

Alouette

The Newsletter of the Canadian Region of SFWA

Editor: Robert J. Sawyer

Publisher: *Who's That Coeurl? Press*



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

7601 Bathurst Street • Suite 617 • Thornhill, Ontario, Canada • L4J 4H5

Phone: (416) 882-5033 • Fax: (416) 886-1624 • CompuServe: 76702,747 • GEnie: RJ.Sawyer

Copyright © 1992 by Robert J. Sawyer and the individual contributors • Printed on recycled paper.

Editorial: The Death of Science Fiction

Theodore Sturgeon's Law: 90% of SF is crap. Unfortunately, like unemployment rates and average global temperatures, I think that number is rising. I blame it on market-oriented forces that are making it harder and harder to find quality SF. Among them:

- A tendency toward overly long books (because publishers can put a higher price on fatter books, and because the SF reviewing community and award-givers have decided to equate authorial ambition with mere length).
- A tendency toward endless repetitions of what was once a good idea. Anne McCaffrey's first Dragon book, *Dragonflight*, is actually a combined volume comprising two shorter works, the novella "Weyr Search" and the novella "Dragonrider." "Weyr Search" tied for the Hugo for best novella of 1968; "Dragonrider" won the Nebula for best novella that same year. In other words, this stuff was cutting-edge and wonderfully acclaimed when it first appeared, but now it's just a cash cow for its author and its publisher. The second *Foundation* trilogy, the ongoing *Rama* saga, and the *Dune* series are more examples of endless repetition.
- A tendency toward junior authors spending what are traditionally one's most productive years turning out work in the mold of other writers, instead of developing their own voices.
- A tendency toward the graying of the SF-reading audience: there's a lot of truth to the old saw that the golden age of SF is when you were 13. There's also a lot of truth to Samuel R. Delany's observation that if you don't start reading SF when you're young, you *can't* start reading it when you're old. SF is failing to find significant numbers of new readers. Part of that is the general decline in North American literacy, and part of it is that the very people fascinated by high technology and computers and strange worlds used to have nowhere to go except SF books, but can now turn instead to computers (gaming and hacking), to role-playing games, and to an endless stream of SF movies. This means that the field is increasingly catering to those who were 13 in the 1950s, an audience rapidly moving towards its retirement years. (This accounts for much of SF's current nostalgia: the publishers are desperate for more Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein, 'cause that's what their aging audience remembers fondly.)

Now, there definitely is some quality work out there. Indeed, I don't even think quality is that hard to get published — I'm sure the editors say, hey, this is pretty good, and it's been a while since we printed anything that was, so, sure, why not?

But my fear is two-fold. First, a person who has become interested in SF through the media, or because of vague childhood memories, will pick up a book from the vast SF rack and be turned off. He or

she will be turned off because the work will almost certainly be crap. You and I know how to find the good ones, but someone new to the field won't have a clue. Yup, you could read a good SF novel a week each week of the year, no doubt. But if you read an SF novel a week picked at random from the rack, you'd never come back for a second year of such torture.

The second is the big-three mentality. Those of us in the field know that names like Orson Scott Card and Michael P. Kube-McDowell and Mike Resnick and Lois McMaster Bujold and William Gibson are the stars of current SF. But, and I mean no offense to these fine authors, the average reader has never heard of them. Yet every literate person within and without the field knows Asimov, Clarke, and (maybe) Heinlein: Asimov, who did no major work after *The Gods Themselves* in 1972; Clarke, whose last truly major work was *The Fountains of Paradise* in 1979; and Heinlein — well, long dead and author in his later years of, um, unusual books.

So what do the publishers give us? Books with Asimov's name on them that aren't by Asimov. Books with Clarke's name on them that aren't by Clarke. And reissues of old Heinlein, bereft of any editorial restraint. Sure, there are some other bestselling writers: Larry Niven, who is sharecropped by Baen; Anne McCaffrey, who is sharecropped by Baen and Ace. There are even authors who have done no significant solo work who have become famous as one of multiple names on a book spine: Jerry Pournelle is an example (his solo work amounts to little more than a couple of Laser Books in the 1970s and the novelization of *Escape from the Planet of the Apes*).

