

# Alouette

## The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

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



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

7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5  
Phone: (905) 882-5033 • Fax: (905) 886-1624 • GEnie: RJ.Sawyer • Internet: rj.sawyer@genie.geis.com  
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## The Great Canadian Royalty Rip-Off

by Donald Maass

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Newsletter of the Association of Authors' Representatives, Inc.,  
Spring 1994)*

Here's a trick question: Is Canada a foreign country?

If you're talking about sovereign nations, naturally Canada is a foreign country. But if you're referring to it as a market for books produced in the U.S., the question is loaded, and authors and agents who answer wrong may be losing millions of dollars in income.

Publishing pros may not appreciate what a huge market Canada is for books published in the United States. In 1992, U.S. publishers shipped \$702,174,000 worth of books to Canada, more than the total shipped to their next eleven largest foreign markets. Sales north of the border represent anywhere from 5% to 15% of a given book's sales. The ratio tends to be even higher for Canadian authors, who needless to say publicize, promote, and find a larger following in their home country.

However, because U.S. publishers classify Canada as an export territory, they pay authors sharply reduced royalties, similar to those they pay on books shipped to Europe, the Middle East, or Asia. Stranger still, there is no consistency among rates. In some cases it is half the U.S. royalty rate; in others, it is 10% or less of the publisher's net Canadian proceeds (which after a trade discount of 40% or more and the deduction of commissions to independent Canadian sales reps can mean pretty small sums indeed).

Are these royalty cuts in fact justified? Discussions I've had with U.S. and Canadian writers, agents, and publishers suggest not.

U.S. publishers rationalize their reduction of royalties on Canadian sales on several principal grounds:

- 1) It is expensive to transport books there, especially when a transfer between carriers occurs at the border;
- 2) Commissions paid to independent Canadian sales reps take a bite out of revenues (typically 10%);
- 3) The country's population is smaller, more spread out, harder to reach through advertising and promotion — and on top of that a segment of it reads in French;

- 4) The Canadian dollar is worth less than the U.S. dollar. Some U.S. publishers also contend that Canadian distribution channels are not as efficient at servicing remote areas as U.S. channels, and/or that Canadian return rates are higher.

Most of these arguments don't hold up well under scrutiny, and certainly don't seem to support the substantial cuts assumed by authors. Regarding shipping, the blunt fact is that most U.S. books — perhaps 80% — are sent to Ontario, and the rest go mainly to a few metropolitan regions such as Vancouver; these are in southern Canada, and distances covered are frankly less than those covered to many destinations in the internal U.S.

Customs clearance is a hang-up, perhaps, but in the end transporting books is just transporting books. Duties and taxes on U.S. books sent to Canada are not a factor.

In fact, there are none. Duties have long since been abolished, and Canada's Goods and Services Tax, a value-added tax charged on book sales, is only paid by Canadian customers at the cash register. Canadian reps pay it, but can get it refunded. GST may inhibit sales, but U.S. publishers pay nothing out of pocket.

As to the cost of independent reps, the fact is that not all U.S. publishers use them. Some have their own Canadian sales forces. Like the population-density question, this may be a phantom issue.

Currency values and fluctuation may be the weakest rationale of all, since the lower value of the Canadian dollar — generally 15% to 20% less than the U.S. greenback — is more than offset by higher Canadian cover prices, which on average are 30% more than U.S. cover prices. Even allowing for higher return rates, this price differential certainly goes a long way toward easing any higher per-unit cost of sale.

Some publishers complain that they are unable to keep Canadian rights anyway, thanks to aggressive negotiation by agents particularly on behalf of Canadian authors. Most of us I'm sure would agree, however, that in the vast majority of cases U.S. publishers take Canadian distribution rights as a given.

True, many British and some Canadian authors withhold these rights, preferring to work with Canadian houses or to cede the territory to their U.K. publisher. That position, though, comes at a price: the reduction in value of the U.S. contract, and the possibility that withholding Canada may make a U.S. sale in some cases impossible.

Despite this, some Canadian authors, sick of seeing their books published without fanfare in their own country, stick to their guns and work with Canadian publishers at home. Many others, unfortunately, do not have this luxury. Science fiction writers, for example have few

if any choices in their home land. These luckless authors must not only look south for publication, but must also accept less money for their hometown sales into the bargain.

The passage of NAFTA — the North American Free Trade Agreement — by the U.S. congress last fall focussed lots of attention on a potential loss of jobs to Mexico. Agents in the U.S. book trade have not realized, though, that in Canada we are already losing a great deal of income. Trade with Canada is in many respects normal, friendly, and duty-free. Are profit margins for publishers necessarily lower there? Must authors really accept less?

Publishers' rationales for lower Canadian royalty rates are increasingly unconvincing. Canada is not across the ocean, it is right next door. Getting there is easy. They want books. They speak our language. The question is not one of cost; it is one of accepting reality. \*

*Donald Maass is an independent New York literary agent. His Canadian clients include Phyllis Gotlieb and Michelle Sagara. Don thanks Robert J. Sawyer for help with research and background information for this article.*

## JURY NAMED

### Philip K. Dick Judges

David G. Hartwell and Gordon Van Gelder have announced this year's judges for the Philip K. Dick Award, which will honour with a cash award a distinguished original SF paperback published for the first time during 1994 in the USA. A second cash award is given for the runner-up. This year's judges are:

Megan Lindholm, 7102 Harts Lake Road S., Roy, WA, USA 98580

Richard Russo, 835 Peralta Ave., Berkley, CA, USA 94707

Steven Popkes, 24 Cedar St., Hopkinton, MA, USA 01748

Joe Sanders, 6354 Brooks Blvd., Mentor, OH, USA 44060

Robert J. Sawyer, 118 Betty Ann Drive, Willowdale, ON M2N 1X4 (preferred address for books)

Please send copies of eligible works directly to all five judges. The winner and the runner-up will be announced in March 1995. \*

## CRIME WRITERS OF CANADA

### Arthur Ellis Awards



At a banquet at the University of Toronto's Faculty Club on June 1, 1994, the Crime Writers of Canada announced the winners of its eleventh-annual Arthur Ellis Awards. Robert J. Sawyer's "Just Like Old Times" won the juried award for Best Short Story of 1993.

The story originally appeared in both *On Spec's* Summer 1993 issue and the anthology *Dinosaur Fantastic* edited by Mike Resnick and Martin H. Greenberg (DAW, July 1993), and is a current Aurora nominee.

Another Aurora nominee, William Gibson's SF book *Virtual Light* (Bantam, 1993), was short-listed for the Best Novel Ellis, but lost to the conventional mystery novel *Gypsy Sins* by John Lawrence Reynolds of Burlington, Ontario (HarperCollins Canada, 1993).

Sawyer's win marks the second time an SF work has taken home an Ellis. Last year, Sean Stewart's *Passion Play* won the Best First Novel Award (with the Best Novel Award going to *Lizardskin* by Carsten Stroud). \*

## WRITERS LEAVING CANADA

### Brain Drain!

Two of Canada's top SF writers are leaving Canada for the United States.

Sean Stewart of Vancouver is moving to Houston, Texas, later this year (coincidentally, he was born in Lubbock, Texas), so that his American-born wife, Christine, can pursue a post-doctoral fellowship in behavioural neuroscience there.

And S. M. Stirling of Toronto, who was born in Metz, France, and his American-born wife, Jan, are moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in April 1995.

They join Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens, who left Thornhill, Ontario, for Los Angeles a couple of years ago, as well as expatriates from further in the past, including Gordon Dickson, H. L. Gold, Joel Rosenberg, and A. E. van Vogt.

We'll miss Sean and Stephen, and wish them best of luck south of the border! \*

## PUBLISHING NEWS

### Tesseract Line for Sale

The Tesseract Books imprint of Victoria's Beach Holme Press is up for sale, and the likely buyer, according to multiple sources, is a consortium headed by Candace Jane Dorsey of Edmonton. Dorsey was co-editor of Beach Holme's *Tesseract's*<sup>3</sup>, and her short-story collection *Machine Sex and Other Stories* was published by them.

Sale of the imprint would involve transferring ownership of five books currently in press, the physical backlist stock and rights to those books, and the right to use the "Tesseract Books" name and logo. The in-press books are Phyllis Gotlieb's collection *Blue Apes*, a third novel by Heather Spears, a third novel by Élisabeth Vonarburg, a book by Michael Barley, and the long-awaited anthology of French-Canadian SF in translation, *Tesseract's Q*.

"All these books are on hold," says Antonia Banyard, Beach Holme Press senior editor — and they will remain on hold until either a buyer is found or Beach Holme determines that no suitable buyer is going to materialize, in which case the books will be published by Beach Holme. But at present no work is being done on any of them. "We don't want to do any more work editorially if they're going to be taken over by somebody else," says Banyard. Phyllis Gotlieb's *Blue Apes*, announced in the June *Locus* as a July 1994 trade-paperback title, will not be appearing anytime soon, says Banyard.

There is no publicly declared asking price for the line, says Banyard. Rumours suggest that Dorsey (who did not return our phone call) has currently put together funding from a variety of sources totaling \$14,000. Banyard would entertain other proposals, though.

