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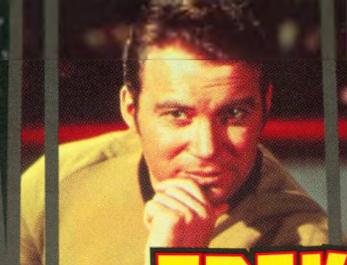
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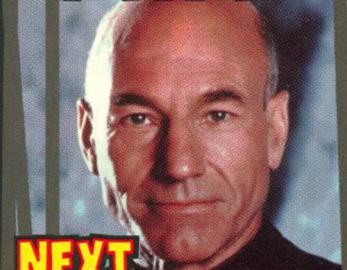
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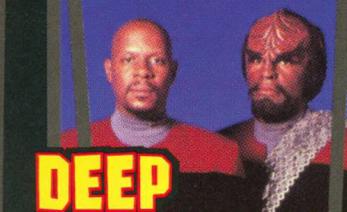


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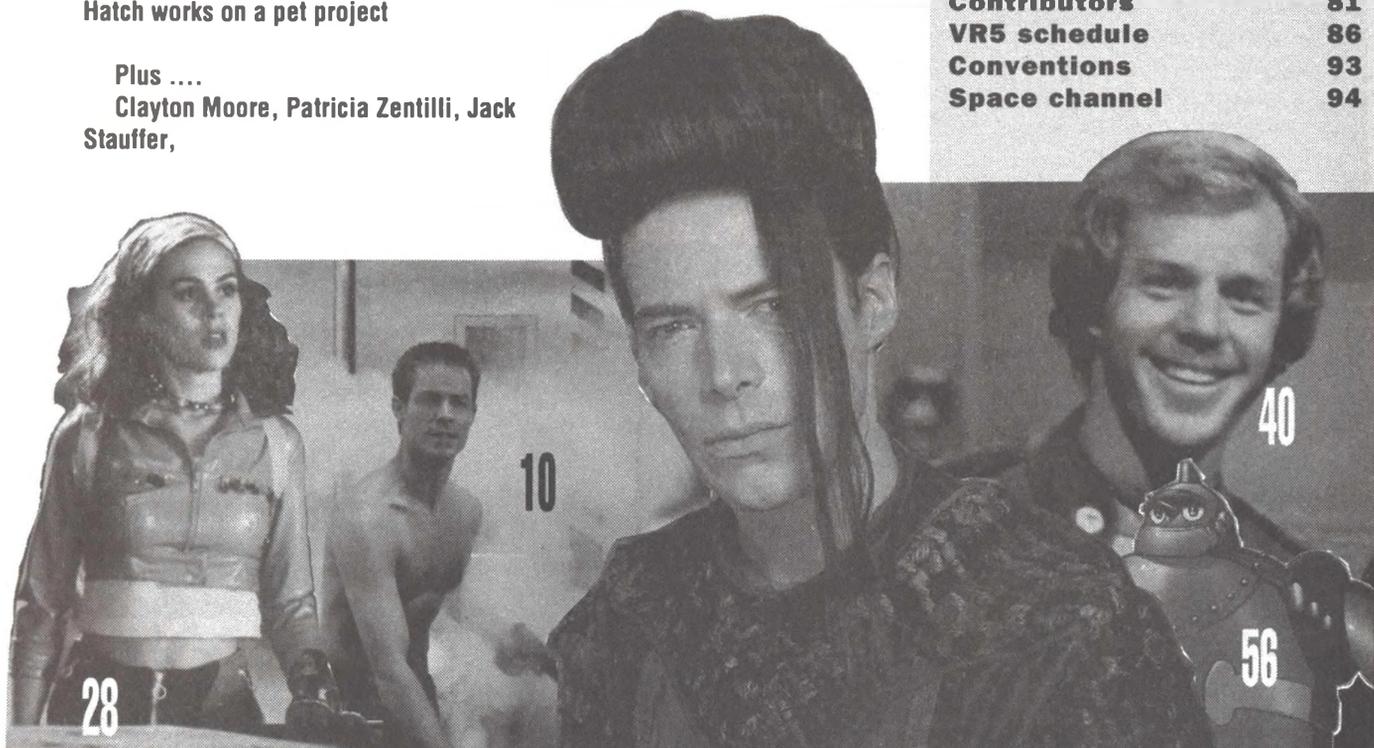
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# A hell of a reputation

Growing up in New England, a displaced Prairie boy, Star Trek was about all you could hope for when it came to science fiction on the television — and that was only if the conditions were right in the days before cable.

Now, you'd have a hard time switching channels during the evening hours without hitting a science fiction, horror or fantasy program (OK, without cable or a satellite dish, it becomes a little easier).

So what does this have to do with the price of canola?

Well, if you glance through the pages of this issue, you'll notice that many of the productions profiled are made on this side of the border.

Lexx, of course, is the elder statesman (or statesbug) of Canadian-made science fiction.

There is Earth: Final Conflict which overcame some second year growing pains — and some major complaints from its actors over the quality of that season's writing — to finally hit its stride.

First Wave is flourishing and with the addition of Traci Elizabeth Lords (see our Winter issue for our interview with her on the series and her work in science fiction), the series promises to become even more compelling. This year, RoboCop, Starhunter and Andromeda represent the latest forays for Canadian production houses into science fiction.

The first two offer different perspectives on the future. One offers a really bloody, explosive and sarcastic view of future society. The other, while just as dark, takes a more personal and cerebral tact toward science fiction.

But both represent the leading edge of Canadian sci-fi. (I'll reserve judgement on Andromeda, since it has yet to air as I write this and I'm a little leery of any series that puts Kevin Sorbo in space).

Five years ago, there was only TekWar and X-Files (which since left

for L.A.) with the Outer Limits about to start its stellar run.

Since 1995, other programs such as Poltergeist, Harsh Realms and Viper have all been made on Canadian soil.

In the last half decade, Canadian production houses, screenwriters and actors have all gained a reputation for top-notch work.

Of course, the success has not come without a backlash. "Ice Niggers" has become the derogatory label for Canadians working in Los-Angeles-based productions.

It seems at a time when some industries embrace globalization and manage to adapt to current market forces, Hollywood only wants to embrace globalization when it comes to placing its products or promoting studio morés to other lands and cultures.

In all other aspects, they want a closed shop.

But, I digress.

Canadians production houses' reputation might serve the domestic industry well in the next year.

From most accounts, U.S.-based actors, writers and directors are expected to hit the bricks at different times in 2001. The result would be a total halt to production, leaving networks to air reruns and scramble for alternate programming.

Some studios are trying to backlog episodes and purchase scripts to avoid being caught without material.

Some studios are also considering shifting some of their productions north of the border or purchasing more Canadian-made material.

All this means that (1) an already busy industry could be getting a whole lot busier; (2) "Ice Niggers" could be one of the nicer things U.S. performers have to say about their Canadian counterparts; (3) opportunities could be created for more sci-fi programs — since the genre is out bailiwick in terms of writing, acting, producing and even creating necessary special effects.

# Torcon 3 will bring world's SF to Canada

*After a 30-year absence, Worldcon returns to Toronto*

**By Peter Jarvis**

The World Science Fiction Convention, or Worldcon, is an annual celebration of science fiction in all its myriad forms.

Held annually, usually over the Labour Day weekend, it celebrates science fiction, fantasy and horror literature, science fiction in the movies and television, science fiction art, as well as many of the other realms of science fiction interest such as anime, filking, computer gaming and RPGs. Science fact, space exploration and technology also figure prominently at Worldcons.

At the last Worldcon in Chicago, Toronto was selected over Cancun as the site for the 61st Worldcon.

Significantly, the first non-U.S. Worldcon was held in Toronto in 1948 (Torcon). Torcon 2 followed 25 years later in 1973. Torcon 3 in 2003 (Aug. 28 - Sept. 1) will mark 30 years since the Worldcon was last held in Toronto and will also mark the first non-U.S. Worldcon of the millennium.

Although the current bid has been active for nearly four years prior to this year's vote, the desire for a return to Toronto goes back even further. The World Science Fiction Society and its mem-

bership have long looked forward to a return visit to Toronto.

The selection of Toronto was not only due to the truly tireless efforts of the bid committee, but also due to help from numerous volunteers, sponsors, and donors, like the Royal York Hotel, Toronto Tourism, ConAdian, local Toronto area SF conventions and not least, the desire of fans world-wide to return to Toronto.

Interestingly, fannish lore has it that the Royal York Hotel, which hosted the entire convention in 1973, is the only hotel in Worldcon history to receive a standing ovation from attendees.

Not surprisingly, the Royal York Hotel is enthusiastic about another Toronto Worldcon.

## Thousands come

For those who have yet to attend a Worldcon, it attracts writers, artists, publishers, editors, agents, scientists and fans from around the world. Programming at a Worldcon can run into more than a dozen or more different tracks.

This doesn't include the many other programming tracks such as movies, TV shows, and special events. Traditional highlights of any Worldcon are the awards ceremonies and the Masquerade.

The Chesley Award for Science Fiction art and the Hugo Awards are both featured Worldcon events. The Hugos, or the Science Fiction

Achievement Awards, honour the best of Science Fiction and Fantasy in both professional and fan categories.

The first Hugo Award was presented in 1953 thus Torcon, or the 61st Worldcon, will mark 50 years since the first Hugo Award was presented!

The Masquerade is an extravaganza of world-wide-costuming talent. Worldcon masquerades have apprentice, journeyman and master category costumers competing for "best-in-show," their work often serves as the benchmark in costuming design.

Hall costumes get their own unique brand of attention.

The art show, the dealers room and the fan exhibits all have their devotees.

The art show displays and auctions the science fiction and fantasy art of both fans and long-established professionals.

It is the premiere showcase of fantastic art world-wide.

The dealers room can typically house more than 100 vendors who offer a dazzling array of goodies. Books to jewelry, T-shirts to videos; if a science fiction fan is likely to want it then you'll likely find it in a Worldcon dealer room.

The fan exhibit is also traditional. Worldcons are not-for-profit, fan-run events and as such they have a proud history.

This history and its attendant artifacts form part of an ever-growing display.

We plan to be showcasing Toronto area and Canadian SF talent, Canadian conventions and fan history.

Things have changed a lot in Worldcons since 1948 and 1973.

Torcon 3 will necessarily encompass several locations to accommodate the 4,000 plus expected attendees. Events and accommodation will be housed in the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, the Royal York Hotel, the Crowne Plaza Hotel, the Renaissance Toronto Hotel at SkyDome and the Holiday Inn on King, with more accommodation to be added over the next few years.

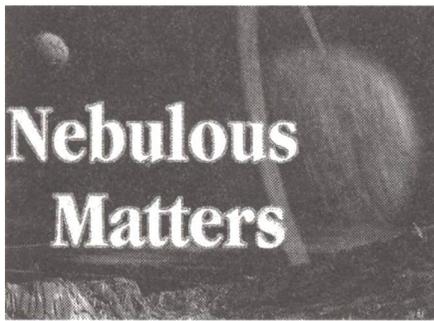
Our guests of honour at Torcon 3 will be George R. Martin (author), Frank Kelly Freas (artist) and Mike Glycer (Fan).

The toastmaster is Spider Robinson. Torcon and Torcon 2 both had as a guest of honour, Robert Bloch. Torcon 3 will be continuing the tradition and honouring his memory as GoHst of Honour: Robert Bloch, the spirit of Toronto Worldcons.

Torcon 3 will offer to Canadian fandom a unique opportunity to experience the best of the world-wide SF community in their own backyard.

We hope that the world SF community which attends will have an unparalleled opportunity to sample Toronto and the hospitality of Canadian fandom.

Peter Jarvis is chairman of Torcon 3.



## Montreal author nabs second

Montreal doctor, Melissa J. Yuan-Innes took second place for the second-quarter of the L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future Contest.

Yuan-Innes's story, *Skin Song*, appears in the anthology *L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Vol. XVI*.

For her accomplishment, Yuan-Innes received a cash award, an all-expense paid trip to Hollywood and the opportunity to participate in the contest's writ-

ers workshop.

Yuan-Innes received her award during a ceremony in Hollywood Sept. 15.

As part of the ceremony, Frederik Pohl received the 2000 L. Ron Hubbard Lifetime Achievement Award for Contributions to the Arts.

Pohl is, of course, a noted author and editor whose career has stretched for 50 years. He is also a recipient of the Science Fiction Grandmaster Award.

Besides the 16th volume of the *Writers of the Future* anthology, the event also marked the release of *The Best Writers of the Future* anthology. The book includes stories by Canadian authors James, Alan Gardner and Jo Beverly.

Yuan-Innes began reading science fiction and fantasy while a student at

the University of Western Ontario.

In 1997, one of her early stories, *The Sacrifice*, appeared in *Parsec*.

Information on the *Writers of the Future* contest can be obtained by sending an SASE to L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future Contest, P.O. Box 1630, Los Angeles, Ca., 90076.



*desouza*



## Brit publications hit newsstands

Issue 23 of *The Third Alternative* has been published.

The magazine features an interview with Peter Straub, new stories by M John Harrison, Graham Joyce, Mark Morris, Jessica Reisman, Brian Howell, Charles M Saplak and art by Dennis Potter.

As well it contains columns by Peter Crowther and Allen Ashley; stunning artwork including a colour cover.

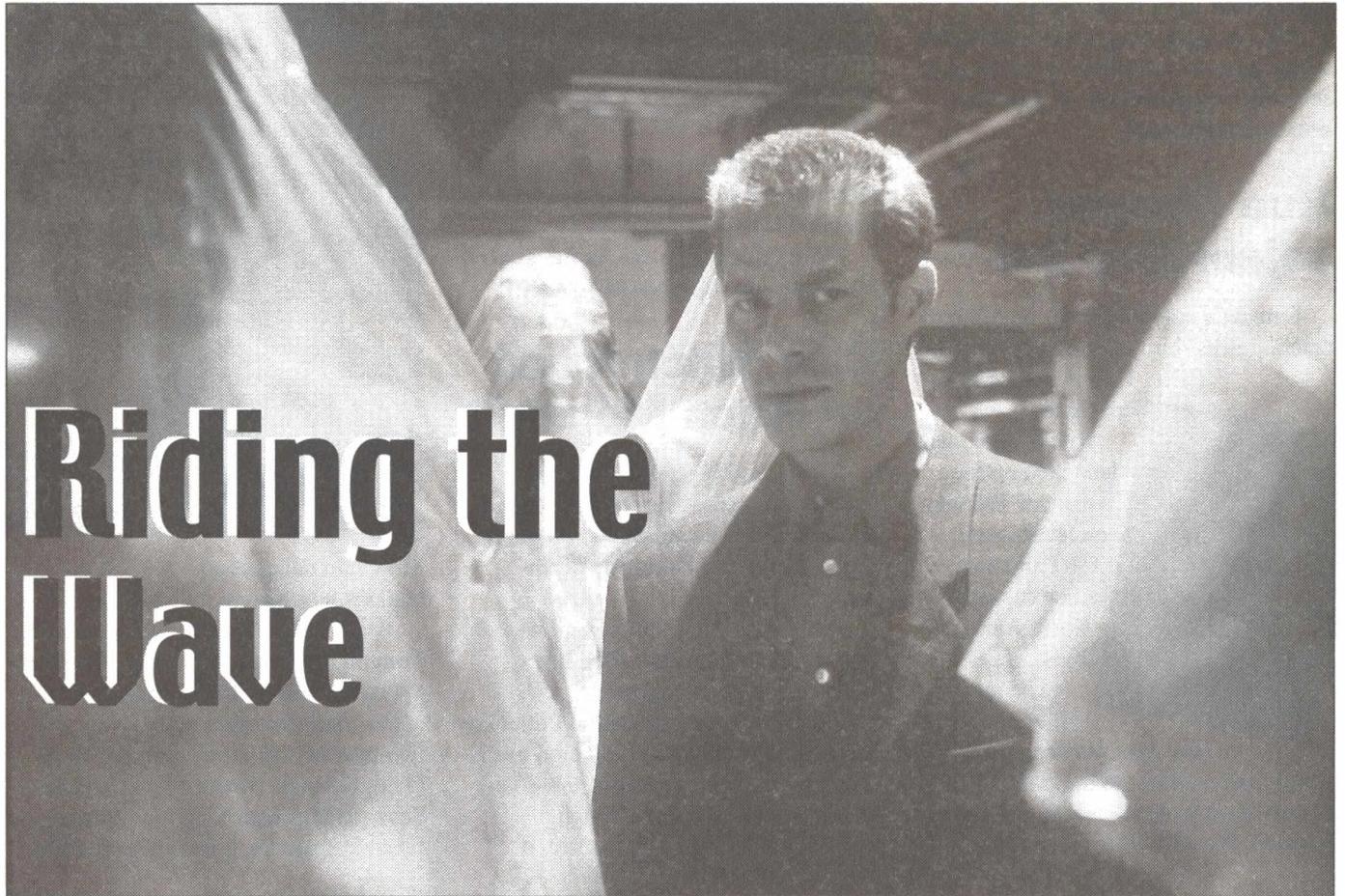
It tops out at 68 pages, and carries a cover price of 3.25 pounds (Europe 3.75/RoW 4.25/U.S.A. \$7). Six-issue subscriptions are 18 pounds (Europe 21/RoW 24/U.S.A. \$36).

Submissions of short stories are welcome. *The Third Alternative* pays 20 pounds per 1,000 words.

Cheques to subscribe or purchase the publication should be made payable to

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# Riding the Wave

## Despite an exhausting schedule, *First Waves*' Sebastian Spence vows to see the *Second Wave*

By  
Chris Krejgaard

It might seem that Sebastian Spence was pre-ordained to become an actor.

His father, Michael Cook, was an acclaimed playwright and drama professor at Memorial University in St. John's, Nfld.

"He was in there during the '70s and '80s and wrote a lot of radio plays for the CBC," Spence recalls.

His mother, Janis Spence, is a successful local actress, playwright and director in the

St. John's area.

But despite this pedigree, Sebastian Spence says there wasn't a push to get him into the profession.

"She used to write me into plays when I was 16 or 17... just little roles," Spence explains. "Initially, it was not going to be anything, they would keep telling me, 'don't become an actor. No, no, don't join us. It's too stressful'."

Despite the cautions, Spence's mother kept writing him into plays and he had a summer job.

After a couple of plays, Spence "caught the bug."

From there, he received offers to perform in other productions and the die was cast.

Spence gained a measure of acclaim with his role in the 1994 movie, the *Boy's of St. Vincent*.

In the movie, he tackled the role of a young man who was tortured by the memory of child abuse. It was an emotionally draining role which gained him recognition within the industry and cemented his decision to

become an actor.

"It was amazing," Spence says of the industry's response. "I was getting phone calls from Hollywood saying, 'Where are you? Can you be here tomorrow?'"

One of the first offers he received amongst the hoopla of the *Boys of St. Vincent*

**For more than two seasons, Cade Foster has served as the focus of Gua's efforts to conquer the Earth and Sebastian Spence has faced the formidable challenge of being at the centre of a television series.**

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**“Originally, Cade wasn’t developed to be one of those slick kind of male TV leads. He doesn’t walk away without a scratch. He gets beaten up in every episode. He just barely manages to beat the aliens.”**

was to audition for the Quick and the Dead (the role eventually went to Leonardo DiCaprio).

“I said ‘Wow, maybe Hollywood’s not out of my reach,’” Spence said.

At the very least, Toronto and Vancouver weren’t out of his reach.

Since the Boys of St. Vincent, Spence has appeared in such television series as Sliders, the X-Files, Fast Track and the Outer Limits, as well as television movies such as Family of Cops.

For the past two-plus seasons, Spence has played the role of Cade Foster on First Wave.

Drawing some inspiration from the Fugitive, First Wave follows the exploits of a former thief who discovers that aliens are infiltrating the earth. To silence him, the aliens frame Foster for the murder of his wife.

It’s a role which has brought him a good measure of professional success and has put him in a special place among Canadian actors.

“Only now, in my career has it gotten to the point where I can browse through scripts and say, ‘yeah’ or ‘no.’”

Also influencing his decision-making process is the demanding schedule for First Wave.

“I really liked the character... the sort of anti-hero, the underdog.

“There’s this whole idea that he’s an everyman... a common man really appealed to me.”

After more than two seasons, the part still appeals to Spence. But he does have his eye on some other projects for when the science fiction series finishes its run.

“I’ve got a couple of scripts that I’ve been trying to do,” Spence explains. “But

I don't have the time to do them, so they're just broken ideas sitting in my laptop.

"They're waiting for me to get four or five months to work on them."

Playing a series lead doesn't afford Spence time to bring these projects to completion in short order. But when the series is over, Spence says he'll have the financial wherewithal to take time off from acting and devote himself to the projects.

During the first two seasons, Spence was in the vast majority of the scenes. So he had to endure a gruelling work schedule.

"It's pretty demanding physically, mentally and emotionally," Spence explains.

"The days are long and after seven days you feel like you just shot a feature film.

"But it's just one episode and then you're on to the next one. So after a season, you feel like you just shot 22 feature films."

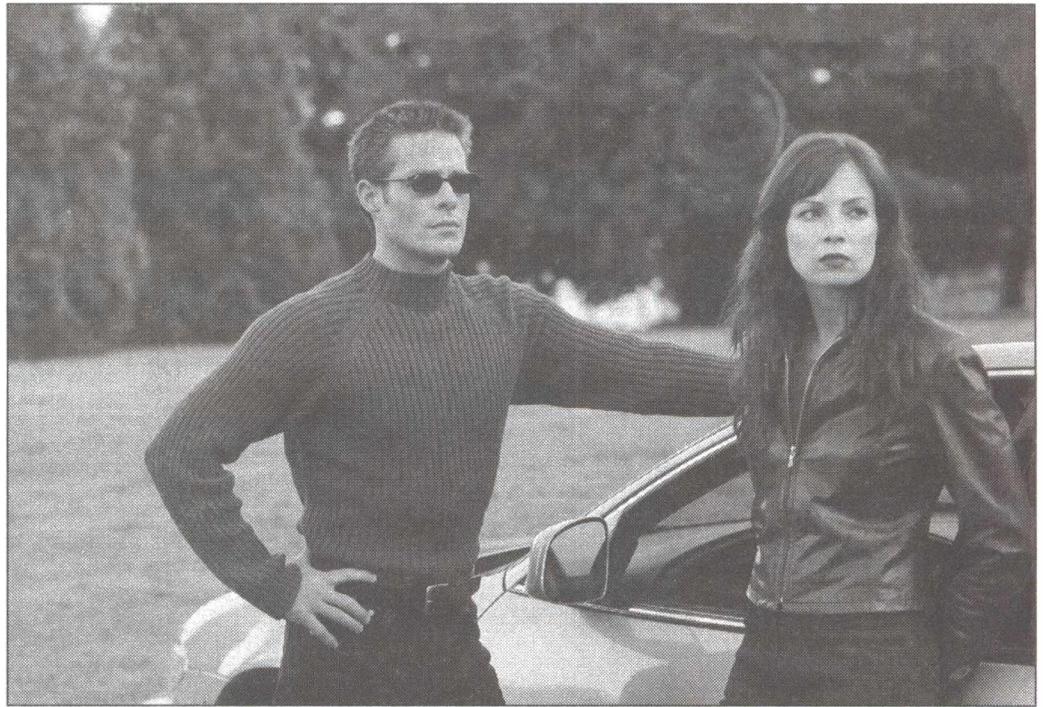
Life on the set did get a little easier for Spence this season.

The producers have introduced another main character to the cast with the addition of Traci Elizabeth Lords as Jordan Radcliffe.

Her character is described as the mysterious and sexy leader of a militia force known as the Raven Nation. Radcliffe joins forces with Foster to save the planet.

"It's (the schedule) an incredible grind and having her there makes a huge difference for me," Spence says. "Because all of a sudden she's out skulking the aliens so I get a day off here and there."

The series is in production for eight or nine months of



All photos courtesy of First Wave Productions

**"It's (the schedule) an incredible grind and having her there makes a huge difference for me."**

**- Spence on the addition of Traci Elizabeth Lords to the cast**

the year and Spence tries to spend his time off away from the industry and recharge his creative batteries.

"For the other couple of months of the year, the last thing you want to do is act," Spence remarked.

Even though he has tackled some smaller roles during his down time, he just tries "to suck some life back in."

"There's the whole idea that you can't maintain it, if you keep repeating it over and over again.

"You have to get away from it for awhile."

Beyond easing the workload, Spence also relishes the potential the new character offers to the series.

"Traci brings a whole new dimension to the cast. She

brings a strong female role model to the show. It's like breathing new life into the show and helping push it to the next level."

Still, Spence, or rather Foster, is the focus of much of the series' action.

"Cade wasn't developed to be one of those slick kind of male TV leads. He doesn't walk away without a scratch. He gets beaten up in every episode. He just barely manages to beat the aliens," Spence says.

As much of a toll as the role takes from Spence, it also has an effect on his mother.

"She has a hard time watching, because I get beaten up quite a bit," Spence explains. "She can't watch

certain episodes. Some of the gory episodes, like the one where my clone was shot, she just can't take."

The demands of the character and the production schedule aside, Spence is far from ready to move on.

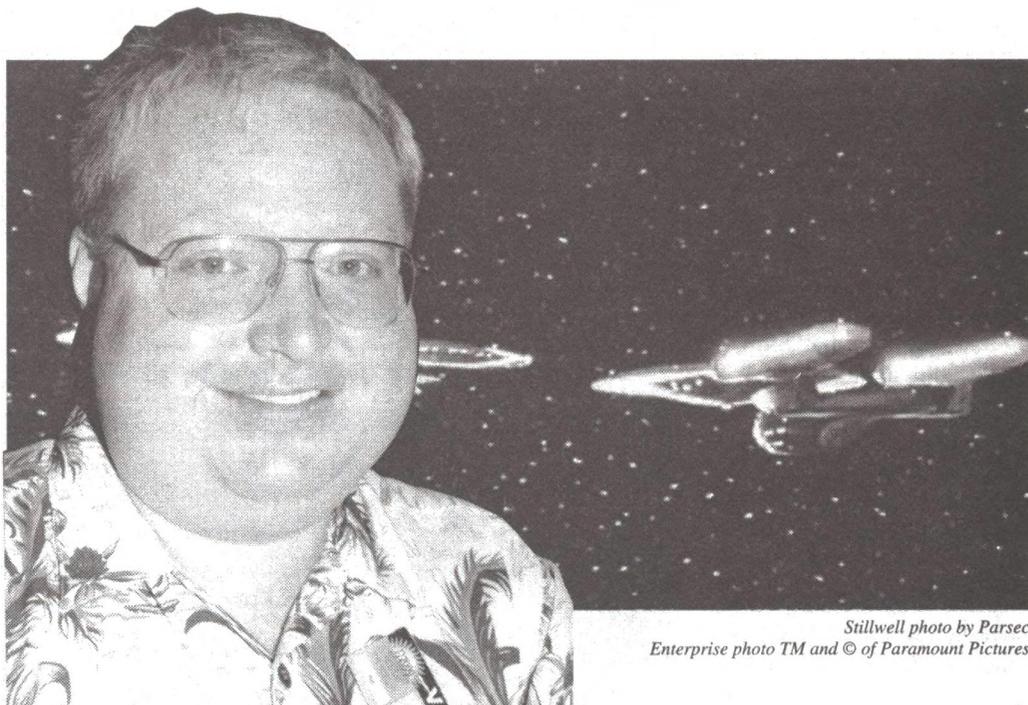
He's under contract for six seasons and, if the series continues, he plans to stick around until the end.

"I've been looking through the eyes of this character for so long now, that I think I would stick with the show as long as it takes to tell the whole story.

"Especially with this show, because you can feel that it's leading up to something that I want to be around for the end."

# Frustrated fan + two spec scripts + team of writers = Star Trek classic

*Eric Stillwell decided he could do better than Star Trek V (what fan didn't?), the result was Next Generation's Yesterday's Enterprise.*



Stillwell photo by Parsec  
Enterprise photo TM and © of Paramount Pictures

In a poll a few year's back, Yesterday's Enterprise was voted as the most popular episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation.

"I'm still surprised," says Eric A. Stillwell who made his first professional sale with the episode. "I'm happy that it was so well received."

For those who haven't seen the episode: the Enterprise encounters an anomaly in space. When they investigate it, a ship — another version of the Enterprise — begins to emerge. Suddenly, reality is changed and the Enterprise is in a universe where the Klingons are enemies and the Federation is losing the war.

So Capt. Picard and his officers must convince the crew of the other Enterprise to return to the past and meet certain doom, in order to restore history to its proper flow.

It was a story which was born out of frustration by a long-time fan.

Stillwell, like many Star

Trek fans, was appalled by Star Trek V. Working at Paramount Studios, he and his writing partner took in a screening at the studio.

"We were disillusioned by it," Stillwell said during a recent stop in Toronto. "We spent a lot of time in the coffee shop afterward saying, 'we could write something better than this'."

So, they set out to prove it.

The final product bore little resemblance to the original story penned by Stillwell.

The final version was a combination of two spec scripts that Stillwell and his partner had been bandying about.

One by Stillwell's writing partner had the two

Enterprises, but no elements of time travel or many of the elements which were in the episode.

"It was a morality play," Stillwell explained. "It was a tale of having to send the people back before they alter history and if they should be told they were being sent back to their deaths."

To this, they added other elements — based upon the original Star Trek series.

In the original draft of the story, the space anomaly was the Guardian of Forever from the original Star Trek series.

In the story, Vulcan archeologists have been sent to the planet to study Vulcan history using the time-travel device.

The researchers inadvertently kill Surak (the father of Vulcans' way of life for the uninitiated).

Because of this, Vulcans end up Machiavellian like the Romulans with whom they have formed an alliance.

As a result, the Klingons have been wiped out and the Federation is battling both the Vulcans and the Romulans. The only ones who know that the timeline has been altered are the Vulcans who were on the surface of the planet.

The Enterprise arrives at the planet and, because of the altered timeline, believe they have found a nest of Vulcan spies who are trying to use the Guardian to

# Boldly go

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**Dark Matters # 3**  
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PAPERBACK, COMING JANUARY 2001

**Diplomatic Implausibility**  
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**Tooth and Claw**  
by Dorranna Durgin  
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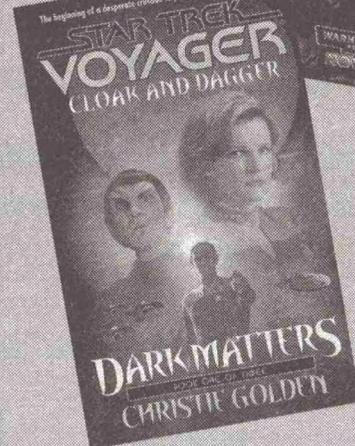
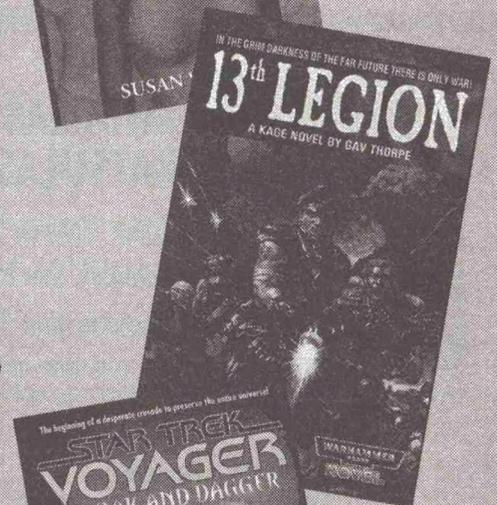
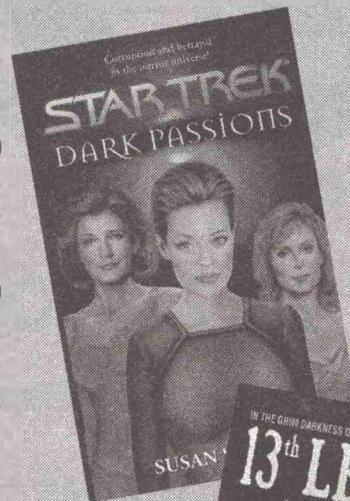
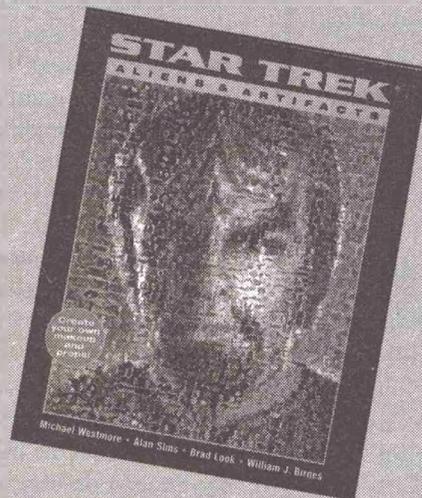
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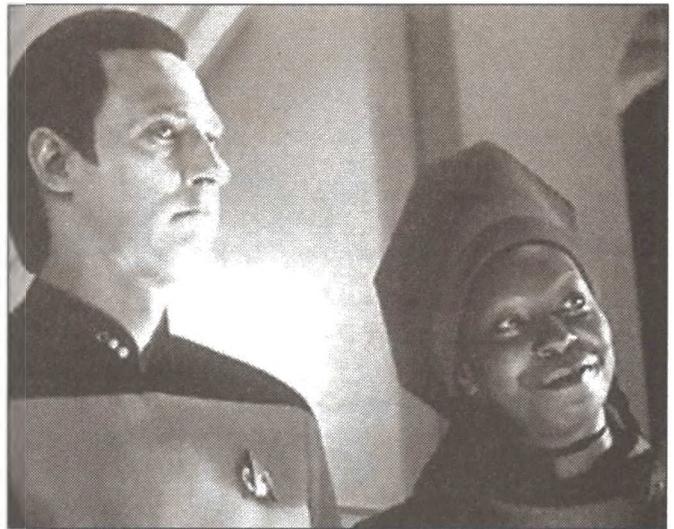
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*Photo TM and © of Paramount Pictures*

**In the original version of the story, Whoopi Goldberg's Guinan was absent and Sarak was the one who convinces Picard that something was wrong with time.**

destroy the Federation.

Among the captured Vulcans is Sarak (Spock's father) and he has to convince Picard that the timeline has been altered and that he has to fix the mistake.

In the end, Sarak sacrifices himself to save Surak.

"All of this came from being a fan in my childhood and thinking it was strange that Spock's father's name was almost the same as the father of Vulcan philosophy," Stillwell said. "So I said what if they were the same person."

The use of a timeline element posed some challenges for the writers and for the audience.

Stillwell and the rest of the writers had to inform the audience what the history of the Federation was and how it had been altered. It was a task made more difficult since the characters didn't know history had been changed, so the main characters couldn't be easily used to help the audience along.

Stillwell pitched the idea to the producers of Next

Generation and, although they loved the time concept and the return of Tasha Yar, they hated the use of the Vulcans and using the Guardian of Forever.

"They didn't want to use elements from the original series," Stillwell explained. "They wanted the show to stand on its own."

In the end, the Surak role went to Guinan, the Enterprise's mysterious bartender — something which Stillwell says added to Guinan.

So, Stillwell and the writing staff began the task of combining the two concepts into a workable script — in two days.

"There were five staff writers working on it over the course of the weekend," Stillwell recalls. "Each one had to put it together like a puzzle over night"

"Usually, with multiple scripts and writers, you have to approach with some trepidation.

"Everyone was convinced it would be a disaster."



# Bucket head

**Jeffrey Willerth was at the centre of production on Babylon 5 for much of the series' run and tackled the role of Ambassador Kosh. Yet, few off the soundstage knows of his contributions**

For the better part of five seasons on Babylon 5, Jeffrey Willerth acted with what amounted to a bucket on his head.

And it wasn't some acting school exercise. Willerth played Ambassador Kosh on Babylon 5.

This meant that he was covered by a huge alien head and essentially had to be led through his scenes since the costume essentially rendered him deaf and blind.

"In simplistic terms, when I consider the amount of training, dedication and passion that real actors put into their characters, my job was easy," Willerth said of his time as Kosh. "But at the same time, I appreciate the difficulty of acting by braille.

"I couldn't see, I couldn't hear and I couldn't interact with the other characters in the scene with me. It was pretty darn challenging.

"It was like acting with a bucket over your head and trying to perform graceful moves."

Despite his fame among series' fans, Willerth doesn't consider himself an actor. Rather he is content to work behind the scenes of a production and leave the acting to his wife, Patricia Tallman.

"I have always been a behind-the-scenes guy," Willerth acknowledges, adding that his education is in broadcast management rather than in the Fine Arts.



**“The beauty of Kosh was that it was five minutes in and five minutes out.”**

Playing Ambassador Kosh was a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

Willerth started on the series as a background artist — a term Willerth

says is the politically correct term for extra.

“A childhood friend of mine (Doug Corring) grew up to become an assistant director on *Babylon 5* and we got together,” Willerth recalls. “He said he was working on a new series and he said when I was done with working on *Young Indiana Jones* that I should come down and spend a couple of days on the set.

“So I stepped on the space station and never left.”

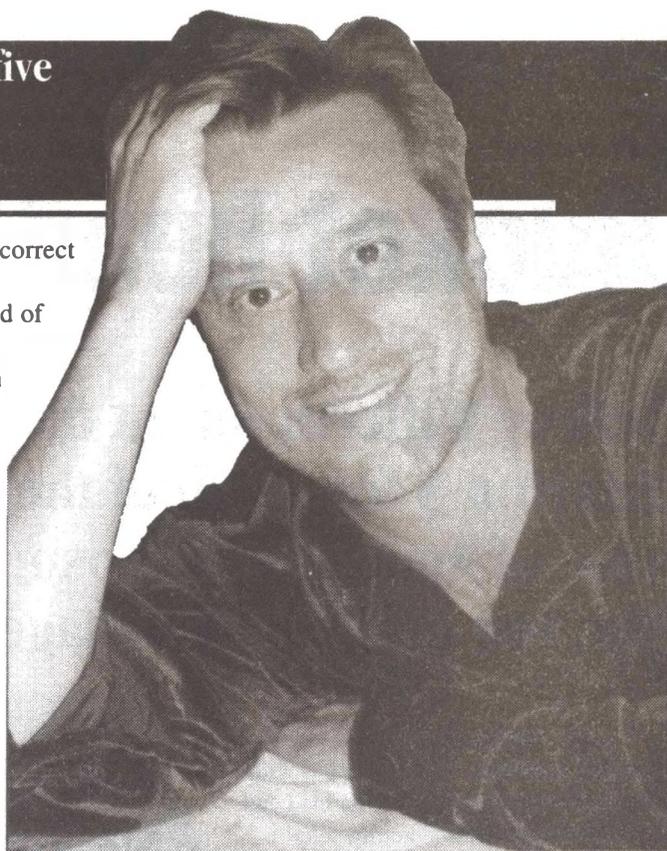
Willerth spent his first season on the station filling various roles — human and alien. With the addition of Bruce Boxleitner in the show’s second season came new responsibilities for Willerth.

Since the St. Louis-born actor shared many of the same physical characteristics of the new lead actor, Willerth was chosen to be his stand-in.

“It was a wonderful job to have,” Willerth explained. “It’s much like being an understudy in theatre.

“It allowed me to act out every scene that Bruce was in and when you’re the stand-in you get to be the centre of all activity. You get to see how the actors move and you get to learn about the camera and how they work, you get to learn about the lights and the sound.

“You get to learn about the whole



*Parsec photo*

**Jeffrey Willerth played a number of aliens and other visitors to *Babylon 5*, as well as Ambassador Kosh before he moved up into the front office of Babylon Productions. Now, he heads up Earthbound Entertainment.**

show because it’s pivoting around you in its preparation.”

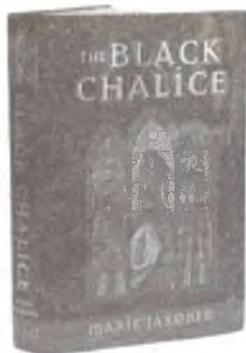
When he served as an extra, err... background artist, Willerth gained a measure of respect for actors who had to undergo hours in the makeup chair.

“I played every alien on the show, so I know how tough it can be. With Kosh, I was very fortunate in that respect,” he said. “The beauty of Kosh was that it was five minutes in and five minutes out.

