
Green Stuff 5

is Murray Moore's contrib to FAPA Mailing No. 243.

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March 23, 1998:: Norman Partridge types a nice metaphor.

His *Saguaro Riptide* includes "The Saturn lurched forward like a peg-legged man pushing a wheelbarrow," "The Saturn lurched through the turn like a man having a heart attack," and, "Elvis's voice sounded like a cross between the Robot in *Lost in Space*, and a can opener with stripped gears."

These samples are excerpted from pages 125, 131, and 135 of the 1997 Berkley mass market paperback, so they pop up right regular.

I nit pick, however, his conflation, on page 128, of the Valkyrie character from the 1940's comic book starring Air Boy, and the Incredible Hulk comic book. The Incredible Hulk was a Marvel Comics-Stan & Jack-Merry Marvel Marching Society-1960's era, product.

Page 128 also includes an interesting typo, in "like he should be hocking a stack of *Muhammad Speaks* newspapers on some corner in Vegas." Several seconds passed while I decided that hawking was wanted in place of hocking.

I also read the Michael Moorcock introduction to the second edition of David Pringle's *Science Fiction: The 100 Best Novels*; Pringle's introduction; and Pringle's assessments of *Earth Abides* (E. R. Stewart), *The Martian Chronicles* (Ray Bradbury), and *The Puppet Masters* (Robert A. Heinlein). Pringle takes as his scope English language sf between 1949 and 1984. Orwell's *1984* is first to be essayed; *Earth Abides* follows.

I reached two conclusions: I should buy a nice, used copy, of the Stewart novel: I should have enough time to read 100 novels in 100 days. The first wish obviously is more likely to be achievable.

March 28:: "A guy who probably lost half a day every time he passed a mirror." More Norman Partridge.

I have been reading more summary-evaluation essays by David Pringle of his 100 Best Science Fiction novels between 1949 and 1984. Each book is covered in less than two pages in trade paperback-size pages. Reading just one more essay is very easy.

Pringle tries to be fair. He includes an Isaac Asimov novel, *The End of Eternity* (1955), with this explanation: "He is one of the best-known sf writers in the world, so I felt I had to include something by Isaac Asimov (born 1920). Though I confess I have little enthusiasm for his work."

Reading reviews and essays can be substitution for reading the work being described. Experience the great works with all the boring parts left out. Typing which, reminds me that Coles Notes, a Canadian publishing institution, is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Coles Notes are mainly summaries of literary works favoured by high school teachers. Coles Notes are marketed in the U.S. under a different name, which I can't recall. Coles perhaps was the original *[Subject Matter] for Dummies* concept.

Reviewers and critics, movies and films. Whichever, no pretensions to insight, or erudite elucidations, the memorable describer-analyst is the individual who writes with insight, wit, and an attitude about good and about bad examples of his coverage area. The best writers can make any subject interesting.

The Academy Awards ostensibly are about the best of the contributions to the movies in the previous year. The Academy Awards is the only annual mundane awards which I follow faithfully. The interest this year for me was in the details. The winners were not unexpected.

The 1998 Academy Awards had plenty of celebrities and one star. Jack Nicholson slumped in his front row seat, eyes invisible behind his Look-I'm-a-Star! Sunglasses. I know how Nicholson would have played Don Corleone in *The Godfather*. Host Billy Crystal sat in his lap. I am surprised he did not kiss Nicholson's hand. "Don Nicholson! I need your help!" Nicholson is on the borderline between celebrity and star. Marlon Brando still is a star, for instance. I can't imagine Brando in Nicholson's place.

The Oscars are about the clothes the women wear as much as recognition of the best work in all cinematic categories of the previous year. Fay Wray appeared unprepared when Billy Crystal materialized behind her after the clip of her

and Kong was shown. Wray also had to pull in her feet to avoid being bruised as divers *Titanic* winners hurried to the stage. Best Actor Nicholson didn't give Best Actress Helen Hunt a glance as he left his seat to receive his Oscar. Hunt, seated on Nicholson's left, recognized Nicholson as she left her seat.