"Tesseract Books definitely will continue, one way or the other," says Banyard, "and there will be a *Tesseract's*<sup>5</sup> anthology, although no editors have yet been chosen for it."

The Tesseract Book line grew out of the 1985 anthology *Tesseract's: Canadian Science Fiction*, edited by Judith Merrill and published by Beach Holme under its old name of Press Porcépic. Sequel anthologies appeared in 1987 (*Tesseract's*<sup>2</sup>, Phyllis Gotlieb and Douglas Barbour, eds.), 1990 (*Tesseract's*<sup>3</sup>, Dorsey and Gerry Truscott, eds.), and 1992 (*Tesseract's*<sup>4</sup>, Lorna Toolis and Michael Skeet, eds.).

The Tesseract backlist includes books by Michael Coney (*Palahaxi Tide*), Tom Henighan (*Strange Attractors*), Teresa Plowright (*Dreams of an Unseen Planet*), Robin Skelton (*Fires of the Kindred*), Heather Spears (*Moonfall* and *The Children of Atwar*), Sean Stewart (*Passion Play*), Élisabeth Vonarburg (*The Silent City* and *The Maerlande Chronicles*), and Andrew Weiner (*Distant Signals and Other Stories*). \*

## CANADIAN REGION BUSINESS

## Director's Report

by Robert J. Sawyer

My term of office as Canadian Regional Director ends on June 30, 1995. Although I'm willing to run for another three-year term, I will also gladly step aside if someone else would like the job. After spending two years lobbying for the creation of the Canadian Region of SFWA, and another three as its first Director, I've had my fill of SFWA's internal politics.

Frankly, the organization seems paralyzed by its traditional way of doing things. As far as I've been able to gather, two past presidents, Jerry Pournelle and Damon Knight, usually select a person they wish to see as the next SFWA president, then pressure that unfortunate soul until he or she consents.

Pournelle argues, vociferously, that once one has agreed to run as president, one should not then be made to jump through hoops for the privilege of being a volunteer, and thus he's adamant that we should have uncontested elections. (T. Jackson King, elections chair when current-president Haldeman was a candidate, came onto GENie soliciting other candidates; he was so roundly harassed by Pournelle for doing this that King resigned from GENie, and from his post. This year, a past SFWA president, Jane Yolen, served as elections chair; she apparently was a more suitable choice, well understanding that her job was to find one, and only one, candidate per position.)

The upshot of all this, unfortunately, is that we end up time and again with presidents who do not wish to be president, who feel bullied into taking the job, who want nothing more than to get through their term of office with as little turbulence and as few confrontations as possible. They behave as lame ducks from day one, and little if anything gets accomplished, much to the frustration of the more proactive members of the Board of Directors.

(In rare cases, the current system instead results in a president who fully understands that there is no real accountability for the office, and who wields power indiscriminately; Ben Bova has often been accused of running such a presidency.)

Those of you who have been reading SFWA's *Forum* no doubt have detected that I'm also monumentally dissatisfied with the performance and cost-effectiveness of the office of SFWA's Executive Secretary. I'm put in mind of *Yes, Minister's* Sir Humphrey Appleby — the quintessential entrenched civil servant, who considers his job to be obstruction rather than facilitation — whenever I have to deal with Peter Pautz. I am not alone in this; several other SFWA volunteers, including the *Forum* editors, the *Nebula Awards Report* editor, and a past Nebula jury chair, share my concern, and Contracts Committee chair Raymond E. Feist and past-President Jerry Pournelle have joined with me in calling for a major overhaul of the office and the possible replacement of the incumbent. Although President Haldeman has made a few Band-Aid efforts in this area, I'm unconvinced that we will see any real improvement.

So, when I say to you all that I'd be glad if one of you would step forward and replace me as Canadian Regional Director, I'd also be surprised if anyone actually wants the job. But let me know before next February (when nominations must be declared); I'll only run again if no one else steps forward, and if you do want the job, let's arrange in advance for an orderly transfer of power.

One other thing I should point out, though, for anyone who is considering taking this position: SFWA designates not one dime of dues for regional activities. I've paid for printing and mailing *Alouette* out of my own pocket (with the exception of one issue, the mailing of which was kindly paid for by Andrew Weiner), as well as all other incidental expenses I've incurred over the years. Of course, no one is obligated to do a regional newsletter (I am, in fact, the only one of SFWA's five Regional Directors to do so), and one could, in theory,

claim back other routine expenses from SFWA's treasurer at the end of the year.

I think my record in this job has been pretty good: a lot of effective lobbying has been done (including being partially responsible for SFWA adopting an annual random royalty-audit program, modeled on the one used by The Writers' Union of Canada), many new Canadian members have been brought into the fold, and I've secured some nice additional benefits for Canadian active members.

But there's one duty, as defined in the *SFWA Officers' Guidelines*, about which I have perhaps been remiss: the calling of annual meetings of the Canadian Region.

We did have one in 1991, at WilfCon 8, in Waterloo, Ontario (which was that year's Convention). In 1992, since almost no Canadian SFWAns were attending it, I decided not to have the Canadian Region meeting at Convention (WolfCon 6, in Nova Scotia), but rather at Ad Astra 13, Toronto's regional con. But although there were over a dozen Canadian SFWAns present, none seemed interested in getting together for a meeting.

Frankly, I don't blame them. We're a small, geographically dispersed group, and I receive (and try to promptly deal with) requests from members coast-to-coast all the time. Do we really gain anything by gathering together in one room and debating issues?

This year's meeting would normally be at Conadian, the Worldcon in Winnipeg, because it is also this year's Convention. But we're all going to have a hundred things to do there, and I don't want to burden people's schedules with a *pro forma* meeting. Besides, SFWA's own full Annual General Meeting will be held at the Winnipeg Worldcon Sunday morning, September 4; Canadian members can directly raise issues there, if they wish.

So, if anyone wants me to call a meeting at Conadian, send me a letter, and I will do so. Otherwise, I will simply try to touch base personally with each attending Canadian SFWAn attending during the course of the con, giving you all a chance to apprise me of any issues you think I should be pursuing. \*

## LOBBYING

## Customs Goes Too Far

In December 1993, Canadian SFWAn — and CTV News writer — Robin Rowland phoned me about a story he'd been following: a piece of *domestic* mail sent by an Ontario book publisher to Little Sister's, a gay and lesbian bookstore in Vancouver's west end, was opened and inspected by Canada Customs. This, of course, is outrageous behaviour — and it fell into the Canadian Region of SFWA's purview, because the inspected package turned out to contain an SF novel.

Your ever-scrappy Canadian Regional Director immediately leapt into the fray, sending this letter to Darryl Lavia, Canada Customs Mail Centre, 685 Hamilton St., Vancouver, BC V6B 2R4:

Dear Mr. Lavia:

As Canadian Regional Director of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, the world's largest association of SF writers, with over 1,100 members in 21 different countries, I am writing to condemn Canada Customs's continual, systematic harassment of Little Sister's, a Gay and Lesbian bookstore in Vancouver.

The latest action, as reported on the front page of the December 9 edition of *The Vancouver Sun* — opening and inspecting Little Sister's *domestic Canadian mail* — is an outrage, completely intolerable in Canadian society, and doubtless abhorrent to Canadian voters.

SFWA would condemn this action even if the mail that was opened — a domestic Canada Post shipment from Penguin Canada's Newmarket, Ontario, warehouse, to the store in Vancouver — hadn't contained the science-fiction novel *Shroud of Shadow* by Gael Baudino. You owe Little

Sister's much more than just an apology over this incident. A full, formal inquiry should be held — and by a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister's Office, I am urging that precisely that happen. There is no excuse whatsoever for Canada Customs to be opening anyone's domestic mail. Your organization has stepped far, far beyond the bounds of acceptable behaviour in a constitutional democracy.

Canada Customs has apologized for this breach, calling it an accident. Still, that Draconian department continues to flout our constitutional right to freedom of expression.

The fight goes on: in June 1994, the American Booksellers Association passed a motion condemning Canada Customs for its constant interference with reading materials passing over the border from the U.S. into Canada. \*

## HUMOUR

### Off to a Bad Start ...

Here's a dishonourable mention from this year's Bulwer-Lytton Writing Contest, in which the object is to write the worst-possible opening sentence:

"The shimmering droplets coursing down the windowpane were as wet and copious as the tears clouding Rebecca's vision, and the similarities were not yet at an end — both the window frame and her lovely lashes were rimmed in red, and the pane, like her left eyeball, was glass."

— Tony Stoltzfus of Goshen, Indiana \*

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### 1993: The Dark Side of the Force by Robert J. Sawyer

Any year that sees new books by such brilliant writers as William F. Wu, Timothy Zahn, K. W. Jeter, Roger MacBride Allen, and Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens should be noteworthy. Add to that the long-awaited first collaborative novel by Kristine Kathryn Rusch and Dean Wesley Smith, and 1993 should have been an auspicious year indeed.