But as easy as it was to put on and

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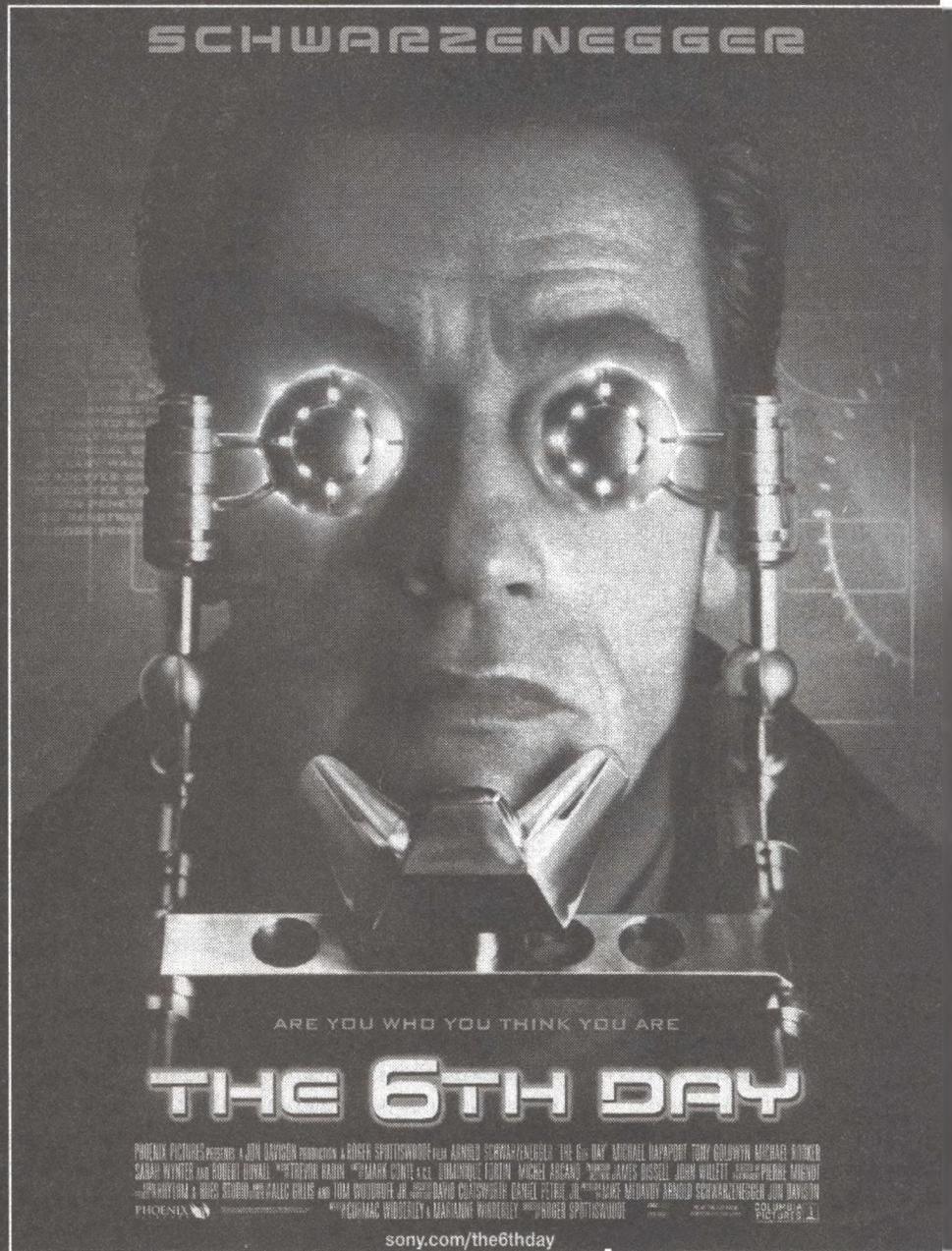
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take off, it wasn't easy between those two moments.

The suit was heavy, uncomfortable and hot because "fiberglass doesn't breathe." When the series

to be done by the producers than there would be on other programs where scripts and storylines are under constant development.

So Willerth handled

came that the network was shutting it down."

In the time since he left *Crusade* and *Babylon 5* behind, Willerth says he has put his career back on the right track, that is in the

production office and pursuing opportunities in emerging mediums.

"I think for the betterment of society, let's not let me act any more," he chuckled.

"My strength is in being a producer, that is the foundation that I laid for myself."

Building upon that foundation, Willerth established

Earthbound Entertainment.

The production company has about 13 shows at various levels of development from pipedreams to completion. The projects range from reality programs to kids programs to feature films to multimedia.

"They're all wonderful projects which I believe in a lot and are all wonderfully diverse," he said.

"There's millions of projects out there created by millions of people and it's just a shot in the dark that your's will be the one that finds the right place at the right time," Willerth said.

One of the projects that he is high on is the company's *Babylon Park* parodies (they're a combination of *Babylon 5* and *South Park*).

*Babylon Park* was developed by Texan Chris Russo.

Russo, whom Willerth calls "a twisted individual with a demented sense of humour, developed the characters based on

*Babylon 5* characters and

used the animation style made famous by *South Park*.

Russo sent Willerth and Tallman a clip of his creation.

"We thought it was hysterical."

So the two, along with

**"It was an incredible learning experience working with these two brilliant gentlemen."**

Robin Atkin Downes and Wayne Alexander, met Russo at a convention and laid down the vocal tracks for *Frightspace* — which parodies *Babylon 5*'s *Thirdspace* movie.

Following the success of *Frightspace*, Earthbound and Russo developed *Grudgematch*, which Willerth calls "a stab at *Crusade* and *Voyager*."

By Willerth's reckoning the second effort was better than the first and he believes the next will improve upon that.

"We'll keep raising the bar until they get better and better," he said

Earthbound has approached both the Space channel in Canada and the Sci-Fi channel in the United States to air the parodies.

The cartoons poke fun at every sci-fi character that has ever reached television or movie screens.

"They're a fun project and it's made for a sci-fi audience," Willerth said.

☆

## Website up for *Babylon 5* fans

While he was in the *Babylon 5* front office, Jeffrey Willerth was responsible for the series' fan club official website — [thestation.com](http://thestation.com).

The site offered fans direct contact with the cast and crew of *Babylon 5* while the show was in production.

"Since the show has been out of production, the site has collapsed into a small shell," explained Willerth. "The cyber community that once existed has splintered and is off running about on their own."

In an effort to pull the community back together, Willerth has launched a new website — *The Galactic Gateway*.

According to Willerth, fans of *Babylon 5*, as well as of all science fiction, now have a "safe haven" on the Internet to discuss *Babylon 5* and to have access to the cast of *Babylon 5* even though they have moved on to their other projects.

The site also offers a variety of merchandise from the actors, as well as chatrooms and other fan-friendly features.

With the wide-screen version of the series being broadcast by the sci-fi channel in the U.S., Willerth said it was important to get the website operational to accommodate both new and old fans of the series.

"It's important for them to have a place to go," he said.

The website's url is [www.thegalacticgateway.com](http://www.thegalacticgateway.com).



entered its fifth season, Willerth had gained enough experience on the set to move up into the head office. Willerth was named producers' associate and worked with J. Michael Straczynski and John Copeland.

"It was an incredible learning experience working with these two brilliant gentlemen," he said. "My duties were to support them in every function of the production."

Because much of the story had been developed by Straczynski, there was less creative work that had

administrative tasks such as overseeing publicity, merchandising and other business functions with Warner Brothers and Turner Network Television.

It was a job which carried over from *Babylon 5* to its spin-off *Crusade*. Willerth remained with the new series for about half of its 13-episode run.

"It was pretty evident to me from the beginning that the series was going to be short-lived," Willerth noted. "The writing was on the wall and it seemed a good time for me to leave.

"Right after I left, word

# He's Baaack

## Creators of RoboCop: Prime Directive promise to return to character's roots

By  
Chris Kreljaard

Standing outside a Toronto hotel, Julian Grant takes a slow pull on a cigarette. He needs a break.

On the heels of a back-breaking production schedule — developing four movies in six months, including an 88-day shooting schedule — producer/director Grant and his team have been busy promoting the hell out of the mini-series.

Like the rest of the creative team, Grant agreed to sign on as producer/director because of his affection for the character.

"I got a call from the president of Fireworks Entertainment, Adam Haight, who basically said, 'How would you like to do a remake of RoboCop?'," Grant recalls. "Thirty seconds later I was in his office."

Grant, screenwriters Brad Abraham and Joe O'Brien are unadulterated fanboys when it comes to RoboCop.

"We're fanboys in the best possible way," cautions O'Brien. "We're professional writers, so I don't want it to sound like we just came off the street."

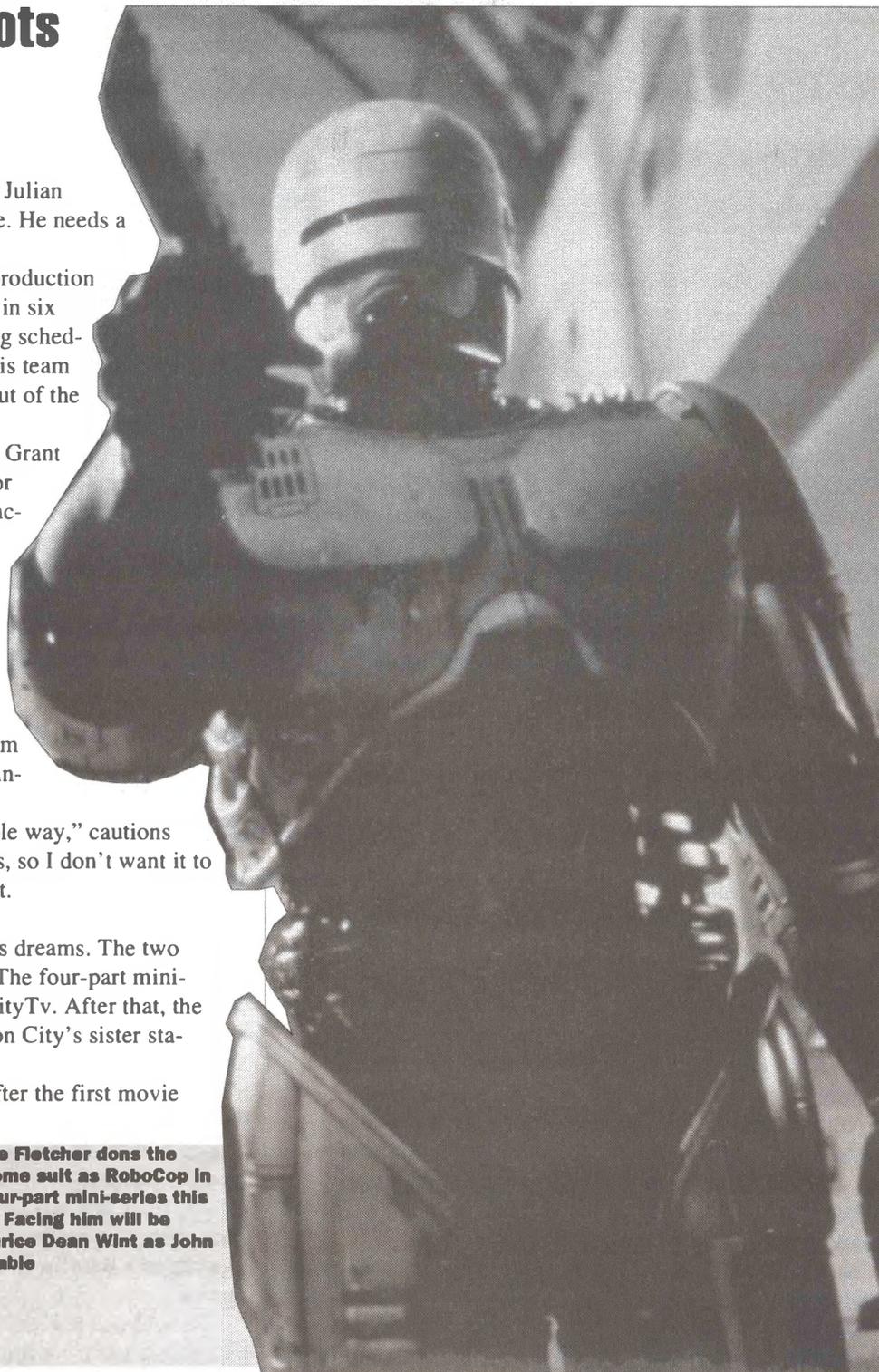
"But we're definitely fans."

Now, they're living out a fanboy's dreams. The two penned RoboCop Prime Directives. The four-part mini-series airs this month on Canada's CityTv. After that, the movies will likely make the rounds on City's sister station, Space: the Imagination Station.

The movies take place 10 years after the first movie and Alex Murphy — RoboCop — (played by Page Fletcher) is on the verge of becoming obsolete. His son has grown up to become one of the rising stars in the OCP corporation and his former partner is head of security for Delta City.

So the plot isn't spoiled for

**Page Fletcher dons the chrome suit as RoboCop in a four-part mini-series this fall. Facing him will be Maurice Dean Wint as John T. Cable**



## Obsolete?

In *RoboCop: Prime Directives* the famed crime-fighting force battles age, evil and corporate greed.



Photo by L. Pief Weyman ©2000 Robocop Productions

chise that has not been optimized. It gave us a chance to create from the ground up a retelling of the RoboCop legend.”

But coming with the opportunity were challenges for the producers and writers. RoboCop may be a brand name, but it is one which carries expectations for the fans.

“It was a daunting challenge,” said Grant.

Grant, who — like Abraham and O’Brien — is less than a fan of the second and third movies or of the television series (which he says was “kind of lame”), stressed that he wanted to base the new movies on the first installment of the original movie series.

Haight gave Grant his approval and complete creative control.

“I knew right there I was either working for a genius or a madman,” Grant recalls. “It turned out that he was a genius because he left us alone.

“He let us make the movie

you, the four movies which comprise the mini-series follow Murphy’s attempt to become relevant, battle evil and save his former partner and his son.

For O’Brien and Abraham, it all came down to being in the right place at the right time. O’Brien had known Grant for about six years through their involvement in the Toronto film industry.

“Julian and I never worked on the same project, but we got along and we shared the same B-movie common interests.”

In 1998, Grant programmed a film festival where O’Brien was selling T-shirts in his spare time.

**“Fortunately, in a case like this you’re asked to do a job and it’s a job you love. We got to work on a character that we have a genuine affection for”**

During this time, Grant was in discussion with Fireworks Entertainment to revive the RoboCop character.

“It was 30 days of non-stop Hong-Kong action, science fiction and horror films,” O’Brien recalls.

“Julian needed writers and Brad and I (who are also partly responsible for *Hover Boy*) were there.

“He knew that we knew RoboCop and that we loved the character, so he asked us if we wanted to join the pro-

ject.”

Besides being a fan of the character, Grant recognized the opportunity the project held for a Canadian filmmaker.

“How often does a Canadian filmmaker get a chance to work on a name brand?” Grant asked rhetorically. “There are only so many opportunities out there to work on a Batman or a Spawn.

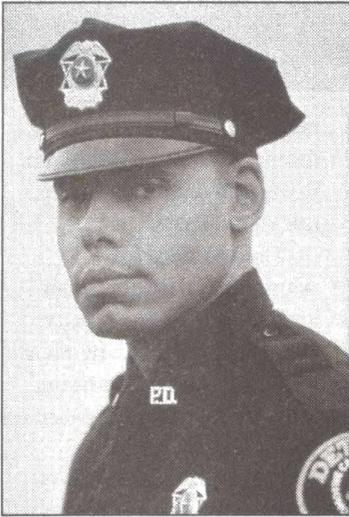
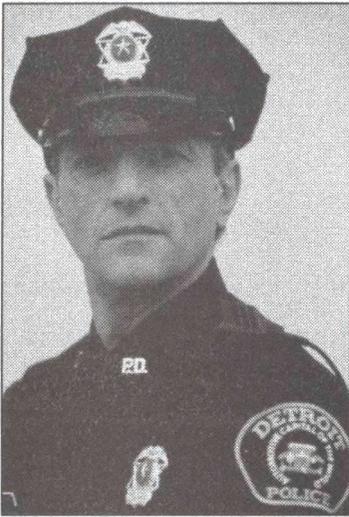
“RoboCop is universally recognized and it’s a fran-

that we set out to make. I couldn’t believe it.”

The end result?

A 450-page script that follows the pattern of violence and humour established by the first movie, directed by a then unknown Paul Verhoven. The latest movie is, what Grant calls “a very dark and bloody tapestry.”

It was the assurance that the project would follow the pattern set by the first movie, that led Abraham and O’Brien to say “yes” to



Grant's invitation.

"Fortunately, in a case like this you're asked to do a job and it's a job you love. We got to work on a character that we have a genuine affection for. So we jumped at the chance," said O'Brien. "We got paid for it, but we might have done it for free."

Well, maybe not for free.

As Abraham points out the two had to deliver the equivalent of four feature films in the space of six months.

Firestorm's Creative executive Debbie Firestone ran herd on the script process to ensure that Grant and the other fans of RoboCop that worked behind the scenes didn't stray too far afield from the script.

It would have been easy for the script and the production to go off on a tangent. Three

**"We were thrilled to get performers like Page and Maurice to work with because they are consummate performers. It wasn't about getting quote-unquote putting a 'star' in the roles. It was about putting really good actors in place.**

**- Director Julian Grant on his choices for RoboCop and RoboCable**

movies and a television series provides a lot of characters and plot threads to draw from.

But Grant says fans' preference of the first movies was the ultimate deciding factor in developing the template for the four movies.

"We went to the various newsgroups to poll the fans and talk to them as fanboys that we are," Grant says of the audience research conducted during the early stages of the project.

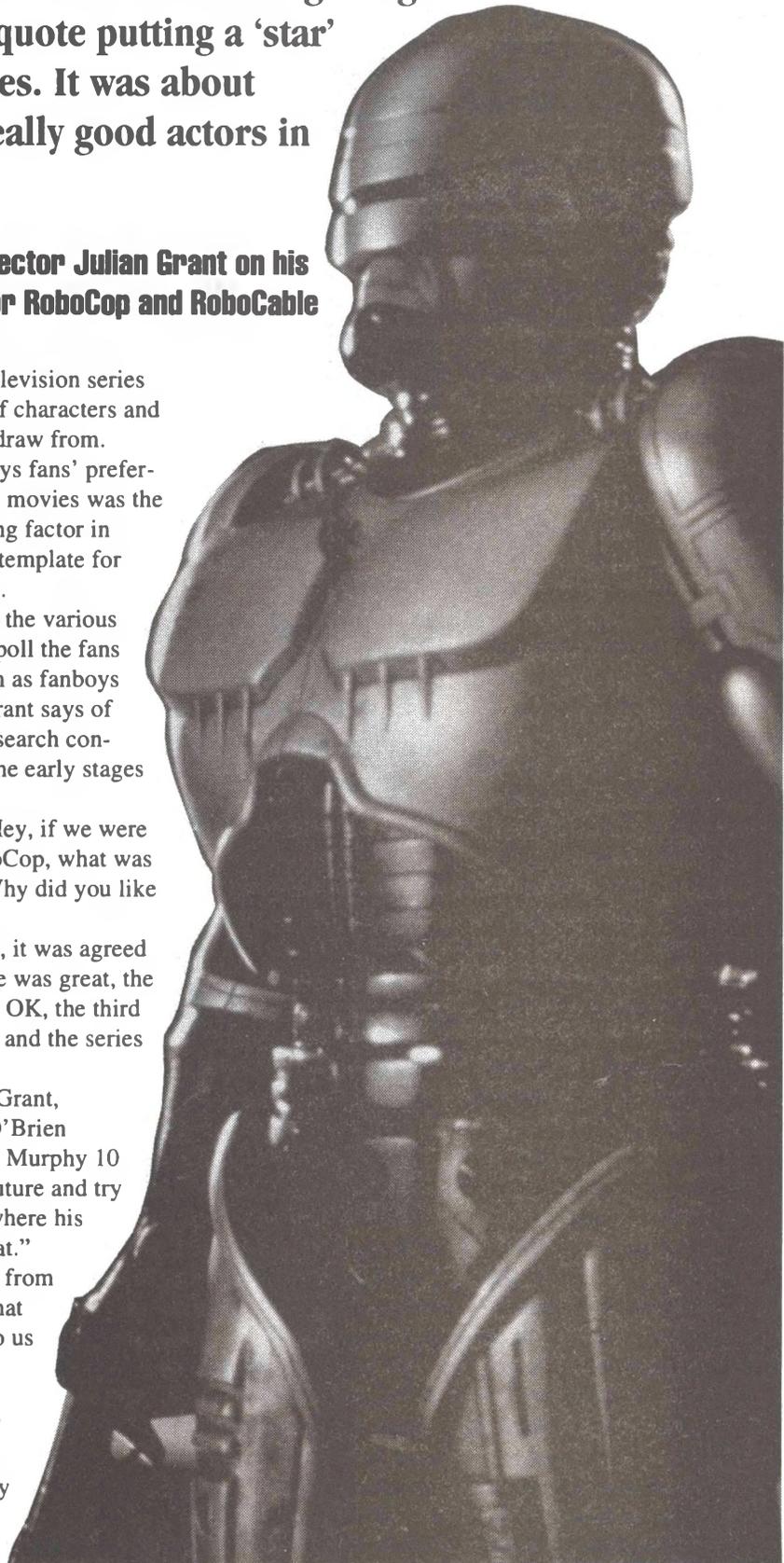
"We said, 'Hey, if we were to remake RoboCop, what was the best one? Why did you like it?'"

"Universally, it was agreed that the first one was great, the second one was OK, the third one was crappy and the series blew."

From there, Grant, Abraham and O'Brien decided to push Murphy 10 years into the future and try to determine "where his head would be at."

"We worked from an initial idea that was proposed to us by Julian and Fireworks Entertainment," Abraham said.

"They were very simple and very straight-



forward.

"The first was RoboCop vs. another RoboCop who might be a vigilante, the second was RoboCop vs. RoboCop, the third was RoboCop and RoboCop on the run, and the fourth one, which we figured we be out of money by then would be Strawdogs.

"So the two of us brainstormed some ideas and I'm still amazed at what we came up with."

After going through the approval process with their outlines, Abraham and O'Brien had to turn in their first script in two weeks.

For the two writers and Grant, the second movie never happened and RoboCop the Series was just a really bad dream.

"The first movie is sort of an odd bird," explains O'Brien. "It was a low-budget film that was made by a mini-major studio, it was released in the wake of some summer blockbusters, and no one expected it to do well.

"But it really struck a nerve with a lot of people."

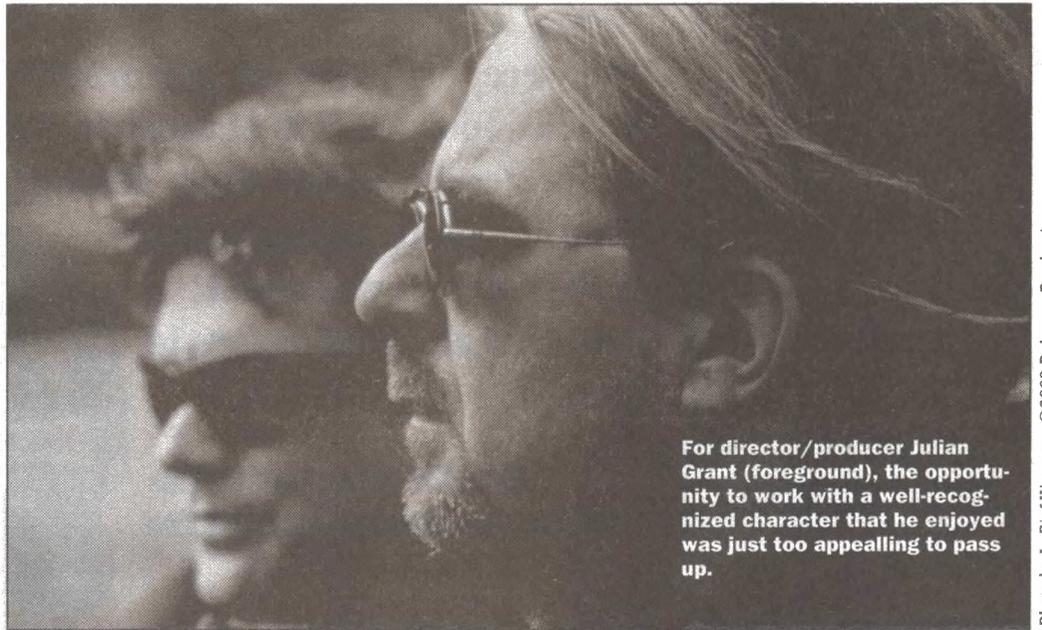
Audiences were enamored by the strong characters and the satirical look at the American mentality woven into the sci-fi action movie.

These elements, the writers promise, will be found in the mini-series.

"One of the first things that we said was, 'let's take what worked in the first movie and apply it to the world today,'" O'Brien said.

One of the key elements in the mini-series will be the media saturation which marks the contemporary world. There will be pokes at the merger of news and entertainment on television.

"I think we locked on to some pretty relevant things,"



For director/producer Julian Grant (foreground), the opportunity to work with a well-recognized character that he enjoyed was just too appealing to pass up.

Photo by L. Pief Weyman ©2000 RoboCop Productions

## "We're fanboys in the best possible way."

- Screenwriter Joe O'Brien (right) on his and fellow screenwriter Brad Abraham's (below) affection for RoboCop



O'Brien said. "If we did our jobs right, people will see it and see the world reflected in a funny way."

Of course, if the mini-series are to follow in the footsteps of the first movie, then there must be violence and plenty of it.

"When we first went in Julian basically said, 'I don't



want to do a PC-lite diet-lite kid-friendly kind of show'," Abraham recalls. "He wanted it to be very satiric about our way of life and not hold back on the violence.

"But because Alex Murphy was a character borne out of violence and Cable becomes the other RoboCop we didn't want to just pay lip service to violence. Because people are going to spend eight hours with these guys, if we played the violence up for laughs we'd be sending a contradictory message."

So don't expect the movies to shy away from the effects of violence on the characters.

While the violence has

been part and parcel of the movie version of RoboCop, it was played down in the television series.

The problem for Abraham, O'Brien, Grant and the rest of the creative forces behind the new incarnation will be overcoming viewer expectations based on the series.

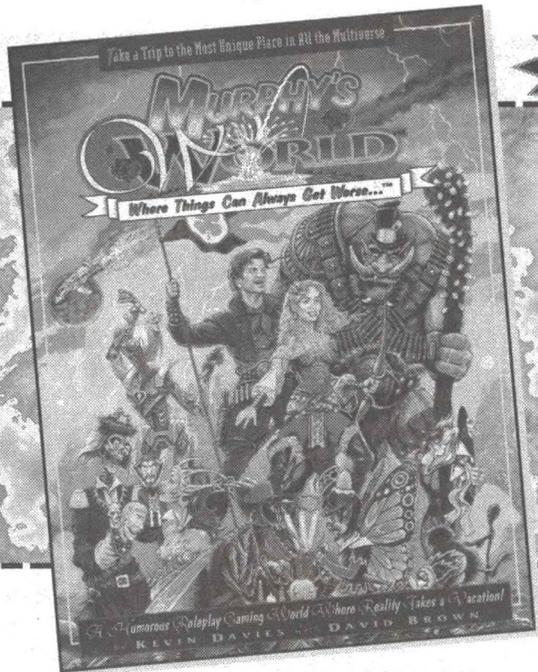
"There have been some teenagers whose first exposure to RoboCop has been the series and then see the movie and say, 'I never realized how violent he was'," explains Abraham. "For someone my age, that's difficult to fathom because violence and RoboCop has always walked hand in hand."

As the scripts were rounded into place, Grant began the process of finding the actors who would fill the roles of Alex Murphy and John Cable, Murphy's former partner and soon to be second RoboCop, err... RoboCable.

Besides Fletcher, the producers also convinced Maurice Dean Wint to take

**Continued on page 27**

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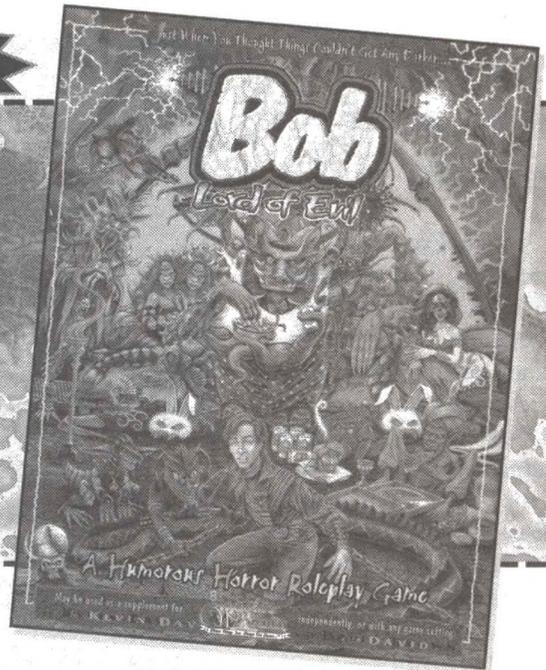
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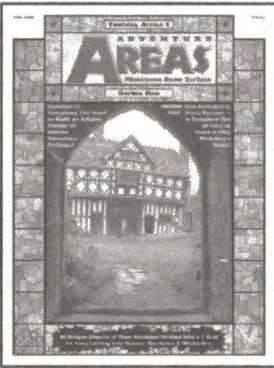


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**PEREGRINE**

# It's all a matter of a microchip

*World gets introduction to RoboCable*

In *RoboCop: Prime Directives*, Toronto-based actor Maurice Dean Wint tackles the role of Jon T. Cable, the chief protagonist for Alex Murphy.

Cable is Murphy's former partner and is head of security for Delta City. Through the course of the four movies that comprise the mini-series, Cable is transformed into RoboCable — by the writers' and producers' own admission, this is the worst kept secret of the project, so I'm not giving anything away here.

Through the use of flashbacks, viewers learn that the relationship between the two characters stretches back before Murphy was murdered and resurrected as RoboCop, according to Wint.

"By the end of the first film, there is a rift between the two characters because Jon T. Cable does something that Alex Murphy doesn't approve of," Wint explains. "So, Cable leaves and then Murphy is killed and becomes RoboCop."

During the course of the four-movie set, their paths become more and more inter-twined.

Rather than become the evil RoboCop, Wint prefers to say that he became "the ambiguous RoboCop."



Photo by L. Pief Weyman ©2000 Robocop Productions

Through the story arc, his relationship with his former partner evolves until the climax when . . . (I won't spoil this one).

Like most of the other people involved in the production, Wint has a certain affection for the character.

"I really loved the first RoboCop," he said. "After the first film, I thought things started to go a bit askew.

"And the series (he appeared in the 1994 episode, *Officer Missing*), never really hit the mark. I don't know if they targeted its audience right or if it knew what it wanted to be."

The thoughts of the second and third movies and the series were still present when he was approached by producer/director Julian

Grant to take part in the movies.

Grant, who says he wanted performers not big-name actors for the production, had targeted Wint and Page Fletcher for the top roles.

"When my agent sent me the scripts, I was expecting to read them and say, 'Oh, more rubbish,'" Wint recalls. "But when I read them, it was just such a powerful, powerful story. I was blown away by the stories."

Unlike other proposals that come his way, Wint read the scripts for the four movies in a single sitting — something, he admits, was out of the ordinary for him.

"I usually get to page five and take a pass."

Of course, working on a science fiction project is nothing new for Wint.

**A veteran of such sci-fi series as *TekWar* and *The Outer Limits*, and the movie, *The Cube*, Maurice Dean Wint was drawn to *RoboCop: Prime Directives* by its "powerful, powerful story."**

He has worked on such television series as *The Outer Limits*, *Earth: Final Conflict*, *Forever Knight*, *RoboCop* the series, *Jim Lee's Wild C.A.T.S: Covert Action Teams*, *My Secret Identity*, *Friday the 13th*, *Psi Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal*, and as the android police officer Lt. Winger on *Tekwar*.

Wint was also one of the main characters, Quentin, in the acclaimed sci-fi movie,

Cube.

"I don't know what it is. Maybe I'm just some sort of sci-fi creature," Wint said.

What was new for him is the amount of preparation that he had to undergo before the cameras were even loaded with film.

Wint was flown to Los Angeles so he could be fit for the skin-tight jet-black outfit for when he became RoboCable. It also required him to study Peter Weller in the original movie.

"Part of it was looking at the first film and watching the way the first RoboCop moved," Wint explained. "But then, once you're in the suit, it does about 85 per cent of the work."

"The remaining 15 per cent is just trying to create the reality of it."

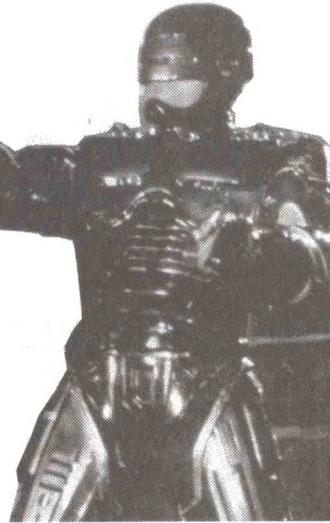
In the suit, Wint had to

**"Once you're in the suit, it does about 85 per cent of the work."**

break down his movements so they appeared mechanical — so he would move his head and then his upper torso.

And if RoboCable is killed by the end of the fourth movie (and I'm not saying he will be), bringing the character back for any future projects won't be a problem.

"How many times has



RoboCop been seemingly down and out only to come back again?" Wint asked rhetorically.

"It's all a matter of replacing a computer chip really."

— CK

## RoboCop

on the role of Cable.

"We were thrilled to get performers like Page and Maurice to work with because they are consummate performers," Grant said. "It wasn't about getting quote-unquote putting a 'star' in the roles. It was about putting really good actors in place."

"I'm really against name-brand casting because no matter how much jeopardy you put that name brand in, the audience knows nothing is going to happen to them."

The lack of a name brand allows the producers to kill everyone in the movie.

"Everyone dies," Grant said with a smile. "Maybe, that should be our slogan."

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# New kid on the cyber-block

## Melinda Deines joins cast of *Earth: Final Conflict*

There will be a new member of the cast when *Earth: Final Conflict* begins its fourth season.

This season will introduce Edmonton native Melinda Deines as J Street.

The character has been described by producers as a, "a brilliant, quick-witted, pleasure-seeker who makes her own rules in the fringe world of cyber punks."

### Street is introduced into the series as a friend of Augur's.

But viewers shouldn't expect the same sort of reserved approach Richard Chelloveau's character offers.

"She adds an element of fun and light-heartedness that the show hasn't necessarily had so far," Deines explained. "She's younger and more care-free than most of the other characters.

"It gives the show more variety and makes the pace more diverse."

Like Augur, Street provides assistance for Liam Kincaid (who ends up serving as a big brother for her) and Rene Palmer. But she isn't as tied up in the conspiracy or the resistance as Augur.

"She sort of gradually becomes more involved during the course of the season," Deines explains.

"She's a typical teenager, she's more concerned about partying than with other things. But it's essential that the character becomes interested in what's going on in the show or she won't last."

While the graduate of the Ryerson Theatre School in Toronto says she shares Street's sense of confidence, the

similarities end there.

"We're quite different," Deines says. "She's a lot younger and less serious than I am. She's a party girl and I like to sit home with a book.

"I don't think she would do that too much. She'd be out, out ... out."

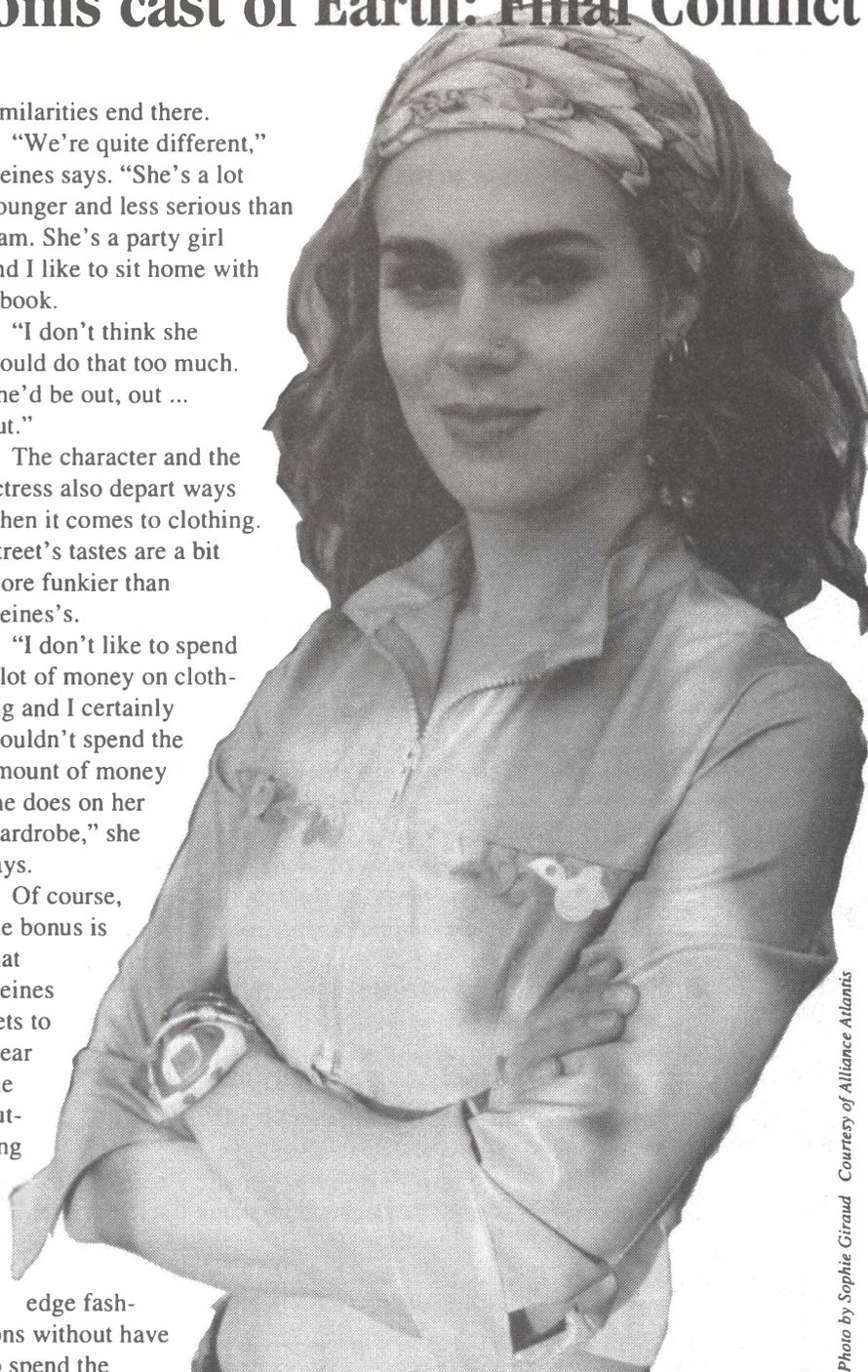
The character and the actress also depart ways when it comes to clothing. Street's tastes are a bit more funkier than Deines's.

"I don't like to spend a lot of money on clothing and I certainly wouldn't spend the amount of money she does on her wardrobe," she says.

Of course, the bonus is that Deines gets to wear the cutting

edge fashions without have to spend the money.

"It's always fun to play a



Melinda Deines' character J. Street provides the actress with a change of pace from her traditional work in the theatre.

Photo by Sophie Giraud. Courtesy of Alliance Atlantis

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character who is sassy and very tongue-in-cheek and has no problem saying what's on her mind," Deines said.

The Toronto-based actress also played a hand in developing the character's backstory.

During an early discussion with the series' creative team, Deines offered her version of Street's history.

According to Deines, Street has a middle-class background, but she turned her back on it and went out on her own.

"I thought she should live in a trailer, so they went out and got me an airstream trailer," Deines says. "That's totally cool, I love the idea that she can just take off when things get yucky at one place."

The series also incorporated Deines idea of having the character being a jack-of-all-trades who concocts a variety of juices. For actors, coming on to an established series is a daunting task, but when one of the creators is a legend in the industry, the task gains an added challenge.

"Of course, I've seen Star Trek ... who hasn't seen Star Trek?" Deines said. "So I had a fairly good sense of who was behind the show.

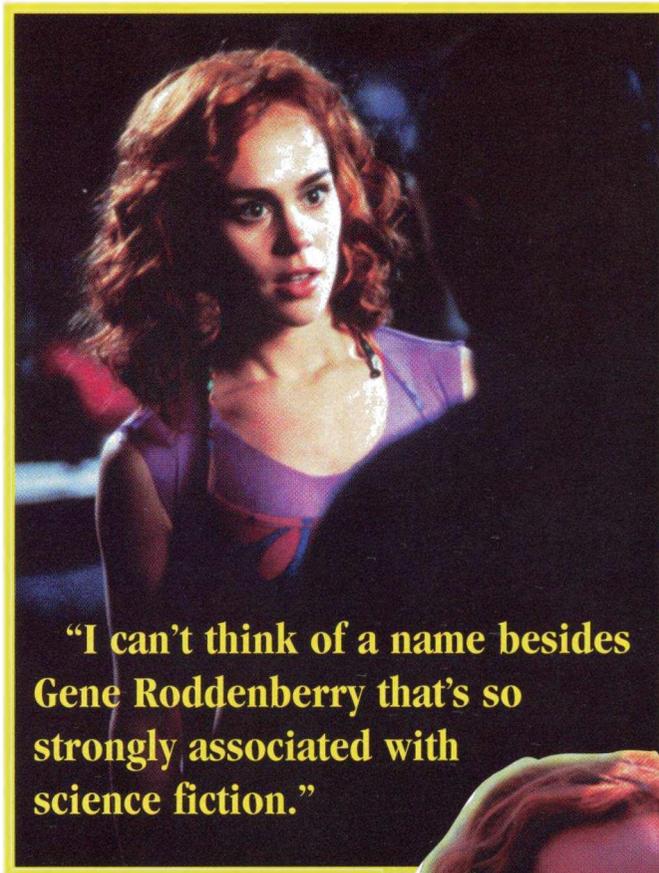
"I can't think of a name besides Gene Roddenberry that's so strongly associated with science fiction."

With that recognition also comes a sense of responsibility for those associated with the program.

"There's a certain responsibility to uphold a certain level of quality. It's nice to have that behind you."

There's also, Deines adds, a challenge for actors and the behind the scenes personnel to reach that lofty standard.

Despite her efforts to



**"I can't think of a name besides Gene Roddenberry that's so strongly associated with science fiction."**

study the show before she reached the set, there were a few areas which surprised Deines — especially when it came to the Taelon's plot-lines.

"I never realized how borderline some of them are," she said. "You can never tell if some of them are good or evil. There is a lot more secretive stuff going on than I remembered.

