

OPUNTIA

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COLLIDING IN COWTOWN

by Dale Speirs

Introduction.

Calgary's regular SF convention for years was Con-Version, but the Internet and media barbarians took over, ran it into the ground, and none was held in 2011. The Old Guard, dismayed at what had been done, set up a new convention for literary SF fans, them that has read a book. The new convention, called When Words Collide, is a pun referring to its including not only SF and fantasy but also mystery, historical, and romance fiction.

The prosaic details of When Words Collide are that it was held August 12 to 14, 2011, at the Best Western hotel in Motel Village in northwest Calgary. This district is a cluster of hotels at the intersection of the Trans-Canada Highway and Crowchild Trail (a major freeway), with an LRT station adjacent for a direct line downtown, plus various bus routes in the vicinity. You can't get more convenient than that for transportation. The University of Calgary campus is a few blocks up Crowchild Trail, and McMahon Stadium (home of the Calgary Stampeders football team) is directly across the street. The University offered congoers guided tours of its recently acquired H.G. Wells collection, but no one played football.

But before that, this. The Sunday of the weekend before the convention, August 7, my neighbourhood held its annual street festival, called Marda Gras. Note the spelling; Marda, not Mardi, as the neighbourhood is called Marda Loop.

I walked over to the street festival, and as I strolled about, I came across a group of steampunks in full costume. They posed for a photo, and afterwards I asked them if they were coming to the SF convention next weekend. They were much surprised and had no idea about it, so I dictated the details to one of them as he jotted it down on his smartphone (not steam-

powered). He in turn gave me their business card; they call themselves the Calgary Steampunk Assemblage. It served as a reminder of how atomized Canadian fandom is these days, and how little the sub-groups communicate with each other. I blame the Internet in part; atomized fans only search for their interests, and only blog with their own kind. The steampunks don't talk to the Trekkies, and neither read books that aren't in their sub-genre. It says something that a literary fan such as myself wouldn't know this group existed until I ran into them by accident at a street festival.



In The Actual Event.

I had pre-registered and it took me about thirty seconds to pick up my badge and programme book. A very efficient operation. The Old Guard has been running conventions for decades and know how to do it. The dealer bourse was strictly books, with no crystals, figurines, swords, or bad portraits of teenage vampires in love (no one does Mr. Spock anymore). About half the tables were retail dealers and the other half were publishers selling direct. I bought a couple of new Sherlock Holmes fantasy-crossover pastiche anthologies. You'll read the reviews in OPUNTIA in the fullness of time.

One thing that impressed me was that the convention was a genuinely good mix of the different genres. The Imaginative Fiction Writers Association (a Calgary SF workshop group) was there as expected, but so were the Calgary Association of Romance Writers, SF Canada, and the Canada West chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. They did not hive off into separate tracks of programming but mixed into each others' panels. Panels began Friday evening, but rather than recite them in chronological order, I'll sort them by theme. There were only four tracks of programming, which ensured decent turnouts and developed a greater sense of community since more people had shared experiences. I consider that many conventions have too many tracks of programming. To me, two tracks would be

optimal, possibly three, because then con-goers would have more in common instead of hiving off on their own tracks for left-handed lesbian Trekkies or old-geezer fanzine fans who haven't published or locced in ten years.

Guest Of Honour Speeches.

First up as a keynote speaker was Rachael Caine, who writes fantasy as both young adult and romance crossovers. She wrote lots of fan fiction as a teenager and said "*I suffered from the delusion that I was really good.*" She persevered though and now has dozens of novels on the bestseller lists. The Publisher GoH was Brian Hades from Edge Publishing, who started off by saying "*My name is Brian Hades. That's a hell of a last name.*" He gave his biography and in the midst of his remarks had everyone in the audience stand up, turn around, and introduce themselves to the person sitting behind them. It reminded me of all those employee motivation courses I took over the years back when I was a wage slave.