(Wu, of course, is known for his wonderful short stories, including "Wong's Curiosity Emporium." Zahn's "Cascade Point" won the 1984 best-novella Hugo. K.W. Jeter's *Dr. Adder* (1984) was an outstanding early cyberpunk work. Roger MacBride Allen's *The Ring of Charon* (1991) was one of the most inventive hard-SF novels in many a year. Gar Reeves-Stevens gave us *Nighteyes* (1989), *Dark Matter* (1990), and several other excellent mainstream SF novels. And multiple-award-nominee Rusch and her husband Smith are the energetic team responsible for the Pulphouse Publishing empire.)

Yes, a distinguished group of authors indeed — and yet not one of their 1993 books made even the preliminary Nebula Award ballot, let alone the list of five finalists.

The reason becomes clear when we mention their 1993 titles: Wu's contributions were *Isaac Asimov's Robots in Time #1, #2, and #3*, plus *Mutant Chronicles Volume 1: In Lunacy* (based on material from Target Games). Zahn weighed in with a couple of *Star Wars* novels. Allen gave us *Isaac Asimov's Caliban*. The Reeves-Stevens wrote *The Day of Descent*, first in a series of books based on the TV

show *Alien Nation*; Jeter's book was also in that series. And Rusch and Smith served up a frothy *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* novel called *The Big Game*.

SF used to be about exploring strange, new worlds. But 1993 was the year in which it seemed to give up the good fight, and finally admit that it had become devoted to exploiting tired, old worlds instead.

The phenomenon of SF being "product" instead of literature began with *Star Trek* novels. When these first started appearing, authors used words like "homage" and "nostalgia" to describe their motives for doing them. But in 1993, that pretense was finally dropped: Pocket announced a forthcoming line of books based on *Voyager*, a new *Star Trek* TV series that will hit the airwaves in 1995. No one outside of the Paramount studios knew the premise of the show, no one had seen even a single frame of it on film, no one could possibly have any sentimental attachment to the material. But the feeding frenzy of authors on GENIE (the computer network on which SFWA has its electronic home) clambering to sign contracts to do books based on that series was a sight to behold.

I don't (much) blame the writers, of course. We've all got to eat. No, the publishers are the culprits here. They pay less in real dollars now than they ever have before for original SF novels — and they often keep those novels in print for only months, or even weeks.

Not that publishers can't get behind books when they want to: Pocket mounted a campaign in 1993 to get the first *Alien Nation* novel onto the Nebula ballot, sending out copies to SFWA members in hopes of getting Nebula recommendations. But how does one assess a volume whose characters, premises, and backgrounds were created by other writers working in other media? For that matter, how does one assess the contributions of writers to books that have a possessive form of Isaac Asimov's name as part of the title?

I'd love to say that 1993 was an aberration. But it wasn't: 1994 and future years are shaping up to be more of the same. See, in 1993, Roger MacBride Allen signed a contract to produce a trilogy of *Star Wars* novels, and another couple of books about Asimov's robots. More power to him — but I'd rather have the rest of his saga of "The Hunted Earth," the ground-breaking original series he began with *Ring of Charon*. Also in 1993, Kevin J. Anderson signed to do a trilogy of *Star Wars* novels. Good work if you can get it, I suppose — but I'd much rather see another mini-masterpiece from him, like this year's Nebula-nominated *Assemblers of Infinity*, which he co-authored with Doug Beason. Dave Wolverton, one of our absolute best authors, has signed on to do a *Star Wars* trilogy, too, while Barry B. Longyear, whose "Enemy Mine" landed him both a Hugo and a Nebula in 1980, has reappeared on bookstore shelves with an *Alien Nation* book.

The SF author I feel sorriest for is John E. Stith. He was a Nebula nominee for 1990's brilliant *Redshift Rendezvous*, and he had an even better novel in 1993 called *Manhattan Transfer*. But that book didn't make it to either the Nebula or Hugo ballot — and I think I know why. Many bookstores have taken to treating the terms *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* as authors' names. Stith's work was no doubt lost in the alphabetical limbo after row upon row of media tie-in books.

Indeed, it's getting hard to find any original SF on shelves groaning under the weight of *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *seaQuest*, and *Quantum Leap* novels; of products licensed by Target Games and TSR; of books in the universes of Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, and Larry Niven; of false collaborations between big-name authors and newcomers; of sharecropping, franchise fiction, and packaged books. It used to be that such fare was the province of hack writers, those who needed a quick buck, and Trekkies who got lucky. Now, though, it's where many of the best and brightest of our younger writers are spending most of their time.

Pocket Books failed in its bid to get an *Alien Nation* novel on the Nebula ballot — but, if things continue, it's inevitable that someday, all too soon, the Nebula Award will be won by a media or gaming tie-in product. The year in which that happens will be the year in which SF literature will be said to have truly died — but when literary historians look back, they'll mark 1993 as the year in which the field's condition became terminal. \*

## MAJOR ANTHOLOGY

## Northern Stars

At Conadian, the World Science Fiction Convention in Winnipeg this September, Tor Books, New York, will be launching a major retrospective hardcover anthology of Canadian science fiction. The book, entitled *Northern Stars*, is edited by David Hartwell in New York and Glenn Grant in Montreal. Here's an advance peek at the anthology's table of contents:

Glenn Grant	Introduction
Judith Merrill	Essay (from the Afterword to <i>Ark of Ice</i> )
Peter Watts	"A Niche"
Phyllis Gotlieb	"Mother Lode"
Élisabeth Vonarburg	"Home by the Sea" (translated by Jane Brierley)
Dave Duncan	"Under Another Moon"
Jean-Louis Trudel	"Remember, the Dead Say"
Heather Spears	"One"
Lesley Choyce	"The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Writer"
Spider Robinson	"User Friendly"
Andrew Weiner	"Distant Signals"
Terence M. Green	"The Woman Who Is The Midnight Wind"
William Gibson	"The Winter Market"
Michael G. Coney	"The Byrds"
Joël Champetier	"Soluble-Fish" (translated by Louise Samson)
Glenn Grant	"Memetic Drift"
James Alan Gardner	"The Reckoning of Gifts"
Donald Kingsbury	"The Cauldron" (excerpt from a novel-in-progress)
Claude-Michel Prévost	"Happy Days in Old Chernobyl" (translated by John Greene)
Charles de Lint	"Pity the Monsters"
Eileen Kernaghan	"Carpe Diem"
Esther Rochon	"Xils" (translated by Lucille Nelson)
Yves Meynard	"Stolen Fires"
John Park	"Retrieval"
Gar Reeves-Stevens	"Outport"
Robert J. Sawyer	"Just Like Old Times"
Daniel Sernine	"Stardust Boulevard" (translated by Jane Brierley)
Robert Charles Wilson	"Ballads in 3/4 Time"
Candas Jane Dorsey	"(Learning About) Machine Sex"
Candas Jane Dorsey	"Afterword: The Author as Asymptote" (from <i>Tesseract's</i> )
Appendix:	Award-winning Canadian SF (compiled by Glenn Grant, Jean-Louis Trudel, Dennis Mullin, and Robert J. Sawyer) *

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

## Discount at 2nd Store

Canada's largest SF specialty store opened in December 1993 at the north end of Metropolitan Toronto — and Canadian active members of SFWA get at 20% discount on cash purchases of books there.

The store, Sci-Fi World, is located at 1600 Steeles Avenue West (a half block west of Steeles and Dufferin, next to the Tim Horton's Donuts), Concord, Ontario, L4K 2M2. It's a wonderful store for browsing: every title on the shelves is placed face out.

The store's phone number is (905) 738-4348, and its fax number is (905) 737-9883. The proprietor is John J. Dimou.

New Canadian SFWA membership cards are going out to all active members, so that they can claim their 20% discount at Sci-Fi World, as well as at Toronto's venerable Bakka. Our thanks to both stores for their generous support of Canada's SF writers! \*

## COMPUSERVE SF&amp;F FORUM

## HOMer Awards

On May 24, Robert J. Sawyer's *Fossil Hunter* (Ace, May 1993) won the Fourth Annual HOMer Award for Best Novel of the Year, voted on by the 18,000 members worldwide of the SF and Fantasy Forum on CompuServe. Last year, Sawyer's *Far-Seer* also won the Best Novel HOMer. The other 1993 novel nominees were *A Season for Slaughter* by David Gerrold, *Beggars in Spain* by Nancy Kress, *Purgatory* by Mike Resnick, and *Manhattan Transfer* by John E. Stith.

Nominated this year in the short-story category was "Modern Mansions" by Vancouver's Barbara Delaplace, from the DAW anthology *Christmas Ghosts*. Although she didn't win this year (the HOMer went to "Mwalimu in the Squared Circle" by Mike Resnick, *Asimov's*, March 1993), she did win last year for her short story "Black Ice."

The Best Novella HOMer this year went to "The Night We Buried Road Dog" by Jack Cady (*F&SF*, January 1993). The Best Novelette HOMer went to "Beast" by George Alec Effinger (from the anthology *Confederacy of the Dead*). \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

Michelle Sagara  
by Tanya Huff

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There are a great many things I could say about Michelle Sagara but as I have a mortgage to pay, I'll stick with those that won't get my arms broken. For example, I'll make no mention of her height.