"It's more complex psychology than the science fiction programs I remember."

Series work is a departure for Deines who was raised in Victoria, B.C., and who wrote and performed plays at local community events when she was a child.

"I've mostly done theatre work," she says. "That doesn't give you a lot of opportunity to do year-long contract work."

During the last two years, Deines has added a number of theatrical credits to her

Iguana, as well as Promise in the Seaside Dive at the Glen Morris Studio.

This is not to say that she hasn't tackled television work before. Deines has appeared in such series such as Real Kids Real Adventures, FX: The Series, The Rez, Fast Track, Wind At My Back, and Nancy Drew.

The transition from stage to series television hasn't been too difficult for Deines.

"It's probably tougher going the other way," she said. "Film is more finicky, but stage work is much more physically and vocally demanding."

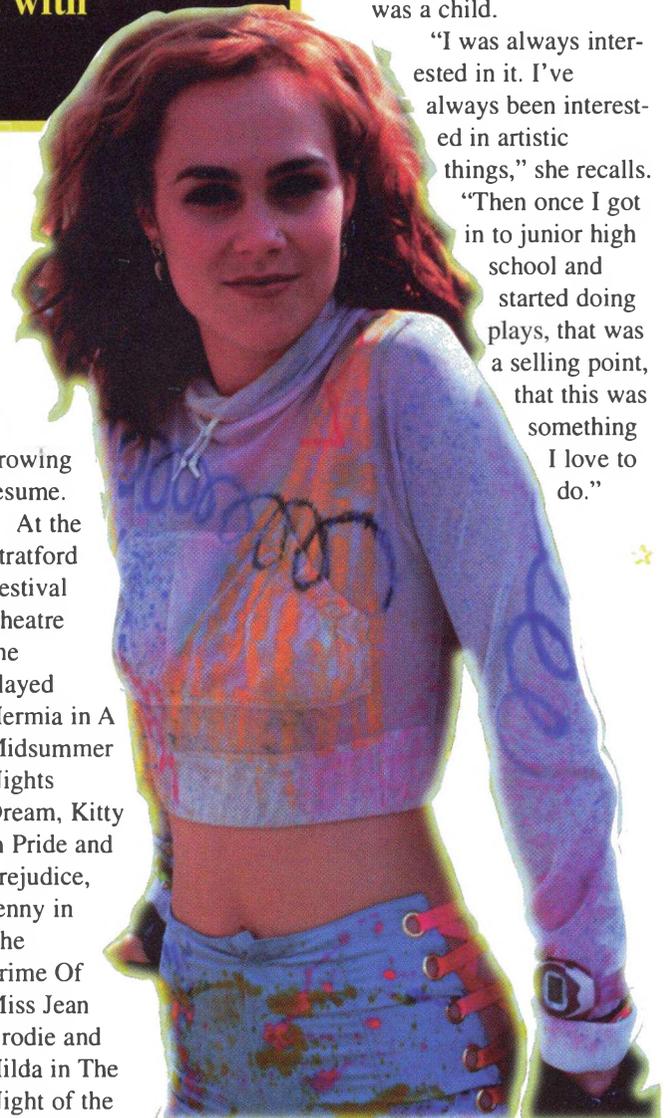
Of course, for Deines, performing has been something she has pursued since she was a child.

"I was always interested in it. I've always been interested in artistic things," she recalls.

"Then once I got in to junior high school and started doing plays, that was a selling point, that this was something I love to do."

growing resume.

At the Stratford Festival Theatre she played Hermia in A Midsummer Nights Dream, Kitty in Pride and Prejudice, Jenny in The Prime Of Miss Jean Brodie and Hilda in The Night of the



# McManus proves there's life in death

**As Kai the dead assassin on Lexx, Michael McManus faces the challenge of maintaining the character's inertia**

**By  
Chris Kreljaard**

When actor Michael McManus took what seemed to be a courtesy call in 1995, he never dreamed that it was his first step toward cult status as the assassin Kai on Lexx.

McManus had worked with the Lexx producer and co-creator on such projects as Paint Cans and The Squamish Five.

"I had worked for Paul Donovan in 1987 and we'd been friends since then," McManus explained from his Toronto home. "When he called me in for an audition, I thought he was just being polite. I didn't take it seriously, but he was very serious during the auditions.

"He claimed later that he wrote Kai and had the idea of a series with me in mind all the time.

"Of course, I was broke at the time so I took the part."

The 38-year-old actor had heard Donovan discuss the potential series before he auditioned for the role of the dead Brunnen-G assassin long before the audition.

But the speed in which the project's financing came together and the Lexx was thrust into orbit caught him off-guard.

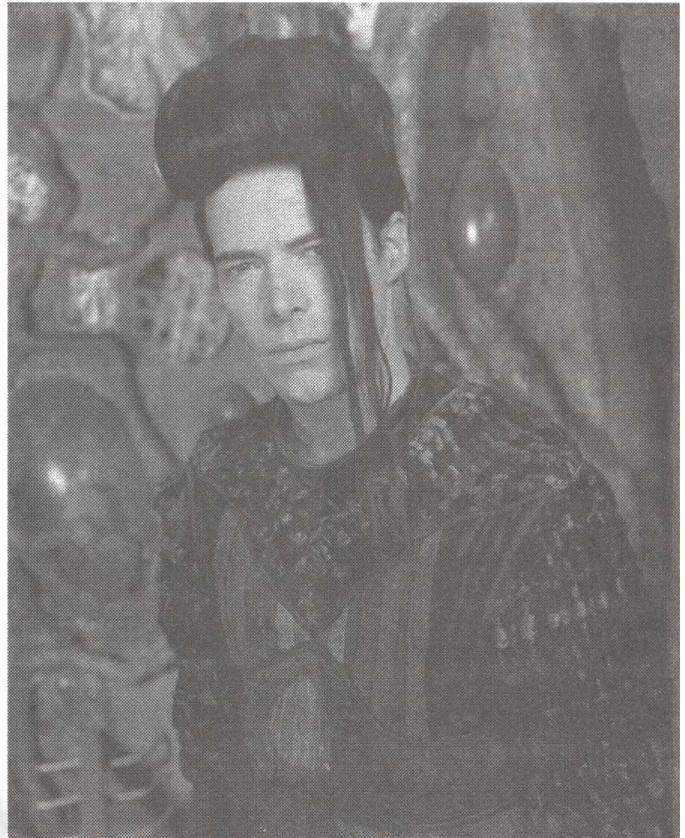
McManus read four pages

of the script for his audition, then shot a screen test and within five days "my life was transported to Halifax and I was having costumes sewn on me."

Despite the pace, McManus still had time to put his immediate impression on the character.

"Both Paul and I are the chief defenders of the wig," he said. "We like it.

"It's pretty silly, but it makes sense for someone whose comes from a civilization that's 2,000-years-old."



*"The dead do not pooh"*  
*In discussing such proof that Kai is dead, Michael McManus explains he had reservations about the reasoning behind Kai's fabled line.*  
*"The problem with the line was that Stanley said 'Yeah it's nice to have a good shit once and a while.' So Kai would have to respond to the enjoyment part rather than the act itself. I think Paul (Donovan) was just chuckling to himself one night."*

McManus also defends Kai's costume, partly from an historical aspect. Since conquering civilizations assimilate parts of the cultures they conquer, it makes sense to McManus that aspects of the insect world would be incor-

porated into Kai's costume.

Of course, being a dead guy presents some problems both for the actors and for the writers — if the character is dead, how does it evolve over the course of the series? Well, it doesn't.

"I try not to evolve the character," McManus said. "After the end of the first eight hours, two of the writers were getting kind of panicky because they couldn't figure out what to do with a dead guy who's so passive.

"I just said, 'Well, you guys wrote it.'"

In response, the writers

began to incorporate such aspects as flashbacks, incorrect waking procedures, mechanical failures and dissections.

"They sort of toned that down a bit lately, which is a shame," McManus said. "I love it when body parts get hacked off."

Of course, playing a dead guy leads others to believe that McManus has little opportunity to act. Not so, he said.

"There are people on the crew who think I never get to do anything. But, I'm acting my pants off. I'm one step from going over the top it's incredible."

McManus's initial approach to Kai was cerebral.

## Guerrilla filmmakers tackle Flint

"We were so out of control," confided Jason Graham.

Working like guerrilla filmmakers, the crew set out to push the boundaries of filmmaking on a budget — about \$350 Cdn.

In a homage to James Colburn's Flint character, Graham and co-conspirator Craig Gould gathered together a bunch of fellow employees at the New VR in Barrie, Ont., and created Mango Flint.

"We just wanted to see what we could do with the station's equipment," said Gould of the decision to cannibalize studio equipment for the production. "We wanted to push video technology to the limit. We were working after hours at night, when no one else was looking, taking their stuff, taking it apart.

And then we wanted to tackle all of the mysteries that are out there."

In the movie, Flint must gain control of the Enigma device and a decoder in order to unlock an intergalactic puzzle. Along the way he has to match wits with the Black Widow and overcome a government conspiracy.

Through the use of stock visuals and some nifty special effect, spare parts and the innards of equipment from the station, the ad hoc production company created a piece which spans from Barrie to the Great Pyramid.

The project started as a vignette to introduce summer programming. But, the project grew until it encompassed a handful of episodes totalling more than 30 minutes of air time.

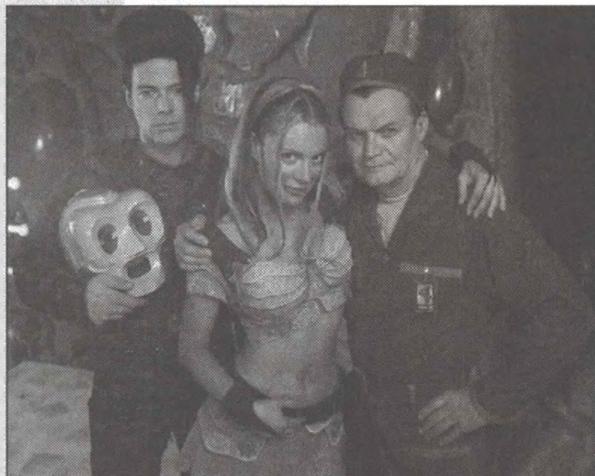
The piece was so good, it was separated into pieces and used on The New VR's sister station, Space: The Imagination Station.

The writing for the episodes is sparse — there's no dialogue, just the occasional narration by the master computer.

He considered how a dead person would move and how it would interact with living beings.

"I thought about the inertia and the tempo of the character," McManus explained. "It seemed like he would be like a steel ball that once it got rolling, it would just keep moving with a regular tempo."

McManus also decided that since a dead person had no emotions of their own, Kai would, to an extent, mirror the emotions and actions of those around him. "One would think of him as kind of hollow and actors are like that too. They just reflect what's around them."



McManus's approach to the character fits perfectly with the Salter Street creative forces behind the series — people who McManus says can be "kind of spiky and they can get into lots of trouble with lots of people.

"But for my money, they're very independent thinking and they take wild chances with talent and that's why they've been successful.

"They're straight-forward and dangerous producers."

Some of that danger is displayed in the sexual nature of the series.

"In terms of the sex part, I don't envy Stanley Twiddle at all," McManus jokes. "I'm quite happy being the stout, stoic dead guy."

But after three seasons, McManus is nearing the end of his time as Kai.

"I think that after one more year, they should just left him drift off into a black-hole.

"I think they all should."

One of the reasons is that McManus

wants to avoid being too strongly identified as Kai.

"If I do three or four more years, then it's a life. I think one more year and then let's get on with it."

Then Kai will just become a sizeable entry on the actor's resume.

There have been other actors on both sides of McManus's family. His grandfather's brother was a devoted amateur actor in southern Ontario during the middle part of the century. On his mother's side, his aunt is actress Helen Shaver and a distant cousin is actress Laly Cadeau.

"I was pretty sure I was going into the arts by the time I was done with elementary school," McManus explained. "I really made a try to get into music, but that was really impossible. So I started to do some musical theatre in high school."

Besides regional theatre, McManus also strengthened and trained his vocal chords by participating in choirs and playing in rock bands. As well, he also began to study ballet at the Ontario School of Ballet.

It was a decision intended to fill in the gaps in McManus's performing arts resume.

"I almost went into dance, but decided that acting might be best after I took a course at the Banff Centre For The Fine Arts," McManus explained. "All of a sudden acting seemed very appealing. So that's what I picked."

Also playing a hand in McManus's decision was that he was coming to dance late in life. Most male dancers start as children, McManus explained. Since he was a young adult, he hadn't time to develop a classically trained technique.

But the clincher was a talk he had with one of his ballet instructors.

"They really roll out the red carpet for you and make you seem really important. The attention and the freebies were really very nice," McManus recalls. "I asked the main teacher what my life would be like as a dancer and she described it in realistic, graphic detail.

**Continued on page 41**

# Actress relishes myriad of roles on Lexx

*From teen to opera singer to spaced out alien, Patricia Zentilli has found a niche on board Lexx*

Patricia Zentilli was ecstatic with the news Lexx had been renewed for a fourth season.

She can, after all, lay claim to being one of the three actors who has played more than one role in the series first three seasons. So, there is a chance she will appear sometime during the fourth season — scheduled to begin airing in June 2001.

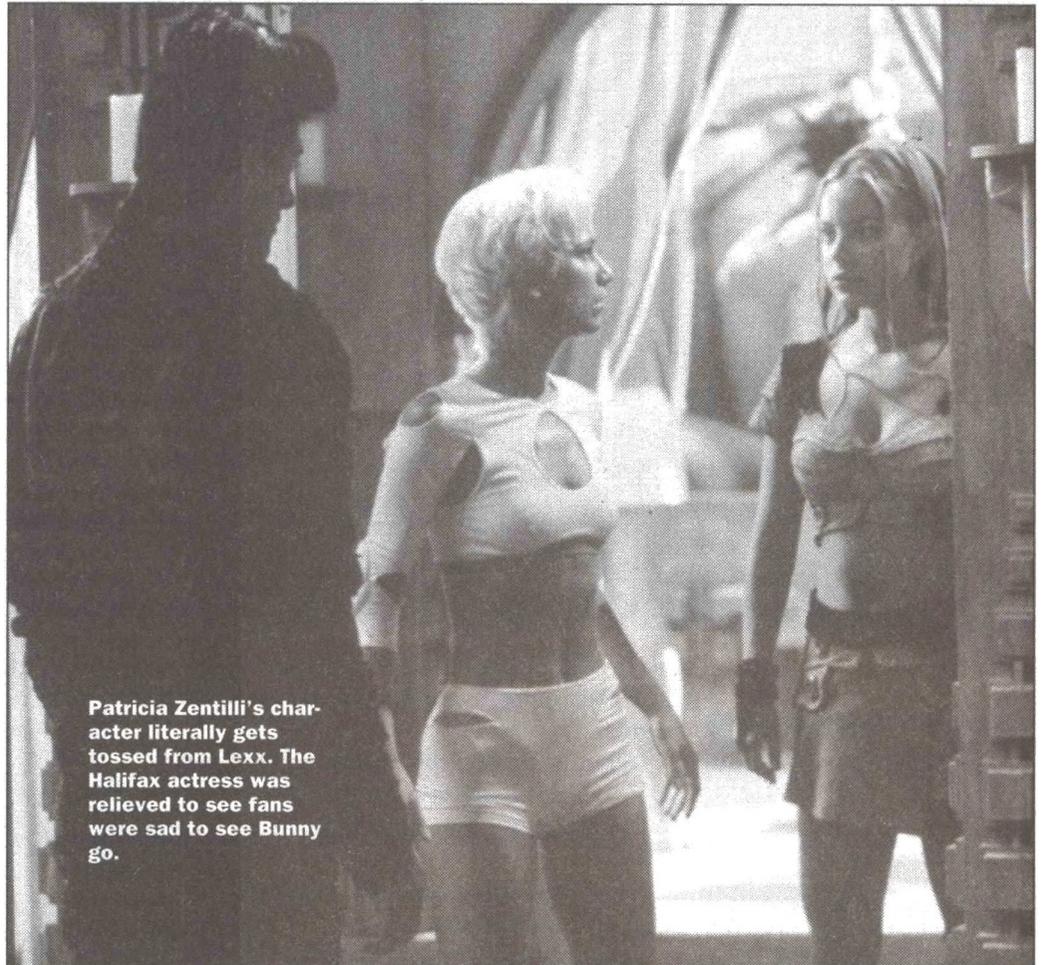
During the second season, she played Laleen in the 10th episode of the second season, Wake the Dead. Eight episodes later she was back on the show in the episode, Brigadoom.

Both episodes are among the most hysterical in a series that prides itself on its deranged sense of humour.

In the third season, she took on the role of Bunny — that is until Bunny got tossed, literally, from the series.

“I was so flattered to be asked back. But I was a little worried about playing Bunny because she was so spacey and nice, that I was afraid that she would be irritating,” Zentilli said. “I didn’t want to go on the Internet and see fans writing, ‘Thank God they threw her off the gondola’.

“I was relieved to see that



Patricia Zentilli's character literally gets tossed from Lexx. The Halifax actress was relieved to see fans were sad to see Bunny go.

fans liked her and were sad to see her go.”

Despite the affection toward Bunny among Lexx fans it was Zentilli’s turn as Laleen which has gained her the most renown.

In Wake the Dead, the Lexx comes across a space ship (which resembles a VW bus) with five teenagers aboard— they planned to be in suspended animation for two days and overslept by almost 270 years. The teenagers come aboard the Lexx and in short fashion are killed.

It was a brilliant tip of the

hat to slasher films.

In a takeoff of Psycho, Zentilli was killed in the shower. The fact she was shown naked generated chatter in Lexx-related news-groups and there are more than a few screengrabs and MPEGs posted for U.S. viewers who were only able to see the censored, errr.... sanitized version.

“I’m nervous before I do everything. You think they’re going to say, ‘Oh my god, we made a big mistake hiring her’,” she explained.

“But I was a little nervous about the shower scene, I

wondered, ‘How am I going to tell mom that I have to do this’.”

Stealing a page from a Nike commercial when her daughter broke the news, Zentilli’s mom just said, “Oh, just do it.”

Later, both her parents watched the episode without any criticism of their daughter’s acting decision.

“They laughed their heads off, My mother thought the toilets in Wake the Dead were the funniest things in the world.”

Of course, Zentilli’s parents, (her mother is an artist



**During Lexx's time on the air, Patricia Zentilli has played an ill-fated party girl who died at the hands of Kal and, most recently, as Bunny during the third season of the program. Above, Bunny watches as Kal tries his hand at volleyball — this time the ball was the one who didn't survive. Right, Zentilli makes a guest appearance on Earth: Final Conflict. In the episode, Sins of the Father, she plays Eva Gale, the daughter of a U.S. senator who has made a shady deal with the Taelons.**

and her father is a geology professor in Halifax), have been supportive of her decision to become an actress.

Recently, Zentilli came across a biography she wrote when she was in sixth grade. It said, "When I grow up, I'm going to be an actress."

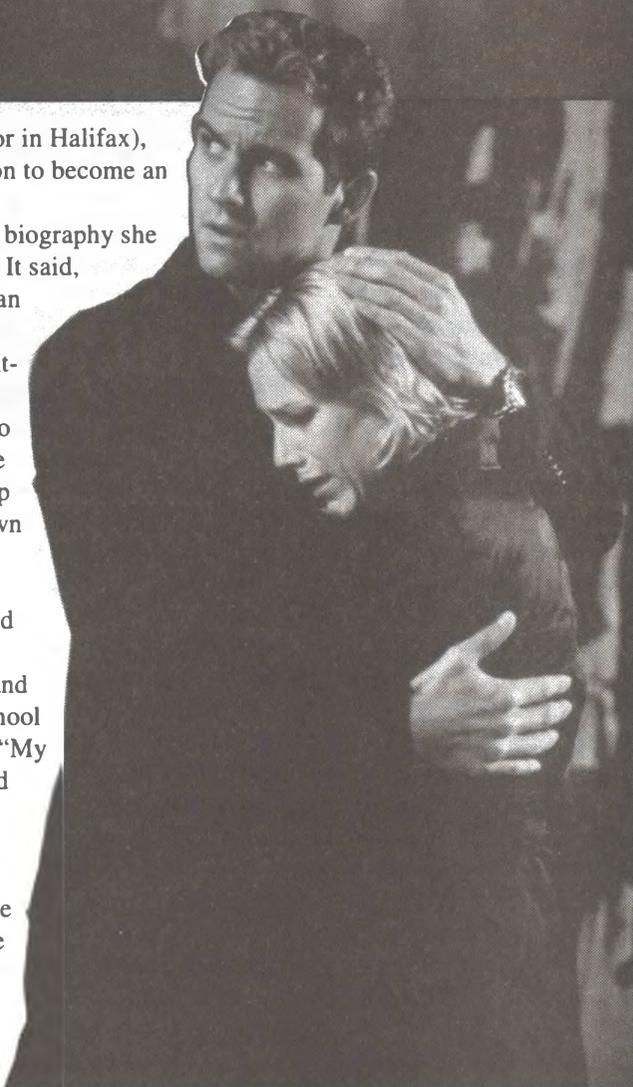
"So it's always something I wanted to do," she explains.

Later in school, Zentilli turned to performing as a means to overcome shyness. In high school, she took up the unicycle, became a bit of a clown and a mainstay in school variety shows.

"I think they were a little worried when they realized that this wasn't going to be just some little hobby and that I was going to go to theatre school and make a go of it," Zentilli said. "My dad would always say, "You should still take a computer course just in case, because computers are the future."

"In the past five years, when I've really been working, I think they're proud."

Of course, those who have seen the third season of Lexx know that Zentilli returned to the showers (as



Bunny).

While she was pleased with the scene, Zentilli doesn't believe it reached its potential.

"I thought it could have been funnier," she said. "I wanted to shampoo Kai's hair or put a big shower cap on him."

But the look on Michael McManus's face told Zentilli that the idea wasn't well-received.

Still McManus was happy with the scene.

"It was a lovely scene, It was a great scene," McManus said. "I was very professional doing it all and it felt great."

"Then at four in the morning after we shot, I woke up and thought, 'My god what am I doing? Those girls were so beautiful'."

After shooting *Wake the Dead*, the producers learned Zentilli was also an accomplished singer. So they brought her back, put a brunette wig on her and gave her the role of "young woman" in the theatre troupe the Lexx discovers in Brigadoom.

In the episode, *The Lexx* comes across an empty theatre that springs to life when Stan Tweedle knocks over a tambourine. The Master of Ceremonies informs them that a very special performance is about to get under way.

The musical drama then unfolds as the story of the warrior poets, Brunnen-G, is played out in glorious musical fashion.

For someone used to singing on the stage, it was a unique experience to sing on the series.

The members of the troupe would sing accompanied by a piano when the episode was shot. Two weeks later, the actors would head to the recording studio to redo the singing portion of the episode.

"We had to dub it and that was very different," Zentilli said. "You had to make sure your mouth was moving and the notes all matched what was on the screen."

"It's challenging. But I've done ADR before and you get better at watching the scenes and saying your lines."

Even with her acting and vocal talents, it took a fortunate bit of timing for

**"I want to tell some really interesting stories and work with some really good actors and do some really interesting things. And see where life takes me."**

Zentilli to end up on the series.

"There's a lot of reasons I ended up on *Lexx*," Zentilli recalls. "That summer, I was in Halifax doing a Leonard Cohen show called, *Sincerely Your Friend*, and there was an Air Canada strike.

"I was stuck in Halifax so I thought, 'Maybe there's something here I can audition for.'"

Heading down to the Salter Street facilities, Zentilli was told there was an audition for parts on *Lexx*.

"But I thought, 'Well, they want really sexy babes for that so I don't know if I'll get it.'"

But *Lexx* isn't the only science fiction series to enjoy Zentilli's talents.

During the summer, she filmed an episode of *Earth: Final Conflict* in Toronto.

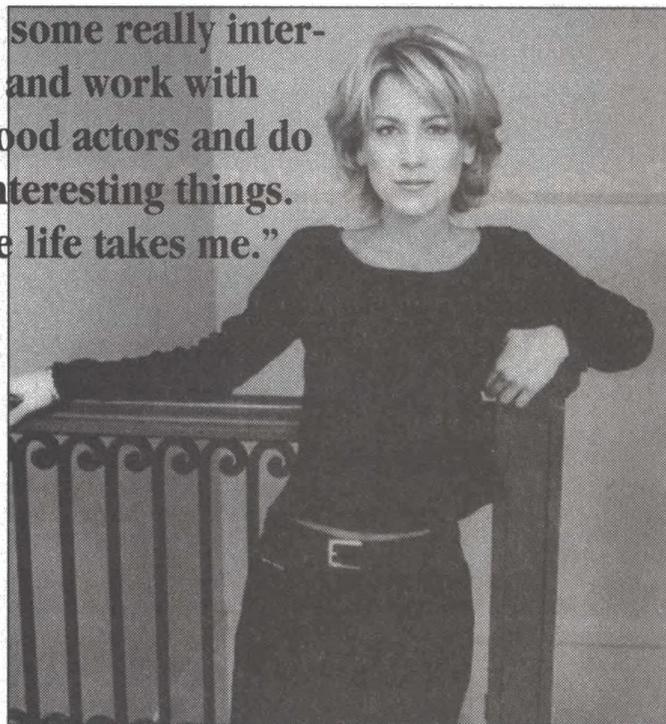
In *Sins of the Father*, she plays Eva Gale, a senator's daughter. Her father (Bruce Gray from *Traders*) plays a politician who becomes involved with the Taelons.

"It was a real blast," she said. "The people on the *Earth Final* set were really nice people. I had so much fun. I got to fire a gun and I got to lie in a hospital bed."

During the episode, Zentilli share the bulk of her scenes with Robert Leeshock, whose character of Liam Kinchaid befriends Eva and tries to help her get away from her evil father.

Between *Lexx* and *Final Conflict*, Zentilli has become more aware of the genre.

"When I do a play that's set in the 18th century, I go out and do a lot of



research and educate myself and end up learning about that period," Zentilli explains.

"*Lexx* kind of opened my eyes to the whole world of science fiction ... all the series, the websites and the fans.

"And it's fun as an actor."

After almost 10 years as a professional actor, Zentilli still approaches each role with a sense of excitement.

"I still feel that I have a lot to learn and I want to learn more and I think I'm ready to take on some really big roles.

"Now, I want to tell some really interesting stories and work with some really good actors and do some really interesting things.

"And see where life takes me."

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# Paré searches for television success with *Starhunter*

*Actor signs on to play reluctant hero searching for his kidnapped child in outer space*

**By**  
**Chris Krejlgard**

The producers call it "action with an attitude."

It has also been called the anthesis of *Star Trek*.

"It's not a utopian universe by any stretch of the imagination," explains producer Phillip K. Jackson. "It's one which is filled with people with large and troubled egos, dysfunctional families and great egos."

"Yeah, reality," interjected fellow producer and series creator Daniel D'Or.

"What we're trying to do is get a story that is, in a way, a reliable commercial story, but to portray a bit more sense of the time involved and the difficulties involved in outer space," said Jackson.

The genesis of the series formed during an industry convention a few years back when D'Or had an epiphany.

The creation of *Starhunter* was, in part, a recognition that a market existed for such a series. As well, there was also an opportunity for Jackson's and D'Or's company to diversify their work.

"We saw there was still an insatiable appetite for sci-fi and the series was the natural progression for us."

*Starhunter* follows the adventures of Danté



**"Michael gets sci-fi."**

— Daniel D'Or  
Creator/Producer

Montana (Michael Paré) about three centuries in the future.

Montana is a social outcast who has never really recovered from the murder of his wife, Penny, by interplanetary marauders, and the kidnapping of his son,

Travis, whom everyone except Dante believes to be dead.

"It's a little bit like the

Fugitive," explained Jackson. "There's always a clue or a hint, that leads him to the next episode."

"He keeps getting closer and closer. But he never quite finds him."

Dante pilots *Tulip*, a vast, rusty and largely derelict former luxury liner now retrofit for duty by the starhunter.

The starhunters are pri-

vate force that operates in a similar fashion to the bounty hunters of the Old West

With the vast distances between Earth and its colonies, the abilities of basic policing services are maxed out. The use of the starhunters, has become common practice.

The *Starhunters* job is to bring to justice, for the monetary reward, the epidemic of criminals terrorizing the colonies.

"Michael really was the right guy for this," Jackson said. "The character of Danté Montana just had a lot of the qualities which naturally go to Michael's strengths."

"The other thing is that Michael gets sci-fi," adds D'Or. "He's an avid sci-fi reader and follows it. So he's very excited about the genre and that really, really helps."

Understanding the genre also allows Paré to contribute to the creative side of the production, by instinctively knowing what works and what won't sci-fi-wise.

As a starhunter, Danté captains the *Tulip* — an old rusty interplanetary luxury liner.

Dante's crew consists of his niece, Percy (Tanya Allen), a bright but rebellious young woman under his guardianship, and Lucretia Luc Scott (Claudette Roche), the ship's munitions expert and unofficial science officer who has been placed on board by the *Tulip*'s owner, Rudolpho. They are assisted by



**Opposite page: Michael Paré as Dante. From top: Claudette Roche as Luc, Ron Donachie as McDuff with Paré during a fight scene. Roche and Paré on the bridge of the Tulip in a scene from the premiere episode of Starhunter.**



**Principal photography on the 22-episode series began in May. The series is scheduled to premiere on The Movie Network in Canada on Nov.1.**

Caravaggio (Murray Melvin), the spaceship's computer 3-D holographic display.

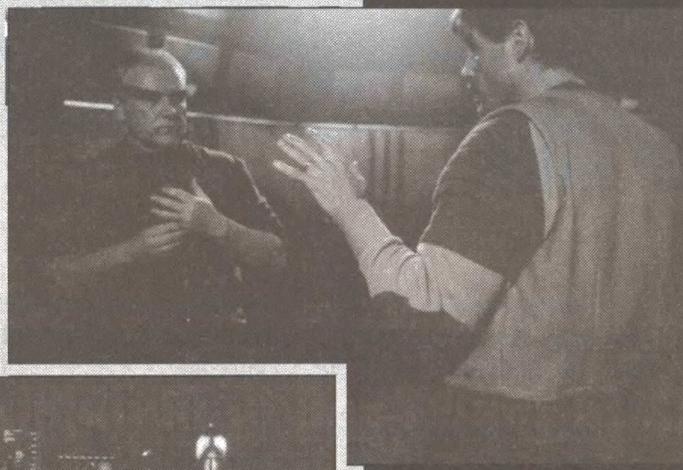
Through it all, there is a backstory involving genetic engineering.

The series also packs an R rating, which makes it perfect for premium cable networks.

"We're blessed with a whole series of buyers who want the edge from us," said Jackson. "The Movie Network has been very clear that they want product that distinguishes itself from what would be on normal channels.

"They want more edge and more attitude. Otherwise, there's no purpose to paying a subscription to get it because they wouldn't be getting anything different."

Space: The Imagination



Station will broadcast the series in 2002. The series has been sold to broadcasters in Europe and negotiations are under way to take the series into the United States.

A second, toned-down version, will also be available to broadcasters.

For Jackson and D'Or, making Starhunter is a new experience.

Before now, they had produced 18 feature films,

such as *The Cusp*, *Deadly Wake* and *Millennium Queen*, through their Toronto-based company Producers' Network Associates.

"The whole idea was to gear up from feature films," D'Or said of the decision to break new ground. "This was the major transition."

While the company isn't abandoning feature films, the television series enhances the company's bottom line and provides more storytelling opportunities.

"We wanted to do a show that's different with a purpose," said Phillip.

Part of that purpose is to fill a need for intelligent, thought-provoking television — especially when it comes to sci-fi programs. The company is also working on a second sci-fi series, *Earthspell*.

"Television tends to underestimate its audience when it comes to science fiction," said Jackson. "I think you have a lot of people out there in the core audience who want a little bit of a challenge both conceptually and socially in the television that they're getting.

"I think that there's a lot of science fiction that has been sanitized for television."

The result, according to Jackson, is that audiences are continually disappointed.

But with the evolution of the television marketplace into more specialized areas, Jackson says that the opportunity to bring more intelligent and challenging programs to air will improve.

Starhunter will seek to strike a balance between action/drama for audiences and technical concepts for hard-core sf fans.

# Launch Vipers

**Even if Battlestar Galactica never takes off again, Richard Hatch has another space journey in store for fans**



**Dirk Benedict and Anne Lockhart are among the actors from the original series who has expressed an interest in returning to the Galactica. Of course if it wasn't for the decision to ignore Galactica 1980, Benedict's character would still be marooned on a desolate planet.**

Like the remnants of the 12 colonies of man in Battlestar Galactica, actor Richard Hatch is on a long search.

Hatch has made it his personal mission to bring the series back to television — 20 years later.

The Los Angeles-based actor is searching for a network executive who will green-light the series' return to theatres and eventually to television.

"Right now, it's tied up by the rights issue," Hatch said during a recent stop in Toronto. "We've been in talks with Universal for some time and it's been pretty slow going."

Adding to the problem is the recent sale of Universal Studios

to a French entertainment conglomerate. But even with the delay, the sale could benefit the project.

"The sale could have a positive effect," Hatch said. "The old Universal had no direction, so this could be a positive change."

The Cylons were minor annoyances compared to the legal wrangling surrounding a sequel to Battlestar Galactica.

Both Richard Hatch, who played Apollo, and Glen Larson, who created Battlestar Galactica, have plans for sequels. As of late, Larson and Universal Studios, which produced the series, are determining what rights Larson holds —

something which would effect any project based on Battlestar Galactica.

Despite the uncertainty over the project's future, Hatch says he and other backers have raised more than \$120 million to make the show a reality.

He's also managed to rally the remaining members of the original cast around him for the project.

All of the principals have agreed to take part.

Even Lorne Green would appear — in the form of a hologram.

"It would make sense that Adama (Green's character) would leave a record of his wisdom and the teachings of the

elders,” Hatch explained.

Even the late John Colicos — or at least Baltar’s embodiment could be included in the new project.

“With all the time that Baltar spent with the Cylons, they would have studied him and incorporated him into their programming,” Hatch noted. “So Baltar’s presence would still be felt even though John won’t be there.”

With the passage of time, there is a possibility the project will lose other cast members as it has Green, Colicos and Lloyd Bridges (Commander Cain).

But while such an eventuality would be personally tragic for Hatch, he says, it wouldn’t scuttle a new *Battlestar Galactica*.

“The plan is to integrate the original cast with a new younger cast and then have the old cast pull back a bit,” Hatch said.

Such a manoeuvre would avoid the space-borne pot-holes that affected *Star Trek: The Next Generation* during its early days.

“Their mistake was to bring in an entirely new cast and it took the audience some time to find the show,” Hatch said. “It was only when they brought characters from the original series on for guest appearances that the show took off.”

Hatch has travelled to science fiction conventions across North America to generate interest in the series and remind fans of the special place it occupies when it comes to popular science fiction.

And judging by the reaction of the fans who stopped by to get an autograph, shake his hand and offer words of encouragement, they still think fondly of the series.

Indeed, according to an

official with Canada’s science fiction network, Space: the Imagination Station, the series is its top-rated program — acing out *Star Trek*, *Babylon 5* and *X-Files*.

“It’s not surprising. The show was a labour of love and the audience can recognize that,” Hatch said.

### Keeping busy

While the project is clearly a top priority for Hatch, he has more irons in the fire.

Just because *Battlestar Galactica* is stuck in limbo, doesn’t mean Hatch is standing idly by. He’s made his pitch to the studio, now it’s up to Universal executives to take the next step.

“If they’re not open to doing *Battlestar*, then we’re going to move forward with *Great War of Magellan*,” Hatch explained. “Which we’re probably going to do anyway. We’re going to do it regardless.”

“Our issue is that you can sit there waiting for months or you can wait for years for a large corporation such as Universal to make a decision.”

Unlike *Battlestar Galactica*, *The Great War of Magellan* is a project which provides Hatch with complete creative control. He wrote it and developed it into a theatrical project.

“I realized after spending the last several years working on *Battlestar*, that no matter how hard I worked, you have no guarantee what big companies like Universal, which own the rights to the property, will do or not do,” Hatch said. “If they don’t want to do anything, they can just sit there and hold on to it.”

“Some companies would

rather hold onto a property than let someone else do it and be successful with it.

“They don’t want to be embarrassed.”

The Great War Of

## “The Great War of Magellan is Braveheart meets Mad Max in Space.”

*Magellan*, is a story that Hatch has written from his heart and is one that he says he’s been waiting to develop all his life.

“The Great War of *Magellan is Braveheart meets Mad Max in Space*,” Hatch encapsulates the plot.

Drawing inspiration from Celtic mythology, the story takes place in a post-apocalyptic time in the *Magellan* galaxy.

The first manned mission to Mars discovers a crashed space ship with a 1,000-year-old being onboard (played by Hatch).

“I basically tell them, ‘I’ve travelled a long way from the *Magellan* Galaxy in the hopes of saving your world generations of pain and destruction’,” Hatch said.

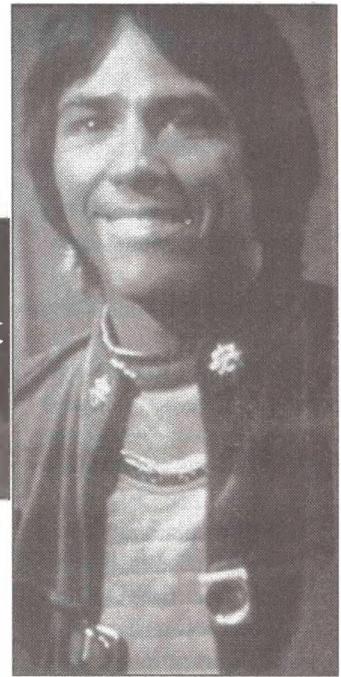
From this point, the alien tells the tale of the war that ravaged his galaxy and why he travelled so far to share his story.

“In a sense, it’s like looking into our future,” Hatch explained. “Where are we going to go in the next thousands of years?”

“What choices are we going to make? And what are the repercussions of them?”

Hatch’s production team filmed a trailer for the project earlier this year.

Hatch plans to show the



trailer at conventions and his own seminars during the coming months.

Of course, there are still some ties to *Battlestar*.

*Battlestar* veteran Jack Stauffer appears in the trailer (his schedule didn’t permit more than a cameo appearance in the trailer — should the project proceed, his part will be enhanced).

In *The Great War of Magellan*, Stauffer plays a bartender of an intergalactic watering hole.

The bar is a focal point for all the cutthroats and shady denizens of the galaxy and Stauffer plays the cantankerous and cranky bartender/owner (who is yet unnamed) who is witness to the intrigue — sort of a space-bound version of Rick’s place in *Casablanca*.

“He’s there and he watches all this going on,” Stauffer said. “It’s a wonderful character in a supporting role.”

“Richard likes to find places for my disposition,” Stauffer said. “Richard and I never vied for the same audience, so we complement each other.”

# Stauffer ready to take care of unfinished business

To the creative forces behind *Battlestar Galactica*, the series represents a large unfinished portion of their careers.

Jack Stauffer is no exception.

Stauffer, a veteran stage and television actor, played Bojay — one of the fighter pilots from the Pegasus who ended up on the *Galactica*.

Stauffer appeared in four of the last five episodes during the series' first season.

"Glen Larson (the series' creator) wanted to introduce some conflict into the series ... beyond just battling the Cylons every week," Stauffer recalls. "But I was involved in another project at the time and wasn't available on a full-time basis.

"The plan was for me to make some appearances during the last few episodes in the first season and then join the cast full-time in the second.

"Of course, there wasn't a second season."

The original plan was to have Stauffer's character serve as an antagonist for Richard Hatch. His character, Apollo, was to have been the exact opposite of Bojay and the two were to be at odds during the course of the series.

In joining the cast full-time, Stauffer would have been reunited with fellow *All My Children* alumnus, Hatch.

With just four appearances on the series, it's fair to say that his character was undefined. Stauffer, who is involved in Hatch's project to reintroduce *Battlestar Galactica*, has developed some of Bojay's back story.

Building on a single line



Photo courtesy of Jack Stauffer

**The introduction of ace Viper pilot Bojay, Jack Stauffer, to *Battlestar Galactica* during the last five episodes was a planned prelude to a long-standing conflict between the character and Richard Hatch's Apollo. With the decision to retool the series with *Galactica 1980*, the plan never came to fruition.**

from the episode, *Living Legend*, Stauffer has developed the basis for Apollo's and Bojay's relationship.

"There is a line where Starbuck says, 'you remember Bojay from the

war broke out.

"So there's an unresolved rivalry."

Like his friend, Stauffer believes that *Galactica 1980* was the worst mistake producers could have made when

**"The search for your origins was such a terrific premise for the series. But once you find your origin, then you have to make some sort of a statement."**

Academy,'" Stauffer explains. "So I thought that the academy would have a *Top-Gun* program and that both Apollo and Bojay would be competing in it when the

they retooled the series for a second season.

The basic theme woven through the original series was man's quest for his past; for his origins. With the dis-

covery of Earth at the beginning of *Galactica 1980*, that thread was pulled out from the series.

"The search for your origins was such a terrific premise for the series. It's such a powerful universal concept.

"But once you find your origin, then you have to make some sort of a statement," Stauffer said. "On *Galactica 1980*, they found their origins."

Since making a statement would effectively end the series, *Battlestar Galactica: The Second Coming* will ignore the 1980 season and continue the premise on the first season.

When the *Second Coming* is approved, Stauffer and Bojay will be part of the

**"The real tragedy is that there was so much potential for the show and it's gone unfulfilled."**

action.