Walter Jon Williams is an SF author who has also written for television and movies. He has attended numerous SF conventions since 1972 and liked to think of con-going as a cruise ship. Everyone boards the S.S. Convention and for the next few days all attention is concentrated inward. You don't look out the windows because the scenery never changes,

and sooner or later everyone meets up in the bar. He gave a capsule history of SF fandom and publishing since 1972, something which many people in the audience had no idea about. He compared true SF to a village, and media SF to a big city. Inhabitants of Media City regularly swarm SF Village in order to plunder its contents for themselves.

Jack Whyte (historical fiction and stage acting) spoke with a strong Scottish burr and put on the best performance, with the gestures and cadence of a televangelist genuinely concerned about your soul. "*Writers are just readers except they have bigger egos.*" He said this convention was the most unusual he had attended because of its deliberate mix of genres. He said that the duty of writers is to get the words right for the occasion: "*And guess what? There's an app for that.*" He reminded me of Napoleon Hill when he said that the tragedy of human life is that 99% of humans go to their grave without once ever having had an original thought. It made people think.

Robert Sawyer had everyone stand up and stretch before he gave his speech. I was beginning to think I hadn't retired after all but had strayed into a motivational course at work. He said he liked to point out that he has won more major awards than any Canadian author, but also holds the record as the all-time Aurora Awards loser. Speaking as someone who twice lost an Aurora to "No award", I might contest that statement. He pointed out that

while Canadian big-name actors such as William Shatner have to move to the USA to succeed, writers have the advantage that they can publish from anywhere, which is why the vast majority of famous Canadian authors stayed in their homeland. He also took some shots at Canadian literary critics, and said his best rebuttal to mundanes is "I'm sorry it went over your head". One of his favourite moments was re-writing in one of his novels William Gibson's famous line "*The sky was the colour of a television set tuned to a dead channel*" as "*The sky was the colour of a television set tuned to a dead channel – blue*" This was a subtle mention of how technology has changed since Gibson wrote cyberpunk novels; television screens no longer transmit snow hash on dead channels, they glow with the blue screen of death.

Getting Your Literary Fix.

"The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo: What Next?" was a rather nebulous theme on reading resources and how to expand your horizons. Julia Keefe and Elisabeth Hegerat, both from the Calgary Public Library, started off by saying that you should read what you enjoy, not what you feel you have to because other people did or expect you to. The four dominant factors in fiction are story, setting, character, and language. Which of these you prefer will determine what authors you should read across the genres. Some authors use flowery language and take forever to

to get to the point. H.P. Lovecraft, who never met an adjective he didn't use, suits certain readers while others consider that Ernest Hemingway was a long-winded author. Other authors use cardboard characters but jump to the action immediately. If you like fast-paced stories, then this will determine which author you choose in SF and mystery but keep you out of romance stories where nothing happens at great length.

Keefe also demonstrated the CPL's new e-books section, allowing library members to log in and read on their laptop. Using wireless connections, she logged into NoveList Plus, a subscription database, and brought up a sample book to illustrate the process. As we watched this on the big screen, I got to thinking about all those SF fans of yore who attended conventions back in the 1940s and 1950s where speakers bravely predicted that someday you would read books on a wall screen. Now smartphones are commonplace in the audience, what once was Star Trek gadgetry. Calgary city council is currently in the process of approving \$100 million for a new central library, and many Cowtowners are questioning whether the city even needs one anymore. The proposed new building will be a remarkable design that straddles overtop the south LRT line behind City Hall.

The discussion veered to book discussion clubs as another way to find new things to read from friends' recommendations. Panel moderator Susan Forest said you should shop around for a book

club to find something that suits you. You want friendly people who are not argumentative for argument's sake, but different enough that you will be exposed to books you ordinarily wouldn't have considered.

How To Cross-Dress Genres.