Michelle is incredibly loyal to her friends, unquestionably loyal to her family, and amazingly tolerant of strangers. She is not, however, at all tolerant of stupidity — it isn't so much that she doesn't suffer fools gladly, as that she doesn't suffer them at all. As a number of people have discovered upon opening their mouths before connecting their brains, she is quite capable and more than willing to rip a pompous or pedantic world view into bloody shreds. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, she's one of the best people to argue with I know. A difference of opinion is never taken personally but rhetoric had better be backed up by fact. This is the only warning you'll get. Please, pay attention.

For some years now, Michelle has been the pragmatic conscience of Bakka Books — untangling the labyrinth of problems and personalities that arise when a small business, in a recession, is staffed with what can only be called individuals. (I could call them something else, but as I was one of them, I'm not likely to, am I?) Michelle's greatest fault is that she doesn't believe she's as good a writer as she is. Some of her short stories deserve awards — "Birthnight" in *A Christmas Bestiary* and "Winter" in *Deals with the Devil* for two. In a just world, people would have sat up and taken notice of her by now. It's not only that she's an incredibly lyrical writer, it's that she has a way of reaching through the unimportant stuff and touching the heart of the matter.

Okay, so she also thought she was writing a short story and ended up with a four book series, but that's not exactly a fault.

Once, on a crowded Saturday afternoon at Bakka, she came out of the back room and very loudly (I was at the cash desk) called me a crawling maggot. I thanked her.

Read her short stories. Read her books. You'll thank me.

"The Books of the Sundered" by Michelle Sagara:

*Into the Dark Lands*, Del Rey, 1991

*Children of the Blood*, Del Rey, 1992

*Lady of Mercy*, Del Rey, 1993

*Chains of Darkness*, *Chains of Light*, Del Rey, 1994 \*

## BUREAUCRATS AT WORK

## PoG Cancelled

Don Duprey, Managing Director of English Programming for TVOntario, the television service of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, has cancelled the network's multiple-award-winning series *Prisoners of Gravity* after five seasons.

*PoG* was created by Mark Askwith, Daniel Richler, and Rick Green, hosted by Green, and produced and directed by Gregg Thurlbeck, with Shirley Brady and Askwith as Associate Producers. The weekly half-hour series explored science fiction and comic books.

Ratings were better than ever, the series was a bargain to produce at just \$23,000 per episode, and awards kept pouring in. A package of ten shows aired recently on several PBS stations in the United States, and Kristine Kathryn Rusch's editorial in the June *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* lauded the show.

As Canadian Regional Director of SFWA, Rob Sawyer sent Duprey a letter protesting the show's cancellation:

On behalf of Canada's science fiction writers, I'm writing to protest in the strongest possible terms the cancellation of *Prisoners of Gravity*.

*PoG* was innovative, intelligent, alternative fare — exactly the sort of thing tax-funded broadcasters are supposed to provide.

The program was inexpensive to produce, and covered fields that no one else in North America was looking at. TVOntario's indifference to the series has been apparent since day one — terrible time slots, constant uncertainty about the show's renewal status, little promotion. Despite that, the show won national and international awards, and, through word-of-mouth, a large and loyal audience — many of whose members doubtless first discovered TVO through *Prisoners of Gravity*.

Canadians spend a lot of time agonizing over the appropriateness of government-subsidized arts. *PoG* was unique, vastly popular, and an important showcase for Canadian writers. The decision to cancel the series only reinforces the most basic argument against "public" broadcasting — that those who control the purse strings often operate from personal agendas, rather than giving the public what it clearly wants. Apparently someone at TVO was embarrassed by having such pop-culture topics as science fiction and comic books on the schedule, and, without accountability to the tax payers who fund the service, decided to cancel what was, in many ways, the best, most innovative, most thought-provoking show on television. Canada's science fiction writers deplore this decision.

Further letters of protest would be most welcome, says Executive Producer Thurlbeck. Write to Don Duprey, Managing Director of English Programming, TVOntario, Box 200, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2T1.

Meanwhile, Thurlbeck and company are trying to place a similar program elsewhere, with Toronto's City-TV a likely possibility. City-TV, run by Canadian media mogul Moses Znaimer, produces and syndicates several magazine-style light-information shows, including MediaTelevision, MovieTelevision, and FashionTelevision. Thurlbeck hopes to get Znaimer to add ScienceFictionTelevision to his lineup. Sad to say, though, *PoG* host Rick Green would not be part of any revived series; he's decided to take this opportunity to move on to other projects. We wish him well.

Now for the good news: on June 6, the CRTC licensed "The Canadian Discovery Channel." That cable-TV channel intends to buy the existing stock of over one hundred *Prisoners of Gravity* programs for airing in prime time, so it looks like series will finally get a national audience in Canada. \*

## CANADIAN AWARDS

## Aurora Nominees

Dennis Mullin and Ruth Stuart, administrators for the 14th annual Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Achievement Awards ("the Auroras"), have announced this year's nominees.

Novels are eligible for two consecutive years, beginning with their year of publication; short stories are eligible for a single year. The Best Novel English and French awards will be presented during the Hugo Award ceremony at the World Science Fiction Convention in Winnipeg, on Saturday evening, September 3, 1994. The other awards will be presented during a separate ceremony earlier that day.

Here are the nominees in the English professional categories:

## Best English-Language Novel of 1992/93:

<i>Virtual Light</i>	William Gibson	(Bantam 1993)
<i>A Song for Arbonne</i>	Guy Gavriel Kay	(Viking 1992)
<i>Far-Seer</i>	Robert J. Sawyer	(Ace 1992)
<i>Nobody's Son</i>	Sean Stewart	(Maxwell Macmillan 1993)

(Sawyer's *Fossil Hunter* also qualified for the best-novel Aurora final ballot, but an author with two works nominated in the same category has the option of withdrawing one, and he chose to exercise that right. Since there was a tie for sixth place, and since the gap in number of nominations received between the top five novels (including *Fossil Hunter*) and the sixth was substantial, the administrators chose not to move up any lower-ranked work to fill out the ballot to the normal five titles.)

## Best English-Language Short Story of 1993:

"Sophie's Spyglass"	Michael Coney	( <i>F&amp;SF</i> , February 1993)
"Body Solar"	Derryl Murphy	( <i>On Spec</i> , Winter 1993)
"Just Like Old Times"	Robert J. Sawyer	( <i>On Spec</i> , Summer 1993)
"Three Moral Tales"	D. L. Schaeffer	( <i>On Spec</i> , Spring 1993)
"Kissing Hitler"	Erik Jon Spigel	( <i>On Spec</i> , Spring 1993)

## Best English-Language Other of 1993:

Al Betz, "Ask Mr. Science" column, *On Spec*  
 "Circle Dance," a poem by Eileen Kernaghan (*On Spec*, Spring 1993)  
 Derryl Murphy, SF book reviewer, *The Edmonton Journal* newspaper  
*On Spec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*  
*Prisoners of Gravity* (TVOntario)  
 Edo van Belkom, Market Reports Columnist, *SFWA Bulletin*,  
*Alouette*, and SF Canada's *Communiqué*

This should have been the Aurora Awards' greatest year for visibility. The Winnipeg Worldcon agreed to mail out nominating ballots to all Canadian members of the Worldcon, along with comprehensive lists of eligible works. The ballots did go out, but *without* the traditional lists of works to choose from; the Aurora administrators didn't get them prepared in time.

Likewise, a thousand final ballots were also to go out to all Canadian members of the Worldcon, along with the con's *Progress Report 6*, with Worldcon members able to vote for free. But the Aurora administrators failed to get the ballots to the Worldcon staff by the May 30 deadline, and so *no* final ballots are going to Canadian members. A giant opportunity has been missed.

However, final Aurora ballots are going out with this issue of *Alouette*. If you are a member of the Worldcon, or of SF Canada, you may vote for free (SF Canada pays its members' voting fees out of their annual dues). If not, you may vote for the token fee of \$2. \*

## MEMBER NEWS

## Who's Doing What

"Feast of Ghosts" by **Mary Choo** of Richmond, BC, appears in the just-published anthology *Northern Frights 2* (Mosaic Press).

**J. Brian Clarke** of Calgary is working on a complete rewrite of his novel *The Expediter* (DAW, 1990), which will include elements from all nine "Expediter" stories published in *Analog* as well as one previously unpublished story. He is also working on a novel-length expansion of two of his non-Expediter *Analog* stories, *Return of the Alphanauts* and *Adoption*.

Brian received \$8.00 for the Chinese language rights to his story *The Second Experiment* (which will appear in *Expanse* magazine in the States). As his agent put it, "Don't spend it all at once."

Brian continues to read for *On Spec* . . . and finds himself very depressed at the excellent quality of the submissions ("I mean," he says, "these are the competition!").

He gave readings at a few Calgary high schools for Alberta Book Week, and found very receptive and enthusiastic audiences. "Of course," he says, "a lot of the kids are already into SF — which means I was probably preaching to the converted."

The 1982 short story "The Byrds" by **Michael Coney** of Sidney, BC, is reprinted in *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*, edited by Ursula K. Le Guin and Brian Attebury. New stories by Mike appeared in *F&SF*'s February 1993 issue ("Sophie's Spyglass") and August 1993 issue ("Die, Lorelei"); the former is an Aurora nominee, and the latter has qualified for the preliminary Nebula ballot. Upcoming stories include "Tea and Hamsters" in *F&SF* and "Most Ancient Battle" in the Greenberg anthology *Phantoms of the Night*. Mike recently completed a new SF novel, *Absolute Power*.