According to Stauffer, Bojay is no longer one of the ace pilots on the *Galactica*. Instead, he heads up the ship's R&D division and develops a myriad of devices for Apollo and the fleet's survivors.

"He's immersed in his work, but equipment and resources are in short supply," Stauffer says. "And

he's easily frustrated."

Like a number of other original cast members, Stauffer has taken part in the filming of Hatch's promotional trailer for *The Second Coming*.

The trailer, portions of which can be found on the Internet, is being used by Hatch to convince Universal Studios executives to green light the project. It's also being used to promote the project among other production companies and among fans.

Should *The Second Coming* become a reality, it will allow the actors to finish a project that began in 1978.

"The real tragedy is that there was so much potential for the show and it's gone unfulfilled," Stauffer said.

☆

## McManus

"That put an end to my desire for a career as a dancer."

But his desire to perform on stage hasn't dimmed. During hiatus, McManus busied himself in an Alan Cole musical. It's hardly a new endeavour for the London, Ont., native.

"I've probably done more plays with music than anything else. And, of course, there was the *Lexx* episodes which were musicals," McManus notes.

"I've been historically most comfortable on the stage, because that's where I started."

Even with the success of the series, it's not without its detractors — especially in the media, which McManus calls

a Toronto-based club.

He laments that some of the media whines about Canadian culture and defending projects which are terrible, while lambasting projects with originality. *Lexx* falls into the last category.

"It's sort of the odd ball of Canadian culture," McManus said with a hint of pride. "The *National Post* hates it, the cable fund hates it, The *Globe and Mail* hates it. But it's gotten a really nice reception from England and from France and America is getting into it.

Such success will ensure the series becomes part of the Canadian tapestry and validate it in the minds of the members of Toronto Club.

"Ten years from now, the *Post* will be calling it 'that Canadian cult hit'."

☆

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# It's a 3-D world for Texas sculptor

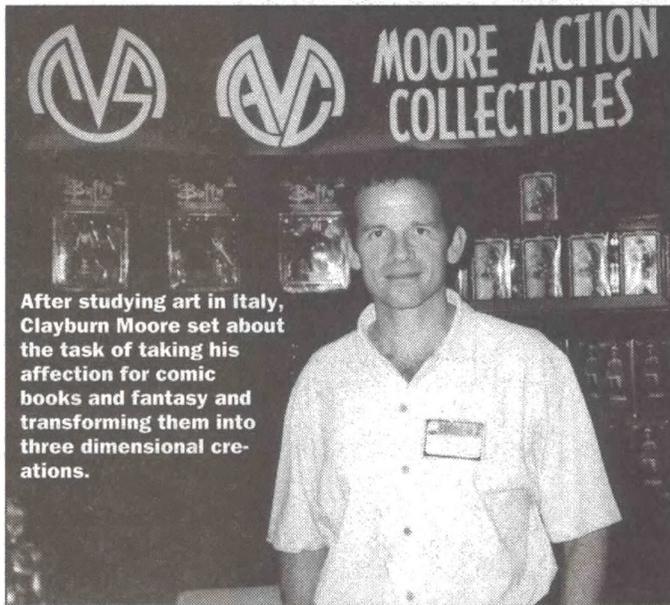
*Conveying power and beauty of his subjects are just two of the trademarks of Clayburn Moore's statues and busts*

By  
**A. Jaye Williams**

One can't help but fall prey to the wandering path the eye takes as it slowly and methodically takes in as much detail of a Clayburn Moore statue as possible.

The twisting, arching pose of Moore's Witchblade figure; the wind-blown hair of the Lady Death figure; the supple realism of the Xena bust. All these statues were sculpted by Moore personally.

His attention-



After studying art in Italy, Clayburn Moore set about the task of taking his affection for comic books and fantasy and transforming them into three dimensional creations.

tion to beauty and detail has a sort of magical allure that makes a Moore Creation or Moore Action Collectible stand out.

"What I try to do is show a human figure that evokes emotions ... strong emotions, whether it's the sensuality of the piece, or the power of the piece, or just the sheer beauty of the human form ... I think my strength is the anatomy and the beauty of the human form."

Moore comes from a family of artists. Having grown up in San Antonio,

Texas, it wasn't until graduating from high school that he realized he had a passion for sculpting. He enrolled in the University of Texas in Austin, but eventually expanded his education to the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy. It was there that he learned the specifics of bronze casting and figure sculpture.

However, Moore had another love as well.

That was the world of science fiction, fantasy and comic books. His major artistic influences ranged from the classical to

the fantasy realm.

"Bernini and Michelangelo, some of the great painters like Delacroix; later periods, more like the last century, people like Rodin ... are great influences. And then, when you get into the comic realms — the comics I was growing up with, the fantasy painter Frank Frazetta was a major influence ... Neal Adams and Jack Kirby are two of the great ones. John Buscema ... and many of the turn-of-the-century illustrators like Maxfield Parrish and Aubrey Beardsley."

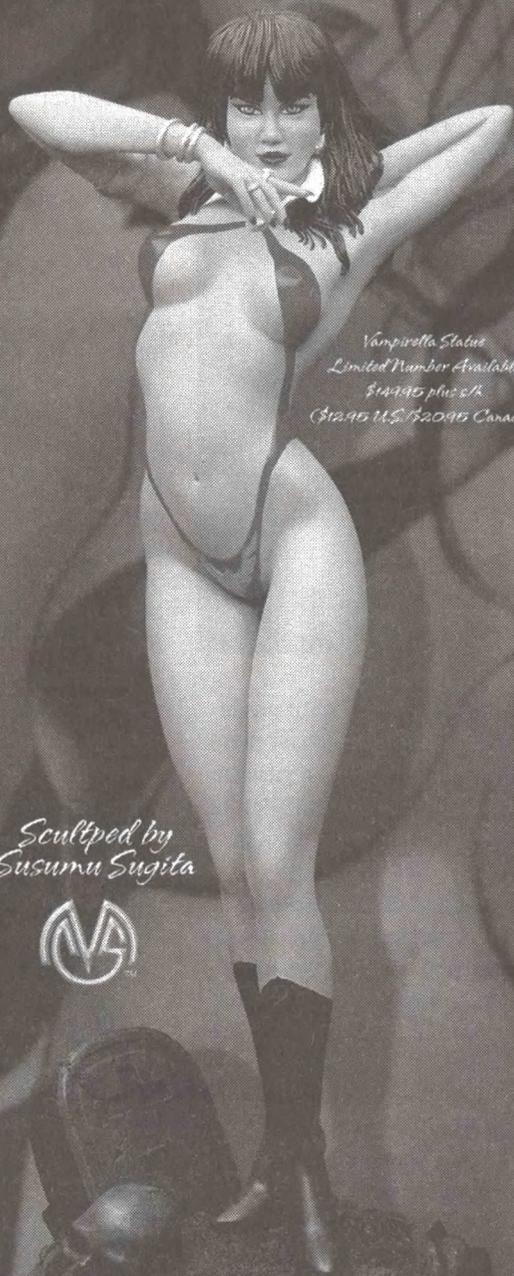
As seen in much of his work, part of Moore's intention with his sculptures "is to bring that sort of classical

Greco-Roman esthetic to comics and comics statues."



**What I try to do is show a human figure that evokes emotions ... strong emotions, whether it's the sensuality of the piece, or the power of the piece, or just the sheer beauty of the human form."**

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Fortunately, Moore has had the opportunity to work for many companies since his early days.

"When I got into this, I was hired to do Vampirella for Graphitti, who had licenced it from Harris. And then, basically, my plan was to target statues for other companies so I could get a broad portfolio of work and then later, after about two years, begin a licensing company.

"It was logical for me to think in terms of 'how can I make this sculpture thing into my own business?'"

But it's when Moore begins to list his portfolio that he shows why he is such a success today.

"So I did Nexus for Dark Horse, Gambit for Marvel, which was the first in a series of sculptures for their characters, and I did the little Death for the Vertigo line at DC ... I did most of that through Bone Designs ... They made some changes, but it's 85 per cent mine."

After Moore had amassed his impressive portfolio, he took off on his own and started up Moore Creations.

"My first project was Savage Dragon for Image Comics. After that, I did Lady Death for Chaos and then, after that, I started doing a lot of the Image stuff and more Chaos stuff. And then, about three years ago, I started the action figure company."

With such notable characters and companies to have worked for over the years, Moore looks with

affection on three key statues that are his personal favourites.

"A dream of mine has been to work with Frazetta. So doing the "Princess" was one thing. That was more of a project to show (the Frazettas) that I could do the work and that they could be happy with it ... I'm very proud of that piece. From a creative standpoint, however, it would be the Witchblade statue."

As well, Moore feels inclined to add that the Vampirella action figure is "the best thing I've done today. I wanted to do this type of fantasy type base with it. The figure itself, I just wanted it to be the best female figure that I could do for my company and Vampirella was perfect for that."

Presently, Moore is working on an Aphrodite IX statue that he's very happy with for David Finch's latest comic book creation. He is also working on a bust of Mark Silvestri's character, Darkness.

As well, he's working on the Cordelia Chase action figure for the Buffy line, another Vampirella — this one being a bust — and the Egyptian Queen from Frazetta's gallery.

It is clear that the quality and the artistry of Moore's work are what keeps bringing more and more business to his door.

"I approach these with this in mind: you have to bring the person out of the character, to show what the character's about. But I really believe that's

**"We're doing luxury items, you don't eat these, they don't give you shelter ... and it's a real honour when they buy one."**

secondary to doing a beautiful form ... and space.

"If it's a female character it needs to convey beauty, strength, an inspiring pose, power, self-reliance, whatever the things are in the character. But also for someone approaching from across the room ... to say 'Oh, that's interesting! What is that? That's ... beautiful. That draws me in! That says something to me emotionally!'"

"That's a major concern. Also, that the piece can be seen well from all angles."

It's not just important to recapture an image that has been drawn in a comic book or painted on a book jacket. Working in three dimensions, Moore has to produce a piece of art that will work from all angles — not just the front. That's particularly important when the figure is twisting or sitting and turning as in his *Witchblade* or *Hannah and Sabretooth* statues.

The *Barbarian* and *Princess* statues may be strict interpretations of two *Frazetta* paint-

ings, but Moore is well aware that when dealing with three-dimensional constructs, the backs and sides and tops will be exposed, where before they weren't.

"I want a sculpture to be seen from all sides and be in a place like someone's coffee table or whatever. I want them to be able to walk around and enjoy it every single time they look at it."

When dealing with fantasy characters, Moore faces one set of challenges, such as working from two-dimensional forms, such as a painting or comic book illustration. When dealing with real people like *Sarah Michelle Gellar's Buffy*, *David Boreanaz's Angel* or *Charisma Carpenter's Cordelia*, the challenges become new.

**"One of the biggest challenges when you're doing a live-action project, which is pretty daunting, is to do a really nice portrait, and we work one-to-one on action figures and doing a face a half-inch tall of an actor is pretty difficult."**

Moore adds the importance of choosing a good pose that is "interesting, that's going to work well as either a statue or an action figure."

Rather than having a

**Among Moore's more recent projects are *Leela* and *Nibbler* from *Futurama*.**

stiff or ordinary pose, Moore likes to tweak it enough in order to evoke some sort of emotion that is representative of that particular character.

Moore plans on creating more of his own characters over the next year or so. Naturally, he will continue to do licenced work because he still enjoys it, but the desire to do his own original works is a powerful calling.

He would also like the challenge of sculpting such great and strong faces as *Arnold Schwarzenegger*, *Rita Hayworth*, *Charles Bronson*, *Clark Gable*, *Gary Cooper* and *Ava Gardner* to name a few.

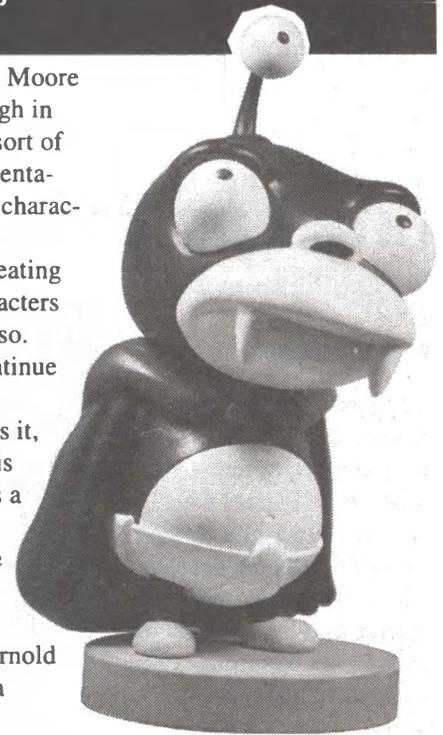
For those who have wondered about the process of sculpting, Moore explains it in a methodical manner: "I start with an armature (the interior skeleton for support) and most artists use aluminum wire for that ... on a wood base and I set the pose I like and I pack material on it. That takes about a day. Then, I build up the muscle masses and that takes about three days.

"At that point, I send out a video for approval to the licensor. I continue to build up the figure — I basically do it nude first and then add the clothing and details to it ... working in super-sculpey. And then I do the head last."

After getting approval again, Moore does the costuming. Final approval, and then Moore is ready to bake.

"I bake the figure, since it's super-sculpey, and then we cut the parts of the body apart and make a master mold. Then we send it out to the factory.

"We send out an unpaint-



ed form to make the production pieces from and a painted master to match the paint job to each piece."

It's clear that Moore receives an immense amount of gratification from the work he does and the pieces he creates. But he also derives plenty of fulfillment from the people who purchase his works.

Attending the *San Diego Convention* and the *Wizard Con*, Moore really appreciated it when a fan spends his or her hard-earned money on something that, essentially, isn't a necessity.

"It's great to meet the fans and see what they have to say and see what you did right, see what you did wrong, because they'll be pretty honest with you and it's really a complement."

But Moore adds, with true humility and in a rather summarily manner, "We're doing luxury items, you don't eat these, they don't give you shelter ... and it's a real honour when they buy one."



# Cowboy Bebop: plays like smooth jazz

By  
Emru Townsend

One of the things that attracted me to anime —and this goes back as far as Battle of the Planets when I was a kid —was the striking visuals of the show openers.

Few, it seemed, relied on the tried-and-true method of assembling clips from existing footage; most that I watched nicely set the tone of the show, the best of them experimenting with interesting visual styles. (Find yourself a copy of a Dirty Pair OAV, Dirty Pair: Project EDEN or Golgo 13 — released here as The Professional —and imagine watching them during the creative wasteland that was Western animation in the mid-'80s.)

Late last year, I had the pleasure of seeing the opener to Cowboy Bebop, a nice little retro number with line art against bold flat color, and creative use of type as a design element.

It evoked that same sense



of adventure and cool-cat smoothness as the classic spy shows of the '60s, leaning more toward, say, I Spy than the more dour Secret Agent. Reinforcing this was the title theme, a hot jazz ditty inexplicably named "Tank!"

which, with its rousing brass and bongo drums, suggested spy-type action aplenty.

The care that went into the Cowboy Bebop opener propelled it to the top of my list of newer anime to review, and it's definitely lived up to its promise.

Cowboy Bebop is set in 2071, a future where people travel through hyperspace like we hop oceans. Our hero is Spike Spiegel, a bounty hunter who travels with his mechanic/manager/pal/back-up-in-a-fight Jet Black.

There is a reason given for the series' head-scratcher of a title, but after watching the first eight episodes, I discovered there's another perfectly good explanation: Spike easily fits the mold of

**Cowboy Bebop is set in 2071 — a time when travelling through hyper space is like hopping an ocean. The episodes, recently released on DVD by Bandal, follow the adventures of Jet Black and Spike as they seek to right some wrongs.**

the wandering cowboy.

Episode after episode, he and Jet arrive on a different planet and, while corralling their quarry, end up righting a few wrongs before moving on. More to the point, Spike is very much a loner in spirit. He glides through the scenery shrouded in mystery, his past revealed to us (and everyone else) in maddeningly tiny scraps as the series

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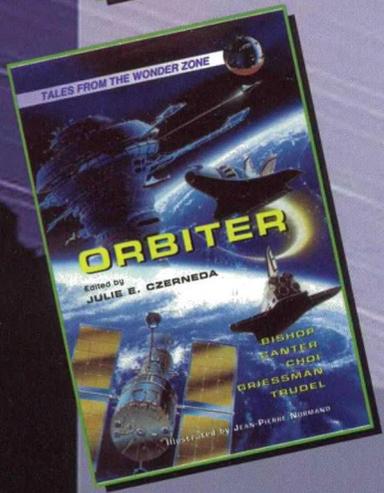
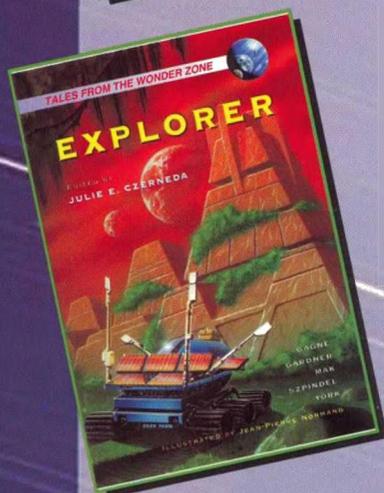
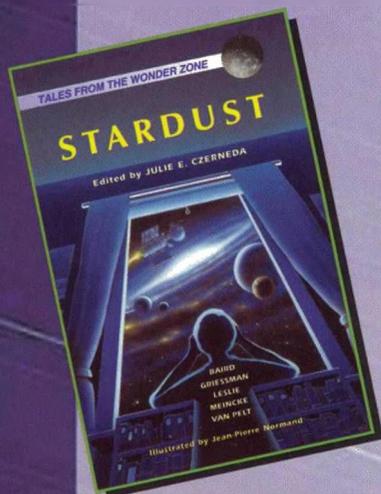
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progresses.

The first episode, for instance, begins with a look at a younger, more violent Spike, who is very different from the easy-going Spike we subsequently become acquainted with. Spike's past is never even hinted at again until he confronts some of his demons in the fifth episode, but this leaves us with more unanswered questions.

Then there's the "Bebop" part of the title, which "Tank!" should make obvious. The soundtrack alone is reason enough to get the DVD version of this series; since there is currently no domestic release of the Cowboy Bebop soundtrack CDs, it's the only way to hear the music the way it's meant to be heard. (At least the DVD includes the complete version of "Tank!".)

Composed by Macross Plus musical mastermind Yoko Kanno, the Cowboy Bebop soundtrack is a healthy mix of jazz and ska, with occasional other styles thrown in. Kanno is quickly shaping up to be my favourite anime soundtrack composer; I'll be curious to hear what she comes up with next.

Music notwithstanding, the "Bebop" could also apply to Spike himself; he's cool, but not in that arrogant sense which seems to have taken hold of current pop culture. The liner notes invoke the Beats of the '50s, which doesn't fall that far off the mark. Spike doesn't work at being aloof; he regards the chaos of life from a distance, goes his



own way, and honestly doesn't give a damn.

All of which would get tedious if it weren't for this invisible thread connecting his past, present, and future. There's a subtle sense that something is building up here, just perceptible enough to be intriguing. Until we find out what it is, there's just the fun of seeing where Spike and Jet's travels will take them next.

And that's cool.

**Emru Townsend only stops talking about animation long enough to write about it. Visit his Web site at <http://purpleplanetmedia.com>.**

**While the story-line of Cowboy Bebop is intriguing, one of the real delights is the music composed by Yoko Kanno.**

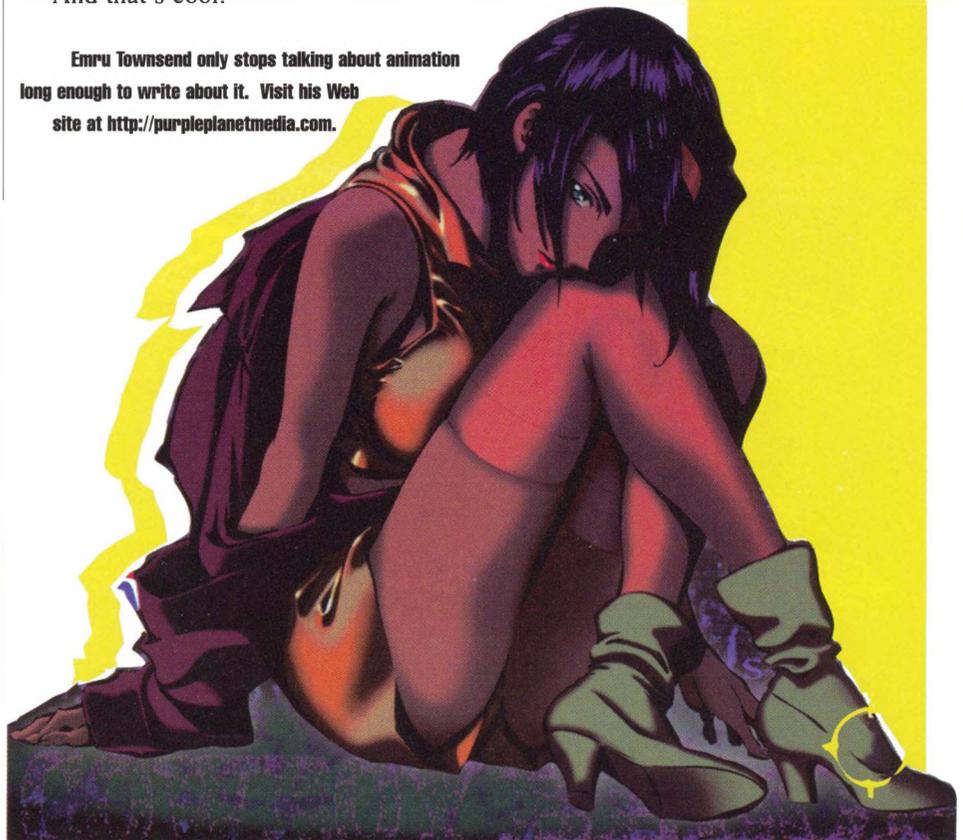
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## Jubei-Chan hits stores December 5

Bandai Entertainment will release of Jubei-Chan the Ninja Girl – Heart of Steel just in time for Christmas.

The legend of Japan's master swordsman, Yagyu Jubei is highly revered. But what will happen when Jubei's swordsmanship is passed along to a young high school girl through a heart-shaped eyepatch?

Created by Akitaroh Daichi and character designs by Takahiro Yoshimatsu

(Slayers), Jubei-Chan fights off a ninja army, learns the true secrets of Jubei's legendary powers.

☆ **Produced by MADHOUSE Studio**  
 ☆ **Running Time: Approx 75 min.**  
 ☆ **Rating: 13up**  
 ☆ **VHS Dub SRP: \$19.98 (US)**  
 ☆ **DVD bilingual SRP: \$29.98 (US)**

## Bandai offers Escaflowne — Betrayal and Trust

The second home video installment of the hit television series, Escaflowne will reach stores around Dec. 5.

Currently on-air both on the Fox Kids Network and on YTV, Escaflowne offers an engaging plot line, cutting edge animation, and a riveting soundtrack.

Hitomi, an ordinary girl, has found herself transported to the world of Gaea, a strange and mystical planet. And no sooner had she arrived then the battles began

☆ **Created by Shoji Kawamori**  
 ☆ **Running Time: Approx 100 min.**  
 ☆ **Rating: 7up/13up**  
 ☆ **VHS Dub SRP: \$14.98 (US)**  
 ☆ **DVD bilingual SRP: \$29.98 (US)**

● ● ●  
**ALSO:** AnimEigo will release its Bubblegum Crisis MegaSeries four-pack DVD set on Nov. 11.

The subtitled set (in English and French) carries a SRP of \$69.95 (US). The first three disks are also dubbed in both English and in Japanese.

# Perfect Blue is a perfect 10

By **Miki Okamoto**

Mima Kirigoe is a famous pop singer who wants more out of life. She wants to be an actress. Her decision to give up the adoration of her fans sets in motion events which lead to injury, death and madness.

Perfect Blue (Manga Entertainment) is a psychological thriller of highest order. Viewers are taken on a path that takes Mima to near madness only to discover the person behind all the mayhem is the one she least expects.

Perfect Blue is Satoshi Kon's first movie and it is a good one. The visuals are strong and Sadayuki Murai's screenplay based on a story by Yoshikazu Takeuchi is taut and compelling.

*Unrated for mature audiences. Contains nudity, violence, adult language and adult situations.*

☆☆☆

The first three installments of Blue Submarine No. 6 offer a portent of a great series.

Based on Satoru Ozawa's comic book, Blue Submarine No.6 (AnimeVillage.com) takes place in a world where the oceans have risen and all land that had been at sea level is now under it. Now, surface dwellers must battle sea dwellers (led by the mysterious Zorndyke) in order to survive.

The Blue Submarine No. 6 series is a visual treat. The

## Reviews

characters are well-rounded and the action nearly non-stop and the story shows a rare sense of depth and relevance.

Blue Submarine No. 6 offers a perfect blend of traditional and computer animation. Director Mahiro Maeda and his creative team show where the future of anime lies.

*Unrated. Contains brief nudity, violence, adult language.*

☆☆☆

The Castle of Cagliostro (Manga Entertainment) provides non-stop fun. Script writers Hayao Miyazaki and Haruya Yamazaki do a nice job of bringing Monkey Punch's original story to anime.

The story, and this won't do it justice, involves thief Lupin who stumbles across a counterfeit ring and clues to a hidden treasure.

Light-hearted and fun.

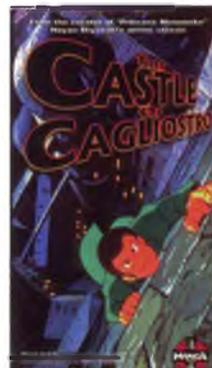
*Unrated. Contains mild language.*

☆☆☆

Brain Powered are large robots known as Antibodies which are powered by their pilots minds and vitality.

Even though the animation is a little uninspired, especially when compared to Blue Submarine No. 6, the six-volume (12-episode) set from AnimeVillage.com provides a complex story which sees families torn apart in a battle against the mysterious group known as Orphan.

*Unrated for mature audiences.*



# Artists prepare high-profile solo projects

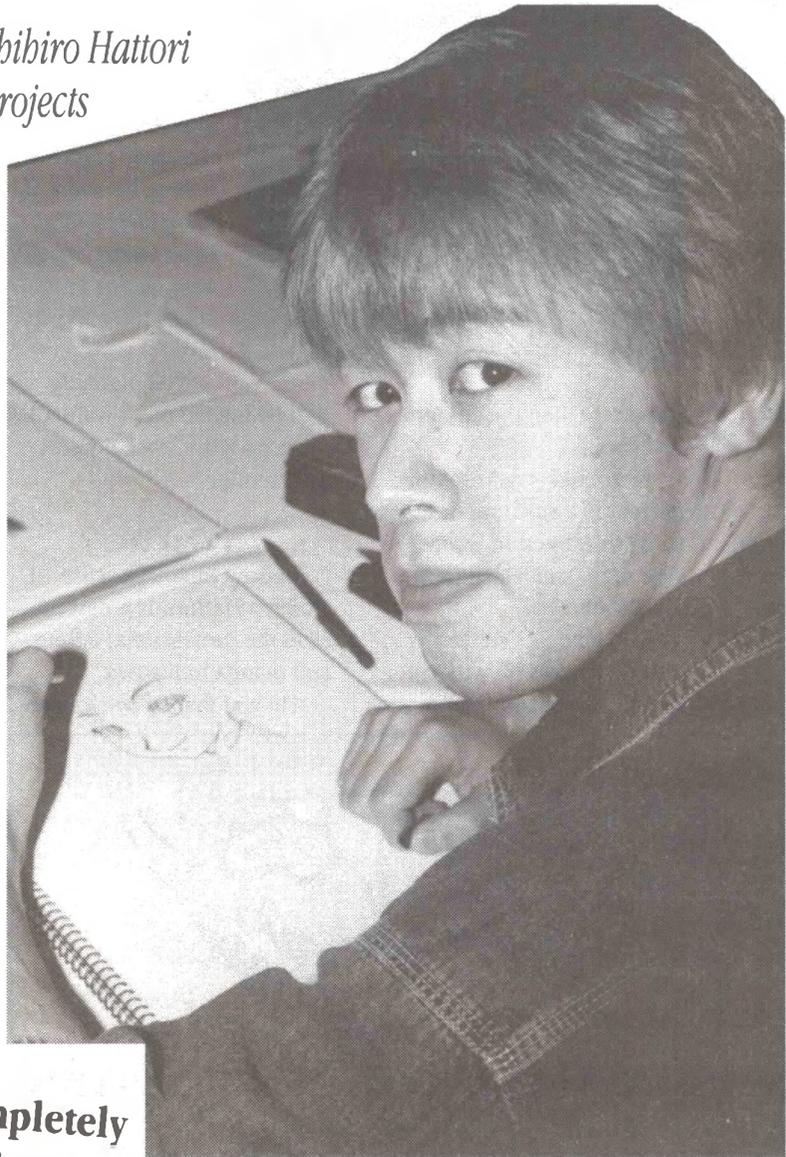
*Tsukasa Kotobuki and Chihiro Hattori prepare their breakout projects in highly competitive anime and manga fields*

**By  
Derwin Mak**

In the highly competitive manga, anime and video game industries, even a young person like Japanese manga and anime artist Tsukasa Kotobuki is already an experienced artist.

Hattori's credentials are mostly in amateur manga, but he has recently worked professionally on his first anime television series as Kotobuki's protégé.

Kotobuki started work as assistant character designer to Kenichi Sonoda, the animator of TV series Bubblegum Crisis and Gunsmith Cats. He



**Kotobuki started work as assistant character designer to Kenichi Sonoda, the animator of Bubblegum Crisis and Gunsmith Cats. He later graduated to character designer on the Sony PlayStation game series Battle Arena Toshinden and the TV series Cyber Team in Akhhabara.**

**“I get my ideas completely from my own imagination. I design a completely new character instead of drawing an actual human form.”**

later graduated to character designer (as opposed to the assistant) on the Sony PlayStation game series

illustrator on the television series Saber Marionette J. He is currently working on a full-length manga story for

Battle Arena Toshinden and the television series Cyber Team in Akhhabara.

He also worked as an

Kadokawa Shotem's Shonen Ace comics magazine.

What project was most helpful in his development as an artist?

Well, there's Battle Arena Toshinden, a Sony PlayStation game.

With a game, there are lots of opportunities to get feedback from the users, and I found the feedback very help-

ful in developing my skills.†

He cites Masamune Shirow, the artist of the manga version of Ghost In the Shell, as a major influence on him.

The study of other artists is important to him, and his advice to persons considering an animation career is to be influenced by past masters.

“Being influenced by

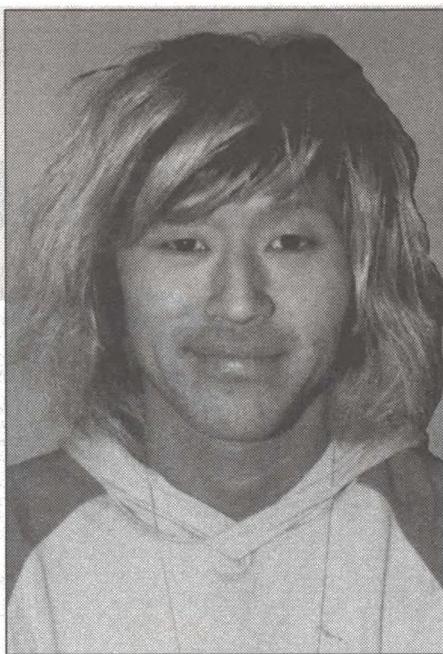
other people is not always bad.

“Some people misinterpret it as copying, but it is important to be influenced by other artists to enhance one’s skills.”

Unlike other artists and American animators (especially Disney artists), he doesn’t get inspiration from real people or use them as models.

**“I get my ideas completely from my own imagination. I design a completely new character instead of drawing an actual human form.”**

Silhouettes are important in his work: “When my characters are drawn as silhouettes, the silhouette can tell you much about the character. The silhouette is more



**Chihiro Hattori credits many artists as great influences on him, including: Tsukasa Kotobuki, his “great teacher,” Masamune Shirow (Ghost In the Shell); and Haruhiko Mikimoto.**

duction. He says he’s “more nervous than looking forward” to publishing his work in the widely-circulated manga magazine, but he appreciates the opportunity.

His planning will be intensive: “I want all the prep work to be done effectively.”



Fellow Japanese artist Chihiro Hattori, is a newcomer to the professional anime and manga industries.

He had gained some atten-

important than the colours and details.”

Kotobuki’s next major project is a full-length manga to be serialized in Shonen Ace magazine starting in November.

The manga’s subject is still secret, but he will say that he is currently in pre-pro-

tion as an self-published, amateur manga artist in the Comiket, the gigantic marketplace of amateur manga magazines.

This is the famous site where thousands of manga readers line-up to buy amateur publications, including spoofs and fan parodies of TV shows; try to imagine a gigantic fair where North Americans can buy comics fanzines and Star Trek and Babylon 5 comics fan fiction, and you get the idea.

He was Kotobuki’s chief assistant illustrator on the Cyber Team in Akihabra manga and TV series.

“It was a lot of work!” he exclaims when asked about his first professional television assignment.

He credits many artists as great influences on him, including: Tsukasa Kotobuki, his “great teacher,” Masamune Shirow (Ghost In the Shell); and Haruhiko Mikimoto.

But the greatest influence on his art is an American writer, William Gibson, leader of the Cyberpunk movement of the ’80s.

Hattori especially likes the novels Neuromancer and Mona Lisa Overdrive and their technological, brooding, rebellious futures.

Will he be leaving his amateur publishing behind for a new career in anime?

“Maybe,” he says, “and maybe, someday I would like to direct a movie.”



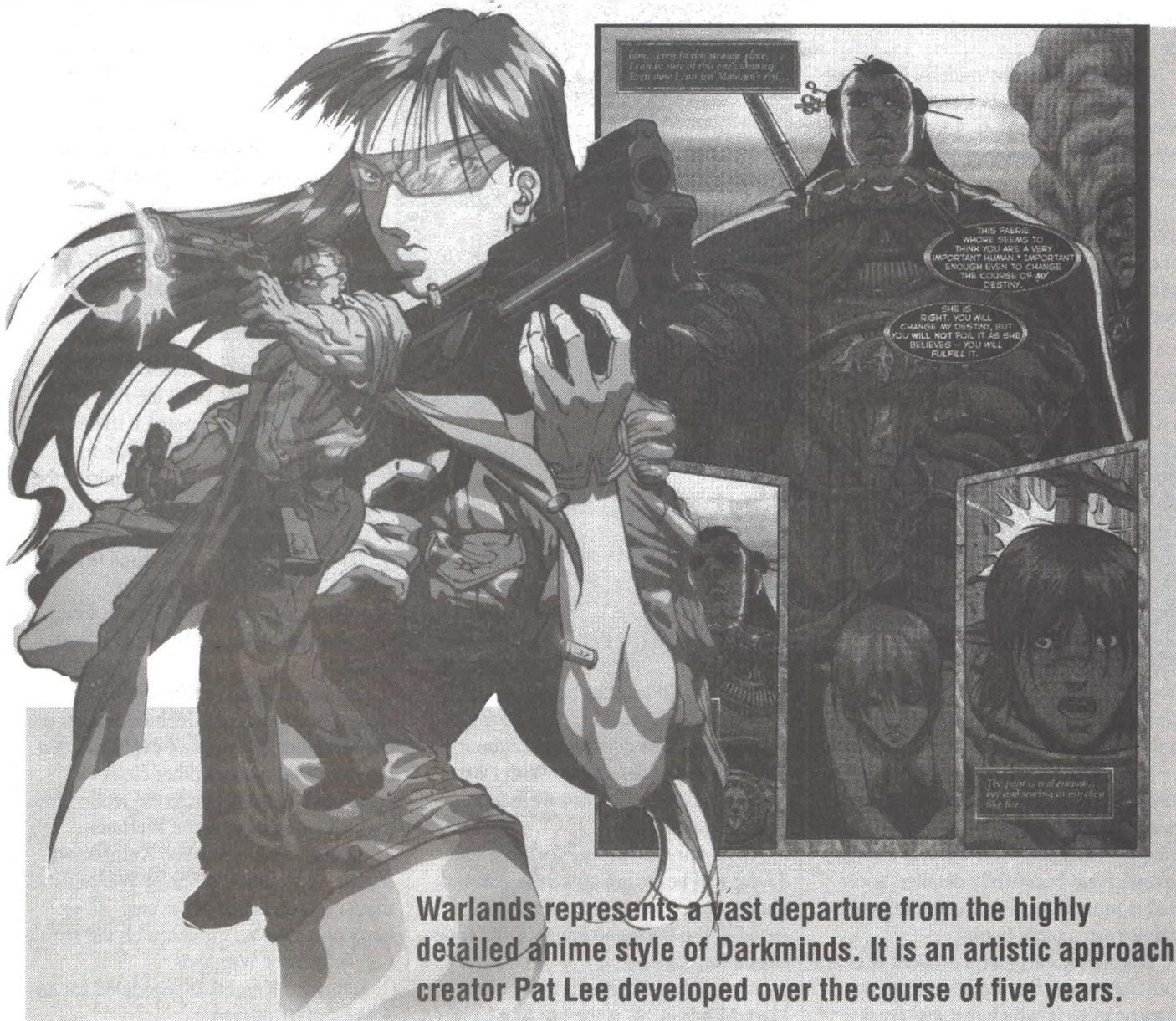
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# Dreamwave brings fantasy back to comics



**Warlands represents a vast departure from the highly detailed anime style of Darkminds. It is an artistic approach creator Pat Lee developed over the course of five years.**

Artist Pat Lee has long been a fan of fantasy and of roleplaying games like Dungeons and Dragons.

"I've like fantasy ever since I was 12 or 13. I've always been a big fan," Lee said of his attraction to role-playing games and Piers Anthony novels.

With his latest comic, Warlands, Lee brings his love

of the genre to the comic page and brings a unique artistic vision which invigorates the reader's interest.

"I just wanted to put out a fantasy book," Lee said recently. "Darkminds was just sort of our way of testing out the market for Japanese anime style."

It was a hell of a test.

The first volume of the Darkminds saga — which followed the efforts of Special Investigations Unit officers Tedashi Nagawa and Nakiko (who happens to be a beautiful cyborg) to capture a serial murderer known as Paradox that has been racking up a serious body count in Macropolis — was one of the top sellers in 1998.

It was a success that caught Lee and the rest of the creative team at his studio, Dreamwave Productions by surprise. It also showed that there was a demand for the style among readers.

"Warlands was our baby project and we wanted to test the market before we actually put it out," Lee explained.

To make sure the studio's

baby was ready and the world was prepared to adopt it, took Lee five years. During that period, the characters who would inhabit the book, as well as the roots of the main story and outlining the various chapters and how the storylines would relate to future circumstances that will take place in future books were developed.

Two years after he initially began setting down the story, Lee was joined by then 16-year-old writer Adrian Tsang who now shares co-creator status on the book.

"There is just so much that we wanted it to be perfect," Lee said. "We did everything we could during those five years to make sure it was a really good book."

Tsang serves as the book's writer, while Lee handles penciling, plotting and separation chores.

Lee, who first gained

his formidable reputation working on other titles for Image, favours an anime-style that accentuates each of the books Dreamwave Productions turns out.

This is not to say that each of Dreamwave's

books — Warlands, Dark Minds, Echo, Neon Rider and the upcoming Shidima will feature the same style.

Taking its cue from Japanese-style animation, Dark Minds artwork draws readers into the story with its detail and unique visual perspectives. It is a deeply textured and beautifully detailed book that is more akin to animation than to mainstream comic books.

During the early days of Dark Minds, Lee had to make a transition from an American style which features cross-hatching to the anime style.

For Warlands, Lee took his artwork a step further and made a conscious effort to alter the anime style to set the book apart from his earlier efforts.

Lee explains that he opted for a more looser line weight rather than the technical style that marks his other works.

"I'm still growing as an artist," Lee said. "I'm still trying to get the grasp of trying to make it look as anime as much as I can and get the colour schematics right.



to do after that, but we haven't pinpointed what we want to do then," Lee said.

Warlands' second volume will take place after the storyline in volume one and the third volume will take place a couple hundred years before the first volume. The second volume is scheduled for release in May. And with four issues in the can before the first one hits comic shops, Lee said the book will be able to stick to a monthly schedule.

Of course, Dark Minds will continue to be Dreamwave's chief title.

"The third volume of Dark Minds is going to be crazy. The style is going to be a lot like Seven," Lee said. "I wasn't to happy with the second volume because it didn't have the flair that I wanted it to have."



But upcoming titles will mirror the studio's focus on Warlands.

Shidima is a side story from

Warlands, Shidima will take place during a ninja-samurai era of the Warlands world.

The title, which is scheduled for release next year, will include aspects of the Warlands' world. Lee explained that the story will include other cities and places and will explain to the reader how they are connected to the Warlands.

Another title, Banished Knights, will feature the brother of one of Warlands' main characters and the events of that book will have an influence on the second volume of Warlands.

Banished Knights is scheduled for an August 2001 release.

With all the interwoven elements spanning centuries, Lee notes that work is under way to develop a time line for readers so that they can easily understand where certain incidents and characters fit into the grand scheme of things.

"It's exciting for us," Lee said. "Expanding Warlands is an awesome thing because then we can make more toys, model kits and roleplaying games."