And what was the story, I wondered, about the obscure Oscar winner from the 1940s, in the group of 70 past Oscar winners, who had hooks in place of hands? Diabetes? A horrible accident? And why did Gregory Peck, of the 70 returnees, receive the most applause. Is Robin Williams really Billy Crystal's best friend? Williams: definitely not a star. He wanted his Oscar too much. Besides, I was rooting for Burt Reynolds for Best Supporting Actor. When Reynolds was good, he was very good (*Deliverance*). Reynolds was very good in *Boogie Nights*.

The appalling Thank You speeches of most recipients destroy all semblance of glamour and otherness of the Oscars. The non-stars are revealed as Ordinary Folks, as are most of the acting fraternity. If Woody Allen ever attends an Academy Awards, he should parrot Alfred Hitchcock's acceptance speech from the 1980s, in its entirety, and get the Hell out of there. "Thank You," said Hitchcock, with his trademark accent.

I have no information about how fans at Corflu UK, attending the FAAn Awards ceremony, dressed. I voted *Idea*, *Banana Wings*, and *Outworlds* for Best Fanzine; Harry Warner, Jr., Joseph Major, and Lloyd Penney, for Best Letterhack. I learned of the results in Tommy Ferguson's e-zine, *Tommyworld* 37. I also learned, via a kind comment from Tommy, that I didn't receive a single vote for Best Letterhack. I never thought about how many votes I might get, as I was not going to be Best Letterhack. But not a single vote? Ah, Fandom, you are keeping me humble. Still, I have the distinction of being one of the 100 names on Graeme Cameron's list of noteworthy Canadian fans. Being left off that list would be the definition of humbling.

March 29:: Best Letterhack is the name of the FAAn category recognizing writers of letters of comment. Letterhack is fannish slang describing a fanzine reader who responds regularly, after reading an issue of a fanzine, by writing a letter to the fanzine's editor, a letter the content of which was inspired by the content of issue of that fanzine. Letter writing is underappreciated in fanzine fandom. The Best Letterhack category in the FAAn awards has been hit and miss. I haven't read all of the fanthologies. I might be corrected, but I will suggest fanthology editors have not made a practice of selecting a Best Letter of Comment of the Year. Best Letterhack recognizes a body of work.

The phenomenon of a fan, on receiving an issue of a fanzine, first looking for his name, at the top of a letter, or other appearance, is well known. Egoboo flows from the appearance of a fan's name in a fanzine.

I experience egoboo while typing a letter of comment, when the letter of comment is flowing onto the screen; when I feel that I have risen above my ordinary level of writing. I anticipate seeing my letter in the fanzine's lettercol, nestled among the missives of my fellow respondents. When I am WAHFed, I summon to my computer screen my orphaned loc. I read it. I judge it against the letters that the fanzine editor chose to print.

March 30:: Today I decided to stop knocking my head against the metaphorical wall of the C++ programming language class.

I have an aptitude for manipulating words: look at me, ma: I'm typing correctly-spelled words in sentences! If I concentrate, I can become competent in a new area. A new area describes all of the subjects so far in the 45-week Information Technology course I began last November.

Learning to think as a programmer must think, however, is *The Outer Limits* for me. Eight weeks of Visual Basic in January and February confirmed my sense that I lack the mind-set. The C++ instruction that began in March is not part of the official curriculum. My class is getting two hours a week.

Today was the day we were to have completed an assignment of creating our first simple C++ program. The result I produced matched what was needed... for the first five minutes of the class. Our instructor wrote on the classroom blackboard, line by line, the code, written in the simple terms with which he started orienting us. He then explained it was a clumsy, crude program. He reworked it as object-oriented.

I am in another, divergent, Earth plane on this subject. I am not lazy. I simply do not comprehend this particular set of abstract concepts. I compare myself to an elephant that walks on its hind legs, or a blind person who learns to ski. The effort is not worth the trouble.