**Barbara Delaplace** of Vancouver has sold "The Hidden Dragon" to both *Galaxy* magazine and the anthology *A Dragon Lover's Treasury of the Fantastic*, edited by Margaret Weis. And "That'll be the Day," co-authored with Jack C. Haldeman, has sold to Mike Resnick for his original Tor anthology *Alternate Tyrants*.

**Charles de Lint** of Ottawa has signed a two-book contract with Tor for a six-figure advance. The two books are *Trader*, sold from an outline, plus an as-yet-unnamed second book. He's also turned in a second "Newford" collection to Tor, with the working title *The Ivory and the Horn*.

March saw the hardcover publication by Bantam of Charles's *The Wild Wood*, illustrated by Brian Froud and also — finally — the North America trade paperback reprint of *Moonheart* (Tor Orb). The mass-market edition of *Dreams Underfoot* was released by Tor in June.

Tor has high expectations for Charles's big book *Memory and Dream* (to be published in September); they're giving it a mainstream push as well as promoting it in the genre. Pan just bought the UK rights and plan to do the same with it next spring.

In April 1994, Del Rey released in hardcover *The Living God*, fourth volume in the "Handful of Men" series by Calgary's **Dave Duncan**. Dave will be one of the professional critiquers for the writing workshop at the Winnipeg Worldcon.

**James Alan Gardner** of Waterloo, Ontario, has sold an SF novella called "The Last Day of the War, With Parrots" to *Amazing*; it's tentatively scheduled for the December issue. Jim will be giving a talk on writing and selling SF at the national convention of the Canadian Authors Association in June. And his first novel, a humorous fantasy entitled *Thief's Passage*, is currently making the rounds, represented by agent Richard Curtis.

Meanwhile, Prentice-Hall published Jim's *A DOS User's Guide to the Internet* earlier this year, and Jim will be turning in a follow-on volume to them, *Internet Anywhere*, by the end of July.

**Phyllis Gotlieb** of Toronto has sold *Blue Apes*, a collection of short fiction, to Tesseract Books, Victoria. Her new story "Among You" appeared in the November 1993 issue of *SF Age*, and her 1981 story "Tauf Aleph" was recently reprinted in *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*.

**Terence M. Green** of Toronto is now represented by Shawna McCarthy of Scovil Chichak Galen. He is working under multiple Ontario Arts Council Writers' Reserve Grants on a novel-length version of his popular story "Ashland, Kentucky."

The story "The Weighmaster of Flood" by **Eileen Kernaghan** of New Westminster, BC, first published in *Ark of Ice*, made the honourable-mention lists in both the 1993 *Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* and the 1993 *Year's Best Science Fiction*; it will be reprinted in the high-school social-studies text *Society Challenge and Change* (Oxford University Press, January 1995).

New SFWA member **Derryl Murphy** of Edmonton is a double Aurora nominee: once for his *On Spec* short story "Body Solar," and again for his review column "Speculative Views" from *The Edmonton Journal*. His next review column will include *Northern Frights 2*, *Nebula Award Winners 28*, and Clarinet's CD-ROM of last year's Hugo and Nebula nominees and winners. After that, he'll be looking at *Towing Jehovah* by James Morrow.

Derryl has presented a proposal to Alberta's NeWest Press to edit an anthology of SF about that province by present and former Albertans. "It has received favourable attention, but much work remains to be done," says Derryl. "This will start out as an invitation-only book, and then I'll get from there if need be."

**Ruth O'Neill** of Ottawa reports that she survived Clarion last summer. Her story "Cancellation" appears in the May-June 1994 issue of the newly revived *Galaxy* magazine, and she recently sold a story entitled "Dear Earthling" to the new children's magazine *Spider*.

*Starmind*, the third *Stardance* novel by **Spider and Jeanne Robinson** of Vancouver, is being serialized in four parts in *Analog*, beginning with the August 1994 issue, with hardcover publication to follow from Ace.

**Michelle Sagara** of Toronto has sold a young-adult short story to Josepha Sherman for her *Orphans of the Night* anthology, a ghost story to *Phantoms of the Night*, edited by Richard Gilliam, and a short piece for *Alternate Tyrants* to Mike Resnick.

In an auction conducted by agent Richard Curtis, the sixth novel by Toronto's **Robert J. Sawyer** has sold to HarperCollins, New York. *Hobson's Choice* was written under an Ontario Arts Council grant, and will be published in May 1995, after a four-part serialization in *Analog*, beginning with the Mid-December 1994 issue. Meanwhile, Rob has signed a new contract with Ace for a two-book hard-SF series; the novels have the working titles *Critical Density* and *The Grand Old Man of Physics*.

New English Library has bought British rights to five of Rob's novels. He has a story in *Sherlock Holmes in Orbit* (Resnick & Greenberg, eds., DAW, early 1995). Rob's *Far-Seer* was an official 1993 Hugo Honourable Mention, and his *Golden Fleece* was a finalist for the Japanese Seiun Award for Best Foreign Novel of 1992.

**Sean Stewart** of Vancouver has won three national awards in three different genres with two books in just over a year: the Aurora and the Crime Writers of Canada's Best First Novel Arthur Ellis for *Passion Play*, and the Young Adult Canadian Book Award for *Nobody's Son* — which is also a current Aurora nominee.

*Nobody's Son* was originally published in Canada by Maxwell Macmillan; Ace will be bringing out a U.S. edition in 1995.

Sean's third book is *Ressurrection Man*, coming from Ace in December. In the "unlikely bedfellows" category, it features blurbs by Ursula K. Le Guin ("A moody, quirky, fascinating fantasy") and

Neal Stephenson, who calls it "Stephen King meets Ibsen," and says, "Something about Vancouver seems to produce novelists who are *sui generis*, each one working all by himself in a new and hitherto unimagined genre. Sean Stewart's work is a case in point — so distinctive and original as to make blurring impossible . . ."

**S. M. Stirling** of Toronto reports that *The Rose Sea*, a collaborative fantasy with Holly Lisle, will be out from Baen in September. And Stephen has turned in *The Sword*, final volume in "The General" SF series he's been doing with David Drake; it should be out in the spring of 1995. Meanwhile, Steve's next solo SF novel, *Heavy Iron*, will be turned in sometime this summer, and he's also writing a near-future SF novel set in California called *Conquistador*, which he expects to turn in late this year or early next. Steve is also working on *Dark Avenger*, a solo sequel to his bestselling collaboration with Anne McCaffrey, *The City Who Fought*. *Dark Avenger* will be Steve's first solo hardcover.

**Edo van Belkom** of Brampton, Ontario, has now sold over sixty short stories, with his most recent sales being to *Alternate Tyrants* (edited by Mike Resnick), *Northern Frights 3*, and the White Wolf Games anthologies *When Will You Rage?*, *Dark Destiny*, and *Death and Damnation*. His 1994 publications include stories in *Shock Rock 2*, *Deadly After Dark* (a volume of the *Hot Blood* anthology series), *Northern Frights 2*, and the *Journal of Canadian Content in Speculative Literature*. Edo recently sold his first novel, *Worm Wolf*. It will be published in late 1994 or early 1995 by HarperPrism, the new SF/F/H line from HarperCollins.

"Messenger" by **Andrew Weiner** of Toronto appeared in the April 1994 *Asimov's*, and his 1984 short story "Distant Signals" was reprinted in *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*. \*

## THE MYTHOPOEIC SOCIETY

### de Lint nominated

Ottawa's Charles de Lint is one of the nominees for the 1994 Mythopoeic Awards, which will be presented by The Mythopoeic Society during Mythcon XXV (5-8 August 1994 in Washington, DC).

The nominees for the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature were announced on June 7. They are:

<i>The Innkeeper's Song</i>	Peter S. Beagle	(Roc)
<i>The Little Country</i>	Charles de Lint	(Tor)
<i>The Cygnet and the Firebird</i>	Patricia A. McKillip	(Ace)
<i>Deerskin</i>	Robin McKinley	(Ace)
<i>The Porcelain Dove</i>	Delia Sherman	(Dutton) *

## NEWS NOTES

### This 'n' That

In June, Quebec writer Roch Carrier, 57, was appointed director of the Canada Council by Heritage Minister Michel Dupuy. Donna Scott, former publisher of *Flare* magazine, will be the Council's new chairperson (a part-time position). The Canada Council disburses over one hundred million dollars in grants to individual artists and arts organizations. The Council's toll-free number: (800) 263-5588.

Cheryl Cohen has replaced Elizabeth Renzetti as book review editor at *The Globe and Mail*, 444 Front Street, Toronto M5V 2S9.

Hugh A. D. Spencer, senior curator of the National Library of Canada's 1995 Canadian SF Exhibition, has been named new President of The Friends of The Merrill Collection of Science Fiction,

Speculation and Fantasy, succeeding Larry Hancock. Your Canadian Regional Director has been consulting with him about having a series of public readings by SFWAnS in conjunction with the exhibition's opening in May 1995.