"Behind Every Great Story Is A Romance" was put on by the Alberta Romance Writers Association and had a packed room, about one-quarter of which was male. Jude Wilner writes time travel romances, where characters end up in, say, the Elizabethan era, and find new love. She said romances can be used to move the plot along, not just between the two lovers but because their actions have consequences that trigger events. Billie Milholland said romances are about relationships, so readers drawn into books by characterization will like them. James Bond fans will not. Sarah Kades likes writing about strong characters brought to their knees (her words) by romance. She uses the Athabasca Tar Sands as a setting, which certainly has more than the usual number of strong characters. Sharon Wildwind writes mystery romances. She said she started out reading Sherlock Holmes, Nero Wolfe, etcetera, and concluded that mystery fiction needed more romances. She said, quite seriously, that if you're not certain how to write a romance scene, then watch one of those nature films showing bower birds courting to get an idea of how humans do it.

“Wilderness Survival For Writers” looked at the practicalities of wilderness areas from the point of view of writing them into fiction. Unfortunately the two main panelists didn’t show, one of whom was a park warden from Jasper National Park, and the other was a mountain rescue specialist stationed in Revelstoke National Park. That left one panelist who admitted she wasn’t much of a wilderness hiker, so after listening to a few general remarks I left. But on the topic I did jot down a few remarks insofar as they apply to writing novels. Wilderness guides are a useful source for city slickers, especially guide books to hiking trails. Don’t write about an army marching across a mountain in one hour in winter. Remember how much trouble you have driving to work in a blizzard, and ask yourself why tired soldiers and war-worn equipment would be any better. How do they keep the supply line open through a narrow mountain pass? Will Gonad the Barbarian be fresh enough to fight the Evil Emperor’s men if he just crossed a mountain range on foot? Remember that spruce forests are sterile, with little plant food and few game animals, so food has to be carried with you.

“Turning History Into Fiction” started with Jack Whyte saying he writes his historical novels with the idea of stripping away all the legends and embellishments that accrued onto the original story and getting back to its seed. Tim Reynolds said leaving out research from novels is important to avoid unnecessary details. Barb Smith said that 100% accuracy is not required if the history

gets in the way of the story. Derryl Murphy pointed out that the English language has changed over the centuries. He had problems using archaic spellings because the proofreader, editor, and spellchecker kept wanting to change them to modern use.

“Creatures Of The Night” was about vampires. Rachael Caine, who has published several vampire novels, did research and found that the original stories were based on mass hysteria. They also didn’t drink blood; they stole souls. Ryan McFadden said his research showed that vampires of European folklore were originally monsters of a different species but since the post-Middle Ages were converted to humans. The modern vampire mythology is derived from early movie adaptations which did not adhere to the folklore, and has since descended to teenage-vampires-in-love stories.

How To Pub Your Ish.

“Graphic Novels And Manga” started off with Richard Harrison saying that comics are for kids and graphic novels for adults. Lee Easton remarked that graphic novels can address more serious issues, and thus attracted the attention of serious artists who didn’t want to do dumbed-down comics. Comic book companies jumped on the bandwagon by publishing serials in book form, but that does not make them graphic novels. True graphic novels

have a unitary whole, while comics are episodic. Many Web-based comics are being published as graphic novels but are just daily comic strip serials gathered into one place.

“Novel Vs Novella Vs Anthology” was a panel of editors and publishers. They all agreed that new authors have to grab the slush pile reader’s attention within five pages, otherwise the manuscript will be rejected. Established authors with a guaranteed readership are given more leniency to get the story going because the audience is willing to wait for it.

“Which Door Should I Open?” looked at modern ways to be published, whether self-publishing, print-on-demand, e-books, or traditional. Vivi Anna said self-published books online return higher royalties for her than traditional publishers, even those who do e-books. Print-on-demand was more profitable for her than traditional printed copies and can be sold via e-books. The reason is that although e-books are cheaper to produce, traditional publishers still have their staff overhead. She said her on-line publisher has e-book authors who sell 100,000s of copies per month but are unknown to mass-media or academic literature critics, both of whom are generally snobbish. (In his GoH speech, Rob Sawyer mentioned that the national newspaper GLOBE AND MAIL reviews mainstream books in its Saturday print edition, but buries his books in the weekday Web site.) Vivi Anna strongly emphasized researching the company and to avoid one-person