A video game version of Warlands is also under consideration, as is a movie version of the title. ☆

**"We're still looking for the best way to make it look dramatic, to pull the readers into the book and make them feel like they're actually there."**

"We're still looking for the best way to make it look dramatic, to pull the readers into the book and make them feel like they're actually there. With Dark Minds, they feel like they were in the environment."

To capture the proper feel, Lee and Tsang will be toning down the colours, almost water-colour, to enhance the mood of the book and enhance the experience for readers.

Also setting Warlands apart from Dark Minds et. al, is the use of a continuing storyline.

Rather than simply tell one story and move on, Warlands will take on an epic scope and Lee has decided to focus much of his attention to the book for the near future.

"We're going to be continuing Warlands," Lee said. "I'm going to be penciling it for at least two years."

According to Lee, the story has been mapped out to the third volume — about two years.

"There's a lot of things that we want

# PARSEC'S Top 10 Countdown

These are the top selling books in Canada, according to a national survey of retailers. To find out who's taking part in the survey, please see page 70

## #1 Midnight Nation 1

A new leader for the X-Men.  
Story: J. Michael Straczynski  
Art: Gary Frank  
Inks: Jason Gorder



## #6 Rising Stars 9

Story: J. Michael Straczynski  
Pencils: Christian Zanier  
Layouts: Ken Lashley



## #2 Marvel Boy 4

X-Men for sale... neat sketch pad.  
Story: Grant Morrison  
Art: J.G. Jones



## #7 Fathom 12

Stays in the Top 10.  
Story: Michael Turner & Bill O'Neil  
Pencils: Michael Turner  
Inks: Jonathan Sibad



## #3 X-Men 386

Story: Chris Claremont  
Pencils: Thomas Derenick



## #8 Punisher 7

Story: Garth Ennis  
Pencils: Steve Dillon  
Inks: Jimmy Palmiotti



## #4 X-Men 106

Story: Chris Claremont  
Art: Lenil Francis Yu  
Thomas Derenick  
Anthony Williams



## #9 JLA 45

Story: Mark Waid  
Art: Howard Porter  
Inks: Drew Geraci



## #5 Adventures of Superman 584

Story: J.M. DeMattels  
Pencils: Patrick Ziercher  
Inks: Jose Marzan Jr.

## #10 Universe X

Story: Jim Krueger & Alex Ross  
Art: Dougie Braithwaite  
Inks: Bill Reinhold

## RECOMMENDED READING

Ohhh Baby!

The creator of Babylon 5 has struck gold with his latest effort according to some of our must trusted sources....

"Midnight Nation. We would have sold more if we were ordered more. It's well-written and it looks good."

Stephanie Hunter  
Silver Snail Comics

"Midnight Nation looks like it's going to be huge. But everyone is waiting for Spawn 100."

Gerry MacDonald  
Phoenix Comics and Books

"Kubert's Weasel series is fantastic and stunning. He hasn't done anything in a while, but he just exploded with this one."

Robin  
Comic and Book Emporium

"Anything Brian Michael Bendis writes, we should read."

Pat  
8th Street Comics and Books

Also Among the chosen:

Avengers  
Rising Stars Prelude  
Ultimate Spiderman  
Dork  
Ring of Nibelung  
Book of Jack  
Preacher  
Tomb Raider  
Any Superman titles

Next issue.....

Chris Claremont... Adam Kubert... Tim Levins... and more join us in January

# Transforming '60s classic to comic-book form

*Ben Dunn and Antarctic Press bring Gigantor to North American readers, tackle organized religion and take ninjas to the classroom*

Ben Dunn managed to gain a measure of revenge against the nuns at the Catholic school he attended as a boy in Texas.

Dunn is the creator of the cult favourite, Areala Warrior Nun and a host of other comic book titles such as Ninja High School produced by his Texas-based Antarctic Press.

Growing up in San Antonio, Dunn was struck by the way in which his instructors approached the concept of god and how the church deals with evil.

It was a seed that would germinate within the artist years later.

As he grew up, Dunn became a fan of Japanese manga comics and of animation that had been brought from Asia to North America.

It was an interest that gained full bloom when Dunn enjoyed an extended visit in Taiwan when he was a teen. There he discovered bootleg manga which had made its way to the island nation from Shanghai.

"They were only a few cents a piece," Dunn recalls. "So I managed to have a pretty large pile of them by the time I went home."

The pile made the return trip to Texas and Dunn still leafs through them for inspiration or just enjoyment.

Dunn, an artist who learned by studying the manga art in those bootlegged books and other comics when he was growing up, latched on with smaller comic publishers such as Eternity, where he created Ninja High School.

But the search for a more creative freedom led him to form his own company. By his own admission, Dunn started the company more out of ignorance of how to enter the field as an artist, than any grand design.

"To be honest, I didn't have the knowledge to do it. I didn't know how to



enter the market with another publisher," he recalls. "The only thing I did know was how to sell comics in a direct market.

"And that was fairly easy to do, once I got a handle on it."

Since being formed 15 years ago, Antarctic Press has become the

11th largest comic publisher in North America — a noteworthy accomplishment since Dunn is the driving force behind the company and the common thread that weaves through all of the publishing company's projects.

The company has also expanded beyond Areala and Ninja High School to include Gigantor and a host of other titles. Through it all, Dunn looks for a long-term commitment from his creative team.

"The one deciding characteristic for the title, is whether or not the people enjoy what they're doing," Dunn explains. "If they don't enjoy what

**Gigantor returns for a 12-issue run. If all goes well, more action could be on the way in 2002.**

they're doing, then there really is no point in doing it.

"My philosophy is 'are you willing to do this comic for 10 or 15 years down the road. If the answer is no, then it's likely not the kind of comic that I would want to bother with."

To that end, Dunn says he encourages

creators to stick with their books regardless of how sales may lag.

"Unfortunately, sales seems to be the driving factor of most creators," Dunn concedes.

"But that's the way it is, you have to eat."

The company has also diversified into such products as action figures.

While other books have sold well for the company, Areala has gained the bulk of recent attention.

The book hit the market in the midst of the explosion in interest in bad-girl comics.

"My motivation was that I could do a bad girl just as well as anyone else," Dunn explains.

"So I decided to go out and create my own bad-girl book.

"I decided to take the approach from a religious standpoint, because I figured that was one of the areas that comics don't treat that well."

According to the story, almost a 1,000 years ago in Norway, a young nun tries to elude a band of — bent on taking their pleasure with her. Before they can succeed, a Valkyrie emerges from the darkness and announces that the actions of the men "fill her with disgust." Now, she has turned her back on the god Odin to serve "the only true God" as an instrument of revenge.

## Dunn and a nun

Creator Ben Dunn and Areala Warrior Nun

Witnessing all of this, the young nun, Areala, realizes that "running from evil is not the way and embraces the valkyrie's message and becomes "a soldier of light."

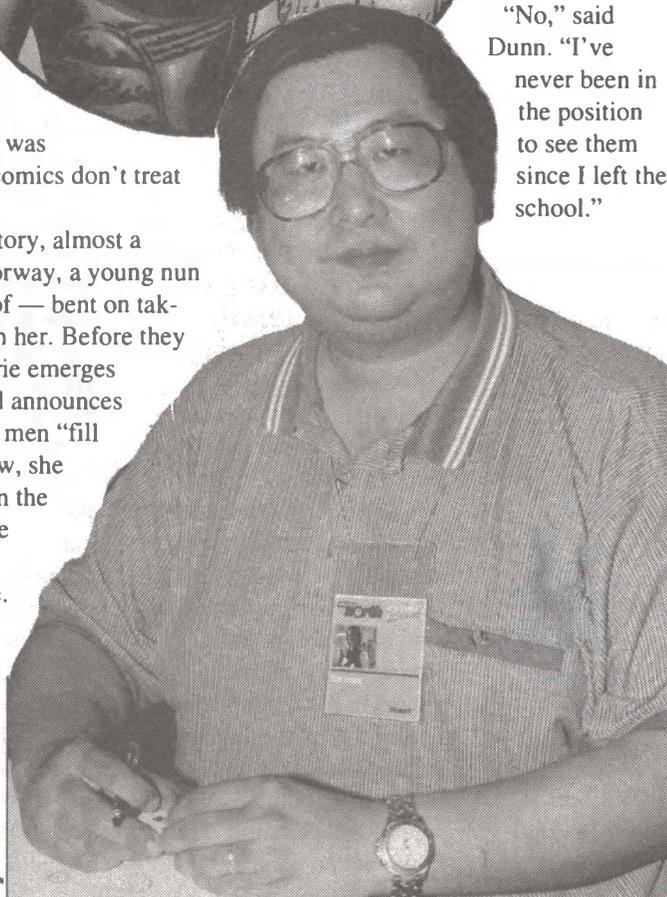
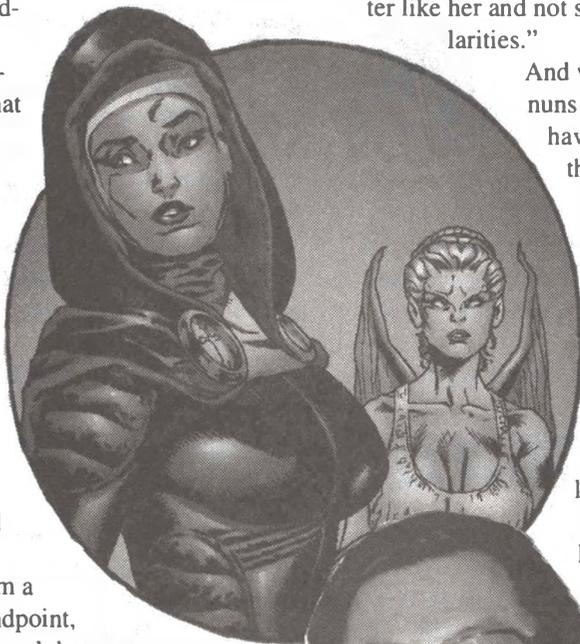
Needless to say, traditional Catholics have been less than pleased at seeing a sword-wielding nun battle evil.

The popularity of the Warrior Nun has opened the door for similar books to enter the market.

"I really think that the character is pretty unique," Dunn said. "It would be pretty hard for someone to do a character like her and not see some similarities."

And what did the nuns at his old school have to say about the character or about the portrayal of the Vatican in the series? Have there been any messages or belated rulers over the artists' knuckles?

"No," said Dunn. "I've never been in the position to see them since I left the school."



## COMING RELEASES

Selected fall/winter releases and their suggested retail price in US dollars.

### November

#### DARK HORSE

|                              |         |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Akira (TP)                   | \$24.95 |
| Gunsmith Cats #2 (of 11)     | \$2.50  |
| Sock Monkey                  | \$2.99  |
| Sin City: Hell and Back (TP) | \$25.00 |

#### DC

|                          |         |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Batman Beyond #15        | \$1.99  |
| Superman: No Limits (TP) | \$14.95 |
| Superman: Lexx 2000      | \$3.50  |
| Wonder Woman #164        | \$2.25  |

#### IMAGE

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Butcher Knight #1 | \$2.50 |
| Tomb Raider #9    | \$2.50 |
| The 10th Muse #1  | \$2.95 |
| Tellos #10        | \$2.95 |

#### INDIES

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| Deja Vu #1             | \$2.95 |
| Tick: Yule Log Special | \$3.50 |
| Nano-Man #1            | \$2.95 |
| Crime Patrol #10       | \$2.50 |

#### MARVEL

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Gambit #24)           | \$2.24  |
| Weapon X              | \$15.95 |
| Universe X #4 (of 12) | \$3.50  |

### December

#### DARK HORSE

|                                    |        |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Ring of Nibelung #1 (of 4)         | \$2.99 |
| Green Lantern vs. Aliens #4 (of 4) | \$2.99 |
| Buffy the Vampire Slayer #28       | \$2.99 |
| Super Manga Blast                  | \$4.99 |
| Spyboy (TP)                        | \$8.95 |

#### DC

|                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Batman #586 ...HE DIES!     | \$2.25  |
| JLA: Seven Caskets          | \$5.95  |
| Swamp Thing: The Curse (TP) | \$19.95 |
| Gen <sup>13</sup> #60       | \$2.50  |
| Plastic Man Archives (v. 2) | \$49.95 |

#### IMAGE

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| A Distant Soil #31 | \$3.95 |
| Crimson Plague #4  | \$2.50 |
| Dark Minds #10     | \$2.50 |
| Dark Realm #2      | \$2.95 |
| Gear Station #6    | \$2.50 |

#### INDIES

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| Stranger Kisses #1     | \$3.00 |
| Cavewoman Intervention | \$2.95 |
| Maxion #13             | \$2.95 |
| Weather Woman #5       | \$2.95 |

#### MARVEL

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Punisher #11 (of 12)          | \$2.99  |
| Ultimate Spiderman #4         | \$2.50  |
| X-Men Visionaries: Neal Adams | \$24.95 |

# Menagerie on the run in Xeno's Arrow

Xeno's Arrow forms one of the points of Toronto's indie comics triangle.

The book, along with Tara Tallan's Galaxion and Mark Oakley's Kings & Thieves, form a triumvirate of small-press publications which have been gaining readers' notice in North America.

Like Galaxion, Xeno's Arrow is part space opera. There, the comparison ends. Xeno's Arrow is an irreverent tale about an escapee from an intergalactic zoo and the friends he picks up along the way.

Xeno's Arrow is the brainchild of Stephen Geigen-Miller and Greg Beettam. It was a collaborative effort in the truest sense of the word.

The two have known each other since their first year at Toronto's York University in 1991. Geigen-Miller was a theatre major at the school, while

## Indie profile

Beettam was a Fine Arts student. Roommates since their second year at York, the two were involved in their own individual projects, but usually shared ideas with one another.

"Greg would be working on his own project and he'd bounce ideas off me," explained Geigen-Miller. "He would say something like 'I was thinking about this species and they only have two fingers.' Then I would say that means that their number system would be either binary or base four.

"And then we'd have to figure out a



system for base four and a calendar."

"That's when we realized we enjoyed working together," added Beettam. "Because we were going in the same direction in terms of developing these elaborate settings and characters."

Geigen-Miller, who says his time at the university taught him that his future didn't lie in the theatre, has focused his creative energies toward writing. And the lessons he learned in the theatre program still come to bear in his work on Xeno's Arrow.

"In many ways, good art is good art, and a lot of the same principles apply (to Xeno's Arrow)," Geigen-Miller said.

"One of the things people say about the book is that the dialogue is very good.

"I think the one thing that helps with that is that I'm very familiar, through my training, with dialogue . . . things spoke aloud."

Reinforcing this is the fact the two

## Dunn

While Areala continues to capture readers attention, Dunn has also overseen the development of Ninja High School.

"I was really big into anime and I was really big into Japanese comedy and I decided to blend all the elements of my favourite shows

into one book, while trying to maintain a uniqueness of its own," he said.

Part of the challenge was to develop a book which would not be accused of being imitative of others on the market.

"Basically, I added enough elements that I felt I could enjoy the book and enough elements that I think

make it unique in the marketplace."

Last January, Dunn began bringing one of his long-time (and less controversial) favourites to a new audience with the launch of a 12-issue series based on the Japanese animated series, Gigantor.

Created in 1958 by Mitsuteru Yokoyama as a manga book in Japan, Tetsujin 28, now known as Gigantor, follows the adventures of a mighty robot.

Gigantor, the space-age robot, is a product of Tatsunoco. Osamu Tezuka is his creator. Gigantor was created by Professor Sparks, Jimmy Sparks father (a genius in the field of robots). Gigantor is controlled by a small control box that is worked by Jimmy Sparks. Jimmy and Gigantor fight crime with the aid of Inspector Bloop, his friend

and scientist Bob Brilliant, and Dick Strong the Secret Agent.

During the '60s, the book was transformed into a series and was shown in black and white. It appeared at the same time as other, perhaps better-known Japanese cartoons such as Speed Racer, Kimba and Astro Boy began appearing on North American television screens.

In the Antarctic books, Dunn has sought to recapture the wonder and heroism that captured his imagination when he was growing up.

"I wanted to update him, but I still wanted to be true to the character," Dunn said. "The series is far enough removed from people's minds that they don't remember every detail, but it's not too far that they don't have a vague recollection."

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collaborators often speak in character when they are creating an issue.

Launched in 1999, Xeno's Arrow has already gone farther than either Geigen-Miller or Beettam had intended.

"Originally, it was just going to be a side joke," Beettam said.

The decision to begin the small-press operation, Cup'O Tea Studios, was made after the two took the story and continually embellished it over time.

"That's when we decided to take it to

**"Originally, it was just going to be a side joke."**

the big time."

There was little doubt who take it to 'the big time.'

"It was inherent in the assumption that we would do it ourselves," said Geigen-Miller. "When you are immersed in the alternative end of comics, you get used to the idea of people creating and owning and publishing it themselves."

Or as Geigen-Miller calls it, the world of photocopier publishing.

But Xeno's Arrow has escaped that world. Geigen-Miller and Beettam's creation features a full-colour cover and marvelously rendered black-and-white artwork.

Besides realizing a creative dream, the book also provides a shortcut for the two to tell the story they want to tell.

Beettam explained that the only alternative to self-publishing is to work for a major comic publisher until you become established. Then you can have some creative control. It was too long a process for him to accept.

"I don't like the concept of taking a totally original idea, hopefully one that's different than any that's been done before, and trying to convince an editor that someone will want to read it.

"Self-publishing is an end-run around that and just taking it straight to retailers and the readers and let them make up their own minds."

But the end run hasn't come without some headaches.

Because Cup'O Tea is an independent, retailers are hesitant to stock the title.

"Retailers are very skeptical of independents because they have been

burned in the

past," Geigen-Miller says.

The two note that a massive shakeup of the comic industry in 1995 resulted in a lot of money and companies leaving the industry. And it made retailers skittish.

"When retailers are feeling their wallets pinched, the first thing to go is the independents," Geigen-Miller explained. "Because those are the things which require the

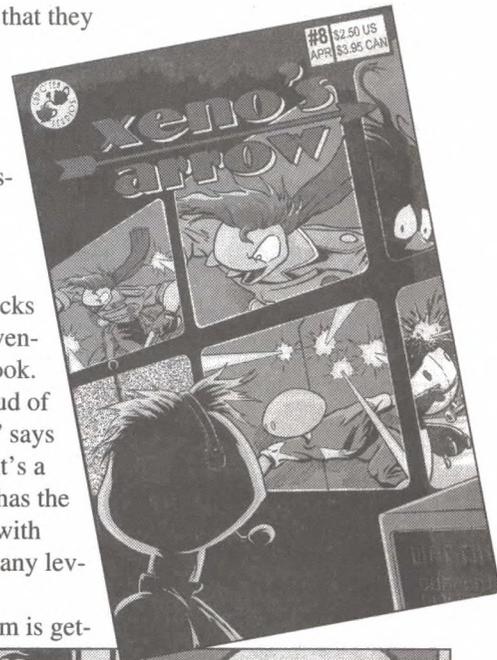
most experimentation and the biggest chance."

This has meant that they have had to be innovative to get retailers to sample the book and to show it to their customers.

This has meant providing free copies, sampler packs and attending conventions to flog the book.

"I'm really proud of what we've done," says Beettam. "I think it's a good work which has the ability to connect with many people on many levels.

"But the problem is get-



**On the run:** It took a few issues but some of the residents of the Intergalactic Zoo of Civilization finally made their escape.

ting those people to look at it."



# Storytelling all-important discipline for Doran

Colleen Doran has gained a reputation for being a manga artist — even though she hadn't become exposed to the medium until she had been a comic artist for about 10 years.

But while she doesn't mind the label, Doran would much rather be known as a storyteller.

Besides her work for Marvel Comics (she was awaiting her next assignment at the time of the interview), Doran has kept busy working on Distant Soil for Image — “Yeah, big surprise there,” she notes — as well as commercial illustrations, television storyboards and a book called Mangamania.

Even though Power Pack just began to hit comic shops in early summer, Doran had already completed her run on the title — as well as on a recent Mutant X annual.

“That's because we're so efficient and hard-working we make our deadlines,” Doran said jokingly.

**The calling for paper** and pencil began early for Doran — when she was about five. “I made my first professional sale when I was 15 and I've been working ever since.”

Doran's first sale came after she attended a science fiction convention and put her portfolio on display. An advertising agency executive saw the work and hired her to work on a poster for Margarita Night for a restaurant chain.

“I didn't even know what a margarita was,” Doran recalls.

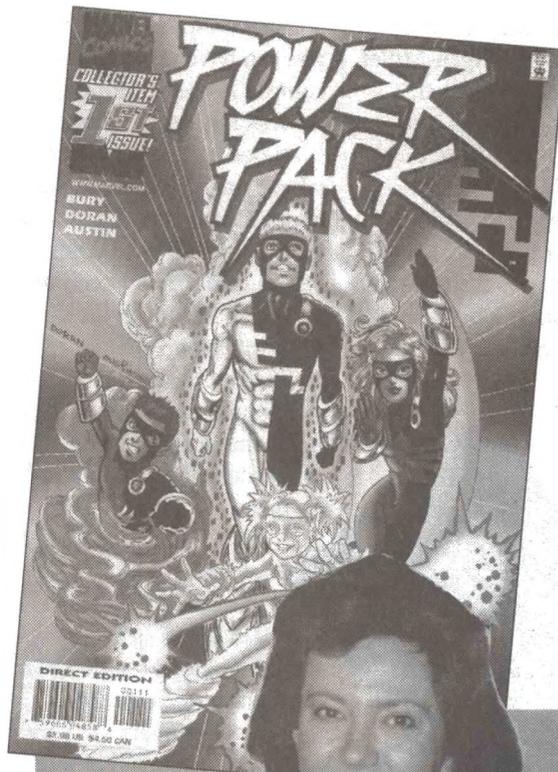
After asking what a margarita was, she drew one held by a dancing bull.

But this was not where her heart was. Doran wanted to work in comics.

Besides the ad agency, comic book industry professionals had also been admiring her work at the convention. Over the next year, Doran continued to display her work at conventions and, through this, gained more attention from comic book publishers.

Her first gig was less-than-memorable. She quit the job because the subject matter was “a little risqué and inappropriate.”

“When they hired me, I thought it was just a super hero job,” Doran recalls. “But it was the usual T and A kind of thing where women

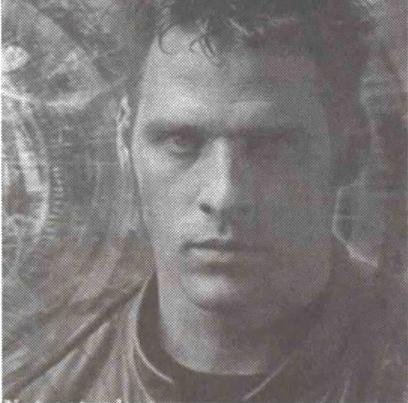


While considered an American manga artist, Colleen Doran explains she had never seen a Japanese comic when she was developing her style. Instead, her style developed parallel to and independent from the art style which Doran is now closely associated with.

NEXT ISSUE...

**PARSEC**

Farscape's  
Ben Browder  
Xena's  
Claire  
Stansfield  
and  
Alex Tydings



get their shirts torn off yada, yada.”

Shortly afterward, Doran got a call from then Legion of Superheroes artist Keith Giffen.

He had seen her work in a fanzine devoted to the comic and asked if she would be

interested in auditioning as his replacement.

“Of course, I said yeah.”

However, because Doran had made an agreement with Warp Graphics before the telephone call, she decided to honour her agreement and declined the audition.

"But I ended up leaving Warp later and doing Legion of Superheroes anyway," she recalls.

Since first entering the industry in 1979, Doran has been a student of her profession.

She studies other artists and learns from their strengths and weaknesses. But while Doran has been closely associated with North American manga during recent years, it had little influence during her formative years.

"You have to remember that when I was growing up, there was no manga," Doran explained. "I just wasn't available. So, it had no influence on me whatsoever."

This lack of influence is ironic when one considers that Doran is considered one of the higher-profile manga artists in North America.

"Everyone says, 'Oh Colleen is an American manga artist,' but I had never seen a single Japanese comic when I developed my art style."

Rather Doran's style grew out of her attraction toward children's books and Disney animation, as well as from such comic strip artists as Hal Foster — because "he could actually draw.

"I just developed independently and along parallel lines from manga," Doran said.

In fact, Doran prefers the work of the earlier illustrators to some of the work being produced by her contemporaries.

"A lot of illustrators and a lot of cartoonists are stylists," Doran explains. "They have gotten into a schtick and they're stuck with it.

"Foster and some of the other cartoonists I admire were truly great technicians

and I really admired their work. And I wanted to achieve that with my work."

Since joining the ranks of the professionals, Doran has become a fan of manga.

Now, more than 20 years after her first professional sale, Doran is influenced by Japanese comics, especially by artists she says can tell a story properly. But the work of the artists who can accomplish this feat are mostly found in the '80s, Doran said.

It is the ability to tell a story that attracts Doran to a particular artist.

Among her current favourites are David Max Kelly and Frank Miller.

"Nobody would ever look at my work and say, 'Frank Miller,' but I study Frank Miller's story telling and I think he's just brilliant," she said.

"Miller does everything well. His pacing is flawless and he knows how to manipulate the reader's sense of time ... slowing you down with dialogue and captions ... speeding you up with a minimal of words and just visuals."

Doran is also a fan of Miller's use of long panels and quick snapshots to play with the reader's sense of time.

"I just looove his work," she confides. "I keep his work next to my drawing board.

Conversely, she says there are people in the industry who are good artists, but who can't tell

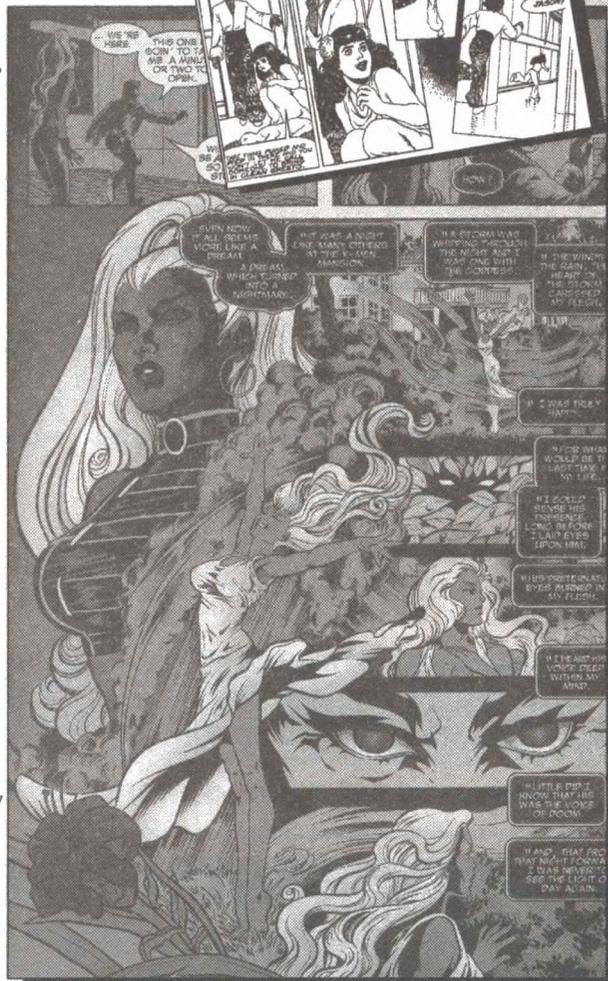
a story.

"Everyone raves about Alex Ross and I think he's a good painter, but to me his storytelling is boring and his line is lousy."

**Continued on page 64**

### Fantasy and superheroes:

**Colleen Doran has brought fantasy to readers with Distant Soil — now published by Image — and with Marvel's Power Pack and Mutant X.**



Distant Soil © Colleen Doran; Storm, Gambit and the Power Pack are TM and © of Marvel Characters Inc.

# Comic Shop Directory

## British Columbia

|                                    |  |                |                              |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Comic &amp; Book Emporium</b>   | 1247 Granville St., Vancouver, V6Z 1M5 | (250) 682-3019 | C BI RPG AR MI M AP B Md HS  |
| <b>Curious Books and Comics</b>    | 631 Johnson St., Victoria, V8W 1M7     | (250) 384-1656 | C BI RPG AS MI AP CC M Md WL |
| <b>Up-Start Comics &amp; Games</b> | 1483A Bowen Rd., Nanaimo, V9S 1G4      | (250) 741-0101 | C BI RPG AR MI M AP B Md HS  |

## Alberta

|                      |                                     |                |                                    |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Comic-Kazi</b>    | Northland Village, Calgary, T2L 2J8 | (403) 286-0544 | C BI RPG AS Md M AP CC M HS WL B   |
| <b>Saturn Comics</b> | 5726 104 St., Edmonton, T6H 2K2     | (780) 430-0598 | C BI RPG AS B M AP CC OL Cat WL ** |

## Saskatchewan

|                                      |                                     |                |                       |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>8th Street Books &amp; Comics</b> | 1010 8th St. E., Saskatoon, S7H 0R9 | (306) 343-6624 | C BI M AP CC Md WL B  |
| <b>Phoenix Comics</b>                | 2806 Dewdney Ave., Regina, S4T 0X7  | (306) 757-9091 | C RPG BI AS CC M WL B |

## Manitoba

|                   |                                      |                |                           |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Comic Cave</b> | 1104 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg, S7H 0R9 | (306) 318-9636 | C BI M AP CC Md WL Cat OL |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|

## Ontario

|                       |                                     |                |                                    |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Big B Comics</b>   | 1045 James St., Hamilton, L8K 1B4   | (905) 312-6977 | C BI RPG Md AP CC M HS WL B        |
| <b>Comics North</b>   | 106 Elm St., Sudbury, P3C 1T5       | (705) 674-1015 | C BI RPG AS AR Md MI AP CC M HS WL |
| <b>Now &amp; Then</b> | 90 Queen St. S., Kitchener, N2G 1V9 | (519) 744-5571 | C BI RPG AS AR Md MI AP CC M WL    |

## Quebec

|                      |                                      |                |                        |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| <b>Empire Comics</b> | 1221 Crescent St., Montreal, H3G 2B1 | (514) 871-1402 | C BI RPG AP CC AS WL B |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|

## Prince Edward Island

|                         |   |                |                        |
|-------------------------|---|----------------|------------------------|
| <b>The Comic Hunter</b> | 63 University Ave. Charlottetown, C1A 4L1 | (902) 566-2926 | C BI RPG AP CC AS WL B |
|-------------------------|---|----------------|------------------------|

## New Brunswick

|                                      |                                      |                |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Stange Adventures Comic Books</b> | 384 Queen St. Fredericton, E3B 1B2   | (506) 450-3759 | C BI RPG MI HS AP CC AS WL B WL M Md |
| <b>Halley's Comics</b>               | 25 charlotte St. St. John's, E2L 2H3 | (506) 693-4835 | C BI RPG MI HS AP CC AS WL B WL M Md |

## Nova Scotia

|  |   |                |                                   |
|--|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Mirror Universe Cards, Comics &amp; Games</b> | 79 Alderney Dr. Dartmouth, B2Y 2N7      | (902) 466-8884 | C BI RPG MI HS M AP CC Md WL AS M |
| <b>Websllgers</b>                                | Halifax Shopping Ctr., Halifax, B3C 2H8 | (902) 455-4949 | C BI RPG Md AP CC M HS WL B AS HS |

\*\* Saturn Comics' website for ordering can be found at [www.compusmart.ab.ca](http://www.compusmart.ab.ca)

## Legend

|                         |                   |                           |                        |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| C = Comics              | AS = Anime Sold   | MI = Minutemen            | CC = Collectible Cards |
| BI = Back Issues        | AR = Anime Rented | AP = Apparel              | M = Magazines          |
| RPG = Roleplaying Games | MO = Mail Order   | Cat = Catalogue Available | Md = Models            |

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# Some authors don't translate well on the Web

*Websites for science fiction and fantasy authors range from non-existent to boring to fun-lovingly quirky*

By  
Dale Sproule

"I'm a writer, not a web designer."

Many authors could employ Dr. McCoy's famous defence when explaining the lack of style on their websites. James Alan Gardner makes no bones about it on his home page.

They make a legitimate point.

Becoming the best at what you do often requires sacrifices. And for authors those sacrifices are often in the line of "I'll be a writer — instead — of a musician/designer/computer guru etc."

The more successful the writer, the less likely he or she is to have had time to learn how to design their own state-of-the-art website. Ergo, many of the best Canadian SF writers are comparative luddites.

William Gibson and Robert Charles Wilson don't have websites at all. And many other writers' pages consist of nothing more than text, with the odd photograph thrown in. Many of the sites created by the authors themselves are utilitarian at best. Of the sites that go beyond pure text, many just reproduce book covers in neat columns or rows and accompany them with descriptions and/or quotes from reviews.

Of these, the best-known is probably Robert J. Sawyer's website, which has been lauded as one of the biggest, most interesting sites for an author in or out of any genre — a well-deserved reputation for this fast, easy-to-navigate website that is packed full of goodness and conscientiously updated.

It's as straightforward and amiable as

the author himself.

Terence M. Green and Dave Duncan both have very accessible sites that are easy on the eyes and packed with information. Karl Schroeder's site is spare and elegant, but also somewhat cold and academic — which is quite unlike like his book, *Ventus* — a sprawling space opera coming out this December.

Cory Doctorow has an amusing retro graphic interface that is fun and fast-loading, and the site is filled with his non-fiction writings, proving hours of good reading.

**The more successful  
the writer, the less  
likely he or she is to  
have had time to learn  
how to design their  
own state-of-the-art  
website.**

Phyllis Gotlieb has a small, but pretty, sight that offers an excerpt of her upcoming novel, *Mindworlds*. Julie Czerneda has a nice clean site which not only features her novels, but also all the educational and young adult anthologies she has edited.

Mark Shainblum, co-creator of *Angloman* and co-editor of *Arrowdreams* has a bright, clean page full of fun and interesting graphics. Nalo Hopkinson's is simple and quick, but features some wonderful graphics and some unique links. Ann Marsten's website is functional and attractive, if a bit too busy with its bright Celtic wallpaper.

Some sites, like Edo Van Belkom's, are intrinsically quite good, but in need of more frequent maintenance.

Of the horror writers, I was most impressed by Nancy Kilpatrick's home

page, which was visually a bit different, featuring nice graphics and neon green and purple lettering on a black background.

The most disappointing site I visited was the one for Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens.

The index page of their site features a globe covered with blurry images of their bookcovers and no text. Once you figure out how to navigate, the pages themselves are quite dull. Theirs is not the worst site of any Canadian SF authors, but it was probably the least successful of the ambitious ones.

A couple of authors are pretty damned fine designers, but none use the web medium more effectively than Peter Watts.

After giving you a good look at the breathtaking cover art, his website for *Starfish* actually takes you deep beneath the ocean, explaining terminology and promoting his novel quite brilliantly along the way. He has a couple of books coming out soon, but while the site mentions them, it hasn't been retooled to actively promote them. I hope Peter keeps finding the time to maintain the website.

Jan Lars Jensen's site is just plain quirky.

You can tell by the fact that his web address doesn't even include a www. At the top of the page are old photographs including the main image of a man on an ornithopter. Below that is a link that allows you to read or download his Hugo- and Sidewise Award-nominated novelette, "The Secret History of the Ornithopter."

Several of his stories can be accessed on the site. Of the other pages that make up his site, two are unfinished and the page for *Shiva 3000* is relatively disappointing — essentially a big movie ad filled with critical raves.

But the link to his "sponsor" *Fancy Garmenteer* is a hilarious indication that

## Doran

Painting, according to Doran, is almost a technical exercise. She would prefer to see more attention focused on "the idea itself and the expression of that idea in its most-immediate form" is what is important. This is also a key component in effective storytelling.

"This is why a great technician like an Alex Ross is not nearly as interesting to me as someone who has great ideas and conveys them so beautifully the way Frank Miller does.

"Frank Miller is all-brain and Alex Ross is almost like an idiot savant to me. There's nothing in his art that interests me, the way Frank Miller's art interests me."

Doran adds that part of her problem with Ross's work is that he doesn't tackle to complex issues or stories that Miller does.

By Doran's reckoning, she needs to work on being able to convey mass with a minimum of lines in her work.

"Being able to convey mass with a simple line is really tough. But when I do it I'm so happy," she said. "

On the other hand, she considers her characterization as her strong suit.

"I think it is dead solid. The body language ... the facial expressions ... that is usually always on target," she said.

Doran spends a great deal of time at the drawing board ensuring that the facial expressions of characters convey the proper tone of the moment. To that end, Doran is not above redoing entire pages to capture the proper mood — while still making deadlines.

"You can see all the erasures on a page I'm working on," she said. "I'll do it over and over until the emotional content of what I'm trying to convey is accurate."

While storytelling skills attracts Doran to a particular work or artist, the lack of characterization garners her scorn.

"I see so many other artists who only have five expressions in their repertoire," Doran says. "Everybody stands the same, everybody's hands are clenched and their mouths are always open.

"It's so boring."



**Robert J. Sawyer's website is one of the most comprehensive and most visited on the Internet. Jan Lars-Jensen's, on the other hand, is quirky and fun.**

Online has a good website featuring pages/links for all their members including Michael Coney, Eileen Kernaghan,

Dave Duncan, Matt Hughes, Mary Choo, Theresa Plowright, Clelie Rich, Nancy Bennett and Rhea Rose. SFWA, SF Site and sff.net all host writer pages.

Made in Canada is at [www.geocities.com/canadian\\_sf/](http://www.geocities.com/canadian_sf/)

SF Canada is at [www.sfcanada.ca](http://www.sfcanada.ca)

The Lonely Cry is at [www.portal.ca/~lonewolf/](http://www.portal.ca/~lonewolf/)

The SFWA site is at [www.sfw.org/members](http://www.sfw.org/members)

The sff.net index is at [www.sff.net/people/](http://www.sff.net/people/)

The SF Site index is at [www.sfsite.com/scribe/scribe01.htm](http://www.sfsite.com/scribe/scribe01.htm)

And check out Dale's own site at [www.razorwings.com](http://www.razorwings.com)

**Dale Sproule is a Toronto writer, artist, editor and web-meister. He founded and edited the first 11**



**issues of TransVersions with his wife Sally McBride. His Aurora-nominations include two for fiction and five for editing. He is currently writing screenplays and designing websites, including his current online graphic novel project, Razorwings.**

this website might even get better as it goes along.

Many of the sites for the more famous authors are actually created and maintained by fans, friends or family.

Guy Gavriel Kay has a fine new site developed and maintained by a fan named Deborah Meghnagi, that is filled with excerpts, artwork, news and academic writings. A thorough and fascinating website.

Charles de Lint has a huge and graphically pleasing site with animation, cover art galore and its own search engine.

Rather than give you individual URLs for most of these websites, I'll simply guide you to a few websites which between them feature links to all the pages mentioned above.

Made in Canada — the Aurora-winning website maintained by Don Bassie — has a comprehensive list of Canadian authors with links to many of their sites.

Writer's co-operatives and organizations often host member pages.

And the SF Canada site, along with interesting articles and member news, has a full member list with websites and e-mail addresses. The Lonely Cry

# The End of Social Gaming?

## Why traditional face-to-face gaming should not be abandoned

*It won't save the world, but it will help us maintain relationships and keep from becoming isolated*

**By  
Kevin Davies**

The gaming industry today is probably as hot as it has ever been.

More products are being produced in more genres for people of all ages. So is everything as it should be? Well, that's for you to determine.

### Why play games?

There are many reasons to play games. Besides being a fun way to spend some time, games can also challenge our minds and/or physical dexterity, permit us to immerse ourselves in an imaginary setting and experience another existence, practice social and decision-making skills and connect with old or new acquaintances, while catching up on each other's lives.

The creative and analytical thinking involved in gameplay and strategising individual actions offer a practical benefit to the player when they engage in mundane activities during the course of their normal day.

Gameplay demands that players anticipate and think through various situations; this can improve real life decision making and the assessment of 'worst case scenarios' before undertaking a task.

Games help build life skills.

### Electronic Games

There are no limits to the potential of electronic games; they are and will continue to be a seductive form of entertainment.

The quality of the visual media continues to improve and the "game-engines" become more elaborate with each new release. Eventually, players will be capable of entering virtual environments either as themselves or some avatar character of their own design.

Though the electronic games of today will seem primitive when compared to the virtual reality amusements of tomorrow, the novelty of exploring graphical terrains and performing relatively simple, repetitive actions (e.g., firing weapons, designating activity sites, or driving vehicles), continues to attract players.

Increasingly, people young and old are limiting the type of games they play to the electronic format.

The reasons are sensible and include: the ability to squeeze in a few minutes of play between other

activities, the capability of solo play when other players are not readily available, the fast play and rapid action resolution, the lack of administration and bookkeeping tasks, and the convenience of immediate set-up with no pieces to physically move or lose.

One significant drawback exists that will not be overcome until the development of true virtual reality: electronic games are limited in their capacity to encourage social interaction between players before and during gameplay — a quality at which traditional face-to-face "social" games excel.

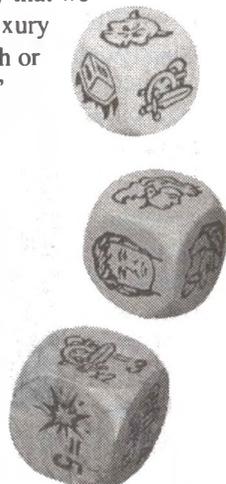
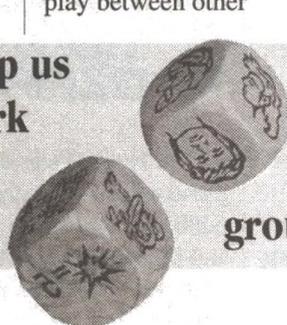
### Benefits of 'Social' Gaming

Electronic games can be compared to watching a film, whereas traditional games are more like reading a novel; both books and traditional (especially roleplay) games require the user to exercise their imagination — films and electronic games are less demanding on creativity, functioning as passive and/or reactive entertainment.

