to bed.

Morning, Sunday, November 5th – 1995.

Woke up quite late in the morning. Just enough time to grab a breakfast before checking out and hotfooting it to the Greyhound bus depot for my return trip to Vancouver.

By breakfast I mean yet another attempt to raid

THE HOSPITALITY SUITE.

There I spent a happy hour gobbling down free food while debating the recent Quebec Sovereignty Referendum with Joyce Scrivner, Alan Rosenthal, and Doug Faunt.

Alan astonished one and all with his account of the longstanding tradition of Canadian Premiers who function as virtual dictators, the outstanding example being Maurice Duplessis whose Union Nationale party ran Quebec from 1944 to 1960. He mentioned Duplessis' notorious Padlock Laws which empowered the police to change the locks on the homes and business of people the Premier didn't like, thus denying them access to their own property.

"Why, that's Communist!" declared an outraged Doug Faunt.

And I threw in the story of the American political expert who'd been studying the government of William 'Whacky' Bennett here in B.C circa late '60s, and who'd fled the province after a hasty news conference in which he'd denounced Premier Bennett as "the worst dictator in North America since Huey Long of Louisiana."

Bennett had been visibly pleased by this flattering remark.

Enough of politics. Time to return home.

Crossing the border back into Canada was more interesting than I had anticipated. A drunken chap in a rumpled suit whom I had noticed becoming more and more agitated as we approached the Customs building leaped from his seat and demanded that the bus drive right through Canada customs without stopping.

On being told this was impossible he insisted the bus stop immediately and let him out. To avoid a fight, the driver obliged. The twit of a drunk then removed several bottles of presumably expensive booze from his luggage and dropped them in a garbage bin in full view of the Customs officers.

Needless to say, we spent a very long time in customs while the inspectors went through this idiot's luggage searching for the slightest possible excuse to slap him with a fine, or maybe even detain him.

He got back on the bus with a smug smile on his face.

"If I had my way, I'd leave you behind," muttered the bus driver.

"Oh yeah? You wouldn't dare. I'm a lawyer!"

This revelation surprised no one.

Seated in the front right-hand seat with a superb view out the windscreen, I decided to study the approaching Canadian scenery from the perspective on someone who has never seen it before, as if I were a first time visitor from the United States.

Initially one passes through a series of 'hobby' farms culminating in the small farming community of

Cloverdale (with a couple of artillery piece monuments in its fair grounds) and then joins the Trans-Canada Highway to pass over the Port Mann bridge high above the Fraser River & assorted train yards, then swings left past Fraser Mills (where Nils Helmer Frome produced his fanzine SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES circa 1937/38) and penetrates the closely packed houses of Burnaby.

Up to this point there's been nothing particularly interesting. But when the bus emerges from the tangle of housing to travel along the Grandview viaduct, racing over train tracks and wrecking yards, with the huge cluster of downtown Vancouver office towers rising in the distance and looking very impressive against the North Shore Mountains (which being much closer to the city than the mountains surrounding Seattle are to that city, loom rather well), one has a sense of arriving – not exactly at the Emerald City, or at the end of the rainbow, mind you – but somewhere different and unique.

That the bus depot is located in the Via Rail - Amtrak train station, one of the old 'imperial' style basilicas of commerce built decades ago, beats the dinky Seattle bus depot all to heck (though the surrounding area, on the edge of China Town, is a bit seedy).

Still, all in all, not a bad intro to Canada.

However, I should note that tourists travelling by automobile usually cross at the more Westerly Blaine border post and arrive in Vancouver via a totally different route.

I took my one piece of luggage, boarded the Vancouver Skytrain at the nearby Main St. station, got off on Granville Street, caught a bus that dropped me off two blocks from my Apt. in Kitsilano and immediately proceeded to not write up my report of the convention. A mere nine months later, I finally get this written.

RECONSTRUCTED MEMBERSHIP LIST FOR DITTO 8 (1995)

- William Affleck-Asch
- Bob Altizer
- Allen Baum
- John (D.) Berry
- Steve Berry

- Marc Bilgrey
- Mindy Bilgrey
- Alan Bostick
- Sheila Bostick
- David Bratman
- Rod the BrewMeister
- Elinor Busby
- F.M. Busby
- Linda Bushyager
- Ron Bushyager
- R. Graeme Cameron
- Chad Childers
- Lindsay Crawford
- Ron Drummond
- Shelley Dutton-Berry
- Lise Eisenberg
- Doug Faunt
- Don Fitch
- George Flynn
- Donald Franson
- Getsu-Shin
- Don Glover
- Victor Gonzalez
- Hank Graham
- Eileen Gunn
- Gene Hackney
- Jane Hawkins
- Andrew Hickmott
- Marilyn J. Holt
- Andrew P. Hooper
- Ken Josenhans
- Jerry Kaufman
- Hope Leibowitz
- David Levine
- Eric Lindsay
- Mark Loney
- Vanessa Loney
- Marcy Malinowczyk
- Faye Manning
- Mark Manning
- Luke McGuff
- Janice Murray
- Debbie Notkin
- Margaret Organ-Kean
- Otto Pfeiffer
- Berni Phillips
- D. Potter
- Yvonne Richardson
- Carrie Root
- Alan Rosenthal
- Anita Rowland
- Jessica Amanda Salmonson
- Kate Schaefer
- Joyce Scrivner
- Stu Shiffman
- Jon Singer
- Craig Smith
- Dick Smith
- Leah Smith
- Leslie Smith
- Jeronimo Squires
- Garth Spencer
- Craig Steed
- Susanne Tompkins
- Amy Thomson
- Cathy Tuttle
- Anna Vargo
- Edd Vick
- Tami Vining
- Taral Wayne
- Jean Weber
- Roger Wells
- Donya Hazard White
- Tom Whitmore
- Art Widner
- Clifford R. Wind
- Kate Yule

The above includes about 64 attendees, some supporting members, and members of the Seattle Vanguard SF Club.

COLOPHON

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Cover Art: Taral Wayne

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NOTE:

Others are considering hosting a Ditto in 2016. Should it come about expect me to promote it with great enthusiasm. Cheers all!