publishers because if they get sick or quit the business, there go the royalties. It is increasingly difficult for new authors to break into print, but on-line they can set up a tiny niche and gradually grow it. Derek Donais said buyers are more willing to take a chance on a cheap e-book by a new author, which is what helped him break out. He also found it was easier for him to sell in foreign markets such as the USA, Australia, or Britain. Vivi Anna interjected here that she sells very well in Romania. Michelle Beattie said she had problems with several publishers who wouldn’t do specialized fiction, paranormal romance in her case. She is therefore thinking of moving to self-published e-books so her fans can find her books. She also writes pirate romances and had trouble with the publisher, who wanted her to use a pen name so the readers wouldn’t be confused. She countered that her readers would stay with her, nevermind what sub-genre she wrote. Lawna Mackie said one drawback of self-publishing is that marketing is time-consuming.

How To Write Good And Proper.

“Writers Groups: The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly” had several panelists saying that a writers group required commitment, not just hit-or-miss attendances. Barb Geiger discouraged new writers from first joining a group. She said they should write and write until they feel they have reached a dead end. Then the group might be able to point the way.

If everyone becomes best friends in the group, its effectiveness declines, since members will be reluctant to give hard reviews when really needed. Bob Laws, who teaches courses in novel writing, found that students have to be screened to weed out the slackers, otherwise the others become frustrated at their dead weight. Some applicants had their novel 80% written, while others had an idea but never wrote more than a few pages despite constant prodding. Jeff Campbell said a group should have members who push each other to succeed instead of just being comfortable. An audience member mentioned that her group has specific guidelines requiring members to be respectful and to meet assignments.

“Making Your Area An Exotic Setting” was a presentation by Krista Ball who publishes fiction set in Alberta but aimed for an international audience. What seems familiar to you is exotic to others. Use common tropes in an unfamiliar setting, such as vampires in Calgary. One has to be careful and identify things for foreign readers, such as “double-double”, “poutine”, and “pogey”. Ball got a complaint from an American reviewer that she should have referred to First Nations aboriginals as American Indians, even though the story was set in Canada where the former term is standard. It is important to identify the location immediately to avoid some of these problems. Like doing historical research, one should not overload a novel with too much local colour, just enough to give a flavour of the locality.

Getting Technical.

“Dead Men Do Talk” by Detective Dave Sweet (Calgary Police Service, Homicide Unit) had standing room only in a large ballroom. He discussed the procedures used by the CPS and played actual 9-1-1 calls of dispatchers trying to calm hysterical callers and get the information. The Homicide Unit uses front-end-load case management, where as many investigators as possible are assigned to a new case to collect physical evidence and interview witnesses within the first 36 hours. Cause of death can only be established by the Medical Examiner, while manner of death is established by the police.

Police use the Locard principle, which states that perpetrators leave a trace of themselves at the crime scene and carry a trace of the scene away with them. Police use blood types, fibre and trace analysis, violent crimes database (to check if a serial killer is operating), telephone records (cellphones are great for tracing people because they have GPS), and interviews. Profiling seldom works. DNA is only used as a last resort because tests are expensive and slow. Unfortunately juries are swayed by the CSI Effect, and expect DNA and other fancy tests when they are not indicated. Detective Sweet said he believed the Casey Anthony trial was an example of this effect.

Calgary's first murder was on 1884-02-08 (the city was founded in 1875) and the culprit was hanged a month later. Today it takes six months just to get to the preliminary hearing. Calgary (population 1.1 million) averages about 28 murders per year; the record total was 34 in 2008. Knives are the most commonly used murder weapon since every kitchen has some. Most murders take place between 03h00 and 04h00 after the taverns close. Random or serial murders are extremely rare; the vast majority are domestic disputes, bar-room brawls, or gang-related, and where the victim knew the attacker. Because of Alberta's dry air (humidity is never mentioned in our weather forecasts), bodies dessicate and don't rot unless submersed in water or muskeg.