Whatever I do for money in the rest of my life, programming will not be part of it. Netware objects, database entities, and database semantic objects, are sufficient unto themselves to exercise my mind.

March 31:: Bernadette, a fellow student, on hearing I was a C++ class dropout, told me programming is very important. I managed in eight weeks of Visual Basic class to learn a simple For loop for the final quiz. I couldn't reproduce it now.

These concepts to me are like a greased pig. If I do grab one, it quickly escapes me. I failed Math in Grade 10. I replaced it in Grades 11 through 13 with Latin. My life to date has not been hindered because my Math education stopped at Grade 10.

I do not labour under the delusion that I ever would be asked to write code. Better for an employer to pay a real programmer \$100 than pay me \$10 an hour. The real programmer would whip up an elegant program quickly.

I have aptitudes, abilities, and blind spots. I could not stand at home plate and hit a Roger Clemens's fastball. I would not feel inadequate for that failing. I am trying to refuse to feel inadequate because I can't grasp the logic of programming.

Chess, Math, and Programming share logic as a foundation. People choose to play chess. People join chess clubs. People follow chess columns in newspapers. I don't know about people getting together to knock off a program, or compete to see who can solve a problem fastest by writing a program.

April 10:: This morning I was folding laundry. One, or both, of Russell and Dennis, were watching an episode of *Reboot*. Folding laundry is not engrossing. I easily was seduced into watching the computer-animated half-hour show. Two-thirds of the episode had passed. *Reboot*'s detail, and the solidity of the animation, always amazes me.

I felt a nagging sense of familiarity about the dialogue, and the images. I quickly realized I was watching a tip of the hat/*homage* to a 30-year-old British mini-series, that quirky, *sui generis*, product of its time, that enduring work of genius by Patrick McGoochan: *The Prisoner*.

I considered telling the boys about the story behind the story, but I did not. They would not appreciate what they had seen any more. The information I could have given them would not have meant anything to them. Age confers some benefits.

April 17:: Earlier this week, reading SOUTHERN FANDOM CONFEDERATION BULLETIN, I was reminded of my Great Idea of obtaining a sample mailing from all of the interesting apas. NEW MOON DIRECTORY lists more than 149 apas. What great fanwriters are out there, waiting to be discovered in their particular cozy corner of Fandom?

Today I come home from another week at school, to find an unusually large total of fan mail for the week, to wit, VANAMONDE 249–252 (John Hertz) ; FILE 770 123 Mike Glycer) ; FOR THE CLERISY VOL 5 No 7 (Brant Kresovich) ; INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GARDENER 1 (Comrades Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas); OPUNTIA 37 (Dale Speirs); SNUFKIN'S BUM 3 (Maureen Kincaid Speller); PINKETTE 16c (Karen Pender-Gunn) & MIND WALLABY 2 (Ian Gunn); THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION 116 (David G. Hartwell et al.); NO AWARD 3 (Marty Cantor); IT GOES ON THE SHELF 18 (Ned Brooks).

I would include the April 20, 1998 issue of *The New Yorker*—Andy Hooper in his most recent THE JEZAIL, you see, included *Crawdaddy* as one of his favourite fanzines—except, I realize, *The New Yorker* is not available for The Usual.

April 25:: Of all of the 26 letters of the alphabet, the greatest of all letters, is the letter, L. How do I know this?

I read the names of the authors printed on the spines of the sf paperbacks which I have read through the past 35 years: R.A. Lafferty; Ursula K. Le Guin; Fritz Leiber; H.P. Lovecraft. Keith Laumer is there, too. Match me with five equally diverse sf authors, who have in common, a name starting with the same letter of the alphabet.

Here is a cartoon idea which I humbly submit would not have fallen flat as a *Far Side* panel. The setup: World War Two, the South Pacific, an island. The scene: Japanese soldiers are charging the viewer. Each soldier carries a small tree in a pot. The words in the speech balloons: "Bonzai!" they shout. "Bonzai!"