And yet the publishers do whatever they can to continue to milk the big three: Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein. Almost every SF fan I know pooh-poohs L. Ron Hubbard's posthumous dekalogy — propelled to bestsellerdom by mind-washed buyers, a packaged product, probably not even written by the guy whose name appears in big letters on the cover. But every one of those same criticisms can also be leveled against *Rama II*, *Isaac Asimov's Robot City*, and so on.

The problem with the publishers still emphasizing the big three is that you can't go on doing false collaborations or works "in the universe of" without eventually mining out the vein and being left with nothing.

Here's an analogy for current SF publishing that most SF people will be familiar with: the *Star Trek* movies.

The *Star Trek* TV series was something a lot of people had fond, nostalgic memories of. Rather than making a new big-budget SF vision, Paramount decided, hey, let's play up to that nostalgia, and re-do *Star Trek*. Guess what? It worked. *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, deeply flawed in many ways though it was, made tons of money. Did Paramount go in other directions, giving us new SF visions? It did not. Instead it said, hey, let's give the public more of the same. Lo and behold, we got *Trek II, III, IV, V, and VI*.

And what's happened? Boom. Crash. *Trek VI* is the last. The old cast is simply too old to go on, and Paramount failed to develop

and promote any younger talent during the dozen years it cranked out *Trek* films. The big-screen cash cow is dead.

Consider all the characters introduced in the *Star Trek* movie series, including, just as a few examples, Captain Will Decker; the bald-headed woman, Ilia; Kirk's son David; whale expert Gillian Taylor; the Vulcan-Romulan hybrid Saavik; and Spock's brother Sybok. Every one of them was ultimately killed off, shoved to the background, or simply forgotten in the mad rush to keep yanking the teats labeled Shatner, Nimoy, and Kelly. Sure, some of the new characters had to be dispensed with for dramatic reasons, but if even a handful of them had been developed over the years (heck, if even Sulu and Chekov had been developed over the years), the movie series could have continued, instead of grinding to a halt.

Likewise, you can only milk Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein so long before (a) you run dry, (b) the public finally realizes that two of them are dead, and the other one, sad to say, won't be with us much longer, and (c) the audience who grew up on Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein likewise begins to shuffle off this mortal coil. By thinking only of the cash that can be grabbed today, instead of developing for the future, the SF field might eventually collapse the way the *Star Trek* movie series has.

Proof? I named a bunch of great modern SF writers earlier in this article. Not one of them outsells the work by Gentry Lee published as putative collaborations with Clarke. Gentry Lee is the real super-bestseller SF author today. But will any readers buy his solo books set outside of Clarke's universe when they start coming out? My bet is no, and that as Gentry Lee's career goes, so, sadly will the field as a whole. *

MINUTES

First Annual Meeting

The first Annual Meeting of the Canadian Region of SFWA was held Saturday, July 27, at the 1992 Convention, WilfCon VIII, in Waterloo, Ontario.

The meeting was a casual affair, taking the form of a long lunch at a local deli, with American SFWAn Algis Budrys joining Canadian members James Alan Gardner, Rob Sawyer, and Edo van Belkom. (Not too shabby, given WilfCon had only about 30 attendees by the time the meeting began early on Saturday morning.)

The main topic of discussion was the Winnipeg WorldCon. The question of SF Canada's desire to either host or co-host a writers' suite in lieu of the traditional SFWA suite was raised. It was felt that SF Canada was underestimating the strength of proprietary feeling on the part of old-guard American SFWAns about the WorldCon suite.

This is a political hot potato, capable of engendering ill-feeling with SF Canada — something we all want to avoid. We adopted the position that business concerning the Winnipeg WorldCon is not a Canadian Region issue, but rather a general SFWA issue. Rob was empowered to write to SFWA President Joe Haldeman stating this view (which he did on July 3 — Joe agreed), and to meet with Winnipeg WorldCon chair John Mansfield to also make this clear (which he did on July 28 at WilfCon).

...

The 1993 annual meeting of the SFWA Canadian Region will be held at the 1993 Convention, WolfCon VI, Mar 5-7, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. For information on that convention, write WolfCon VI, Box 796, Wolfville, NS, B0P 1X0. (RhinoCon 3 in London, Ontario, withdrew its Convention bid when it changed its date to March 1994.)