"Fukushima Power Plant" was a presentation by Michael Taylor (University of Calgary) and Derek Belle (radioactive wastes disposal company) about the disaster in Japan on 2011-03-11, which is still an ongoing story. The reactors all automatically shut down fission when the earthquake occurred, but the decay products still remain and are what are causing the problems, not the actual uranium fuel. Prior to the earthquake, the tallest tsunami recorded was 3 metres high, so the reactor engineers built the seawall 6 metres high. The tsunami that hit Fukushima was 7 metres high. The reactors were safely shut down and being cooled by back-up diesel generators recirculating the coolant water through the reactor cores. The tsunami flooded the diesel generators and shut them down. The cores then overheated

because there was no circulation, and boiled off the water cooling them. Once exposed to air, the fuel rods began to burn at 2,700°C. The current status is stable but steam has to be vented to carry away heat while new water is pumped in. The steam is not radioactive but the particulates are. Japan's 54 other reactors automatically shut down but are mostly re-started. For the record, Alberta has no nuclear reactors, earthquakes, or tsunamis.

"Technology, Biology, And Liberty" looked at the effects of modern electronics on society. As the panel started, I noticed someone in the front row video recording the panel on his smartphone, which pretty much said it all. Panelist Lynda Williams said that if something can be done, it will be done without thought or knowledge of long-term consequences. Having said that, she was nonetheless optimistic. One audience member mentioned that a school board in Indiana recently decided not to teach handwriting on the grounds that in the future, kids will only type.

Robert J. Sawyer is a good lecturer and a humourous one, well recommended to any convention that hasn't had him as a GoH. He had an untitled talk which turned out to be on consciousness, a favourite interest of his. He said he wanted to be a palaeontologist but they have to specialize and he wanted to study everything. As an SF novelist, he gets to write it into his stories.

In university, Sawyer studied radio and television arts with a minor in psychology, from which he developed an interest in consciousness. Philosophers were the first to think about the idea of zombies because they realized a lot of human activity is unconscious, such as walking or repeating common actions. You don't think about walking, you just do it without thinking "Swing left leg forward while bending at knee, set it on the ground, swing right leg forward ... ". A zombie would therefore be someone who only reacted unconsciously all the time. Neanderthals never changed their ways of making stone goods while *Homo sapiens* did, and never put grave goods in with bodies or had art. This indicates they did not have consciousness, just existence in the moment. The value of consciousness in humans was that it allowed the evolution of thought and the ability to anticipate, which was important when technology such as bows and arrows developed . As technology improved, humans were forced by consciousness to moderate their behaviour lest military technology wipe out everyone.

Epilogue.

When Words Collide was a successful convention. Well done those people over there. The written word was the focus, with no costumers (if the steampunk group showed up, they were in plainclothes and I didn't recognize them), no masquerade, no trinket sellers, and no actors. The panels all had sizable

audiences, and the hallways were pleasantly crowded so that one realized there were a good number of fellow travelers there. There was a good age demographic, as most attendees were in their 20s to 40s, and while us geezers were conspicuous, it wasn't a Grey Power meeting like my local stamp club. I was pleased to meet up with Murray and Mary Ellen Moore, known to Toronto fandom, who were making a grand tour of western Canada visiting their son and admiring our mountains and badlands.

There will be a WWC #2 next year, August 10 to 12, at the same hotel. On Sunday they started selling memberships for it, and I plunked down my \$45 for the event. Details will be posted at www.whenwordscollide.org

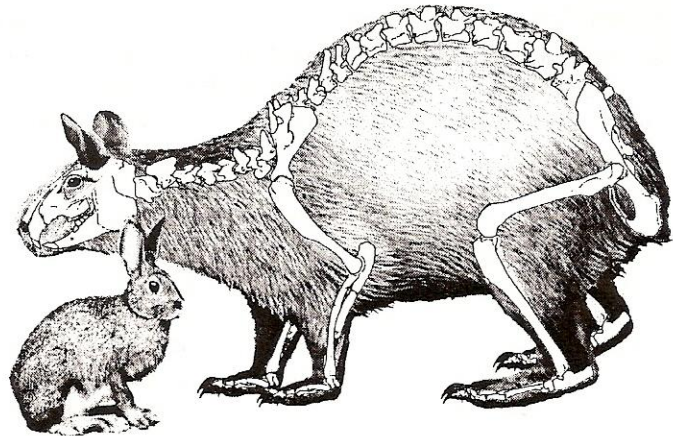
SEEN IN THE LITERATURE

by Dale Speirs

Quintana, J., et al (2011) *Nuralagus rex*, gen. et sp. nov., an endemic insular giant rabbit from the Neogene of Minorca (Balearic Islands, Spain). JOURNAL OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY 31:231-240