Scan this sentence, printed in eight-point type, I dare you, Tom Forman!

Back to nine point, Tahoma type.

My

fan-philosophical thought for today: My loc is printed, therefore I am.

David Pringle's 100 Best Science Fiction Novels: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell, 1949; *Earth Abides*, George R. Stewart, 1949; *The Martian Chronicles*, Ray Bradbury, 1950; *The Puppet Masters*, Robert A. Heinlein, 1951; *The Day of the Triffids*, John Wyndham, 1951; *Limbo*, Bernard Wolfe, 1952; *The Demolished Man*, Alfred Bester, 1953; *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury, 1953; *Childhood's End*, Arthur C. Clarke, 1953; *The Paradox Men*, Charles L. Harness, 1953; *Bring the Jubilee*, Ward Moore, 1953; *The Space Merchants*, Frederik Pohl & C.M. Kornbluth, 1953; *Ring Around the Sun*, Clifford D. Simak, 1953; *More Than Human*, Theodore Sturgeon, 1953; *Mission of Gravity*, Hal Clement, 1954; *A Mirror For Observers*, Edgar Pangborn, 1954; *The End of*

Eternity, Isaac Asimov, 1955; *The Long Tomorrow*, Leigh Brackett, 1955; *The Inheritors*, William Golding, 1955; *The Stars My Destination*, Alfred Bester, 1956; *The Death of Grass* aka *No Blade of Grass*, John Christopher, 1956; *The City and the Stars*, Arthur C. Clarke, 1956; *The Door into Summer*, Robert A. Heinlein, 1957; *The Midwich Cuckoos*, John Wyndham, 1957; *Non-Stop*, aka *Starship*, Brian W. Aldiss, 1958; *A Case of Conscience*, James Blish, 1958; *Have Space-Suit-Will Travel*, Robert A. Heinlein, 1958; *Time Out of Joint*, Philip K. Dick, 1959; *Alas, Babylon*, Pat Frank, 1959; *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Walter M. Miller, 1959; *The Sirens of Titan*, Kurt Vonnegut, 1959.

Rogue Moon, Algis Budrys, 1960; *Venus Plus X*, Theodore Sturgeon, 1960; *Hothouse* aka *The Long Afternoon of Earth*, Brian W. Aldiss, 1962; *The Drowned World*, J.G. Ballard, 1962; *A Clockwork Orange*, Anthony Burgess, 1962; *A Man in the High Castle*, Philip K. Dick, 1962; *Journey Beyond Tomorrow* aka *Journey of Joenes*, Robert Sheckley, 1963; *Way Station*, Clifford D. Simak, 1963; *Cat's Cradle*, Kurt Vonnegut, 1963; *Greybeard*, Brian W. Aldiss, 1964; *Nova Express*, William Burroughs, 1964; *Martian Time-Slip*, Philip K. Dick, 1964; *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, Philip K. Dick, 1964; *The Wanderer*, Fritz Leiber, 1964; *Norstrilia*, Cordwainer Smith, 1964-1968; *Dr. Bloodmoney*, Philip K. Dick, 1965; *Dune*, Frank Herbert, 1965; *The Crystal World*, J.G. Ballard, 1966; *Make Room! Make Room!*, Harry Harrison, 1966; *Flowers for Algernon*, Daniel Keyes, 1966; *The Dream Master*, Roger Zelazny, 1966; *Stand on Zanzibar*, John Brunner, 1968; *Nova*, Samuel R. Delany, 1968; *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Philip K. Dick, 1968; *Camp Concentration*, Thomas Disch, 1968; *The Final Programme*, Michael Moorcock, 1968; *Pavane*, Keith Roberts, 1968; *Heroes and Villains*, Angela Carter, 1969; *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Ursula Le Guin, 1969; *The Palace of Eternity*, Bob Shaw, 1969; *Bug Jack Barron*, Norman Spinrad, 1969.