New Canadian affiliate members of SFWA include Salman A. Nensi, until recently the trade publicist for Distican, and John Rose, owner of Toronto's Bakka, Canada's oldest SF specialty store. Welcome aboard!

WilfCon, a small SF convention at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, has been a sort of a right-of-passage for Ontario SF writers for the past decade. Guests of Honour have included Guy Kay (1986), Phyllis Gotlieb ('87), S. M. Stirling ('88), Terry Green ('89), Tanya Huff ('90), Rob Sawyer ('91), Andrew Weiner ('92), short-story writers Lynne Armstrong-Jones, Jim Gardner, Karl Schroeder, and Jean-Louis Trudel ('93), and Michelle Sagara ('94). This year's WilfCon, the tenth, was the last, at least for the time being. We wish con co-chairs Dennis Mullin and Dave Brown well.

In January, CHUM/City contacted the Canadian Regional Director of SFWA for help in lobbying the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to approve its application for "Space TV," a Canadian science-fiction specialty cable-TV channel. A letter was sent on SFWA Canadian Region letterhead to Allan J. Darling, Secretary General of the CRTC in Ottawa. Unfortunately, the Commission chose to award CHUM/City only one of the many applications it requested. They got a license for "Bravo: The Canadian Performance Channel," but not one for "Space." The "Space" application may be resubmitted at a future licensing hearing. \*

## MEMBER PROFILE

### Caro Soles by Karl Schroeder

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Many writers strain the boundaries of science fiction trying to capture the Other — the alien, the new, the unexpected. Caro Soles recognizes that the most profound experience of the Other comes when we find it within ourselves. The heroes of her short stories and novels undergo rites of passage in which they discover their true identities by abandoning their socially-bred, "safe" images of themselves. In stories about gender and sexuality, Caro finds the richest terrain for this exploration.

Caro writes with an intense passion and involvement in her characters. She takes great delight in the senses, letting you touch the wood grain and smell candle wax and perfume. It is impossible to stay distanced from her characters, because you enter them, experiencing that heightened awareness that comes as you watch your lover laugh or make the simplest familiar gesture. And in this world of heightened desire, you begin to question desire itself, and all the relations that follow from it.

Caro Soles has written three novels under the pseudonym Kyle Stone. This year will see the publication of *The Initiation of PB500*, *The Citadel*, and *Rituals* by Bad Boy Press, a gay-oriented publishing house. She has also edited two anthologies for Bad Boy, *Bizarre Dreams* (co-edited with Stanislas Tal, 1994) and *Meltdown* (1994), both under her own name.

A native of Toronto, Caro taught French and Spanish at Trinity College, University of Toronto, before turning to writing full-time twelve years ago. \*

**Karl Schroeder** teaches SF writing at George Brown College, Toronto. With David Nickle, he was winner of last year's English-language short story Aurora Award.



## EDITOR INTERVIEW

## Ellen Datlow

by Nancy Kilpatrick

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(Excerpted from the January/February 1994 issue of Horror: The Magazine for Professionals in the Horror and Dark Fantasy Fields)

Ellen Datlow is fiction editor at *Omni Magazine*. She has edited several *Omni* anthologies, as well as *Blood Is Not Enough*, *A Whisper of Blood*, *Alien Sex*, and *Little Deaths*. Together with Terri Windling she has edited six volumes of *Year's Best Horror and Fantasy*.

**Nancy Kilpatrick:** You've got a degree in English Literature and here you are editing SF and horror. How come?

**Ellen Datlow:** Well, I didn't know what to do with a degree in English Literature. The only options I had were being a teacher, which I adamantly did not want to do, and getting into publishing. I had no idea what else you could do with an English lit degree. I still don't.

**NK:** Did you want to be involved with more literary writing?

**ED:** When I first got into publishing, I didn't know much about the science fiction field. I knew nothing about conventions or even magazines. I read a lot of short stories in year's best collections. And I read Harlan Ellison, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne. I knew that science fiction existed as a genre but I didn't want to go into it because I didn't want to be pigeon-holed. I'd always had an interest in all kinds of fiction and I didn't want to be stuck. I purposely did try to get into mainstream book publishing for that reason. When I was in mainstream book publishing, at that time — that was in the early to mid seventies — I didn't want to get into paperbacks, even though I knew it would be really hard to get ahead in hardcover. Most everything published in paperback was a reprint, not original. I don't know much about the development of science fiction as original paperbacks, but as far as mainstream, there were no original mainstream books being published. There was just picking out stuff that was already edited for reprint, and I didn't want to do that.

**NK:** Were you prepared for *Omni*, or did you just plunge in?

**ED:** It's a combination. I knew how office politics worked. I knew about reading and selecting material. I had never worked with short stories before I got to *Omni*. Before I worked for Robert Sheckley I worked for a few months for Ben Bova. I don't think there is any way you can teach editing, except learning on the job. I mean, Ben kind of had me edit something and looked it over and said, I wouldn't do this, and I wouldn't do that. Editing is so subjective. I even took an editing course, but it was useless. No one can sit down with you and say, This is what you should cut out, this is what you shouldn't. You learn that as you're doing it and you either have it or you don't. I'm grateful that I seemed to figure it out.

**NK:** There seems to be two schools of editors, the type who are highly intuitive — a gut reaction — and the ones who are more intellectual — they think it all out. Which side are you on?

**ED:** I think it's different with novels and short stories. I don't know if I could be a good novel editor because I think in a way you have to be more intellectual to figure out the structure. A novel's structure is much more complex than a short story's and I suppose I could do it but I haven't. I think I edit intuitively. I would guess most people do. A lot of people don't edit at all. They'll buy books, but they don't edit them. Or they'll acquire stories but they won't actually edit them.

**NK:** Break down the editing process for us.

**ED:** To me, there are two steps to editing. And I'm not talking about copy editing — that's something completely different. There's substantive editing, which is going over a story and figuring out what flaws there are in the structure and characterization, if the plot's too slow. It's looking at the piece as a whole and seeing if it works as a story that begins and finishes. The other is more fine, line editing, which is going over a story line by line and making sure everything tracks. This is different from copyediting, although you may be doing some copyediting as you do this.

**NK:** Is it more stylistic?

**ED:** I try not to mess with the author's style. It's making sure the author's style is consistent. When I'm line editing is when I may want someone to cut something: I think you should cut a thousand words out of it. And if you want me to tell you where, I'll go over it more closely. I do this if I'm willing to work on the story and if I might want to buy it. If I have no interest in the story I'm not going to go to that trouble, although I might make some suggestions to the author on how to make the story better. I try to make it clear that even though I've made suggestions, it doesn't necessarily mean I'm going to buy the story but that my perception is that by fixing something they can sell that story or at least make it a better story. That's my ultimate concern. I really want people to produce the story they want and communicate the way they want.

**NK:** How did you get into editing horror anthologies?

**ED:** It was purposeful, although I sometimes forget that. I didn't want to do an SF anthology because it would conflict with my job.

**NK:** You have an agent, Merrilee Heifetz at Writers' House. Isn't that unusual, an editor having an agent?

**ED:** I need someone to represent me for the anthologies because I don't know the ins-and-outs of it. I wouldn't want to do the deals. I hate that aspect of it. I make suggestions to Merrilee as to who to send the anthologies to. But *Alien Sex*, for example, ended up with a non-science fiction publisher, Dutton. I have a new anthology that we just sold. I basically had lunch with a few editors I know and I mentioned the idea and someone, whoever said, Oh, yeah, that sounds good. I had Merrilee send the proposal to them.

**NK:** How did you and Terri get together to do the *Year's Best* books?

**ED:** Jim Frenkel approached each of us and pitched his idea, which was to do a "Best Of," including half fantasy and half horror. I thought that was great.

**NK:** What joy do you find in working on anthologies?

**ED:** Buying great stories. Encouraging people to write really good stories that express what I'm hoping they'll express. Every time I get a really good story it just thrills me.

**NK:** What are the horrors of it?

**ED:** Getting a lot of crap. It's horrible wading through stories I know are not appropriate, but then you get one that's perfect.

**NK:** Do you have any aspirations to write?

**ED:** Not at all. When I was in college I guess I wanted to write poetry . . . Nah! Every non-fiction thing I write is an agony.

**NK:** How does the horror side of your *Year's Best* differ from Karl Wagner's *Year's Best Horror* and Steve Jones' *Best New Horror* anthologies?

**ED:** Well, I've looked through Steve's books. I always find other editors' decisions baffling. I know my taste but I don't understand anyone else's taste. I think that I try to cast as broad a net as I can for horror. In a way I feel — I may be wrong — I feel Karl has gotten too esoteric. His taste has narrowed. I don't know if it's a question of doing it for a long time. I'm afraid I'll get burned out and just won't want to read stuff anymore. Or look for more and more obscure sources. I mean, I always look for obscure sources but I find the best horror is from the non-obscure sources.

Steve Jones has a very English point of view. He's said about some of the stories I've taken that he didn't think anyone in England would be scared or horrified by them. In turn, I don't understand why he picks some of the stories he does. What it comes down to is taste.