The 1994 annual meeting will be held at Conadian, the 52nd World Science Fiction Convention, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Get your WorldCon memberships soon. The current rate of \$85 is only in effect until December 31. Write: Conadian, P.B. Box 2430, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4A7. *

SFWA BUSINESS

Referendum

At long last, here's the wording of the referendum questions going out to all active SFWA members worldwide. You will receive your voting ballot with the December 1992 issue of *SFWA Forum*.

QUESTION ONE

Background: Under SFWA's bylaws, SFWA Regions can be created by a vote of the Board of Directors. In May of this year, the Board, following up on the unanimous recommendation of the April 1992 Annual General Meeting of the Corporation held during the Nebula Awards Weekend in Atlanta, formally and legally created the Canadian Region of SFWA. Later, in SFWA's 1992 elections, a Canadian Regional Director was duly elected.

Currently all Regional Directors except the Canadian Regional Directors are voting members of SFWA's Board of Directors. Although a sense-of-the-meeting vote taken during the 1992 Annual General Meeting overwhelmingly approved granting the Canadian Regional Director a vote, SFWA's bylaws state that the addition of new voting members to the Board can only be done by a full vote of the membership at large. Therefore, the question is now being put to the membership as a whole.

The Board of Directors recommends you vote YES on this question.

1. The Canadian Regional Director should be a voting member of SFWA's Board of Directors. (Yes/No)

QUESTION TWO

This is pretty straightforward, just clarifying the interpretation of existing rules regarding publication outside of the U.S. and Canada:

2. Publications in the English language in countries outside of North America may be used as credentials for Associate membership only. (Yes/No)

2a. Publications in the English language in countries outside of North America may be used as credentials for Active membership. (Yes/No)

QUESTION THREE

Background: The Board of Directors intends that the creation of a Canadian Region of SFWA be a special case, recognizing the growing numbers of Canadian SF&F writers, the emerging domestic Canadian markets, and the unusual circumstance of Canada sometimes being considered in publishing contracts as a part of the "domestic" U.S. territory, sometimes a part of the "British" territory, and, increasingly, being a territory in its own right. However, some people have raised concerns about the Balkanization of the SFWA, with an ever-increasing number of Regions coming into being. In order to allay fears of the frivolous creation of Regions, the following motion is put forward. (Please note, however, that regardless of this motion, Article VI, Section 3, of the SFWA bylaws already requires that the Overseas Region of SFWA always include the entire Eastern hemisphere. That bylaw cannot be changed without a full vote of the membership.)

3. Subsequent to this ballot, the creation of additional SFWA regions may only be done with the approval of two-thirds of the Board of Directors.

Finally, an appeal from the President: A vote changing SFWA's bylaws requires a simple majority with at least one third of the active membership voting. Even a unanimous vote would be meaningless if too few people participated. Please help us out and vote. *

WRITERS' WORKSHOPS

Clarion Reflections

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Clarion, an annual workshop for aspirant SF writers, founded by Robert Scott Wilson at Clarion College, Pennsylvania. These days, the direct descendant of the original workshop is held at Michigan State University, and a second annual workshop called Clarion West, built on the same model, is held in Seattle, Washington. Among the annual workshop's graduates are Kim Stanley Robinson, George Alec Effinger, Vonda McIntyre, and Lucius Shepard, as well as several Canadians, four of whom have been kind enough to share their reminiscences with us.

...

JOHN PARK, Ottawa

Clarion 1978

What to say about my experience of the Clarion workshop, 14 years after the event? It was intense, serious and silly. There were no punches pulled and no egos shattered. Was it memorable? Definitely. Did I learn from it? Yes. Did it resolve my struggle with writer's block and turn me into a productive major writer? Obviously not.

A few memories: A copy of the current manuscript, like the conch in *Lord of the Flies*, being passed from critiquer to critiquer as each spoke in turn (the current victim holding a blue stuffed bunny). Robin Scott Wilson telling someone in the first week, "Everyone has to write this kind of story once. Now you've done it; don't do it again." Trips off-campus for beer and ice cream. Algis Budrys stressing that motivation was the key and expounding his seven-point plot skeleton — but in practice being sympathetic to a much wider range of approaches. Carol Emshwiller, whose work had struck me as abstruse and literary, starting off her week: "You people have got to learn how to write plots." And a visible improvement in the level of writing over the six weeks.