Social games help us explore and work out problems within a group-environment in a way that we might not have the luxury of experimenting with or failing at in 'real-life'

**Social games help us  
explore and work**

**out problems within a  
group-environment.**



conditions.

They allow us to practise our people skills, including talking, suggesting and promoting ideas, gaining the attention of others, following another's lead, assuming a leadership role and accepting failure and the criticism of our efforts.

Electronic games offer victory, defeat, and limited interaction through text and increasingly, audio.

However, until we can see the eyes, detailed expressions, and body language of our opponents and/or team members, and fully interact with them outside of the gameplay experience, the total range of social benefits of electronic gameplay will not be available.

Why is this something you should be concerned about?

## Don't Limit Yourself

If you only purchase and play electronic games, many traditional social games may not be around much longer. The marketplace will only produce what consumers are willing to support.

If social games disappear before electronic games can achieve the sophistication that allows them to deliver the same social benefits, our society will have lost an important stimulus for social interaction. We will become more isolated and less socialized as a people.

Ultimately, taken to its extreme, this could result in a significantly more hostile society.

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not suggesting that social gaming can save the world.

It does, however, encourage people to spend some time together, get to know one another, and work through some

problems — even if they are simulated through the events of a roleplay scenario or the strategies of a tabletop game.

Take the opportunity to gather some friends and set aside some time to experiment with a variety of games: roleplay games, miniatures games, wargames, card games, and family board games.

Sure, it may take a bit more effort than plugging in a cartridge or logging-on, but the friendships that develop over the months and years of regular gaming sessions will be well worth the effort.

Kevin Davies is a publisher, game designer, and illustrator. His company Peregrine produces the humorous roleplay games *Murphy's World* and *Bob, Lord of Evil* and can be reached at [peregrine@peregrine-net.com](mailto:peregrine@peregrine-net.com) or <http://www.peregrine-net.com>

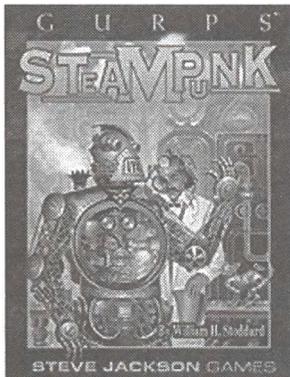


## Jackson unveils Gurps Steampunk

Steve Jackson Games has released the latest addition to its GURPS lineup with GURPS Steampunk.

The guide combines the mood of cyberpunk with the setting of an alternate Industrial Age, where computers run on steam power, walking colossi stalk the battlefields, flying ironclads rule the skies, and science is the new frontier.

GURPS Steampunk covers the real events, politics, and personalities of the Industrial Age, as well as the weird science that could have been created vehicles and robots, airships.



Choose from several different Steam Age settings described in the book.

GURPS Steampunk is 144 pages and carries a suggested retail price of \$20.95 (US).

## Wheel of Time rolls round

Precedence Marketing is scheduled to release two major new additions to the Wheel of Time universe in November.

Winter's Heart will arrive in stores at the same time as the next installment in the top-rated Wheel of Time Collectible Card Game.

The new limited edition card set will be entitled Children of the Dragon. Adhering to the characters and story of the popular fantasy novel series, the Wheel of Time CCG pits Light versus

## GAME NEWS

Dark, in a battle for control of the Pattern which shapes Destiny itself. The game is illustrated by a host of acclaimed fantasy artists including: Larry Elmore, Chris Arneson and Stephen Snyder.

## Heavy Gear becomes disk game

Fantasy Flight Games has acquired the license to publish a customizable disk game based on Dream Pod 9's Heavy Gear universe.



The Heavy Gear disk game will be designed and published by Fantasy Flight and is scheduled to debut at next year's GenCon in August.

The Heavy Gear game will use Fantasy Flight's proprietary customizable disk-game mechanics, introduced in the award-winning DiskWars game. With a new disk game system designed specifically for Heavy Gear, it promises a unique and exciting brand of tabletop mechanized combat, say Fantasy Flight officials.

## Pinnacle becomes a subsidiary

Pinnacle Entertainment Group, Inc. has become a wholly owned subsidiary of Cybergames.com.

As a result, Pinnacle had to adjust its release schedule for the Great Rail Wars.

The 144-page book replaces the planned box set and will be available in November along with the first wave of miniatures.

Pinnacle also plans to release new miniature packs, vehicles and books for the Great Rail wars in the first quarter of 2001.



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# Inkworks' Roswell cards capture sense of mystery

By Connor

Hot on the heels of its successful Angel Season One cards, Inkworks is about to release initial series for Roswell.

The 90-card set will include episode and behind-the-scenes cards as part of the basic set.

"We were able to get enough images and it adds a different level to the series," said Inkworks executive vice-president Martha Modlin.

The subsets includes Close Encounters which examines some of the relationships that developed between Roswell's main characters, and Local Phenomena which looks at some of the strange occurrences from the season.

"We've definitely taken a sci-fi slant and tried to get as much of the alien and some of the mysteries and the clues into the card set," said

Modlin.

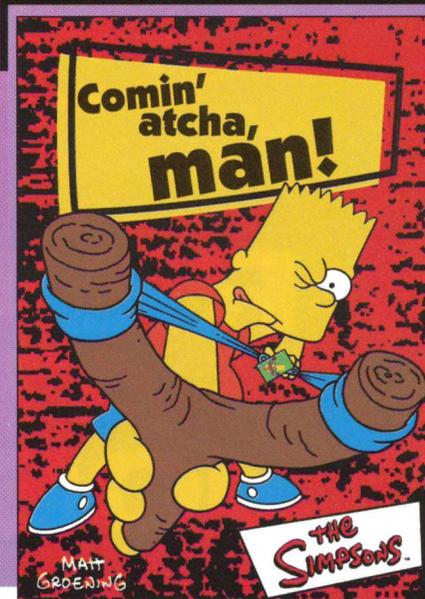
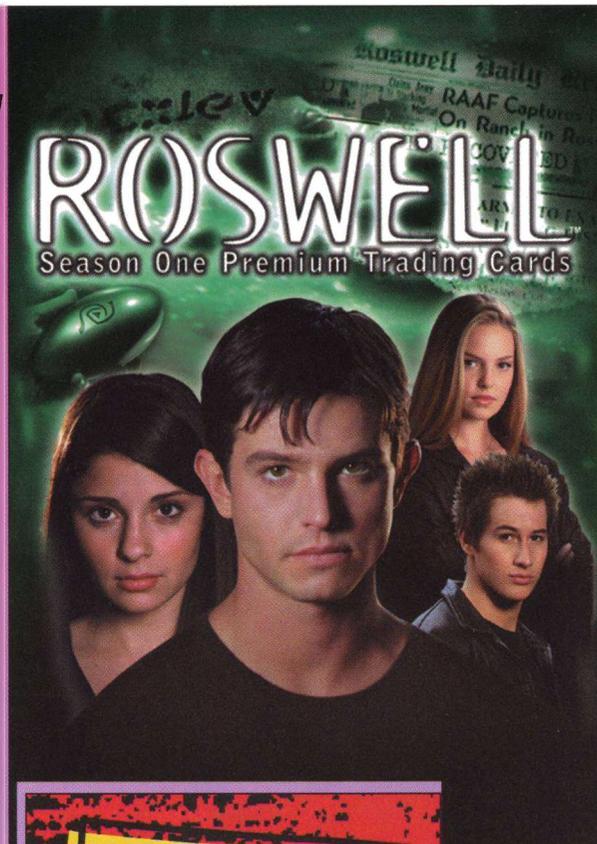
There are three levels of bonus cards: the foil cards Aliens Among Us — nine foil puzzle cards featuring the alien teens, Not of this Earth — six cards featuring a design based on the book of alien sketches discovered during the first season.

"These cards are reminiscent of the book," Modlin explained.

The third chase set is entitled, Alien Orbs.

The two die-cut orbs are designed so that when they are placed together, you can read the message that the alien's mother relays to her children when the orbs were placed together in the season finale.

As was the case with Inkworks' previous card sets, the Roswell series not only features a special high-quality vinyl album for the cards, features autograph cards from the five main char-



**Aliens among us:**  
Inkworks will release its Roswell series in the middle of November. The 90-card set also features a subset dedicated to the various phenomena that marked the show's first season. November also marks the release of the Simpson's 10th anniversary set.



acters.

Roswell carries a \$1.99 (US) price tag per seven-card pack, is scheduled to be shipped Nov. 10.



Inkworks has released its Simpsons series to

commemorate the show's 10th anniversary.

The set includes six nuclear neon cards, four mix-and-match puzzle cards and autograph cards from the voice actors.

# Fantasy for the intelligent reader

*By speaking to human themes, fantasy author Terry Goodkind opens genre to a different breed of readers*

**By  
Chris Krellgaard**

Author Terry Goodkind is gratified with fans' reactions to his novels — gratified, but not surprised.

Goodkind is the author of seven novels.

His recent work — *Soul of Fire* reached the top of the best-seller lists in Canada. Such a feat is almost unheard of when it comes to fantasy and science fiction novels.

His assessment of the popularity of his novels is a simple one.

"I'm not really writing fantasy," he said. "The only reason for fantasy is if it's used to illustrate important human themes.

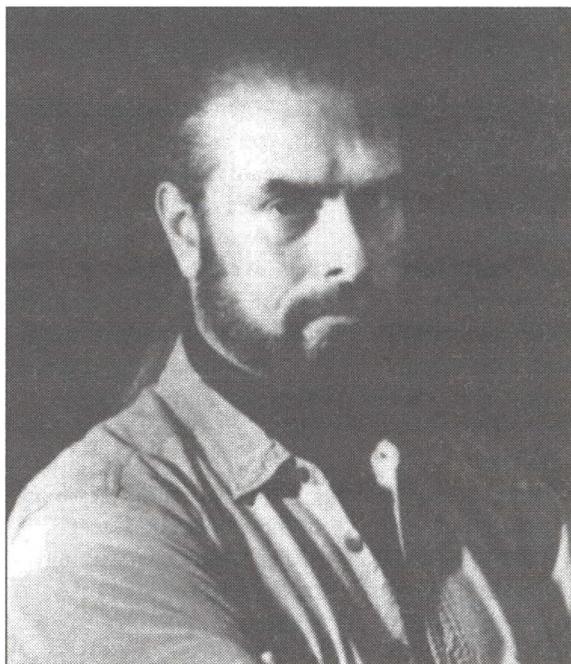
"Fantasy for fantasy's sake I consider invalid and very boring."

Goodkind argues that in some authors' hands, fantasy becomes a crutch. It becomes a means for them to "escape their responsibility to reality."

As a result, readers cannot relate to the stories because there are no ties to reality.

According to Goodkind, this reality is based on an author's philosophy.

"Some of our philosophies



are in error," he said.

"Philosophy must be based on the perceivable world, because the only test that we have of truth is to be able to prove something in reality."

Like knowledge, a writer's philosophy is constructed piece by piece over the course of time. This philosophical outlook is partly the result of an author's — or a person's upbringing — and upon the knowledge they have been able to accumulate.

"The fact that I have so many devoted fans I think speaks to the fact that they recognize the sense of life that my books carry with them," he explains. "So, I'm very gratified that it's succeeding, but I think it's succeeding because I'm doing what a lot of other people aren't doing.

"That's speaking to those important human themes."

One of the important themes in all of Goodkind's works is the basis of life.

"It seems like a pretty basic premise, but you'd be surprised how many authors don't get it," Goodkind said.

Using the example of a story whose main character is a drug dealer, Goodkind says authors usually base their stories on death rather than life.

"It's shocking to me how few authors grasp that most basic premise ... that the ultimate value is life."

By speaking to these themes, Goodkind's novels attract a different type of reader than your normal sword-and-sorcery fare. In fact, Goodkind's novels cut across age groups and backgrounds — drawing readers to the genre who otherwise might not be inclined to read a fantasy novel.

"People are spreading the

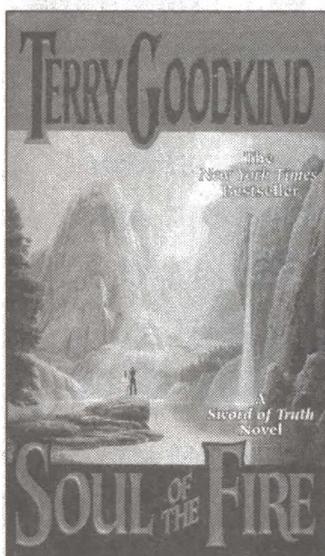
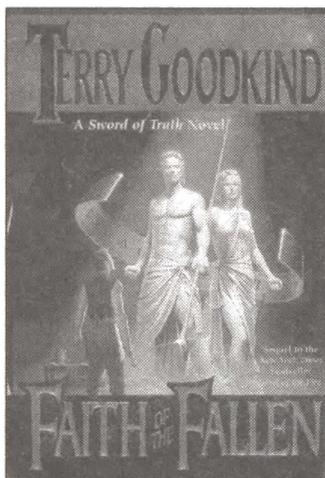
**"The only reason for fantasy is if it's used to illustrate important human themes. Fantasy for fantasy's sake I consider invalid and very boring."**

word to friends and acquaintances who like intelligently written things," Goodkind explains. "And I write for intelligent readers.

"I never speak down to readers and I write things expecting that they will be able to understand what I'm writing about because I explain it clearly enough."

It is this audience which Goodkind admires and protects. He does not appreciate other authors making, what can be construed as insulting, overtures to his readers.

If Goodkind's success and popularity is breeding imitators, he isn't aware of anyone who is adept at imitating his approach and style. While he is aware of various advertising campaigns which tout an author as following in Goodkind's literary footsteps, he has yet to find someone whose feet fit exactly.



**Of the three most-recent additions to the Sword of Truth series, *Soul of Fire* topped the best-seller charts in Canada — an unprecedented feat for a fantasy novel.**

“From what I’ve seen, they just don’t get it,” Goodkind said. “They don’t understand what it is I’m doing, how it is I do it or why it is I’m doing it.”

“They pick up on certain superficial elements and think that by using those elements that they’re going to attract the same audience.”

Because Goodkind writes to the intelligent reader, he argues that stories built on such a weak foundation will fail to tap into his success.

“I appeal to the reader’s intellect, to their intelligence,” Goodkind explains. “I don’t think that you can use gimmicks to reach people on an intellectual level.”

Earlier this fall, Goodkind’s *Faith of the Fallen* reached bookstores. The novel is the latest novel and the sixth book in the seven-year-old *Sword of Truth* Series.

“*Faith of the Fallen* is a book I could not have written a few years ago,” Goodkind confides. “It’s far and a way the best book of the series and, I believe, a landmark fantasy novel.”

“In many ways, it’s anti-fantasy.”

One of the reasons why Goodkind believes he couldn’t have written the novel earlier in his career is because he couldn’t express some of the complex abstracts in the novel.

“We are the sum total of everything we know,” Goodkind says. “So everything you know has to be part of your writing.”

“You write in abstracts, but you have to explain in concrete terms what it is that you’re trying to get across to readers.”

Through experience and a growing base of knowledge, authors are able to draw on

more examples which can provide the touchstones needed to convey an abstract concept in their works.

“Recreating a human being when your doing a painting is difficult to do because the most recognizable thing to a human being is another human being,” he explains.

“When you recreate it in art, you’re using art to recreate reality, but you can’t include everything. So you have to use certain elements that give the connotation of a human being and make it recognizable as a human being.”

“The better artist you are, the more able you are to make that recognizable figure.”

Having a reader grasp one of those abstract concepts, is one of the most gratifying parts of his work as an author.

“I love it when readers get it,” he said. “When they understand the message of life involved in the story.”

Since he began work on his first novel, Goodkind has brought elements together to strike a chord with readers’ intelligence. It is a careful process which follows the same process Goodkind follows as a carpenter.

“It’s much like building a home, you can’t just go down and buy a bunch of wood, drive up to the site and start nailing it together,” Goodkind explains.

“You have to understand the concept of what you’re trying to create, you have to use your intellect to decide what you want to accomplish in the end, whether you’re building a house or a novel.”

To Goodkind, following a blueprint or an outline is essential to grasping the concepts and the steps along the way to reach your goal. The

steps, according to Goodkind, include theme, plot, characterization and style.

Like a house, a novel must be laid out ahead of time. The author needs to understand the characters and their purpose in the novel and how the characters will serve this purpose.

To that end, Goodkind will not bring past characters into new works unless they have a purpose within the story. To bring characters back, would be “boring,” according to Goodkind.

“Everything in that book has to serve a function and has to contribute to that whole.”

While the writing process has become easier, working on the *Sword of Truth* series has not. In some ways, the series hamstrings Goodkind.

“In a series you’re limited in what you can do,” he said. “You have certain characters who are defined in certain ways and you cannot expand on it.”

“But at the same time, I’ve learned how to overcome these blocked paths and the new paths I’ve followed are exciting.”

Goodkind will follow the path during the coming months as he works on his eighth novel. It is a hectic pace he has set for himself — the book is expected to be released in late 2001.

“I enjoy the process of writing and I know that readers are eager for the next book and I want to write it,” says Goodkind. “It’s a process where day after day, month after month, you have to keep at it.”

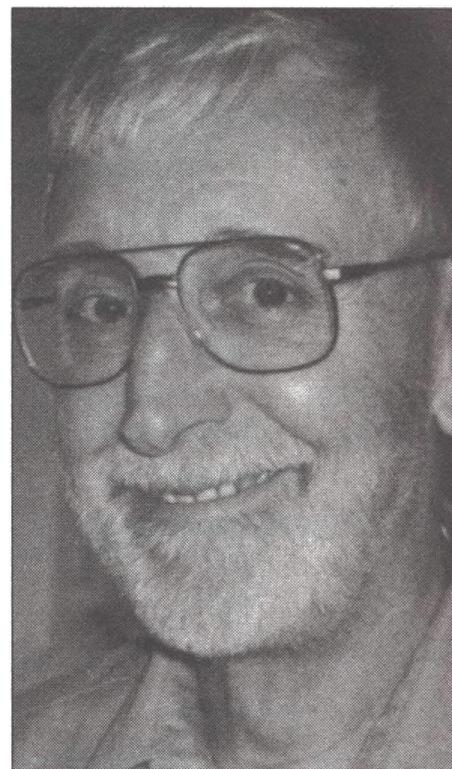
“But the work is gratifying and it’s something I really enjoy doing.”

# 10 questions

## 'Escape' shouldn't be a dirty word

with Dave Duncan

It took a downturn in the oil industry for the Alberta business to lose a respected scientist and geologist and for readers to gain the joys of Dave Duncan. Since 1986, the Scottish-born Duncan has authored 28 fantasy novels for both young and old. He took some time out from his hectic promotional tour schedule to discuss his latest novel.



**1** How does your current novel, *Sky of Swords*, fit into the *King's Blades* series?

All three books are stand-alone novels. They cover much the same time interval and certain characters appear in both. You can read any one without reference to the others, but the three together tell a larger story. No two agree exactly, and you need to read all three to get the whole story. I do suggest that they be read in the order they were published.

**2** And how does the young adult series, *The King's Daggers* fit?

I'm not certain that these books are YA. That was the intention, certainly. They are simpler stories, but Avon is marketing them as just plain 'books' and they obviously appeal to adults as well, because the first, *Sir Stalwart*, made the Locus bestseller list.

*Daggers* describes in more detail the *Monster War*, which was touched on in *The Gilded Chain*. They feature Emerald of the White Sisters and a young Blade, *Sir Stalwart* (his friends call him *Wart* and his enemies call him *Sir*). The sec-

ond book, *The Crooked House*, is just out.

**3** Is *Sky of Swords* the final installment to the series or just part of an ongoing saga?

This completes the present series. I have a contract to write another *Tale of the King's Blades*, but that will be set in a different time. It is scheduled for publication in 2003, so I haven't given it much thought yet.

**4** As a storyteller, what has been the challenge of writing a series such as the *King's Blades*?

This series has been different from any other I ever wrote, in that I didn't plan for there to be a series at all.

I wrote *The Gilded Chain* as a one-off and it was Jennifer Brehl at Avon who suggested that it might lead to a sequel or two. I concurred with dignified enthusiasm, but when the time came to start writing, I couldn't find a sequel, so I wrote *paraquels*, books running concurrently.

This 'lateral trilogy' turned out to have a few unexpected difficulties because there are so more inconsistency traps to fall into - I know of one that I shall try to have fixed before the paperback of *Sky of Swords* appears next year, although it isn't serious. (When did *Mother Superior* first come to court? Two books disagree.)

I'm sure there are more. I had to use a spread sheet to keep track of the *Blades*

themselves. About 200 of them are mentioned and new recruits can take the names of former heroes, so there can be several *Sir Terrors*, and so on.

The *Daggers* books were a different sort of challenge, in that they're shorter, and I am normally a long-winded writer. I think the series gets better as it goes along and I get the hang of that medium.

**5** What is the attraction of fantasy for you?

Fantasy is fiction with the gloves off, set in a completely unbelievable world. The challenge for the writer is to keep the people believable. The paradox is that, as the setting becomes less credible, the characters matter more;

## IN PAPERBACK

### Avon Eos

Colony Fleet Susan Matthews  
 Lord of the Fire Lands Dave Duncan  
 Rules of Conflict Kristine Smith  
 The Swordsman's Oath Juliet E. McKenna

### Baen

The Chick is in the Mail E. Friesner, M. Greenberg  
 Rats, Bats & Vats Dave Freer, Eric Flint

### Bantam

Only Forward Michael Marshall Smith  
 Pangaea: Book II Lisa Mason

### Bantam/Doubleday

Blind Assassin Margaret Atwood

### Bridge

Writers of the Future Volume XVI  
 Algis Budrys, ed.

### DAW

Changing Visions Julie Czerneda  
 Far Frontiers M. Greenberg, Larry Segriff

### Exhibit A Press

Sonovawitch! and Other Tales of Supernatural Law  
 Batton Lash

### Forge

@expectations Kit Reed

### Golden Gryphon

Terminal Visions Richard Paul Russo

### Harcourt Brace

Soulsaver James Stevens-Arce

### Random House

Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay  
 Michael Chabon

### ROC

The Invisible Ring Anne Bishop  
 Kingdom of the Grail Judith Tarr

the thread of 'universality' that all good stories require becomes more evident. I am sure, this is why J. R. R. Tolkien was repeatedly forced to deny that his Lord of the Rings was an allegory. The story is obviously not true, and yet it feels true because the people are true. That is the test of good fantasy.

For example, suppose an employer instructs an employee to do something that feels unethical. Not illegal, just shady. In the real world this is not a rare occurrence, but a refusal risks no more than regular paycheques or future promotion, balanced against loss of self-respect.

In fantasy, when the employee is a swordsman and his employer a despotic king, then the stakes become liberty or life itself. Now the problem is more focused. It matters.

6

### For the reader?

Escape. I know that's a dirty word to some people, but it's just plain good fun to be a sword-wielding hunk or a powerful sorcerer for a while. Real life is too homogenized.

7

### As a writer, what do you set out to give the reader in your novels?

To boldly go where no McDonald's has gone before. More specifically, I try for likable, but not perfect, heroes (and heroines, of course) reasonably struggling against almost but not quite insurmountable problems, in a world that is consistently worked out. Magic is impossible, obviously (as Judy Merrill once asked me, "Where does the Second law of Thermodynamics fit in this?"), but the absurdities should be tucked out of sight.

8

### Before you became a novelist, you were a geologist. What made you decide to take up writing as a second profession?

I loved geology, but after 30 years I was getting bored. I'd always had a desire to be a writer. I'd tried short stories and realized I had no talent for that medium. In the summer of 1984, I

sat down at my computer and began writing a novel, more or less on the spur of the moment, thinking it would be a fun thing to do. It was and I rapidly became hooked. I started submitting my work (it was easier to get published in those days than it is now). Then, in the spring of 1986, the oil business collapsed.

For the first time in 30 years I was out of work. Two weeks after I completed my last consulting project, Del Rey phoned from New York and offered to buy a manuscript I had sent, *A Rose-Red City*.

### What sparks your creative juices?

If you mean where does the initial seed idea come from, it can be anything at all.

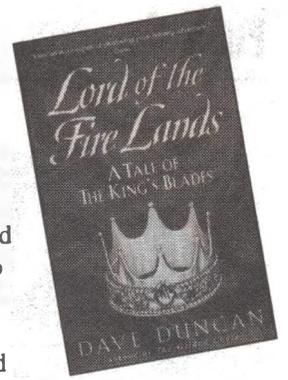
The entire world of Chivial originated in a celebrated example of royal ingratitude, when Cardinal Wolsey lay dying and the King (Henry VIII of course) sent men to remove his chain of office. My version of that episode forms Chapter One of *The Gilded Chain*.

After that the juices flow from working out each successive incident and watching them shape out a story.

### What's your next project?

10 I've already turned in book three of *The King's Daggers* for publication next year. As I said, there will eventually be more books about the Blades.

At the moment I'm working in a new world on what looks like being a two-part series. It has a slight resemblance to *The Cursed*, in that there are many distinct types of magic interacting. The four protagonists were taken hostage as children and have now grown up, in very different circumstances. Their task is to find one another and go home to claim their inheritance.



Next issue...

Orson Scott Card

# Feist combines love of swashbuckling with gaming

*Fantasy author's latest, **Krondor: Tears of the Gods**, is due in December*

Fantasy was a logical genre for Raymond E. Feist.

"My love of fantasy began with the passion I had as a kid for reading what was known as boy's adventure novels, like *Captain Blood* and the *Three Musketeers*," Feist explains. "They don't publish that kind of fiction any more. It's kind of a late 19th and early 20th century form."

"So, I always had that appetite for swashbuckling and daring do."

Years later, he managed to combine his love of adventure novels with a favourite pastime.

In college during the '70s, Feist became hooked on a fantasy roleplaying game set in the world of Midkemia.

At the time, there were upwards of a dozen who were active gamers, with another dozen who would be more transient members of Feist's gaming clique.

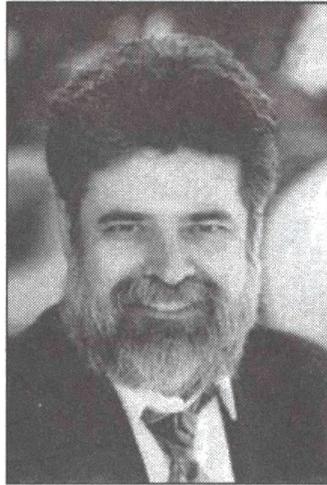
After a few years, he had begun to write stories set in the gaming environment he had played in for about three or four years.

"They were pretty silly. They were really lightweight sort of bad Fritz Lieber knockoff," Feist recalls.

On a whim, Feist decided to tackle a serious story based on the world of Midkemia.

The final product was his first novel, *Magician*.

"There was never a conscious effort on my part to become fantasy writer," Feist



explained. "I didn't sit down one day and decide I was going to be a fantasy writer. It just happened."

"But I discovered in the process that I enjoyed writing and I enjoyed writing fantasy."

By his own admission, Feist's success since the *Magician* has surpassed his wildest expectation

Since the *Magician*, Feist has pushed the story further with sequels *Silverthorn* and *A Darkness at Sethanon* — considered *The Riftwar Saga*,

He co-authored, with Janny Wurts the *Empire Trilogy* — including *Prince of the Blood*, *The King's Buccaneer* and *Faerie Tale*. The latter novel is a dark-fantasy set in contemporary America, as well as the *Serpentwar Saga*.

He has also composed a *The Riftwar Legacy* series, based in part on the hugely successful computer games set in his universe, *Betrayal at Krondor*, *Return to Krondor* and last fall, *Krondor the Assassin*.

Feist's work is inexorably tied to roleplaying games.

This provides the novels with a ready readership, but it also makes the novels difficult to

**"It's all very absurdist and it may play well when you're drinking beer and rolling dice, but it's hard to sell as a serious novel."**

create.

"In most gaming environments, there's a high quotient of silly," Feist said. "and unless you're Terry Pratchett, it's kind of hard to pull off."

"It's all very absurdist and it may play well when you're drinking beer and rolling dice, but it's hard to sell as a serious novel."

Feist was able to overcome the absurdist pitfalls by setting the novels 500 years before the events in the roleplaying games took place.

In essence, he crafts historical fantasies — works which outline the histories of the roleplaying universe.

## Support

Making the task easier is the support group which Feist taps for assistance during the creative process.

"There are lots of other fathers and mothers of Midkemia, people whom I can turn to and ask, 'OK, what happened over here? How did that come about?'"

"This way the burden isn't on me to think up events as much as it is to research them."

From watching his friends running campaigns or watching strategies unfold while his friends played, Feist was able to gain inspiration for his stories to flesh out of the world.

"That's part of the joy and the frustration of it," Feist

said. "Someone says something in a flippant manner and it becomes a precedent in the game."

"It was a very talented group with a great capacity for trivia. And that's like having one of those sticky things that you take lint of clothes with, because you say things and it sticks with you."

Like any history expert, Feist keeps a timeline of the events which help shaped his world. Although he says some parts of the Midkemia timeline are fuzzy, they become more defined as he develops the narrative of a particular novel.

"I know something bad happened over here on the timeline, I just don't know what," he said of the development of Midkemia's history.

"A lot of it is just people sitting around a table on a Friday night talking about the past and giving that feeling of place and the feeling of time to that game in which they're currently involved."

But through the years, Feist stretched the boundaries of the games and fleshed out that details of the world of Midkemia to the point where it bears little resemblance to the of the world in the game almost a quarter-century ago.

"It is a virtual world in a lot of ways," Feist said. "It's grown exponentially over the years and there's still a lot of stories that I have to tell."

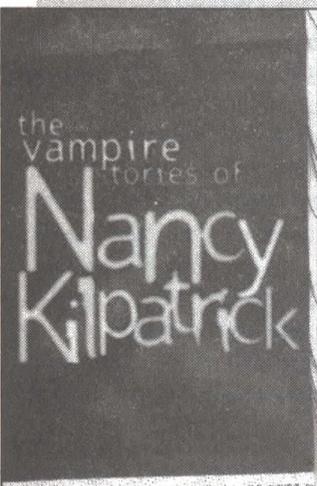
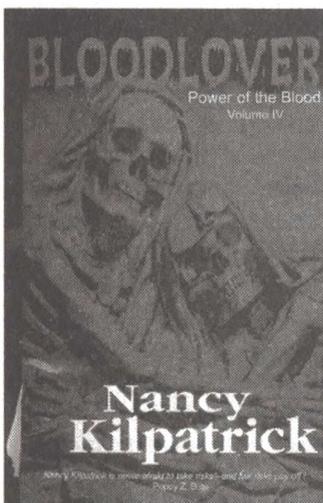
# Kilpatrick's vampires bloody bookshelves

Nancy Kilpatrick has gained a reputation as one of Canada's top horror writers.

This fall, the release of **Bloodlover** (Baskerville Books) and **The Vampire Stories of Nancy Kilpatrick** (Mosaic Press) give readers a chance to make their own assessment.

**Bloodlover**, the fourth part of Kilpatrick's Power of Blood series, takes place in 1960s London and focuses on the complex relationship — call it mindgames — between Julien and Jeanette.

**Bloodlover** is a well-crafted and invigorating novel that



demonstrates the literary elegance which horror writing can achieve.

The real treat of The Vampire stories is that it allows those who have come along late in the game to play catch-up.

The anthology contains out-of-print short stories from 1991-96. Readers will enjoy the surprise of *The Shaft* (1991) and the guilty pleasure derived from *The Game* (1996).

Besides the well-crafted tales, the book holds value for students of literary horror.

The anthology allows readers to examine the evolution of Kilpatrick's writing style and skills over the course of almost a decade.

**Bloodlovers \$19.95 Cdn/\$14.95 US; The Vampire Stories \$20 Cdn/\$15 US**

Speaking of horror, horromeister (and sometime Parsec contributor) Edo van Belkom has compiled an eclectic selection of horror

## Old and New

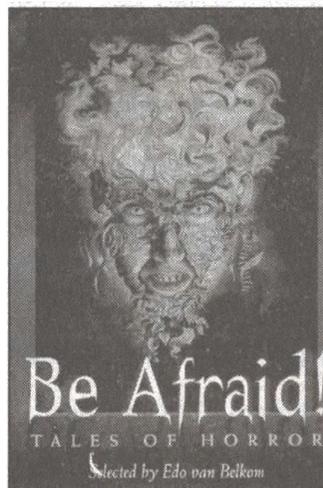
Two releases give readers chance to appreciate the horror writer.

stories in **Be Afraid!** (Tundra Books)

In the anthology, authors such as Kilpatrick, Ed Greenwood (read *The Witch of the Dawn ... I dare you*) offer

a disturbing view of commonplace events — like a day at school — turned on their ear.

In fact, as can be expected, the anthology follows van Belkom's philosophy that the real world is pretty scary.

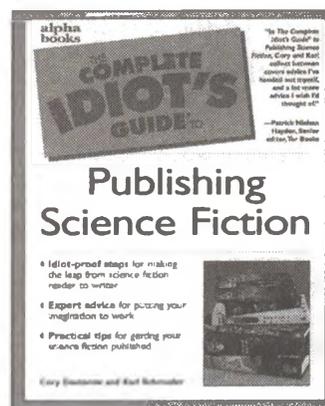
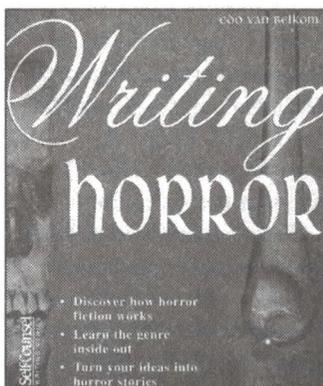


Even though there are a couple of clunkers in this lot, on the whole, van Belkom has brought together fine examples of contemporary horror writing.

For those of you hoping to follow in Kilpatrick's or van Belkom's footsteps, the latter has written the how-to-guide, **Writing Horror** (Self-Counsel Press).

With more than 150 short stories to his credit, van Belkom is well-versed in composing a story and preparing it for market.

Besides explaining the basics of the genre, **Writing Horror** covers the essentials of composing a horror story, targeting the story to a reader-ship group, preparing a manu-



script and selling the story to a publisher.

It also offers useful (and needed) advice on contracts and the benefits of writers groups.

This must be considered an essential reference tool for those considering entering the genre (and probably for some that are already in the field).

**Be Afraid! \$8.99Cdn/\$6.95 US; Writing Horror \$19.95**

— Chris Kroffgaard

Authors Cory Doctorow and Karl Schroeder offer advice to novice science fiction writers with their **Complete Idiot's Guide to Publishing Science Fiction** (Alpha Books).

In the reference book, the two cover such basics as getting an idea and how to write a short story.

They also offer advice on manuscript preparation, approaching publishers and even self-promotion.

While the title can be a little off-putting, it shouldn't detract from the fact that the book provides a perfect foundation for someone wanting to break into the highly-competitive world of being a sci-

ence-fiction writer.

\$25.95Cdn/\$16.95 US

— Lara Johanson

As a rule, autobiographies are either a treat for an author's ego or therapy for the soul. Either way, such books are self-indulgent exercises which proffer lessons to the reader — an attempt to seek a common ground.

On this latter point, Opus is no exception. Barry Windsor-Smith offers readers a glimpse at the metaphysical incidents which have shaped him personally and artistically.

But criticizing Opus on the basis of Windsor-Smith's epiphanies and metaphysical theories would be unfair.

But his retelling of his



experiences do provide a better understanding of Windsor-Smith's approach to art and the influences upon his work during the past 20 or so years.

Opus is lavishly illustrated with Windsor-Smith's works from the mid-60s to the present day. The works demonstrate the true measure of art,

and of humour, the artist who Baby Boomers remember for his stint during the early days of the Conan comic book.

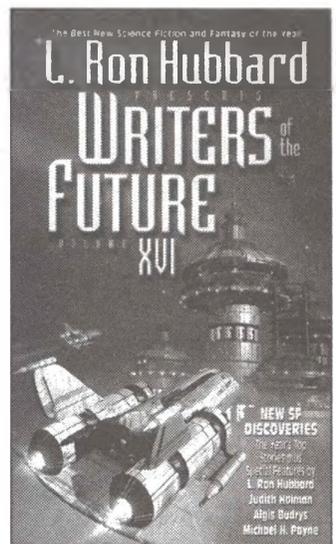
As an artbook and a study of an artist, Opus lives up to its name. It's brilliant.

\$55.95Cdn/\$39.95 US

Over the course of the past 16 years, the Writers of the Future Contest has sent more than its share of top-notch talent on to the professional ranks.

The anthologies generated through these contests have contained some of the finest pieces of short fiction to come down the pike. The latest volume is no exception.

Of particular note are Dan Dysan's Guildmaster and Paul D. Batteiger's Like Iron



Unicorns.Plus

Both are well-crafted, taut stories which demonstrate the full potential of short fiction.

\$11.99Cdn/\$7.99 US

Another anthology worthy of consideration is *Whispers from the Cotton Root Tree* (Invisible Cities Press).

In this work, author Nalo Hopkinson turns editor and brings readers 20 tales of the fantastic from authors of Caribbean background.

Readers will be entranced by H. Nigel Thomas's *The Village Cock* and by Opal Palmer Adisa's *The Widow's Walk*. As well, *Uncle Obadiah and the Alien* by Geoffrey Philip is damned enjoyable.

Hopkinson has managed to gather threads representing the diverse, colourful cultures of the Caribbean and weave a wonderful tapestry of an anthology.

\$24.95 US

### Worth the price:

The Best of Lester del Rey  
**Callahan's Key;** S. Robinson  
Grand Eclipse; Paula Volsky  
**Ship of Destiny;** Robin Hobb  
UFOs, JFK and Elvis

Richard Belzer

**The Collapsium;** W.McCarthy  
Prospero's Children; J. Siegel  
Eternally Yours; J. Hetherington

## UPCOMING RELEASES

The following are books are scheduled for release by U.S. publishers or their Canadian distributors during the next three months. Please note that release dates are subject to change. HC denotes hard cover, TP denotes trade paperback.