**NK:** Some writers value editors and other writers despise them. Do you ever feel thrust into the "bad guy" role?

**ED:** Yeah, and again, I'm baffled. I don't understand writers who think I'm out to get them. I find it strange when a writer takes my editing suggestions and turns around and shoves them in my face and kind of insults me. It doesn't happen very often, luckily, but once in a while it gets weird.

**NK:** What's your worst experience?

**ED:** I've had a couple, each time with someone I'd written a critical letter to, maybe a page or so, about their story, and they wrote back abusive letters. It's so shocking when that happens. It's so out-of-the-blue usually that initially I didn't know how to deal with it. Talking with an editor friend she said, you don't want to respond to every point and get back to them, don't do that. Think about it over the weekend and cool down. And she was right. You can't respond because it's irrational. So what I would do is write, Gee, I'm really sorry I hurt your feelings about this, and that's it.

What's aggravating is when these people come back six months later acting as if nothing had happened, not acting as if they insulted you. And just submitting a story blithely and saying, Here's another story. At least one of them did this after swearing he would never send me anything again. They never apologize. And that's what I find just incredible. People like that who do that don't even apologize after insulting the editor.

**NK:** How has editing fiction for *Omni* been rewarding?

**ED:** It gives me an entree to people who I otherwise wouldn't feel comfortable writing to and I've gotten a lot of interesting people to write for *Omni* who, if I was editing for *F&SF* or *Asimov's*, I think I'd have been much more intimidated by. But because I've got *Omni* behind me, I get to meet or get in touch with T. Coraghessan Boyle, Joyce Carol Oates, William Burroughs.

**NK:** Are you only open to "name" writers?

**ED:** Oh, not at all. I'm interested in any kind of writer. I'm just delighted to read people with a fresh voice and energy.

**NK:** Is it frustrating working for *Omni*?

**ED:** It's frustrating only being able to get one story in an issue.

**NK:** A lot of people consider SF "of the mind" and horror "visceral." You're editing both. Does that make you feel schizy?

**ED:** No, I think it all crosses over. Some of the horror I've published in *Omni* is science fiction. And some of the best science fiction is horror. In *Blood Is Not Enough* I used Pat Cadigan's story "Dirty Work," which is definitely a science fiction story, it's from her "pathosfinder" stories, but it's definitely horror as well. It doesn't make me schizy, I find it fascinating. I love to make it all work. Once in a while I'll get a story that I don't know what to do with that

isn't quite right for *Omni*. This happened with M. John Harrison's story I bought for *Little Deaths*. It wasn't really for *Omni*; it was too long. I had two anthologies open, *Black Thorn*, *White Rose* and *Little Deaths*. I got in touch with Terri and said, Is this a fairy tale, and she said, Not that I know of, so we couldn't squeeze it in. Then I thought, humm, is it sexual horror? A lot of things can be justified in an introduction. Maybe this is something I shouldn't give away — a trade secret — but what I do in an anthology is if I really like a story, I'll squeeze it in and justify it after, or find a way to justify it. And if the story's a great story and it works, who cares?

**NK:** So you will actually take stories that come in for *Omni* and shuffle them over to the anthologies?

**ED:** Yeah, I do that if I can't use them for *Omni*. When people send me a story for *Omni* and I turn it down and then they send it again three months later saying, I hear you're doing this anthology, I think, oh God, I read this already! If I'd wanted it for the anthology I would have taken it. Don't send it to me again. I can't turn my brain completely off. On the other hand, I don't like it when people send me stories and say, Use this in anything you want. A story should be focused for something. If it doesn't work for that book venue, that's one thing. I can make the decision to find another anthology for it. I'd rather the author not do that because it leaves kind of a mushy feeling. The power's dissipated when it's not meant for a particular project I'm working on and they say, Here, just look at it.

**NK:** What projects do you have in the works?

**ED:** I'm hoping to do another *Alien Sex* anthology. It hasn't been sold, but the first one did well enough. And it's still selling in paperback, apparently. My paperback editor suggested another one, although I don't know if he'll end up buying it. It made me decide I really did want to do another one. And I already have three stories I want to reprint — it will be mostly originals. I also have three originals I'm holding that I want for it. I'm hoping that will be a go.

**NK:** How would you describe your taste?

**ED:** Someone told me that I like sex and violence, which may be true, but I wouldn't admit it. [Laughter.] I'll admit it.

I hate dull stories. I like edgy stories. Unfortunately, there's nothing that a so-so writer can do about their style but I'm interested in style to a certain extent and if a story is really boringly written, that will turn me off right away. I think a writer can develop a style, but I think they need to work at it. It shouldn't be flat. It should have some kind of a movement to it, even if nothing's happened. The language, I mean, has movement. Lucius Shepard is a terrific writer who can do anything. In his fantasy fiction, he can write beautifully but he can also handle a hard style.

It sounds contradictory, but I like subtlety. I hate satire, I hate heavy-handed material. When I was looking for sexual horror, I told people, I don't want any castration, unless it's absolutely necessary. [Laughter.] I read too many that had two or three castrations. Oh, please, give me a break! Something else has to be happening.

I've actually found that for sexual horror I have more luck with my science fiction writers than with my horror writers. Horror writers are too involved with the effect and not involved enough with telling a story. That's really the main difference I've found between science fiction writers who are writing horror stories and the horror writers. Too many horror writers are too concerned with the final line. They're going only for the effect and that's not a story, it's a vignette, a scene. I want stories. I want an actual plot and something happening in it. Not always, but certainly most of the time. And I think that's something a lot of horror writers have a problem with, from what I've seen from the submissions I get. \*

*Toronto's Nancy Kilpatrick has published more than 50 horror stories in publications including Year's Best Horror and Northern Frights 1 and 2. Her story "Mantrap" won the Arthur Ellis Award last year.*

## PROMOTING YOUR BOOK

## Getting Good Press

by Robert J. Sawyer

Okay, okay — I'm getting tired of being asked what's the secret to all the good press I keep getting. Actually, there are *six* secrets, and I'll share 'em all here.

1) Find some way to define yourself as a big fish in a small pond. In my case, that was easy: there are in fact very few English-Canadian SF novelists (lots of fantasy novelists — de Lint, Kay, Sagara, Huff, Duncan, Russell, etc., etc.), but very few who actually regularly write SF — and most of the few others who do are in British Columbia, thousands of kilometres away from me.

There are lots of other ways to define oneself, of course. I've seen Terence M. Green make effective use of the fact that he's a school teacher who writes SF, Élisabeth Vonarburg make use of the fact that she's a French-Canadian who writes SF that's translated into English, Guy Gavriel Kay make use of the fact that he's a lawyer who writes fantasy, and Michelle Sagara make use of the fact that she's a fantasy writer who has managed a bookstore.

For my own part, when the simple "Canadian SF writer" hook hasn't been enough, I've capitalized on the fact that I was a business writer for glossy magazines before I made a name in SF. Every journalist in Canada immediately sees that there's a story in a writer going from Bay Street to Beta Draconis . . . Just remember: however you choose to define yourself, it's got to be something that makes you appear special in the eyes of the press.

2) "Special" will only get you so far. Find something else that will also make you *newsworthy*. For my Quintaglio books, it was easy. The series as a whole is about intelligent dinosaurs, and it came out around the time of the *Jurassic Park* movie; within days of that film's release, I got on the *CTV National News*, a full hour on CFRB Toronto's "The Andy Barrie Show," a mention in *Maclean's*, and 22 column-inches in *The Toronto Star*. But *Far-Seer*, the first book of the trilogy, also came out in the 500th anniversary year of Columbus's voyage, and it told in part the story of an alien Columbus, so that was a good news hook, too. For local media, simply tying the book into an event like a public-library reading or a bookstore autographing is often enough of a hook.

3) Being thought of as only an SF or fantasy writer will normally just get you coverage in genre publications. So, find some way to make your work appear to transcend genre boundaries. For my first novel, *Golden Fleece*, that was simple: it was an SF/mystery crossover, and that was something the press found immediately appealing. For instance, *The Toronto Star* did a special book-review column headlined "Vicarious Travels with Super Sleuths" that reviewed, most favorably, both my *Golden Fleece* and John E. Stith's novel of a hyperspace starship, *Redshift Rendezvous* — and reviewed them as *mysteries*, not SF. Now, John lives in Colorado, but the crossover SF/mystery idea was appealing enough as a hook to get him reviewed here in the Great White North (and, conversely, to get me reviewed in *Mystery Scene* and *The Droid Review of Mystery* down south).

Likewise, for my Quintaglio series, the fact that they're parables about great human thinkers (Galileo, Darwin, and Freud) again lets the books be treated as being of greater than just genre interest. And for *End of an Era* and *Hobson's Choice*, I'll capitalize on the fact that both books are actually set in Canada.

4) You can't expect the press to hear about you on its own. Send out your own press kits. I used to write such things for corporate clients, so I'm pretty good at it, but they're easy to learn to do. (I generally rely on my New York publishers to take care of American newspapers and the genre publications, but I go after Canadian newspapers and media personally.) Also, get a decent photo of yourself,

not some god-awful passport thing, and send it out with everything. My latest publicity shot has appeared in *Science Fiction Chronicle*, *Books in Canada*, *Quill & Quire*, and many other places, and at least partly that's because (a) it was a good shot, well-lit and with good contrast, and (b) it was accessible — they had it on hand.