Tau Zero, Poul Anderson, 1970; *Downward to the Earth*, Robert Silverberg, 1970; *The Year of the Quiet Sun*, Wilson Tucker, 1970; 334, Thomas Disch, 1972; *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, Gene Wolfe, 1972; *The Dancers at the End of Time*, Michael Moorcock, 1972-76 (*An Alien Heat*, 1972 + *The Hollow Lands*, 1974 + *The End of All Songs*, 1976); *Crash*, J.G. Ballard, 1973; *Looking Backward, From the Year 2000*, Mack Reynolds, 1973; *The Embedding*, Ian Watson, 1973; *Walk to the End of the World*, Suzy McKee Charnas, 1974; *The Centauri Device*, M. John Harrison, 1974; *The Dispossessed*, Ursula K. Le Guin, 1974; *Inverted World*, Christopher Priest, 1974; *High-Rise*, J.G. Ballard, 1975; *Galaxies*, Barry Malzberg, 1975; *The Female Man*, Joanna Russ, 1975; *Orbitsville*, Bob Shaw, 1975; *The Alteration*, Kingsley Amis, 1976; *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Marge Piercy, 1976; *Man Plus*, Frederik Pohl, 1976; *Michaelmas*, Algis Budrys, 1977; *The Ophiuchi Hotline*, John Varley, 1977; *Miracle Visitors*, Ian Watson, 1978; *Engine Summer*, John Crowley, 1978; *On Wings of Song*, Thomas M. Disch, 1979; *The Walking Shadow*, Brian Stableford, 1979; *Juniper Time*, Kate Wilhelm, 1979.

Timescape, Gregory Benford, 1980; *The Dreaming Dragons*, Damien Broderick, 1980; *Wild Seed*, Octavia A. Butler, 1980; *Riddley Walker*, Russell Hoban, 1980; *Roderick, and Roderick at Random*, John Sladek, 1980-83; *The Book of the New Sun*, Gene Wolfe, 1980-83; *The Unreasoning Mask*, Philip Jose Farmer, 1980; *Oath of Fealty*, Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle, 1981; *No Enemy But Time*, Michael Bishop, 1982; *The Birth of the People's Republic of Antarctica*, John Calvin Batchelor, 1983; *Neuromancer*, William Gibson, 1984.

A list that begins with 1984 and ends with *Neuromancer* isn't shabby.

The idea of reading these 100 novels seemed crazy...until I realized that many of these novels, by current standards, are short novels.

Who knows the enjoyment I could have, re-reading some of the novels on this list? I know that I have read *Norstrilia*, and *Camp Concentration*, only because a copy of each of these two titles is among my read books. If I had not seen them in that setting, I would bet my life I had not read them.

I am curious if Pringle, from the vantage of 1998, would stick with the 100 titles he picked in 1984. *The Birth of the People's Republic of Antarctica*, for example, isn't a novel of which I know, other than it being one of Pringle's 100.

Hola!, Jack Speer: You enquire, Is Bloor Street named for Mother Bloor? I'll bite. Who is Mother Bloor? ## The back cover, and the (obscured by Rotsler cartoons, and its title) front cover, of HARRY WARNER, JR.: FAN OF LETTERS, is page one and page two of a letter of comment by Harry. The subject is a previous issue of one of my fanzines. **Marc Ortlieb**, welcome back to FAPA! **Roger Wells** and **Roy Tackett**, non-stop-paragraphing, okay! **Fred Lerner**, each of my FAPAazines has a different look. Perhaps I will settle eventually on a look that, in its own way, is as clean, and as classical, as is your LOFGEORNOST. **Robert Sabella!**, Exclamation Point alert! Between the two of us, we can force a run on the North American supply of the phallic period!!! Congrats to **Harry Warner, Jr.** and **Vicki Rosenzweig**, for being voted First, and Third, Best Letterhack of 1997, in the 1998 FAAn Awards, announced during Corflu!!!!