### NOVEMBER

Herter, David  
Jordan, Robert  
Martin, George R.R.  
Mitchell, Syne  
Oltion, Jerry  
Ore, Rebecca  
Pratchett, Terry  
Simmons, Dan  
Sterling, Bruce  
Stevermer, Caroline  
Stewart, Ian, & Jack Cohen  
Tepper, Sheri S

Ceres Storm  
Winter's Heart  
A Storm of Swords  
Murphy's Gambit  
Abandon in Place  
Outlaw School  
The Truth  
Darwin's Blade  
Zeitgeist  
When the King Comes Home  
Whealers  
The Fresco

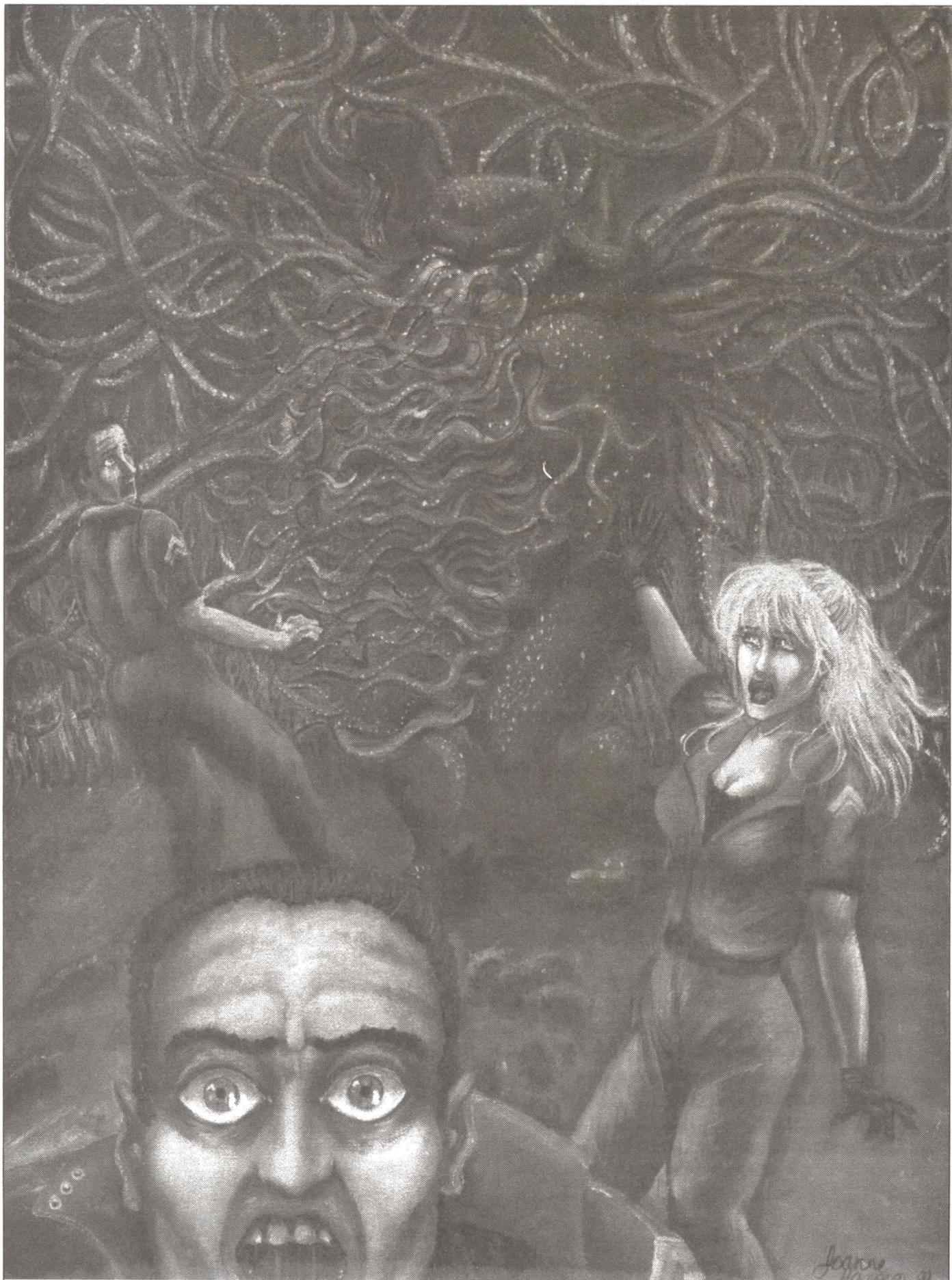
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Bantam Spectra, hc  
Penguin  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
HarperCollins/Eos, tp  
HarperCollins  
HarperCollins/Morrow, hc  
Bantam Spectra, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Warner Aspect, hc  
Avon Eos, hc

### DECEMBER

Asaro, Catherine  
Barrett, Neal, Jr.  
Bester, Alfred  
Cacek, P.D.  
Carver, Jeffrey A.  
Dalkey, Kara  
Ford, John M.  
Haldeman, Joe  
Holland, Cecelia  
Kooistra, Jeffery D.  
Koontz, Dean  
Landis, Geoffrey A.  
Lee, Gentry  
Lee, Tanith  
Moon, Elizabeth  
Pohl, Frederik  
Schroeder, Karl  
Springer, Nancy

The Phoenix Code  
The Prophecy Machine  
Redemolished  
Canyons  
Eternity's End  
Genpei  
The Last Hot Time  
The Coming  
The Angel and the Sword  
Dykstra's War  
From the Corner of His Eye  
Mars Crossing  
The Tranquility Wars  
White as Snow  
Against the Odds  
Chasing Science: Science as Spectator Sport  
Ventus  
Plumage

Bantam Spectra  
Bantam Spectra  
Pocket Books, cln, tp  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Ace, hc  
Tor/-ForgeHB Fenn, hc  
Baen  
Bantam, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Bantam Spectra, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
Baen, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, nf, hc  
Tor/HB Fenn, hc  
HarperCollins, hc



Jeanne  
Illustration

Creating new worlds, meeting interesting people

# FIRST CONTACT... ♦ ♦ ♦

FIRST CONTACT CUSTOM SIMULATION PC 91- BASE BORDEN ©  
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**H**umanity's big moment. And a moment was how long it lasted. They'd run. Lt. Courtland — the Ironman himself — had been the first to break, flinging from him the state-of-the-art translator they'd brought to this meeting place with such care, his boots driving deep into the mud with each stride so that he lurched from side-to-side in an agonizing effort to

put distance between himself and It. Lt. Desroches had hesitated a second longer, staring into the writhing mass of filaments as if somehow this would help her find a point of correspondence, a suggestion of a face. Then she shuddered and whirled to follow Courtland. Lt. Smith, the one who'd barely made the final cut for this mission, the one considered the weakest link, remained the longest. This had more to do with his complete conviction that his legs wouldn't obey him than any desire to stay within reach of that thing. His paralysis left him with the alien's first tentative reach in his direction.

☆ ☆ ☆

"So I tell the Colonel: You pick the partner; we just do the music."

Nance's pale eyes gleamed through her ragged fringe of bangs. "And what did he say to that?" Her fingers continued to search for a disk among the piles of post-it coated pages layered on her desk. The keyboard balanced on her lap shifted with every movement as though trying to save itself from falling to the floor and being lost among even more piles of journals and clippings. For a company listed among the top five software producers, the office of its CEO and resident

genius looked a great deal more like a newsroom from the early fifties than the site of executive splendor.

Henry Fergus, graphics whiz and sales rep, when he wasn't fussing over hardware, dropped his voice into a fair imitation of Col. Dunwithy's growl. "Your so-called 'music' sent three of my best officers into therapy! Why should I pay for that?"

"To which you said?"

Henry flopped into the swivel chair that doubled as a printer stand the odd time they needed hardcopy. "You know what I said." Two fingers tugged a folded check from his pocket. "You pay for it, because it worked."

Nance, Dr. Nancy Vzcenza to those who were not her friends, pushed her hair out of her eyes for a moment. "Henry. Driving people crazy is not what we do here."

"No?"

"No. They do that all by themselves." She found the disk she was after and dropped it into the drive, fingers now jabbing at keys. Henry glanced around in vain for the mouse. She'd lost it again, he bet, or was using it as a footpedal. "We just..." tap tap "illustrate" tap tap tap "the circumstances." Tap.

He kicked off his shoes, thinking nostalgically of the days not long ago when he'd made all his sales calls in sandals. Even better, when most of his business contacts had been over the vidphone. He'd really loved putting on that shirt, tie, and jacket over his bike shorts. Pants and dress shoes. The cost of success.

"So what's up?"

She looked up from the screen as though startled to find him still there. Henry was used to that. He blanked out the world himself when there was a glitch to track down.

"Last-minute upgrade for the new theme park in Australia."

He whistled. "Way to make those bucks. We can retire soon." Which was a joke. Nance had no clearer concept of how much the company — and they — were worth these days than he did. There were people on the next floor who kept

Story by  
**Julie Czerneda**

Art by  
**Joanne Hansen**

track; annoying people in suits who drove better cars than he did and who routinely forgot to tell new staff that he and Nance paid their salaries. That always messed up the lunch-hour softball games.

And retire? Just when they could at last actually own the best systems for themselves? Just when they could do what they loved doing all day long? Being paid for it was, was — “Convenient.”

“Pardon?”

Nance looked innocent. “Convenient that the park wants this particular upgrade. I’ve been wanting to play with it a bit more.”

Henry winced. Nance’s idea of playing usually involved roping him and anyone else still breathing into the VR chamber at ungodly hours.

“What did you have in mind?” he sighed, slipping down into a more comfortable slouch — interested despite the likely unpleasant consequence to his own workload.



**FIRST CONTACT CUSTOM SIMULATION DC 101-SMITHERS © FIRST CONTACT INC. LICENSED FOR HOME EXPERIENCE ONLY.**

Dark red blood settled into the star-shaped cracks in the windshield, forming a network of pleasing regularity. Mildred Smithers, grandmother of three and leading voice in the Real Goldies Choir, shut off the still-racing engine of her car with a satisfied nod. “Gotcha again, you bastard,” she said primly, glancing around as if to reassure herself that this descent into rough language had been safely unnoticed. But she was alone, of course.

She pushed up her bifocals to better see the face of her watch. Not bad. Shaved at least a minute off her response time. Practice makes perfect, as she always reminded her good-for-nothing son-in-law. For a moment, she considered the lifeless form draped over what was left of the hood of her car. Pity you couldn’t buy the same experience a little closer to home, she thought. Then again, the whole point of the exercise was to be ready to act — something she knew full well her family would depend on her to do.

“When you get here,” she promised the tentacled being her driving skill had shattered into two equal halves, “Mildred Smithers will be ready.”



The next morning, Henry poked his head into Nance’s office. Nothing appeared to have changed, unless you counted the accumulation of dead leaves under the plant cowering on the windowsill. “How’s the Aussie upgrade?”

There was an incoherent grumble from behind the monitor. He used his knuckles to sound a drum roll on the door frame. “Made a coffee run.”

Half a face showed, the one eye looking wistful.

“Bagels?”

“With blueberry cream cheese.”

The eye blinked slowly. “I hope Meaghan appreciates you.”

Henry, unable to find a clear surface for his offering, chose the most stable pile of paper and set the tray down with care. “She appreciates me. It’s the rest of my family that has

doubts.”

Nance popped the lid from one of the coffees, blew away the steam, and took a huge swallow, looking as though the caffeine was heading straight to her bloodstream. Henry was convinced her mouth had an asbestos lining. “So how’s the sim?” he persisted. “Mustafa said you’ve been on it all night.”

She gave him a condescending look over a mouthful of cheese-drifted bagel. “How would he know? Mustafa’s idea of getting in early is anytime after the traffic’s died down on the freeway.”

Another gulp of coffee. “It’s weird.”

**Nance looked innocent. “Convenient that the park wants this particular upgrade. I’ve been wanting to play with it a bit more.”**

His eyes went to the wall unit behind Nance’s chair, loaded with dusty jars of pickled insects and mollusks, interspersed with museum-quality replica skulls of various mammals, and tied bundles of bird feet. Fortunately, the cleaning staff had insisted the eyeball collection go home, despite Nance’s protests about the importance of biological reality to her simulations. “Weird how?”

Nance stood up, stretching with a twisting motion that made audible cracks. “They keep adding to the specs.” She handed him a set of faxes clipped together with a clothespin Santa her niece had made last year. Nance kept everything.

“Bit late for this many changes. Park opens the day after tomorrow.” Henry started leafing through the pages. Each contained one minor requested change. There must have been about twenty, sent at roughly equal intervals over the past day and night. “You’ve told them modifications on the fly like these are extra, I hope.”

Head half inside a sweater, Nance muttered darkly, “I told them to stop it after the first two. I hate being interrupted. But they wouldn’t.” She pushed her head out and glared fiercely at Henry.

“Not to mention that what they’re asking for is silly.”

“Silly.” Henry looked more closely at the top page and read aloud, “The pupil of each eye must be an unreflective black, not luminous orange.” The next page, “Four appendages in total, mobile at a sequence of six joints.” He tried not to grin. “They are being quite specific. Someone’s had a nightmare lately.”

Nance dropped back into her seat. “I’ll give them nightmares.”



**FIRST CONTACT CUSTOM SIMULATION PC 225-FERNANDEZ © FIRST CONTACT INC. LICENSED FOR HOME EXPERIENCE ONLY.**

He wasn’t sure what had disturbed his sleep. It was an older building; pipes and joists had a tendency to be musical in changing weather. But that wasn’t it this time.

Juan sat up, trying to listen more carefully. There. A scrap-

ing sound. From outside. He yawned and lay back down. The old elm out front was wide enough to kiss the bricks with an east wind. He'd remind the super about having it trimmed at the next tenants' meeting.

Snick. Skitter, skitter.

That wasn't the tree! Juan had his feet on the cold floor this time, hand racing for the light by his bed. Sounded like a cockroach convention. He hit the switch and found himself facing what he'd never even dreamed of.

Equally startled, his visitor scampered from the now-open patio doors to the top of his bureau in a ripple of reflective scales.

For a seeming eternity, the only sound was a sigh of wind through the doors and Juan's heart hammering in his ears. Then the creature shivered, a motion that made the plates covering its gaunt body touch together with a faint bell-like tinkle. It had eyes, two large and one smaller, centered on a triangular head. Around its neck was a wreath made of autumn leaves.

Juan reached slowly for the phone at his bedside. When he brought it to his ear, there was a soft voice already speaking to him. The creature tilted its head and settled more comfortably on the bureau.

"Juan Fernandez," whispered the soft voice. "I have chosen you to contact first of all of your kind. Your music has touched even the stars. Play for me and let there be peace between us."

Numbly, his eyes never leaving his visitor, Juan put down the phone and reached for the saxophone on its stand beside his bed. He'd always known he'd make it big one day — not necessarily this big — but big.



"What's the original design base?"

"Standard PC 30, peaceful contact following initial suspicion, overtones of economic congruence of mutual benefit. Nothing flashy." Nance sent the fifteenth paper airplane of the hour soaring overhead. "Not until they started this last minute nonsense."

Henry caught it before it hit his ear and unfolded the paper to read the request. "Strands of keratin 30 cm long to be attached behind each auditory

organ?"

Nance raised her eyebrow. "We are definitely dealing with someone who knows their biology — if not how to stay within a budget. Hair, Henry. They want me to put hair on its head."



FIRST CONTACT CUSTOM SIMULATION FC  
1301-GRANT, R. © FIRST CONTACT INC.  
LICENSED FOR HOME EXPERIENCE ONLY.

There was no place left to hide, Roger decided grimly, his bike sucking fumes as it coasted off the deserted highway. He could stand and fight here and now ... or die without ever seeing the face of his enemy. Funny, he hadn't imagined death would come as a cliché.

Had it only been yesterday? The aliens had been so well prepared, their technology so superior. The only wonder was that crumbs of humanity like himself still existed on the planet. A crumb. What a joke on the world that he had lasted hours after the rest were obliterated.

There was a whistle in the distance, the sound piercing and ominous as though it could summon Hell's demons to chase him. And weren't they, despite their appearance of being only machines? He'd watched the trackers demolish a city block of apartments — an economical way of dealing with the vermin inside. He'd known better than to hide in the subways too, having witnessed yet another set of machines burrowing into the streets, somehow fully aware of every crack that still harbored humankind. Roger no longer remembered how he escaped. There were too many other images in the way.

Another whistle, this time an answer from the direction he'd vaguely hoped might be away from Them. Roger considered his surroundings: the once-blue sky smudged by the smoke from the city, the highway boiled away in places where cars had been targets, the landscape pitted and ruined overnight. He reached into the saddlebag of his bike and pulled out the gun he knew was there. Would he have the courage to end it for himself this time? Or would he have to wait for the mercy of the aliens to make it stop?



"Good morning, fellow-genuses!"

The door flew open as if propelled by a hurricane. "Have you started celebrating without me?"

Mustafa, a man who rarely smiled before noon and then required an excuse to make the effort, was beaming from ear to ear. Henry and Nance traded knowing glances. "Cracked the blackjack table?" Nance asked.

"Much better," Mustafa announced. He pointed one pudgy finger at them and shook it. "You didn't check your mail again. When are you going..."

Henry cut short what promised to be the usual diatribe about corporate responsibilities and other nonsense that had invaded their lives since home simulation machines had become the rage — with First Contact Inc. already poised for success with its custom VR's.

"Tell us what we need to know, oh keeper of the secret."

"Guess who's opening the Aussie theme park."

Nance scowled, which widened Mustafa's smile even farther. "Am I supposed to care?" she growled. "Some rock star or other."

Henry tsk-tsked. "You never think about sales. So who, Mustafa? Must be a good one to make you drool."

"The President."

Nance's head came around from its hiding place behind her monitor. Henry swallowed hard and managed what he hoped was a nonchalant, "Pardon?" that cracked part way through the middle. He tried again. "Which President?"

Mustafa positively glowed. "The President. You know. The first one to win a majority from every country."

"President Polemski. He's going to open the park."

"Gets better, compadres. The Pres is apparently a fan of your work, Nance. He's going to be the first person to try your latest and greatest First Contact sim."

Henry and Nance dived for the pile of pages in the wastebasket, Henry winning by an arm's length. "No wonder you couldn't track down the source with the Aussies," he gasped, trying to smooth the abused paper into order. "These must be straight from his office."

"Whoa, there," Nance interjected uneasily. "That's a pretty big guess, Henry."

He drew in a last deep breath of the salt-scented air, took one last look at the technology that was his only link to his own kind, and prepared to make history.

He shook his head, holding up the pages. "What time exactly did the President's office announce this?"

Mustafa looked from one to the other of his bosses, his satisfied look fading into puzzled concern as he saw the expressions on their faces. "At the 9 am press conference, yesterday. I eye'd you guys when I found out. Why?"

Nance took the sheaf of faxes-turned-airplanes from Henry. She found the first one. It was dated yesterday, 9:30 am. Their eyes met. "I think I'd better input every one of these after all."

Henry nodded slowly. "And I think we'd better have a look before it goes out."

☆☆☆

FIRST CONTACT CUSTOM SIMULATION PC 30A0D352A - AUSTRALIA'S DOWN UNDER THEME PARK CORPORATION © FIRST CONTACT INC. LICENSED FOR PUBLIC ON-LOCATION VIEWING ONLY. TEST RUN.

Until today, he'd enjoyed flying; sympathetic but unable to understand why so many of his aides became white-knuckled with every air pocket. This flight was different. He wasn't sure whether his new-found anxiety stemmed from being the only living thing on board or his destination. Likely both. He turned from the window and switched on the recorded briefing from his aides for the third time. The familiar voices were reassuring, edged though they were with unfamiliar tension.

The arrangements had been made using numerical expressions that both sides understood. There was some negotiation required regarding the location of that critical first meeting. The home world was not as wet as that of the guest. And beauty was important. The meeting would be carried live on both planets. A good first impression would do wonders for the ultimate response from the public.

Yet, despite concern and some honest fear of the unknown, there was good will. There was a sense of inevitability too — that events would unfold regardless of the careful planning of governments. All that remained was the moment when strangers met.

He'd studied the pictures, but nothing truly prepared one for such an encounter. Aides had informed him of what they understood to be appropriate alien protocol. No weapons, at least none in sight, was a reassuring common factor. Gifts might be misconstrued at this earliest point; who knew what values they shared or didn't? What to wear ... best to err on the side of formality; no one liked to be slighted. And much of what transpired was meant purely for the viewers. His people had definite expectations of him, if not of the one he met.

They'd chosen a beach on an isolated, uninhabited island, large enough for automated transports to land. He set the controls as the techs had instructed in order to set up the transmission and recording equipment. Each, visitor and host, had a designated half of the land mass for their preparations. The island was blessed with a central lagoon lovely by any standard. Its beach was the designated meeting site. It could be

reached by either representative in a short walk.

He drew in a last deep breath of the salt-scented air, took one last look at the technology that was his only link to his own kind, and prepared to make history.

☆☆☆

"Stop." Henry hit the kill switch on the simulation and looked at Nance and Mustafa.

"This is ordinary. It's dull. Some nice work on the scenery, but face it. First Contact Inc. makes its money on custom sims real enough to make you wet your drawers. Any one of our competitors could do better than this."

Nance stopped him just by raising her eyebrows. "We haven't reached the climax, Henry. And that's where most of the changes were made. Shall we?"

Henry muttered something to himself, but restarted the sim.

☆☆☆

FIRST CONTACT CUSTOM SIMULATION PC 30A0D352A - AUSTRALIA'S DOWN UNDER THEME PARK CORPORATION © FIRST CONTACT INC. LICENSED FOR PUBLIC ON-LOCATION VIEWING ONLY. TEST RUN.

He drew in a last deep breath of the salt-scented air, took one last look at the technology that was his only link to his own kind, and prepared to make history.

The walk was too short. World leader or not, there was something inherently terrifying about this meeting, something that threatened his very grasp upon reality. Before panic could truly overwhelm his intentions, it was too late. There was the Other.

The Other was strangeness given life. The body shape was roughly cylindrical, with appendages located with reasonable symmetry. Clothing covered many of the important details, but he knew from his aides that the appendages had a remarkable range of movement. The body was topped by a short stalk that in turn supported a round cranial mass. Keratin strains attached behind each auditory organ tossed in the wind.

Some sort of exudate coated the rest of the cranial mass. It glistened in the warm sun and the Other used one appendage to spread the exudate over the keratin strains in what looked to be a reflex. Just in case, he mimicked the gesture as best he could. The openings on the front portion of the cranial mass changed position almost at once. Startled, he moved back a bit. The Other spread its appendages in what seemed a peaceful gesture.

His people were watching. He gathered himself, then moved forward slowly. The Other echoed his movement until they were close enough to touch. He held out his...

☆☆☆

"Stop!" This time it was Nance's decision.

"Holy Mother of Mainframes," Henry breathed, not surprised to feel himself shaking. "We just made contact with

the President." The other two looked just as shocked, then Nance began to chuckle, a deep throaty sound so contagious Henry found himself laughing suddenly too.

"I don't see what's funny," Mustafa said, his complexion as pale as it could get.

Nance popped the sim's cartridge out of the player and held it up reverently. "Don't you get it? These last changes didn't come from the Australians."

"Of course not, they came from the President. But why would Polemski want to meet — himself?" The words came more and more slowly. Mustafa's eyes glazed over and he sat down on the floor. "Oh, my."

Henry nodded, not too sure on his feet either. He took the cartridge from Nance and stared at it. "Looks like we have a new customer for First Contact Inc."

Nance's expression was the same one she'd had when they'd delivered the quad photon storage system for her computer ... a combination of worship and glee.

"I'd better make sure this gets sent out immediately. The customer may want to run it a few times to get it right."

They all glanced up at the ceiling. "Shouldn't we tell someone?" Mustafa whispered.

Nance held out her hand and Henry dropped the cartridge into it.

"Well, if you can think of someone who'd believe us, I'll give it a shot." She paused and swept her bangs out of her eyes. "You realize we're all out of a job in two days. First Contact Inc. will be definitely redundant once it really happens."

Henry thought happily of shorts and sandals. "I've been telling you we should be doing more historicals. And westerns. I've always wanted to do westerns."

"Westerns," Nance grumbled, leading the way out of the VR chamber. "Pirates, maybe."

As they went down the corridor, Mustafa's voice trailed behind. "What about the new guys? They already like our stuff."

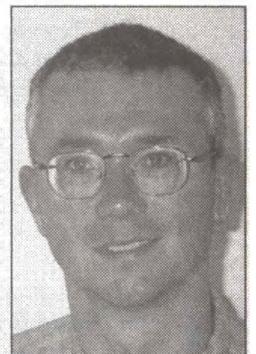


## Who's Who

**Julie Czerneda** is a Canadian science fiction writer whose first novel, *A Thousand Words for Stranger*, was published in 1997 by DAW Books. Her second novel, Aurora Award finalist *Beholder's Eye*, was published by DAW in 1998, with the sequel to *A Thousand Words for Stranger*, *Ties of Power*, out in 1999. The sequel to *Beholder's Eye*, *Changing Vision*, was released last summer. DAW has purchased three more science fiction novels as well, the first of these is the standalone novel *In the Company of Others*. What's ahead? Next into stores is the sequel to *Beholder's Eye*, *Changing Vision*. Then, a standalone sf on a contaminated terraforming project called *In the Company of Others*. After that, a third *Trade Pact* and another book about *Esen* the ever-changing. And further ahead? There may be a prequel and another sequel in the *Trade Pact Universe*. Also in the works are a pair of novels looking at the darker side of evolution, *The Biodiversity Wars*. Formerly a researcher in animal communication, Julie has also written non-fiction, from biology texts to the use of science fiction to develop literacy. She currently lives at the edge of a forest with her family, enjoying rocketry and canoeing whenever there's time.



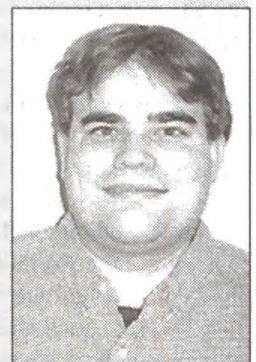
**Eric Rountree** is a native of Halifax, N.S., but has lived in Kingston, Ont. since 1996. Eric has worked as a computer systems administrator for a lot of years, primarily at Dalhousie University in Halifax, more recently at Kingston General Hospital, and currently at Queen's University. As if that level of immersion in technology were not enough, Eric writes science fiction stories in his spare time and is currently working on his first novel.



**Larry Desousa** is Parsec's resident purveyor of comic hilarity.

**Derwin Mak** is an author of quirky science fiction short stories. His story, *The Snow Aliens*, appears in *The Wonder Zone* — anthology edited by Julie Czerneda. He is also the only science fiction author to have a costuming award named after him — the *Derwin Mak Attack Award* at the Toronto Trek masquerade.

**Ron Baxley** has had an Oz novel — *The Talking City of Oz* — published in limited circulation by the late Swedish sojourner March Laumer, an Oz essay, *The Changing World of Youth in Caliber's Oz*, published in *The Baum Bugle*, a journal of the International Wizard of Oz Club, two poems published in *Nostalgia*, a South Carolina journal dedicated to the sentimental, and health articles published on [www.lifewell.com](http://www.lifewell.com). I worked for a year as a reporter for a small daily newspaper after graduating from the University of South Carolina Aiken with a degree in English. Ron is currently involved in a non-profit children's literacy organization.



**Joanne Hansen** is freelance artist, born in Newmarket, Ont. She has been doing commission pieces her whole life, but has just gone professional last year under the business name *Rumble Strips*. Hansen now lives in Barrie, Ont., as a freelance science fiction and fantasy artist with her three cats and her wonderful husband. This is her first published piece (and hopefully not her last.) If you have any questions or a commission idea, please contact her at [rubblestrips@home.com](mailto:rubblestrips@home.com).

In January...

Short fiction from Nebula and Aurora Award winner Robert J. Sawyer

# Treasureisland.com

*"If studious youth no longer crave,  
His ancient appetites forgot,  
Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave,  
Or Cooper of the wood and wave:  
So be it, also! And may I  
And all my pirates share the grave  
Where these and their creations lie!"*

— Robert Louis Stevenson,  
"To The Traveling Sailor,"  
epigraph poem, *Treasure Island*

John "Board Flyer" Yoder left the Amish village because he met Long John Silver and his crew of P.I.R.A.T.E.S. (or Private Internet Raceteers And Treasure Excitement Seekers) riding through his village on their way to an internet cafe.

Long John Silver rolled down the window of his long gas-guzzler, a station wagon with wooden paneling, wooden as a ship, the back beside the hatch full of diskettes, papers, long wires, and, most ominous of all, surgical instruments.

He said, "Shiver my timbers, if it ain't Jim Hawkins walking down the road.

Why not lose yer land legs and join us, lad? We'll be sailing the seas of the internet quicker than we'll see the North Star. Aye, lose 'em."

Long John Silver sat beside his crutch. He had a clean, pale face like the many hams John had seen cured on life on the farm. He did not, being so clean, look like a geek with bad hygiene who sat in front of a computer all day and who had this transient life-style.

Some other P.I.R.A.T.E.S., one with just three finger on one hand and one with an eye plucked out stared out of the back of the car and laughed.

A robotic parrot sat perched on the cylinder that held the rear-view mirror. The rear-view mirror had a special compass device on it that could let you know if you were going North or South, for example. Installed on the dashboard was a digi-map that fed, through

cellular and internet technology, off of an internet map website.

The robotic parrot said, "Brach . . . almost found it . . . Brach . . . almost found it."

"Board Flyer" Yoder asked, "Found what?"

Long John Silver said, "Never you mind, lad. Never you mind 'till you join me mates and me on our search."

"Board Flyer" said, "Um, o-kay."

"Board Flyer" did not make this decision in complete haste. He looked at the parrot and eye-patches. He thought about all of those adventure books he had read in secret in which people who looked liked the fellow in the car and his comrades sailed off on the seven seas, where the ocean is blue as parakeet's wings and where islands exist where the very sands themselves seem to already be glass. In short, "Board Flyer" had, as many young people have, an extreme case of wander-lust. And he would be willing to go with almost anyone to escape the closed world that he had lived in for so long.

So he opened the door and hopped in the back of the car.

At that moment, the mostly-wood-covered vehicle sped off.

On that fated day, when John "Board-Flyer" Yoder left his small Amish community in Pennsylvania when he had just left the eighth grade, the only thing he had similiar to the band of P.I.R.A.T.E.S. he joined up with was a nickname.

He still had the wide hazel eyes, golden hair, black suspenders, and broad-brimmed hat that characterized a lot of the young people he knew. But the only thing that made him similiar to "Long John" and the rest of the Private Internet Raceteers And Treasure Excitement Seekers was, again, the fact that he had a nick-name. Like some of the P.I.R.A.T.E.S. such as Black Dog and Two-Fingers, he had gained his nick-name from something that happened in his past. But his did not involve losing limbs or digits.

The P.I.R.A.T.E.S., which existed in the broad urban expansion that occurred outside Philly late in the 22nd century, were known when they needed cash when their normal questionable endeavours were at a stand-still, to pull up in their large gas-guzzlers, relics from another time, to Internet cafes and practically take over the place, often throwing out

*A Story by*  
Ron Baxley

whatever college students that had arrived there into the streets. Once there, they would enter the on-line auction houses, the black market ones that had developed, and proceed to auction off a finger or sometimes, an entire leg.

Demand for flesh was at a premium. Over-population created food scarcity and there were some who claimed that the auction houses actually served a clientele of cannibals. Yet another rumor was that the flesh was sent, after being chopped off by the P.I.R.A.T.E.S. or other desperate souls and freeze-dried shipped, to genetic labs throughout the world.

Regardless of where they went to, lost limbs and digits became the trademark of P.I.R.A.T.E.S. who would do anything and everything to get on-line currency so that they could continue in their transient lifestyle.

John "Board Flyer" Yoder's nickname grew out of a less ominous story.

He, like others, was given a nickname to prevent name confusion, for many Amish boys were named John Yoder.

During a barn raising, at age ten, he tried to jump off of a barn scaffold with a board, holding it in the middle and spreading it out like a pair of wings.

Upon landing and hurting himself, the younger John said, "I saw an airplane flying to Philadelphia just like that."

His parents and the entire community ribbed him quite a lot because of this and the nickname Board Flyer stuck. Somewhere in the minds of the minister at the Amish church and others was the realization that this early like of technology meant that he would be leaving their tight-knit community.

The minister said, "Yea, it art true. He will be prodigal."

They knew this too because John "Board Flyer" Yoder had a lot of "chair mindedness." He spent entirely too much time reading and sought out books from the English neighbors whenever possible. He received the whip one time for selling some quilts and eggs to some English neighbors in trade for a book.

He even started trying to read in a web-cafe in the tourist village one time. His stern father caught him, pulled him up by his suspenders, and dragged him out of the cafe, screaming.

He remembered his father screaming, "Children, obey your parents."

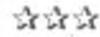
And John "Board Flyer" thought, "Parents provoke not your children to anger."

Once again, after the long, dusty buggy-ride home, he received the whip.

So when John made the decision that every Amish teen can make when his or her education at the private schoolhouse ends at eighth grade, no one was surprised.

But they did not expect him to just leave like that.

He, after all, was always a decent boy.



"The bar silver and the arms still lie, for all that I know, where Flint buried them; and certainly they shall lie there for me. Oxen and wain-ropes would not bring me back again to that accursed island; and the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts or start upright in bed with the sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears: "Pieces of eight! Piece of eight!" — Stevenson, Robert Louis, Treasure Island.

The robotic parrot screamed, "Found the map. Found the map. Brach."

The robotic parrot's name was "Captain Flint." It was the latest in pet-searcher devices that could retrieve information from the web and read it aloud to you. Because of the emphasis on images and media, people were finding it harder and harder to actually read text off of the web so the huge libraries and individual web-pages that existed there could be read to the modern illiterates by a device available at the nearest RadioCabin.

The map was a series of codes and passwords to get through various web pages on a website called TreasureIsland. Board Flyer could read that much from the screen before Long John covered it up.

"Aargh," he said, "Aargh. Now this is what we've been lookin' for."

A couple of solar cars, all operating on hover principles, sped past the ancient gas guzzler. The owners pressed a button to expel a digital "honk" in the direction of Long John. Long John who screamed out of the window,

"Aargh. This is a good ship. A classic ship. And it don't take no lilly-livered land-lubbers to be telling me naeh!"

Board Flyer, barely able to speak up with his changing, youthful voice, said, "So what is the map for then? What has your parrot found?"

"Aaargh," said Long John, "He's found a digi-map, a digi-map full of codes and where to click on Treasure Island."

Board Flyer had no idea what he was talking about. But he had some experience reading on web-sites. At least, he had an hour's worth of experience. And he'd read enough to know the book Treasure Island and what the characters in that book were looking for. He also knew about the map and everything that entailed. These self-imposed, illiterate P.I.R.A.T.E.S., despite spending so much time on-line, never used this time to read but to hack and steal.

Board Flyer said, "Isn't the treasure supposed to be buried under a dead man? A skeleton?"

Long John put on the brakes. "Now who told you that now, laddie?"

"Nobody," said Board Flyer.

"Oh, well." Long John's humor lightened. "You probably knew that 'cause with booty there is always dead men. Aargh."

**"Sixteen men on a dead man's chest. Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum," sang one Long John's compatriates from beside Board Flyer.**

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"Sixteen men on a dead man's chest. Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum," sang one of Long John's compatriots from beside Board Flyer. The whole motley crew laughed hoarsely despite their forty-something ages.

Board Flyer decided to hold his questions for the journey. He had never encountered men like this his fourteen years in the village.

About ten miles down the road, however, something so distressed all of the men that he had to ask another question.

An e-mail message came on-screen in the car. The digi-parrot informed them all, "Brach, You've Got Parchment!"

Long John said, "Aargh, open it up then."

Instantly, on screen, via an attachment, appeared an enormous black spot.

The black spot was animated and spun around like a coin on its side.

With each spin, writing on one side was revealed.

Long John quickly deleted it and grew even paler than his usual pasty complexion.

His friends, many with glasses as well as lost limbs, nearly knocked their glasses off in excitement when they saw the news. They had the glasses of stereotypical nerds yet the outfits of swashbucklers. The one with one eye had an eye patch stretched out over one lense.

John "Board Flyer" Yoder was very distressed. He took off his wide-rimmed hat and wiped the sweat from his blonde hair.

He asked the fellow beside him without two fingers, "What does that mean?"

The fellow said, "It means that someone in a competing P.I.R.A.T.E. band wants Long John dead."

Long John said, "Tis right. Someone's found out that we got the map. And our lives is like the fishes now."

He adjusted his three corner hat nervously.

Board Flyer asked, "How did you English get caught up in all this?"

"We, English," laughed Long John at the quaint tone.

But then he sat up high in his seat,

showing how tall he really was, his three-corner hat poking the interior of the station wagon.

Long John said, "Aargh, I used to work for a fast food restaurant main-hub of a franchise, designing their website."

The young Board Flyer, if he were a part of mainstream American culture, would have had the popular culture knowledge to

### An e-mail message came on-screen in the car.

form a witty retort here.

But Board Flyer, despite his leanings towards leaving the village, did not say, "Oh, was it Long John Silver's fish restaurant?"

Long John continued, "It was such a low-paying job, though. I mean, who doesn't know HTML and who doesn't know how to use Speak and Create to make pages?"

Board Flyer shrugged and squinted his hazel eyes at Long John in the rear-view.

Long John said, "So . . . you might say I founded me own subcontracting group, aargh! The best bunch of P.I.R.A.T.E.S. on the seven seas of the World Wide Web!"

Board Flyer said, "But your neighbor here (again, snickering due to the archaic phrases could not be contained from the P.I.R.A.T.E.S.) was telling me that you have sold pieces of yourselves."

Long John became enraged, "He wha-at!"

Board Flyer said, "If this is so much better than the honest living you were making before, then why do you have to give parts of yourself away?"

Two-fingers said, "See, I told ya' it was a mistake bringing this lad along."

Long John said, "New recruits. New recruits. And the lad's got spunk asking me questions like that. We'll make a P.I.R.A.T.E. out of him yet."

Long John said, "Boy, if we bunch of swashbucklers don't act like a bunch of swabs, we might just not have to ever sell anything again! We got a deal here that will set us for life. Why, if this works out, I will be rich enough to run my campaign for Congress."

Board Flyer said, "We Amish do not get involved in politics."

"Listen at him, lads, we Amish. You aren't Amish anymore. You're a P.I.R.A.T.E."

The parrot Captain Flint said through his sharp beak, "Brach, you're a pirate! A pirate!"

And with this the whole bunch of them made such racket that Board Flyer felt like covering his ears to stop the echoing of how much a mistake this was.

When they arrived at the net cafe, they immediately set to work throwing out the college students who had gathered there. They pulled one out by a string attached to a nose ring, the young man screaming in pain. They pulled a college girl out by one of those tiny backpacks that were still in vogue.

**T**hey scoffed at all of the old brick buildings of Philly, the ones that were as old as the nation itself, and called them old fashioned, no place for a net cafe.

But they did not seem to mind, plopping down on the stools there after finishing clearing the place out.

When they, after entering in various codes, passwords, and clicking various links in a special sequence given to them in the digi-map which they had placed on optical media to be quick-loaded into the systems there, they discovered something that made Board Flyer know that he had definitely made a mistake.

Long John simply shrugged. But young Board Flyer thought he saw something in his eyes, something that sparkled with the knowledge that this entire situation was desperate.

On-screen was a digital photo of a beach-scene, somewhere on the West Coast. There, on the sands, was a skeleton, bleached out perfectly. But this was no movie prop. This was a real skeleton. Beneath it, like a newspaper cut-line, read, "Here lies the last man who tried to get the BOOTY."

BOOTY, internet currency that could buy you all of the products of the world. Like the travelers of olde, you could have world spices and luxury items at your fingertips with BOOTY. Governments tried to ban BOOTY for fear it would undermine their power. But it was to no avail. BOOTY existed and the P.I.R.A.T.E.S. continued to get rich off of it.

This was all that mattered to Long John Silver. Board Flyer was beginning to think how he might deal with this man and the destruction he might cause to get what he wanted. There would be no patrons or mentors for Board Flyer as there were for Jim Hawkins. -No Squire nor Doctor. People were decidedly against getting involved in young peoples' lives because of past hysteria about the implications of doing so. -No interveners.

Suddenly, as if to confirm Board Flyer's thoughts, a man broke the window to the establishment with his white cane and using it as if in a track and field event, leapt over the shards into the room.

"Blind Pete," screamed the P.I.R.A.T.E.S. Blind Pete had sold both his eyes for a chance to get more BOOTY. Not ones for political correctness nor correctness of any kind, the PIRATES did not mind labeling him as they did.

Long John said, "Destroy 'em, lads."

The P.I.R.A.T.E.S. set to work, pulling out swords at their sides, to do battle with those who were with Blind Pete.

**"BOOTY not accessible at this site! Brach..."**

Long John Silver started "digging." This involved clicking in sequence on the photo of the skeleton. Soon, via animation, a hole started to appear.

—An empty hole.

Long John Silver asked his parrot, "Find the BOOTY."

The parrot said, "The BOOTY is not accessible. BOOTY not accessible at this site! Brach..."

Long John said, "Aaargh. Bloody bullocks."

But at this point, his men lay dead on the floor.

And the others were approaching Long John.

They ignored Flying Board who still had his Amish clothes on and had managed to retain all of his limbs, though he did have a scratch.

Long John burst out of the internet cafe, got in his station-wagon ship, and was never to be seen again. He left his three-corner hat behind.

The other competing P.I.R.A.T.E.S. followed after him in a huge Lincoln.

Seeing that his potential corrupter was gone, Flying Board set to work.

He put aside his broad-rimmed hat and put on Long John's three-cornered one for a moment.

He went back to the Treasure Island site because Long John had clicked off of it to keep his pursuers from discovering it.

John "Flying Board" Yoder then proceeded to find Ben Gunn's cave on the site. A gray cavern appeared on the screen.

There was a chat room accessible at Ben Gunn's cave wherein he chatted with

Ben Gunn himself.

Board Flyer typed, "Long John is gone. You gave him the map, but it would never have led to treasure. You had already hidden the booty here in the cave."

Ben Gunn wrote, the words appearing sporadically on-screen, "What?"

What's that you say? Who are you?"

John "Flying Board" Yoder took off the three-cornered hat for a moment and wrote, "I am Jim Hawkins."

Ben Gunn wrote, "ROTFL (rolling on the floor laughing) . . . **<tearing out my white hair madly>** Yes, yes, you have found the BOOTY. It is here. You have discovered the secret!"

Flying Board clicked on the cave, inserted an optical card that the P.I.R.A.T.E.S. had given him and proceeded to download one million dollars worth of BOOTY on to it.

He did not know what circumstances were created for them to get this BOOTY, what destruction they might have caused. But Flying Board knew what he would do with it.

John Yoder built a huge library outside of Philly where he invited young people to come to and learn, lest they too become P.I.R.A.T.E.S.

John Yoder kept the Flying Board in his name as he, in the future, continued to read adventure books. But those who heard his stories could never be quite sure if he kept his nickname to remember his Amish-ness or to keep in the back of his mind the day he had almost become a P.I.R.A.T.E.

## Playing Mantis lets you go ape

Playing Mantis has released a flurry of model kits just in time for the Christmas season.

Released under the Aurora banner, the Indiana company has unveiled snap kits and vinyl kits featuring-

ing such movie greats as Godzilla, King Ghidorah! and Rodan, as well as Cornelius, General Ursus, Doctor Zira and Doctor Zaius.

The kits are

## NEAT THINGS

designed for skill Level 1 modellers. They come with just 20 pieces and do not require any glue (hence the name, Snap Kit).

Besides movie-related Snap Kits, Playing Mantis has also released a series of dinosaur models for Level 1 builders. The series includes a Tyranosaurus Rex, a

Triceratops and a Pteranodon. The highly detailed kits have between 21 and 28 pieces.