"We describe a new insular endemic lagomorph from the Late Neogene karstic deposits of Minorca (Balearic islands, Spain). Nuralagus rex, gen. et sp. nov., is characterized by an array of odd traits unknown for lagomorphs. Most outstanding are the gigantic size (average 12 kg), the robust postcranial skeleton with unique morphological traits (short manus and pes with splayed phalanges, short and stiff vertebral column with reduced extension/flexion capabilities), and the relatively small size of sense-related areas of the skull (tympanic bullae, orbits, braincase, and choanae). These morphological traits denote an important decrease in locomotor and neurological activities and, hence, a decrease in metabolic energy expenditure, which is concordant with the ecological conditions of the insular environment characterized by absence of predators and low levels of resource supply."

Speirs: In other words, a big dumb slow-moving rabbit about the size of a large dog that sat around most of the day.



Henry, A.D., P. Pralat, and C.Q. Zhang (2011) **Emergence of segregation in evolving social networks.** PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES USA 108:8605-8610

"In many social networks, there is a high correlation between the similarity of actors and the existence of relationships between them. This paper introduces a model of network evolution where actors are assumed to have a small aversion from being connected to others who are dissimilar

to themselves, and yet no actor strictly prefers a segregated network. This model is motivated by Schelling's classic model of residential segregation, and we show that Schelling's results also apply to the structure of networks; namely, segregated networks always emerge regardless of the level of aversion. In addition, we prove analytically that attribute similarity among connected network actors always reaches a stationary distribution, and this distribution is independent of network topology and the level of aversion bias. This research provides a basis for more complex models of social interaction that are driven in part by the underlying attributes of network actors and helps advance our understanding of why dysfunctional social network structures may emerge."

Speirs: There are those who talk about how the Internet builds communities and social networks, but as this and other studies have demonstrated, the only communities are those of like-minded people. We all prefer to associate with our own kind, something that may not always be possible in choosing an apartment or house, but is possible in deciding what blogs to post on. If you favour a gun registry but a gun nut moves in next door, there isn't much you can do but be polite. If you post on a left-wing blog, any gun nut trying to post there will be quickly be shouted down, or rather, put on the ignore list.

COSTS \$20 TO KICK ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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[reprinted from WINNIPEG FREE PRESS,
1908-10-31, page 7]

[Editor's note: I do quite a bit of scrolling through microfilm of old newspapers in my researches. If I come across something interesting that I might use for an article on some distant day, I index the article on a 3x5 card for future reference. I can't think why I would need to cite the following article, so instead I reprint it here as a reminder of the days when men were men and politics was not just a metaphorical boxing ring. This story deals with a tangle in 1908 between a Winnipeg barrister and the Attorney-General of Manitoba.]

Reading from a judgment which had all the appearance of having been prepared in advance, Magistrate McMicken yesterday fined E.L. Howell \$20 and costs for having kicked Hon. Colin H. Campbell, the Attorney-General, on Wednesday last. "*There is no doubt that the crime is punishable*", came the verdict, "*and the example set by Mr. Howell is not in the interests of the community at large. We are told to honour those who are in authority.*" Here there were interruptions from Mr. Hagel and Mr. Bonnar, the former of whom rather flouted the text. "*We are told to honour those in authority*", insisted the magistrate, "*and Mr. Howell should be punished. I am sorry that a case of this kind should have been brought into court. I am limited by the statutes to a fine of \$20 and costs or two months in jail. I, therefore, sentence the prisoner to pay a fine of \$20 and costs or imprisonment for two months.*"