5) By the time your book is on the stands (especially if it's mass-market), it's too late for most publicity efforts. It's important to get word out to the media *prior* to the book's actual appearance. A perfect example is having a full-colour caricature of me ending up being the cover illustration for *Quill & Quire's* May 1993 issue. They got a galley of my *Fossil Hunter* months before that issue appeared (at my request, my publisher provided me with extra galleys for the Canadian media), and so were able to review that book during its actual month of release. Now, they'd have probably reviewed *Fossil Hunter* anyway, but no way they'd have put me on the cover of the magazine if they couldn't have had it coincide with the book's release.

Rules of thumb: get galleys into the hands of the genre magazines (such as *Analog*) ten months in advance of release, into the hands of *Books in Canada* and *Quill & Quire* three or four months in advance, and into the hands of newspaper reviewers two months in advance.

6) This is the hardest one, but you've also got to find some way to overcome the media's prejudices. First, there's a real prejudice against SF&F; they're seen as juvenile, or escapist, or poorly written, or crass, or commercial, or (my God!) American. Second, if, like me, you're published in paperback, there's a prejudice against mass-market: many media outlets assume anything of quality must be in hardcover (how soon they forget that possibly the number-one best-selling Canadian novel of all-time, William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, was a mass-market original . . .).

I was extraordinarily fortunate in that my first book, *Golden Fleece*, got some glowing early reviews. Photocopies of those helped me fight these prejudices from the beginning. I've also made use of the fact that I've won five minor awards, appeared in an anthology alongside Margaret Atwood, Timothy Findley, and W. P. Kinsella (*Ark of Ice*), and had some publishing-related news hooks (books auctioned in New York, multi-book deals, foreign sales). But there are so many SF awards, regional awards, best-of-year lists, best-sellers' lists, and so on, that there are possibilities for positioning just about any book of quality as something special, regardless of its publication format.

And, of course, sometimes being in mass-market actually helps. By every measure one might care to use, Charles de Lint is a more successful author than I am. Still, he and I both got starred reviews ("denoting books of exceptional merit") from the May 1993 *Quill & Quire*. But they put a caricature of me, not him, on the cover of that issue. When *Q&Q's* editor contacted me to get photos for the caricature artist to use, he told me why he was using me, instead of Charles: I was receiving my second successive starred review in *Q&Q* for a *mass-market* paperback. That was a newsworthy occurrence. (As a yardstick, *Q&Q* reviewed sixty-two books that month; only seven got starred reviews, and of those seven, my *Fossil Hunter* was the only mass-market paperback.)

I know all the foregoing sounds like a lot of work, but actually the investment of time and money is small and the return on that investment is large. You want proof? I've concentrated most of my promotion efforts in Canada. Typically, if an English-language genre paperback sells *X* thousand copies in the States, it will sell something like 7.5% of *X* in Canada (Canada's population is about one-tenth that of the U.S., but of course a good hunk of Canadians are French readers). But my books sell between 15% and 20% of *X* in Canada, or *more than double* what one would normally expect. A hundred percent increase in domestic sales is tremendous, of course, and even in the broad picture of the North American market, you can bet that a 7.5% increase in overall sales is well worth having, and makes New York publishers sit up and take notice.

So, that's it: the six secrets of promoting a book. Now, get to work — and good luck!

## MEMBER PROFILE

## Edo van Belkom

by Robert J. Sawyer

First, the name: Edo. It rhymes with Laredo.

Second, the man: he's 32, bearded, a Torontonian by birth, of mixed Dutch and Italian descent.

He grew up in a blue-collar family in an ethnically mixed suburb — a crucible that's given him an excellent ear for accents. When he met science-fiction author George Zebrowski for the first time, he made a friend for life by pronouncing it "Hor-gay Zhev-browskee." Edo's also a devastating mimic, doing impressions of not just TV and movie stars, but Canadian writers, as well.

Edo's degree is in Creative Writing from York University, and there's an irony in that: he is the most practical, down-to-earth wordsmith I've ever met. His constant challenging of classmates' opinions ("That's not the way it works in the real world!") made him less than popular.

But it's an attitude that's served him well. Although he's worked as a police and sports reporter, Edo made the leap from first sale to full-time fiction writer in less than two years. In many ways, he's the ideal of what used to be called, back when the term wasn't disparaging, a pulp writer: he writes stories quickly, often to a given editor's specification, always producing a quality, salable product on time.

What else? Well, he's far thinner than a man who refers to eating as "snarfing" has any right to be. He's husband to Roberta and father to baby Luke. There's a cat living in his house, but he seems content to ignore it as much as it ignores him, so that's okay.

Third, the career: Edo van Belkom's fiction career started with "Baseball Memories." Its initial publication venue was about as obscure as it gets: *Aethlon: The Journal of Sports Literature*, put out by East Tennessee University. But Edo wasn't to dwell in obscurity for long. Karl Edward Wagner picked up "Baseball Memories" for the twentieth annual *Year's Best Horror* collection.

After that, honours seemed to come Edo's way on an almost daily basis. "Baseball Memories" was short-listed for the Aurora Award, Canada's top honour in science fiction and fantasy writing. When Mosaic Press was launching its prestigious hardcover line of Canadian dark-fantasy anthologies, *Northern Frights*, they came to Edo to produce a story to go with the cover painting they'd already bought. He was quickly made a contributing editor of the *Bulletin* of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, and Canadian membership representative for the Horror Writers Association.

And all the while he kept selling stories at a fantastic rate, to markets big and small — stories that were tight and polished and rang true even when they were about incredible things, stories that sent shivers down the reader's spine, or outraged us, or sometimes made us laugh. Stories that were real stories, old-fashioned stories, stories with beginnings, and middles, and ends, and characters we cared about and points to make and language used so elegantly as to be all but invisible.

Edo's work has an incredible range to it. "Baseball Memories" and "S.P.S." are arguably science fiction, of the *Twilight Zone* sort. "Mark of the Beast" and "Blood Bait" are werewolf and vampire tales respectively — each with a new twist, of course. And "The Highway" has no fantastic element at all, which makes its horrors all the more chilling.

Edo's work reminds one of Ray Bradbury, of Dennis Etchison, of Richard Matheson, of Stephen King, of Rod Serling. He takes on writing voices and genres with the same facility with which he adopts accents or does impressions. He tries his hand at everything, fails at nothing, and is always looking for new avenues to explore, and new challenges for both himself and his readers. Put his work on the shelf next to Stephen King, or Barbara Gowdy, or Charles Dickens. They're all story tellers of the first stripe — just like Edo van Belkom.

## Forthcoming Novel

*Wyrm Wolf*, a novel set in the universe of White Wolf Games' role-playing adventure *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, HarperPrism, late 1994 or early 1995.

## Selected Short Works

"Baseball Memories" in *Year's Best Horror Stories 20*, edited by Karl Edward Wagner, DAW, 1992, and *The Grand Slam Book of Canadian Baseball Writing*, edited by John Bell, Pottersfield Press, 1993.

"The Cold" in *Northern Frights 2*, edited by Don Hutchison, Mosaic Press, 1994, and in an upcoming issue of *Eldritch Tales*.

"The Basement" in *On Spec*, Fall 1990.

"Teeth" in *Aberations*, July 1993.

"Lip-O-Suction" in *The Vampire's Crypt*, Fall 1991.

"Mark of the Beast" in *Northern Frights*, edited by Don Hutchison, Mosaic Press, 1992.

"Induction Center" in *Haunts*, Fall/Winter 1993.

"Season's Meeting" in *Midnight Zoo*, February 1993.

"Blood Bait" in *Alouette*, March 1992, and *The Vampire's Crypt*, Fall 1992.

"War Cry" in *Deathport*, edited by Ramsey Campbell, Pocket Books, 1993.

"Scream String" in *Shock Rock 2*, edited by Jeff Gelb, Pocket Books, 1994.

"Wireless" in *Aethlon: The Journal of Sport Literature*, Spring 1993.

"Mother and Child" in *Gathering Darkness*, March/April 1994.

## Upcoming Publications

"No Kids Allowed" in *Twisted*.

"And Injustice For Some" in *The Journal of Canadian Content in Speculative Literature*, Fall 1994.

"Lifeforce" in *Underground*, edited by Neal Barrett Jr., Summer/Fall 1994.

"Sex Starved" in *The Hot Blood Series: Deadly After Dark*, edited by Jeff Gelb and Michael Garrett, Pocket Books, October 1994.

"Lone Wolf" in *Dark Destiny*, edited by Edward E. Kramer, White Wolf Games, October 1994.

"The Highway" in *Fear Itself*, edited by Jeff Gelb, Warner, April 1995.

"Afterli€" in *Palace Corbie*.

"Family Ties" in *Northern Frights 3*, edited by Don Hutchison, Mosaic Press.

"The October Crisis" (a story about Pierre Trudeau) in *Alternate Tyrants*, edited by Mike Resnick, Tor Books, 1996. \*