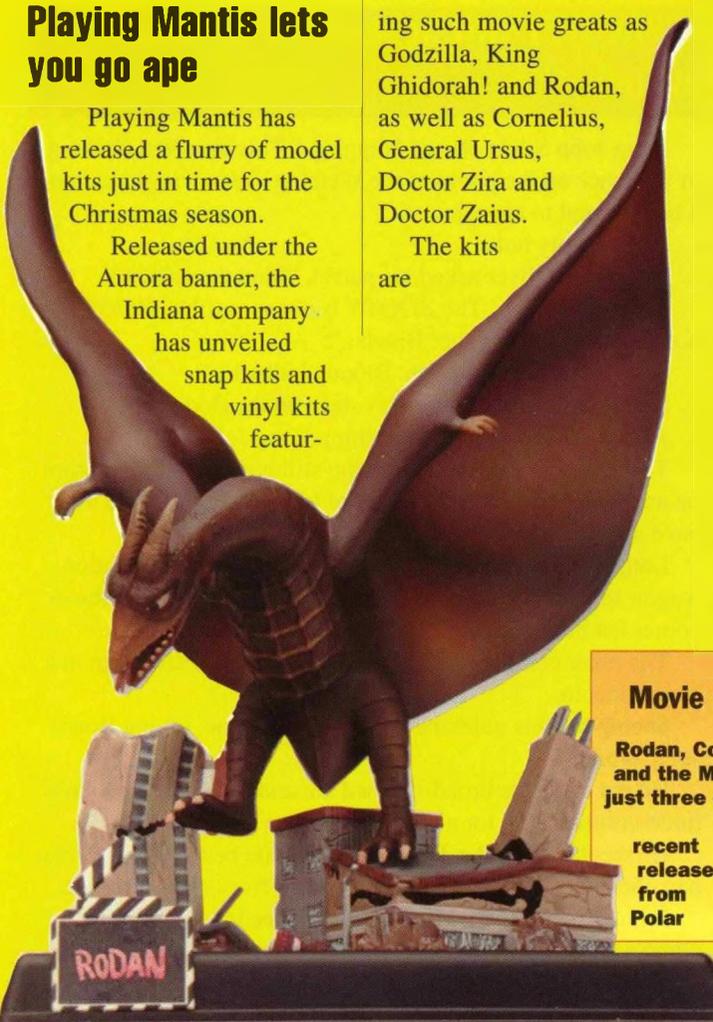


For Level 2 builders, there's Speed Racer's Mach 5. The 1:25 scale kit features 75 pieces including the robot bird.

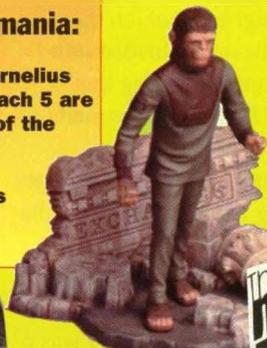
For more advanced builders, Polar Lights has also released a 1:16 scale Dick Tracy and a 1:8 scale Phantom of the Opera Models.

The Dick Tracy Model is based on '60s version, while the Phantom is an initial release.

Dick Tracy carries a SRP of \$16.99 US, while the Phantom carries a \$25.99 SRP.



**Movie mania:**  
Rodan, Cornelius and the Mach 5 are just three of the recent releases from Polar



## SF/FANTASY ON

| Eastern Time | MONDAY                         | TUESDAY                  | WEDNESDAY      | THURSDAY          | FRIDAY       | SATURDAY           | SUNDAY       | Pacific Time |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 5:00 pm      | Star Trek Voyager              |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 2:00 pm      |
| 5:30 pm      |                                |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 2:30 pm      |
| 8:00 pm      |                                | Buffy the Vampire Slayer | Xena           | Beastmaster       | 7 Days       |                    |              | 5:00 pm      |
| 8:30 pm      |                                | Angel                    | Cleopatra 2525 | Earth             | Level 9      |                    |              | 5:30 pm      |
| 9:00 pm      |                                |                          | Jack of Trades | Final Conflict    |              |                    |              | 6:00 am      |
| 9:30 pm      |                                | The Lost World           | VIP            |                   | First Wave   |                    | Lost World   | 6:30 am      |
| 10:00 pm     |                                |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 7:00 pm      |
| 10:30 pm     |                                |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 7:30 pm      |
| 2:00 am      |                                | Star Trek Deep Space 9   |                |                   |              | Star Trek: Voyager | Relic Hunter | 11:00 pm     |
| 2:30 am      |                                |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 11:30 pm     |
| 3:00 am      |                                | First Wave               |                |                   | Knight Rider |                    |              | midnight     |
| 3:30 am      |                                |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 12:30 am     |
| 4:00 am      |                                | The Crow 1               |                | Star Trek Voyager |              |                    |              | 1:00 am      |
| 4:30 am      |                                |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 1:30 am      |
| 5:00 am      | Star Trek: The Next Generation |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 2:00 am      |
| 5:30pm       |                                |                          |                |                   |              |                    |              | 2:30 am      |

## Dragon Pass woes fixed

The designers of King of Dragon Pass have announced that they have corrected problems with the game. Among them are:

- ☆ problems relating to defeated clans offering tribute
- ☆ Added explanatory text if you can't seize land
- ☆ bugs in one branch of seducing poet sequence
- ☆ Orlanth worshippers don't lose abilities after sacrificing to wind spirits
- ☆ Joining Colymar tribe no longer prevents victory.

VR technology forces a ....

# *Reality* CHECK

*A story by*  
Eric Rowntree

The air bristled with anticipation as he crouched behind a gargantuan tree. His senses were heightened, his muscles poised for quick reaction. His breathing was deep and steady, his mind alert but calm.

He was ready.

For long minutes he crouched, sensing, waiting. His thighs burned from the enforced stillness, but he integrated the sensation into his awareness. He did not let it bother him.

Finally, he knew the waiting was over. The faint sound would have gone completely unnoticed by anyone with lesser abilities. To his ears, though, it sounded as if someone had broken an entire tree branch underfoot.

Still, he admired this one's skill. The rustle he'd heard had been no more than thirty metres away. To come that close to him without his detection—that was impressive.

A heartbeat later, a figure emerged from the trees.

He grinned. Just as he'd anticipated.

Almost silently the figure moved, stepping without rhythm, expertly shifting weight from one leg to the other, placing the balls of the feet just so and in just the right places.

This newcomer was good. Damn good. Almost as good as he.

He nodded approvingly. With any luck, he'd have the opportunity to find out just how skilled a sword fighter this woman was.

As she passed his hiding place, he caught glimpses through the foliage: her leather armour, well worn, but with surprisingly few scars; her boots, sturdy but light, reaching almost up to her knees; her sword, raised in readiness, held firmly in hands that belied her strength by appearing soft and gentle, even in a rigid grip.

She was tall and strong, with arms and legs as muscular as

they were graceful. Her hair was dark and cropped short about her ears, an unusual indulgence for a woman of this area. Even most men around these parts simply tied their hair back and were done with it. An intriguing character she was, to be sure.

He watched her, fascinated.

At length she passed out of sight. He waited a few minutes more, then silently rose from his position and began to track her.

She had left almost no trace of her passage, but what little she had was enough for him to follow. Silently, expertly, he moved after her.

Mere minutes into his hunt, he stopped.

Frowning, he looked carefully around, listening and smelling as he did so. Her trail had ended. There was no further trace of her. His senses recoiled at the mere thought of it. Impossible!

Then he realized his mistake.

Just as he was piecing together what had happened, a shrill banshee cry sounded from above him. Before he could look up, a great weight landed upon his shoulders, buckling his knees and throwing him off balance. He could feel a muscular thigh on each side of his neck, squeezing.

Oh, she was good, this one.

He knew he was headed for the ground, but he had just enough time to twist his body in such a way that he'd land on his back. With any luck, his passenger would land that way as well.

He smiled with satisfaction upon hearing her sharp exhalation as her back hit the earth. Her leg muscles relaxed just long enough for him to roll out of her grip and up onto his haunches. He whipped out his sword and spun to face her.

Incredibly, she was on her feet as well. He hadn't

anticipated her speed and was holding his sword low, ready to catch her still on her back. Their two movements combined to place the tip of his weapon firmly in her mid-thigh.

She growled in pain and fell back, clutching the wound.

Rubbing his chin, he surveyed her intently. He found he quite liked the shorthaired look.

He smiled, and stepped toward her...

... and recoiled violently as the back of his head exploded in pain.

Staggering, he swung about to look behind him, but found no one there.

He looked at the woman. She wore a confused expression, and she appeared somewhat blurry. He shook his head, but she did not come into focus.

He could feel panic stirring in his chest at the thought of losing both his mind and his vision.

Again the base of his skull shot fire into his nerves. He cried out and fell to the ground, dropping his sword beside him. He looked around frantically, still finding no trace of anything that could have caused such pain.

Now when he looked at the woman, she seemed to flicker. Occasionally she would dissolve into bits of coloured light and then form again.

Suddenly he knew what was happening, and rage took him. "No!" he cried. "Stop this!"

Now his surroundings began to flicker. He reached for his fallen sword, but his hand passed right through it.

The forest became a wash of static. Coloured dots danced where leaves had been just a moment before. He screamed, his rage now inarticulate, as he helplessly watched the forest, sky, and earth dissolve around him.



He needed only a moment to reorient himself when he opened his eyes. He sprang from the chair and whirled about. She was standing there, as he'd known she would be. He wanted to lash out, to strike her, but something in her eyes held him back.

"Don't you ever," he screamed at her, "do that again!"

He was practically panting with rage.

She glared at him, her temples throbbing, her jaw clenched. "I'm growing a little tired," she said tightly, "of you spending all your free time rutting in the forest."

"What?" he asked, disbelieving. "What?"

A moment passed before her words sank in. "That's private!" he screeched at her. "You don't look at my program!"

His fury finally bested him. Grabbing the letter opener off his desk, he raised it over his head and lunged at her.

He roared an inarticulate string of syllables and then promptly stopped in his tracks. He was surprised to find that her arms were also raised, just not quite as high as his. He was even more surprised to find that she was pointing a handgun at his throat.

"Enough, Kyle," she said, her voice icily calm. "It stops now. Right now."

He gaped at her, unable to form words.

"Drop the letter opener," she said crisply, "and go outside

and get in the car. We're getting that goddamned thing taken out of your head before it kills both of us."



So it was supper in the cafeteria again.

Arianna muttered to herself as she stepped off the elevator on the ground floor. She was already late leaving, and now she'd be even later. That was nothing new. The work was sometimes all-consuming. She just wanted a normal evening once in a while.

She read again the note the departmental secretary had given her. Martin Hansen wanted her assistance on a "particularly interesting" case.

She almost feared learning what that meant. The last time she'd worked with Martin Hansen had been over a year before, and it had not been a picnic.

Hansen was one of those rare individuals who seemed able to do whatever he set his mind to doing. The fact that he was a neurosurgeon who also happened to hold a degree in electrical engineering was testament to his abilities. He was a genius, and the company revered him for it; he was their golden child. His projects were always heftily funded, and he always seemed to obtain whatever he wanted. He was that good.

It wasn't the brilliance that bothered Arianna. It was the ego that went with it—an ego so large it obscured his vision of his own good fortune and squashed his sense of appreciation.

Arianna sighed. She tried not to be bitter, but sometimes she felt the whole Psych Division was just a token gesture. She had repeatedly requested more resources, more psychologists, but the funds were never available. All the big bucks went to Martin Hansen and his VR Chip Implant Project. The company was recouping big on its investment, and they weren't going to slow down Hansen's progress at this stage of the game.

Arianna glanced up from the note just in time to see a large trench coat bearing down upon her. Startled, she jerked to move out of the way but was thwarted by the proximity of the cafeteria furniture. She bounced off the back of a chair and directly into the path of the oncoming figure. Arianna's briefcase and purse dropped to the floor, and the man's styrofoam coffee cup took flight across the room.

"Sorry about that," she muttered meekly as she crouched to pick up her belongings.

Cringing, she managed to muster a small, self-deprecating smile as she squeezed the rest of the way past the poor unsuspecting soul who'd had the misfortune to be moving towards her. Cursing her clumsiness and tall, awkward frame, she wondered for the millionth time how she could possibly have made captain of her high school basketball team with such an ungainly physical composition.

As the man in the trench coat moved off, royally pissed, she presumed, at having been deprived of that last quarter-cup of coffee, Arianna headed for the sandwich counter, wishing again that she'd been blessed with a petite, delicate frame like all the other girls she'd known in school.



The sign on the grey metal door simply said, "M. Hansen." The unassuming signage, she thought, did little to prepare the

uninitiated for the bombastic personality that lay in wait within. Allowing herself a small smile, she reached for the handle and hauled the heavy door open. She stepped inside and surveyed the kingdom of the mad scientist.

“Come in, come in,” came a voice from somewhere amidst all the equipment.

Carefully, she threaded her way through the wires and gizmos and found the rotund, balding neurosurgeon crouched down behind a panel of flashing lights.

Hansen stood up and dusted himself off. “Arianna,” he said. “Good, good. Come with me. The happy couple are on their way as we speak.” She could tell he was excited; his head was shiny.

Hansen ushered her into an adjoining meeting room. The professional decor was a stark contrast to the electronic mayhem of the lab itself. The muted tones and nondescript, generic artwork were typical of the corporate fastidiousness that seemed to weave its way into many large companies. Rooms like these managed to be comfortable without actually being inviting.

**“She came in armed, Doc,” the dark man said. “We got her gun downstairs. I don’t think hubby here was too shit hot about comin’ down here tonight.” He half-grinned.**

As Arianna and Hansen settled themselves in two of the blue-grey chairs surrounding the oak-veneer conference table, the door at the opposite end of the room opened. Two people, escorted by a dark man in a dark suit, entered.

“Mr. and Mrs. Mappin,” Hansen said, standing to greet them. “Please come in and sit down.”

He indicated two chairs to his left, across from Arianna.

Neither husband nor wife looked particularly happy. He wore a scowl so deep the creases threatened to expose bone. She wore a mask of calm that spoke volumes about the turmoil beneath.

“She came in armed, Doc,” the dark man said. “We got her gun downstairs. I don’t think hubby here was too shit hot about comin’ down here tonight.” He half-grinned.

Hansen nodded. “Thank you, Carl,” he said. “I’ll take it from here.”

Carl frowned. “Police are on their way, Doc. They’re gonna wanna talk to these folks.”

“Don’t worry, I won’t keep them long.”

“Yeah, well, whatever you say.” Carl glanced uncertainly at the Mappins and, shrugging, headed back out into the hall.

“Teresa, Kyle,” Hansen said, “this is Arianna Williamson, one of our staff psychologists. I’ve asked her to join us because the dynamics of this particular case have—though I’m loath to confess it—stepped beyond the realms of my admittedly broad range of expertise.”

Arianna didn’t know whether to chuckle or vomit. Finding neither to be appropriate for the occasion, she simply crossed her arms and kept her face neutral.

“As I’ve explained to the Mappins,” Hansen said to Arianna, “this new chip implanted in Kyle’s brain is experimental. He knew this going in. He was, in fact, anxious to participate in the beta test.

The new software in the chip adds an unparalleled level of realism to the virtual reality program, and the improved storage mechanism allows for more varied experiences.”

Arianna considered the couple. They both looked exhausted. Teresa was holding it together, but she didn’t look too far from cracking under whatever strain she carried. Kyle looked ready to explode. As she watched their body language, Kyle fixed her with a glare so malevolent it sent a chill down her spine. Flustered, she looked back at Hansen.

“We were also able to anticipate the Mappins’ arrival here,” he was saying, “thanks to the advanced monitoring software also built into the system.”

“What he means is my head’s been bugged!” Kyle snarled.

“Easy, now, Kyle,” Hansen cautioned. “We couldn’t very well install this untried hardware and software in your head without a few precautions, now could we?”

“You could have told me, you bastard!”

“As you can see,” Hansen said to Arianna with a look of pitying sympathy, “Kyle is experiencing some side effects from the implantation.”

Teresa snorted. “If becoming an anti-social cretin is what you consider ‘side effects’,” she muttered.

Teresa’s tone was brave, Arianna thought, but there was a slight tremor in her voice. She was frightened. She’d come here for help and had found nothing but patronizing arrogance. Hansen was worsening the situation, not improving it.

“What we’re going to do,” Hansen pronounced, “is as follows: Douglas, my assistant, is going to make some modifications to the chip’s software, and we’re going to enhance the monitoring capabilities as well.” He turned to look at Kyle. “With the gentleman’s permission this time.”

Teresa’s composure finally broke. She put her hands over her face and sobbed, “I want that goddamned thing taken out!”

Arianna was instantly on her feet and moving towards Teresa.

Hansen reached out and patted Teresa’s arm before Arianna could quite make it around the table. “Now, now, Teresa,” he said. “There’s no need for such drastic action just yet. Just a few tweaks, that’s all. Good as new. You’ll see.”

“Martin!” Arianna hissed. “You’re not helping.” She crouched beside Teresa’s chair and put an arm around her shoulders. “Teresa,” she said quietly, “I want to help you get through this.”

Teresa regarded her dubiously.

“I want both of you to come to my office,” Arianna continued, tenderly putting her hand on Teresa’s cheek. “We’ll talk this through. OK?”

She was interrupted by the sound of the door at the far end of the room opening again. She looked up in annoyance to find Carl poking his head in.

“Uh, police are here, Doc,” he said. “They want to see these

**Arianna drew her mouth into a tight line. "Richard," she said, "I don't want to put you in an awkward position, but you're the director of this project and you have a right to know."**

two right away."

"Oh, all right, all right," Hansen said, waving his hands about agitatedly. "Take them away. Just bring them back up when they're done, will you?"

"Right. Whatever you say, Doc."

Arianna reluctantly helped Teresa out of her chair and handed her over. Carl took Teresa and Kyle each by an arm and herded them out.

"Is Carl an employee?" she asked Hansen after the three were gone.

Hansen looked perplexed. "Yes, he's a security guard here."

Arianna frowned. "I've never seen him before."



It was late, but she knew he'd still be in. As she approached the office, the tiny sliver of light creeping out from under the door told her she was right.

She knocked gently, taking the muffled sound that came in reply as a cue to enter. "Richard?" she asked as she opened the door and stepped inside.

"Arianna?" came a voice. "Is that you?"

As she stepped into the room, the office's occupant, sitting behind a desk piled high with papers and folders, smiled up at her.

"Not your usual thing," he said, "working this late."

She smiled a small, embarrassed smile. "No," she said quietly. "Lot on my mind today."

"Care to unload?" he asked, gesturing towards a chair.

"Thanks." She looked behind her and took the offered seat.

"What's up?" Richard asked.

Arianna drew her mouth into a tight line. "Richard," she said, "I don't want to put you in an awkward position, but you're the director of this project and you have a right to know."

"To know what?" he asked.

She swallowed hard and set her jaw. "About Martin Hansen," she said with a fierceness that surprised even her.

Richard sat back in his chair and steepled his fingers. "Go on," he replied.

Arianna took a deep breath and continued. "I think his ethics have gone right out the window," she said. "I just met the volunteer who's testing this latest VR implant — Kyle Mappin, his name is. Both he and his wife are showing signs of severe emotional distress. Martin called me down to consult on the case—probably the sanest thing he's done in years — but I barely even got a chance to talk to them. They were spirited off to talk to the police just minutes after I got there."

"The police?"

"Yes. It seems Mrs. Mappin brought her husband in at gunpoint, desperate to have the chip removed."

Richard's expression was unreadable.

"Their situation has deteriorated," Arianna continued, her face becoming redder by the minute, "beyond any reasonable expectations. These people have had their lives turned upside down, and Martin just grins and shushes them and tells them 'oh not to worry' and meaningless drivel like that. He's not even aware of what he's doing to these people."

Richard leaned forward again. "The fact that you're so upset by this," he said quietly, "is cause enough for alarm."

Arianna let out a long breath.

"I want you to stay on top of this, Arianna," Richard continued, "and keep me apprised."

Arianna nodded in satisfaction.



As Martin Hansen scuttled in and out of the nearly empty room, Arianna seated herself in a burgundy desk chair. Was it only yesterday she'd been in this lab? It seemed a lifetime ago.

"We're nearly ready," Hansen said excitedly as he scooted in and out one more time.

Arianna shifted in her seat, uncomfortable not because of the chair, but because she had no idea what Hansen had planned. She was grappling with the notion that this might be even worse than the last time they'd met.

Finally Hansen returned, closing the door behind him and taking the other chair.

"All right, Douglas," he called to the air around him.

The lights went out immediately.

"Martin—" Arianna muttered.

"Just a moment," Hansen said, his voice the very embodiment of breathless excitement.

Suddenly the world came to life around them.

The near-reality of it was so staggering that Arianna clutched the arms of her chair and planted her feet flat on the floor.

"Breathtaking, isn't it?" Hansen practically squealed.

The streetscape around them moved, rocking back and forth slightly as the sidewalk and buildings moved past them.

"What am I seeing here, Martin?" Arianna asked uncertainly.

"This," Hansen said proudly, "is a holographic projection."

Arianna rocked back and forth, trying to adjust to the movement she was not initiating.

"This is Pine Street," she said.

"That's right," Hansen replied. "Live and in colour."

"Why is it rocking back and forth?"

"Footsteps, my dear. Footsteps."

"Footsteps?" she asked, looking around in puzzlement.

Then she started to understand. Good God, she thought, what has he done? "Where is this image coming from?" she asked him warily.

"Why, from inside the head of our dear friend Mr. Kyle Mappin."

Arianna's thoughts began to race as she realized the situation was much worse than she had expected. She was suddenly overcome with the impulse to drive one of her shoes down his throat.

"Allow me to explain," Hansen offered. "Last time Kyle was here, after his interview with the police, Douglas and I tweaked the VR chip in his head and added some enhanced monitoring capabilities."

Arianna's stomach lurched as they turned a virtual corner.

"It works on the same principle as sonar," Hansen continued. "Only much more sophisticated. The chip bounces a signal off everything around him, then transmits the combined signal, heavily compressed and encoded, back here, where our parallel processing computer decodes it and displays it in this room."

Arianna raked her hand through her hair. "You've lost your mind," she whispered.

"Douglas," Hansen called as if he hadn't heard, "turn on the sound."

A moment later the eerie recreation took on added life, as the sounds of traffic and pedestrians filled the air.

"We can't actually see Kyle," Hansen said, "because for all intents and purposes we're sitting inside his head. But we'll be able to hear him with no problem."

At this moment their virtual host was passing through a small crowd of people walking in the opposite direction. The entire world jerked and shuddered for a moment as he bumped shoulders with a man in a plaid jacket.

"Watch where you're goin', moron!" Mappin's voice shouted as he spun back to confront the other man. The spin nearly took Arianna's lunch from her.

"Why don't you calm down, buddy?" the other man said. "I just bumped into you. What's the big deal?"

Kyle's arm appeared, his index finger pointing rigidly. "Fuck you!" he said tightly, shaking the pointing finger at the other guy. Then he turned abruptly and resumed his walk.

"Nice to meet ya, asshole," the other man called after him.

"He's getting worse," Arianna muttered.

"It's incredible," Hansen bubbled. "We can monitor his behavior at a level of detail never before imagined."

Arianna tried to control her breathing as she spun her chair to face Hansen. "You can't do this," she said through clenched teeth. "It's beyond unethical. It's—it's—immoral."

Hansen sighed. "Kyle agreed to all of this, my dear," he

**Arianna gritted her teeth. Finding nothing further to say to this madman, she looked again at the scene projected around her. Kyle was taking them along the edge of a park now, walking towards the downtown area.**

said, sounding like a teacher talking to a slow child, "so don't fret about it. It's all been taken care of."

Arianna gritted her teeth. Finding nothing further to say to this madman, she looked again at the scene projected around her. Kyle was taking them along the edge of a park now, walking towards the downtown area.

A large banner, advertising a "Walk for Heart," was suspended above the street ahead of them.

Arianna frowned. "This is Summer Park Road, isn't it?" she asked.

"Yes," Hansen replied. "Yes it is."

Something wasn't quite right here.

"Turn it off, Martin," she said flatly.

"But we've barely begun—"

"I said turn it off!"

Arianna stood abruptly, fighting the vertigo that threatened to haul her to the floor.

Hansen sighed. "Turn it off, Douglas," he said, sounding more than a little disappointed.

The scene disappeared. A moment later the lights came back up.

Before Hansen could utter another word, Arianna was out the door, slamming it soundly behind her.

☆☆☆

This time she didn't knock.

"Richard!" she snapped.

He practically fell off his chair as he spun around to face her.

"Arianna," he said, flustered. "What is it?"

She stared at him, her arms crossed, her foot tapping the floor.

Richard pushed his chair back and stood. "For God's sake, Arianna, what's wrong?"

She took a deep breath and let it out again quickly. "I want to know what the hell's going on."

Richard's eyes narrowed. "What are you talking about?"

She took a step forward. "I'm talking about the experience I had a short time ago down in Martin's lab. He showed me the enhancements to the monitoring capabilities of the VR implant chip."

Richard raised his eyebrows in anticipation. "And?"

Arianna grunted. "And," she said, "it's the most incredible piece of technology I've ever laid eyes on. I had no idea that something like that was even remotely possible. It's like—" she glanced around the room as if searching for the word, "like something out of Star Trek."

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"Martin's a brilliant man," Richard said.

"Martin's a surgeon, Richard," Arianna replied curtly. "I know he's got degrees up the yazoo, but he's not a specialist in hardware and software."

"He's got an exemplary team working for him..."

"I'm not stupid, Richard! I've learned a few things about the products in my time working here. It would take a team of fifty to put together something like what I saw today."

"So what are you saying?"

Arianna turned away from him and paced toward the door.

"I checked the files," she said. "There's no record of a test volunteer named Kyle Mappin. And there's no personnel record for a security guard named Carl."

Richard frowned. "What prompted you to look through the files?"

Arianna whirled back to face him. "What prompted me was the fact that in this so-called live transmission from inside Kyle Mappin's head I saw a banner strung across Summer Park Road that hasn't been there for over six weeks!"

Richard placed his hands on his desk and leaned his weight onto them.

They were both silent for a moment.

Finally, Richard straightened up and resumed his seat.

"You're the most observant person I've ever met, Arianna," he said quietly. "That's why you're such a damn fine psychologist. And that's why we chose you for this."

Arianna's nostrils flared. Her eyes bored holes into Richard's skull. "It was a simulation," she said. It was not a question.

"Yes. It was a simulation. That's the technology we're testing, not the enhanced VR chip. Kyle and Teresa Mappin and Carl the security guard don't exist. They're part of the program. We needed someone to enter that program without knowledge that it was a program. Someone observant and detail-minded. Someone like you."

"So you knew about this whole thing all along," Arianna rasped.

Richard shifted in his seat but said nothing.

"You bastard!" she spat.

He opened his mouth to speak, but the door had already slammed behind her.



Arianna burst into her apartment, dropping her purse and briefcase in the same wild movement with which she flung the door closed. She undressed on her way to the bedroom, discarding items of clothing without regard for their resting places.

Tossing her blouse onto the bed, she stormed into the bathroom and splashed water on her face. Not bothering to reach for a towel, she stomped back out into the living room and stood there in her underwear, fuming.

Finally she managed to compose herself. She shook her head, wiped a hand across her face, and headed for the hall mirror.

She was immediately sorry she'd bothered. She looked like hell. Her chestnut-coloured hair, so carefully coiffed and cropped just below the ears, was in total disarray, the edges

plastered to her face by her recent dousing. Her face was still red, her eyes even redder.

Damn them! she thought. Damn them all to hell.

She trudged back into the living room and headed for the bookcase in the corner. Crouching, she pulled a box from the bottom shelf and lifted the lid. Peeking inside, she found her treasures still present and intact. It had been months, but the stress right now was too much. She needed something. She pulled the package of cigarettes out of the box and, digging around, found the lighter as well.

A moment later she was sitting cross-legged on the living room carpet, puffing contentedly on a cigarette. It didn't make the frustration go away, but it sure took the edge off her tension.

As she stared at the doorframe across from her, the smoke

**"You bastard!" she spat.**

swirled about her head, forming ghostly shapes that danced past her eyes. She felt transported, as if she were in another time and place entirely.

She took the pipe out of her mouth and rested it on her knee. She frowned, looking down at it. She was sure she'd lit a cigarette, but then, she'd been so upset she might have been mistaken.

Then she looked further down and frowned again. She didn't remember removing her underwear, but it was nowhere to be seen.

And the carpet was a different colour now. She reached down to touch it, finding it didn't feel like carpet at all. She examined her fingertips and found them covered with dirt.

She looked across the room to see if her clothes were still there. They were, but they weren't in a trail from the front door to the bedroom. They were in a heap by the tree.

She squinted, seeking the front door. Where had it gone? There was just patch of wild flowers there now. This was supremely weird. It was just a cigarette, for God's sake.

Oh, right, it was a pipe, not a cigarette. But what the hell was in that pipe?

She shook her head, trying to clear it.

After a few minutes she felt a bit more lucid. Looking down at her left thigh, she removed the leaves she had plastered to it. The wound looked much better. She was healing nicely. The succulent bandage and the medicine pipe were doing their work.

She stood, trying her weight on the mending leg. It was sore, but it would bear her back to the village.

Feeling suddenly vulnerable in her nudity, she strode over to the tree and put her clothing back on. She adjusted her armour, picked up her sword, and moved back out into the clearing.

This was where her opponent had vanished.

No matter. They would meet again.

**OCTOBER 26-28**

**26th World Fantasy Convention:** Omni Bayfront Hotel, Corpus Christi, TX. Scheduled guests: K.W. Jeter, John Crowley. Registration NA. Information: PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, fduartejr@aol.com.

**OCTOBER 31**

**Alternate Realities:** Scarsdale, N.Y. Scheduled Guest: Bernie Wrightson. Information: www.alternaterealities.com

November 4  
Dr. Who Party:

**NOVEMBER 17-19**

**Philcon 200:** Adam's Mark Hotel, Philadelphia, Pa. Scheduled guests: Poul Anderson, Vernor Vinge, Bob Walters. Registration: NA. Information: info@philcon.org, www.philcon.org, (215) 604-3980 or PO Box 8303, Philadelphia, Pa., 19101-8303.

**2001**

**JANUARY 20-21**

**Pandemonium 18:** Day's Inn, 30 Carleton St., Toronto, Ont. Registration: \$20 preregistered weekend gaming, \$25 at door; \$5 visitors passes at the door. Information: www.megacity-one.com/panda, Hugh Montgomerie@sony.ca

**FEBRUARY 8-11**

**Astronomicon '01:** Fourt Points Sheraton, Rochester, N.Y. Scheduled guests: Steven Barnes, Robert J. Sawyer. Registration: \$35 US until Dec. 31, \$40 at the door. Information: Ralston@aol.com, www.RochesterFantasyFans.org

**FEBRUARY 23-25**

**Ad Astra 2001:** Holiday Inn at the Innon the Park, Toronto.

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**APRIL 18-22**

**ConFurence 12:** Hilton Burbank Airport Hotel and Convention Centre. Scheduled guests: Jym Magon, Mike Kazaleh. Registration: \$35 US until March 12. Information: (619) 523-9814, info@con-furence.net, www.comfer-ence.net.

**APRIL 20-22**

**EerieCon Three:** Days Inn Riverview, Niagara Falls, NY. Scheduled guests: Robert J. Sawyer, Carolyn Clink, Samuel R. Delany. Registration: \$30 until March 15, \$40 at the door. Information: www.geocities.com/area51/9159, www.scificspace.com/html/eriecon.html, email to eeriecon@juno.com or by mail to P.O. Box 412, Buffalo, NY 14226

**MAY 25-28**

**Costume Con 19:** Westin Hotel, Calgary, Alta. Scheduled Guests: TBA; Registration: NA. Information: Box 20001, Bow Valley Postal Outlet, 205-5th Ave SW, Calgary, Alta., T2P 4H3 or capsam@nucleus.com.

**MAY 25-27**

**Anime North:** Toronto Airport Marriott, Dixon Road, Toronto.

Scheduled Guests: Ben Dunn, Stephen R. Bennett IV, Doug Smith. Registration: \$30 Cdn/\$22 US until April 9; \$40/\$30 at the door. Information: info@animenorth.com or www.animenorth.com

**JULY 20-22**

**Toronto Trek 15:** Regal Constellation Hotel, Dixon Road, Toronto. Scheduled guests: TBA. Registration: (until June 1) Weekend passes: \$40 Cdn/\$30 US; Friday: \$20/\$15; Saturday: \$35/\$26; Sunday: \$25/\$20. Information: www.tcon.icomm.ca, tcon@icomm.ca; (416) 410-8266.

**AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 3**

**Millennium Philcon:** Pennsylvania Convention Centre and Philadelphia Marriott Hotel. Scheduled guests: Greg Bear, Gardner Dozois, Stephen Youll. Registration: \$145 new attending; \$90 convert. Information: www.phil2001.org, www.netaxs.com/~phil2001.

*Parsec is not responsible for changes in hotels, guests, prices, dates or cancellations. It is the sole responsibility of convention organizers to provide this information.*

**Ad Astra 2001**

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Holiday Inn, Toronto - Don Valley  
February 23-25, 2001

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# Fall schedule



| Eastern Time | MONDAY                                   | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY                   | SUNDAY               | Pacific Time |          |  |
|--------------|--|---------|------------|----------|----------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|--|
| 6:00am       | Highlander                               |         |            |          |          | Space News                 | Canadian             | 3:00am       |          |  |
| 6:30am       |  |         |            |          |          | Twilight Zone              | Document.            | 3:30am       |          |  |
| 7:00am       | Ray Bradbury                             |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 4:00 am  |  |
| 7:30am       | Weird Science                            |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 4:30am   |  |
| 8:00am       | Beast                                    | Nowhere | Crow       | Raven    | VR5      | movie                      | Capt. Power          | 5:00am       |          |  |
| 8:30am       | Master                                   | Msn     |            |          |          |                            | Odyssey              | 5:30am       |          |  |
| 9:00am       | War of the Worlds                        |         |            |          |          |                            | Battlestar           | 6:00am       |          |  |
| 9:30am       |  |         |            |          |          | Galactica                  |                      | 6:30am       |          |  |
| 10:00am      | Star Trek                                |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 7:00am   |  |
| 10:30am      |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 7:30am   |  |
| 11:00am      | Highlanders                              |         |            |          |          | Star Trek: Next Generation |                      | 8:00am       |          |  |
| 11:30am      |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | 8:30am       |          |  |
| Noon         | Star Trek: Next Generation               |         |            |          |          | Star Trek: Deep Space 9    | Twilight Zone        | 9:00am       |          |  |
| 12:30pm      |  |         |            |          |          |                            | Elec. Playh.         | 9:30am       |          |  |
| 1:00pm       | Quantum Leap                             |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 10:00am  |  |
| 1:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 10:30am  |  |
| 2:00pm       | Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict |         |            |          |          | Movie                      | Movie                | 11:00am      |          |  |
| 2:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | 11:30am      |          |  |
| 3:00pm       | Babylon 5                                |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | noon         |          |  |
| 3:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | 12:30pm      |          |  |
| 4:00pm       | Star Trek                                |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 1:00pm   |  |
| 4:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          | The Visitor                | Beyond Belief        | 1:30pm       |          |  |
| 5:00pm       | Star Trek: Deep Space 9                  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 2:00pm   |  |
| 5:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          | Roswell                    | Space Specials       | 2:30am       |          |  |
| 6:00pm       | Highlander                               |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 3:00pm   |  |
| 6:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          | Battlestar Galactica       | Beastmaster          | 3:30pm       |          |  |
| 7:00pm       | Babylon 5                                |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 4:00pm   |  |
| 7:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          | The Lost World             | Earth Final Conflict | 4:30pm       |          |  |
| 8:00pm       | The Visitor                              | Sliders | Sliders    | Sliders  | Sliders  | Relic Hunter               | Movie                | 5:00pm       |          |  |
| 8:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | 5:30pm       |          |  |
| 9:00pm       | Seven Days                               | Level 9 | First Wave | Angel    | Roswell. | Movie                      |                      | 6:00pm       |          |  |
| 9:30pm       |  |         |            |          |          |                            | 6:30pm               |              |          |  |
| 10:00pm      | Star Trek: Voyager                       |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | 7:00pm       |          |  |
| 10:30pm      |  |         |            |          |          |                            | movie                | 7:30pm       |          |  |
| 11:00pm      | X-Files                                  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 8:00pm   |  |
| 11:30pm      |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | 8:30pm       |          |  |
| midnight     |  |         |            |          |          | Movie                      | Good vs. Evil        | 9:00pm       |          |  |
| 12:30am      | Movie                                    | Movie   | Movie      | Movie    | Movie    |                            |                      | 9:30pm       |          |  |
| 1:00am       |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | 10:00pm      |          |  |
| 1:30am       |  |         |            |          |          | Harsh Realm                | TBA                  | 10:30pm      |          |  |
| 2:00am       | X-Files                                  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 11:00pm  |  |
| 2:30am       |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      | 11:30pm      |          |  |
| 3:00am       | Babylon 5                                |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | midnight |  |
| 3:30am       |  |         |            |          |          | Good vs. Evil              | Paranormal prog.     | 12:30am      |          |  |
| 4:00am       | Star Trek: Voyager                       |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 1:00am   |  |
| 4:30am       |  |         |            |          |          | American Gothic            |                      | 1:30am       |          |  |
| 5:00am       |  |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 2:00am   |  |
| 5:30am       | Deep Space Nine                          |         |            |          |          |                            |                      |              | 2:30am   |  |

## Highlights SHEENA, QUEEN



## OF THE JUNGLE

Former Baywatch babe Gena Lee Nolin in a new fantasy series with an environmental conscience. **Premieres, Nov. 6**

Mondays at 9 p.m.

## PERVERSIONS OF SCIENCE

The adult sci-fi anthology brought to you by the executive producers of Tales from the Crypt. The series offers a flirtatious and tormenting approach to science fiction.

Saturdays at 1:15 a.m.

Can't get Space in your area? Call your cable company

# The Ultimate In Animé!



# X

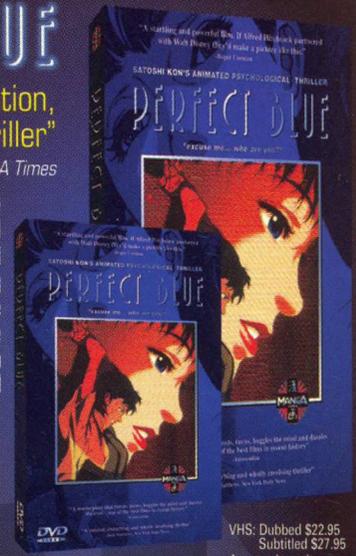
"Amazing"  
- Animexpress

At the edge of the millennium the concluding battle for humanity's future is staged. Kamui Shirou's destiny has been decided as he returns to Tokyo to face his ultimate challenge.

# PERFECT BLUE

"An amazing feat of animation, a stylish psychological thriller"  
- LA Times

In the tradition of great suspense masters, director Satoshi Kon, special advisor Katsuhiro Otomo (Akira) and Madhouse Studios (Ninja Scroll), bring Yoshikazu Takeuchi's thrilling suspense novel to the screen in a tour de force that brings animation to a bold new level.



VHS: Dubbed \$22.95  
Subtitled \$27.95  
Approx. Length -  
98 minutes

DVD - Approx. Length -  
98 minutes

DVD: Approx. Length:  
80 minutes

VHS: Dubbed \$22.95  
Subtitled \$27.95  
Approx. Length:  
80 minutes



# MANGA



# RAYEARTH VOLUME 1



"Fast & furious...  
a hilarious mix of Hitchcock and  
the Marx Brothers" - Hollywood Reporter

Master thief Lupin III, a.k.a. 'the wolf', and his right-hand gunman Jigen are hot on the trail of a counterfeiter who swindled them. But when their search leads them to the secluded European country of Cagliostro, they find far more than they bargained for. It's an action-packed escapade that even Steven Spielberg once called the "greatest adventure movie of all time."

The first in a three part action-adventure series which follows three friends as they discover they need to change the course of destiny to save the world...and learn that faith in one's friendship is the ultimate power!

VHS: Dubbed \$22.95  
Subtitled \$27.95  
Approx. Length:  
109 minutes

DVD:  
Approx. length: 109 minutes

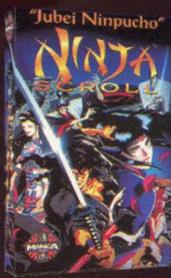
VHS: Dubbed \$22.95  
Subtitled \$27.95  
Approx. Length:  
60 minutes



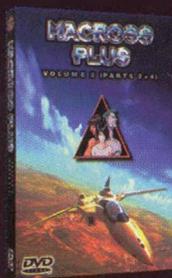
## FAST FORWARD INTO THE 21ST CENTURY WITH THE FINEST IN JAPANESE ANIMATION



Ghost In The Shell



Ninja Scroll



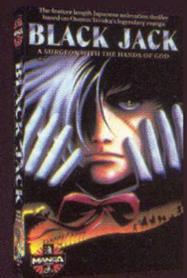
Macross Plus  
Volume 1



Fist Of The North Star



Patlabor 1, 2 & 3



Black Jack

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**SMV**  
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entertainment

SCHWARZENEGGER



ARE YOU WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE

# THE 6TH DAY

PHOENIX PICTURES PRESENTS A JON DAVISON PRODUCTION A ROGER SPOTTISWOODE FILM ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER "THE 6TH DAY" MICHAEL RAPAPORT TONY GOLDWYN MICHAEL ROOKER SARAH WYNTER AND ROBERT DUVALL MUSIC BY TREVOR RABIN EDITED BY MARK CONTE A.C.E. DOMINIQUE FORTIN MICHEL ARCAND PRODUCTION DESIGNERS JAMES BISSELL JOHN WILLETT DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PIERRE MIGNOT VISUAL EFFECTS BY RHYTHM & HUES STUDIO MAKE-UP BY ALEC GILLIS AND TOM WOODRUFF JR. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DAVID COATSWORTH DANIEL PETRIE JR. PRODUCED BY MIKE MEDAVOY ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER JON DAVISON WRITTEN BY CORMAC WIBBERLEY & MARIANNE WIBBERLEY DIRECTED BY ROGER SPOTTISWOODE



NOVEMBER

[sony.com/the6thday](http://sony.com/the6thday)