

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Visions of the Future appear in Vancouver next month, conjured up by VCON 36

VANCOUVER, BC – Tuesday, September 20th, 2011 - Science-fiction and fantasy fans have marked their calendars for VCON 36 – Vancouver’s oldest independent science fiction and fantasy convention, scheduled for **September 30th – October 2nd, 2011** at the Sheraton Vancouver International Airport Hotel in Richmond, BC. Instead of tickets, access to the festivities is granted with \$60 memberships, which allow you total access to all member areas to the convention. Students and seniors are extended a 25% discount with valid ID, youth from 7-18 gets a 50% discount, while kids under 7 are free! For those unwilling to fully commit, one-day passes are also available.

After dipping into the alternate past with the theme of **Steampunk** last year, VCON sets its sights on the future--with a little bit of help. To unite and guide fantasy and sci-fi lovers on their journey into the speculative future world are three Guests of Honour: Lisa Lassek, who has cut together such illustrious shows as *Buffy* and *Pushing Daisies*, is currently working on the latest Joss Whedon movie, *The Avengers*; Jean-Pierre Normand, chosen by Canada as the 5-time winner of the Aurora Award for artistic achievement; and finally Larry Niven, who returns to VCON as author Guest of Honour after over 25 years. Niven has used current scientific theory consistently over the years to bring us dynamic visions of times and places that may never be and yet send shivers of potential through readers--such as a world where magic is a non-renewable resource. Bringing them all together is Toastmaster Steve Fahnstak, who has put his die-hard sci-fi fandom to use for over 55 years writing fanzines and a YA novel, as well as starting at least 2 conventions, and serving as chair, auctioneer, toastmaster, and other roles for many more.

With a unique focus on the tangible relationship between the science fiction of yesterday and today’s modern technologies, the Guests of Honour will join with over 700 attendees to come together in celebration of their most cherished books, movies, artwork, television shows, comics and toys and the respective science fiction and fantasy universes responsible for their development. VCON 36 will keep the future in mind as it hosts discussion panels, a 24-hour gaming area, movie screenings and even a Cosplay Masquerade and Dance for its guests.

Held on an annual basis, VCON is the only event of its kind in the Lower Mainland – a fully not-for-profit, volunteer-driven convention, produced by and for fans with no commercial or corporate involvement. Supported by the West Coast Science Fiction Association, the event has hosted guests of little and large fame alike, beginning with Ursula K. Le Guin in its first year and including such other authors as Phillip K. Dick and Canada’s own Charles de Lint. VCON doesn’t just cater to writers and readers, however: other notable Guests of Honour include more traditional artists such as Brom and Todd Lockwood, comic book artists like George Metzger and Alex Schomburg, astrophysicist Dr. Jaymie Matthews, board game designer James Ernest, and even Forrest J. Ackerman, who was an avid collector of science fiction movie memorabilia. Within the world of VCON, anybody heavily involved in the community and business of science fiction and fantasy has the right to equal stage time.█

“This year, we are working hard to produce an event unmatched to date in terms of scale or quality,” says Keith Lim, chair for VCON 36. “In doing so, we are thanking our attendees for their dedicated support by providing them with an experience simply not possible at a commercial event or convention – the chance to truly come together out of love for these characters, their stories and the universes they inhabit.” VCON was held at the Sheraton last year as well, and the event and locale were so successful that VCON has been expanded more than 200% in almost every aspect, to put Visions of the Future on the scale that it deserves, and give attendees the perfect forum to foster participation.

VCON 36 will indeed feature ample opportunities for like-minded fans to come together and build communities around their common interests. In addition to aforementioned areas, Visions of the Future will feature an art show, charity auction, and multi-author book launch. Of particular note this year is the previously mentioned Cosplay Masquerade and Dance, where costumes must be created, not bought, and must feature some degree of backstory. Here, fans are really allowed to shine--potentially literally--

and share their own visions of what the future might look like. Immediately following the Masquerade comes the Dance, where humans will mingle with strange creatures to the beat of the music. This year, VCON is offering the possibility of attending *only* the Masquerade and Dance, with special Saturday evening memberships, which allow access to the entire convention from 7pm to 3 am. Tickets can be bought in advance for \$20 by contacting nicholas.petrie@vcon.ca, or are available for \$25 at the door.

These are just a few ways in which VCON doesn't just provide consumers with activities of interest in the sci-fi and fantasy world to continue to consume--it plays an active role in allowing everyone to bring their own imagination to the vibrant community on which the future is based. In fact, if you keep an eye out at the convention, you may see a few other dedicated paranormal groups--there have been hints that the Ghostbusters of Alberta and BC might even make an appearance to keep the supernatural peace.

"Attendees at this year's event will also come away with an enhanced sense of the very viable role that science fiction plays in enhancing our understanding and awareness of modern technologies – and how they impact our daily lives," says Lim. "It is common knowledge that many iconic pieces of technology – and, sometimes, entire industries – are sparked by ideas initially presented in science fiction. In that way, VCON celebrates the limitless power of the imagination – and the limitless potential of our species." For more information, or to secure tickets, please visit: www.vcon.ca.

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