This case was the direct cause of one of the most turbulent scenes ever witnessed in the city police court, if not in any court in Canada. The magistrate interrupted counsel frequently and many wordy battles resulted between them. When the case for Hon. Colin H. Campbell had been concluded, when the defence had submitted their evidence, and when the argument by counsel had been completed, it was found that the prosecution had not shown that the assault had taken place in Winnipeg and Mr. Hagel asked for a dismissal of the action. There was consternation at once, and Mr. Sparling, for the prosecution, asked that the case be re-opened. The defence objected, as such a procedure was against all rules of the court, but the magistrate allowed it, and Hon. Mr. Campbell was recalled to tell where the trouble had occurred. Mr. Hagel called attention to the fact that with the Attorney-General and his most clever prosecutor carrying out the case, it was remarkable that the court should need to take such a step.

The case opened with the reading of the information which charged E.L. Howell with having assaulted the Attorney-General.

Hon. Mr. Campbell was called to the witness stand and took the oath in an inaudible tone of voice. He gave the details of the assault as already published, stating, however, that he knew nothing of Mr. Howell's presence til he was kicked on the back of the leg. He said that Mr. Howell then grabbed him and kicked him a couple of times on the shin. After the first kick Mr. Howell said "*I'll teach you to call me a blatherskite. Will you apologize?*"

Mr. Campbell replied, "*I have nothing to apologize for*", and then started to pull away. Mr. Howell kicked him again and then said, "*I will kick you every time I meet you*". All of this transpired within a half minute.

Mr. Campbell said that he offered no defence and made no motion to strike back. The kicks were not severe and at the time he had done nothing to invite attack. Under cross-examination by Mr. Hagel, Mr. Campbell said that he had not had any conversation with Mr. Howell for months previous.

"Then you draw a distinction between personal conversation and a conversation over a government telephone?"

Ans.: "*Yes*".

The magistrate objected to the question and the expression "Government telephone".

Mr. Hagel: "*I am going to conduct my own case in my own manner.*"

Magistrate: "*You are not.*"

Mr. Hagel, with emphasis: "*When did this conversation over the government telephone take place?*"

Ans.: "*On Sunday*"

"Then if there are private telephone lines in this country you do not know of them?"

Mr. Campbell: "*No*"

"Then if there are, you and the magistrate have something to learn?"

Ans.: "Yes"

The magistrate: *"I will not stand this. I will have you carried out of this court."*

Mr. Hagel: *"No you will not. Some time you will learn where your jurisdiction lies."*

After some objections from Mr. Sparling, Hon. Mr. Campbell told of the trouble between him and Mr. Howell on Sunday, and admitted having used the word 'blatherskite' over the telephone. Further objections followed and Mr. Hagel stated that he would treat Mr. Campbell with the same courtesy he would any witness under cross-examination. This was a question of the individual and not of the Attorney-General. Mr. Campbell expressed his willingness to answer the questions. Mr. Campbell denied that Mr. Howell had called to him, *"Mr. Campbell I want to speak to you"*, before the assault was committed. The apology was not asked for til the first kick had been administered. While the assault was taking place Mr. Howell said, *"I will teach you to call me a blatherskite"*.

Mr. Hagel: *"We are none of us too old to learn."*

Mr. Campbell: *"No"*

Mr. Hagel: *"You may call a gentleman that and refuse to apologise?"*

Mr. Campbell: *"Yes"*

Mr. Hagel: *"You were unwilling to apologise?"*

Mr. Campbell: *"Yes"*

Mr. Sparling asked under what conditions the epithet 'blatherskite' was used, and Mr. Campbell said that it was because of the dictatorial manner adopted by Mr. Howell over the telephone.

Mr. Wilson's Evidence.

The next witness called was Benjamin Wilson, of Ontario, Cal., who was with Mr. Campbell at the time of the assault. He told essentially the same story as Mr. Campbell, differing only in some of the details. He said that Mr. Howell called to Mr. Campbell before he seized or kicked him. He admitted that at first he did not think that there was any trouble between the two, just an excess of familiarity. The assault was not a vigorous one and he did not think any great injury had been done except to Mr. Campbell's feelings. It was more of an insult than an assault.

Magistrate Offers Opinion.

While this part of the examination was progressing the magistrate broke in with the statement that he thought the language used by the Attorney-General over the telephone was justified.

The Defence.

E.L. Howell was called and told the other side of the story. He said that in the course of his profession as solicitor representing a man who had been locked up in the provincial jail and denied communication with friends, he had called at the jail. He had asked for admission for himself, bondsmen, and Judge Myers, who had come to arrange for bail. This had been denied and he had asked the Attorney-General for permission to see his client. This the Attorney-General had denied, and in addition had taken advantage of the telephone to deliberately insult him. The Attorney-General had refused to apologise, and the only recourse was the person. He had not intended to injure the Attorney-General, but merely to insult and humiliate him. He had called to the Attorney-General before striking him, and had also demanded an apology which was refused. It was the only means he could see of balancing the account.

Mr. Bonnar: *"It was a trifling occurrence between two men, and should not have been brought into court at all."* Mr. Sparling argued that there was no justification.

Where Prosecution Failed.

When all argument had been closed and the magistrate had started to deliver his judgement, Mr. Bonnar rose and interrupted.

"I wish to suggest, Your Worship", he said, "that you have no jurisdiction in this matter. I would not like to be accused of so far forgetting myself as not to call your attention to this matter. We do not know where this assault took place. There is nothing in the evidence so far submitted to show whether it took place in Winnipeg or in South Africa. I wish it noted that there is no place specified except that it occurred in front of the Merchants Bank, and there are a number of them in Canada."

Mr. Sparling was on his feet in an instant, blushing furiously, and demanding that Mr. Campbell be recalled. Mr. Hagel objected, as the case had been concluded, but the magistrate signed for Mr. Campbell to come back to the stand. Mr. Hagel pointed out that such action was unprecedented and contrary to all rules of law, but the objection was brushed aside with a gesture and Mr. Campbell was allowed to complete the case so that the magistrate might have jurisdiction.

Mr. Bonnar: *"This case has been brought in by the Attorney-General and a brilliant young solicitor. Surely they are not going to admit that they have not brought it in properly."*

The court was in roars of laughter, and Mr. Campbell seemed much embarrassed while giving his evidence. At the close the magistrate gave his judgement, appearing to read from a paper which was concealed on his desk,

giving rise to the supposition that it had been written in advance for there was not time to write it during the course of the trial.

[Speirs: I suspect that the only reason that the barristers were not run in for contempt of court was because the magistrate had a guilty conscience himself.]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[Editor's remarks in square brackets.]

FROM: Tiziana Baracchi
Via Cavallotti 83-B
30171 Venezia-Mestre, Italia

2010-11-18

To produce my artistamps, I use Word and sometimes Paint and Photo Suite. I know there are very good graphic programmes but still now I am not able to use them. So I use Word and two different printers, an inkjet for coloured images and a laser for black-and-white. With Word you can play with colours to obtain different blacks and greys. Of course you have to pass the sheet more times to obtain the effects you prefer, as in the past with litho/xylo/serigraphy. Finishes are handmade. Unfortunately I

still have no hole perforator.

[I prepare photos for OPUNTIA with the software that came with my digital camera (Nikon D80 SLR) and scanner (Hewlett Packard), and do the final edit, if needed, in Paint. My zine is produced in WordPerfect. I won't buy fancy graphics software since I would never use 99% of the features. The only perforators I've ever seen are the big machines used by professional printers, beyond my needs as I would seldom use it. Pinking scissors are a cheap substitute if you are producing individual artistamps but I haven't seen anything inexpensive for sheets of stamps.]

FROM: Lloyd Penney
1706 - 24 Eva Road
Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2B2

2010-11-10

Canadian fandom may not even exist any more but just in Balkanized spots here and there. The clubs in Ottawa, Montréal, and Vancouver trade back and forth with their zines, but I know of other clubs who say they are SF clubs but are mainly media SF fans with no tradition of community outside their own city.

I Also Heard From: Stuart Stratu, John Hertz, Franz Zrilich, Ned Brooks