In my own case I was always most comfortable with mood and atmosphere, and the Budrys plot skeleton gave me a landmark as I tried to find my way through the mysteries of story construction. Now I prefer Damon Knight's more inclusive idea of what a story is, and John Gardner's idea of "profluence" rather than plot; but I still have the plot skeleton somewhere at the back of my mind when I'm planning a story.

Clarion teaches what can be taught — which necessarily has more to do with technique and form than with content. A workshop can develop craft; it can't create originality or passion. Of the 20 or so of us, Pat Murphy, Richard Kadrey and Steven Popkes have achieved a fair amount of recognition; I'm still hoping to become an overnight success, and several others have published and are still writing.

Almost certainly each of us took away different things, and most of them were things we would have learned anyway, as long as we kept writing — but not as quickly or as systematically. And with nowhere near as much fun.

(John has published in *Galaxy*, *OnSpec*, *Solaris*, and *Tesseract* 3&4.)

...

KATHRYN A. SINCLAIR, Edmonton

Clarion 1981

1. Robin: Our introduction to Clarion. "Boot camp for writers." The first day he throws a hapless Clarionite's manuscript across the room. Horrors! We all cringe. So much for our tender egos!

Huddled in a stifling dormitory room, dripping sweat, I struggle with a story. Down the hall in the common room a couple of people tune up their guitars; the singing begins.

2. Lizzy: Doing Aikido rolls on the grass with several eager Clarionites trying to follow suit. I decide to pass on that and go back to my writing.

We escape from the oppressively hot dorm for a few hours by stuffing ten or sixteen or so of us into a Toyota sedan and piling the rest on a motorbike and dashing down the freeway to see *Escape From New York*.

3. Joe and Gay: We sing a tender ballad written by Joe: "Locked Up in a Spaceship for a Year Without No Women Blues." With Joe we sing a lot. On the back of my copy of the song I've printed in pencil "Brush Teeth." Was I *that* far gone?

In the middle of the night I take a break from a recalcitrant story to watch a frantic card game in the common room and listen to a new song. The Water Pistols appear!

4 & 5. Kate and Damon: Kate attired as the Queen Mum. We celebrate the marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Di by holding our own ceremony. A song, "Charlie," has been written for the occasion. Damon arrives in tinfoil horns . . . the court jester?

The tension grows: there is an ebb and flow of activity from room to room as people seek advice or just a sympathetic ear. Sporadic water pistol skirmishes break out.

6. A.J.: He introduces us to poor Sara Jane fiddling in a rain-storm. We drink a lot of beer and draw diagrams and take notes; is this the answer to our problems with structure? Sounds of desperate typing issue from every open door; we are not calmed by his amusing stories of Clarion's past. The heat and pressure build up until finally we are pushed over the edge!

The Waterfight! Light weaponry is abandoned as more advanced armaments appear. The Lithuanian Gunfighter strides the halls, laser canon at his hip. Heavy artillery is needed to repel the threat; the Waterhoses are mobilized. Fighting surges from room to room and the floor below receives the fallout!

Finally the workshop was over. During that six weeks in the summer of '81 we were helped with our work by six writers who gave generously of their time and energy. I wrote eight stories. We played a lot and sang a lot and made lifelong friends.

Our Clarion ended appropriately, with a new ballad: "The Ball at Clarion '81." Our last act of writing was to contribute a verse each about one of the other participants or an instructor. "One and twenty hopefuls came out to learn to write. They workshopped in the morning and they fooled around all night." And on for 29 more verses.

My copy is waterstained.

(Kathryn has published in *Asimov's*, *OnSpec*, and *Tesseract* 2.)

...

JAMES ALAN GARDNER, Waterloo

Clarion West 1989

The first gathering of the class was on a Sunday night, in a classroom at the top of a 10-storey building on the heights of Seattle. Lots of big windows showed the sun setting over the Seattle skyline, and Orson Scott Card said to us all, "You have entered Faerie-Land."

He went on to explain that the world of Clarion is and isn't real. Like people who stumble into Faerie-Land, you can go to Clarion and come back changed; but the changes can be slippery and not what you think they are. Scott warned that the intensity of the program could make us leap impulsively in unwise directions — leap into romantic entanglements with our classmates, for example, or leap to strange conclusions about how good or bad our writing was.

Faerie-Land.

Well, I know of five marriages that broke up directly or indirectly due to Clarion, in a class of 21 people . . . and I haven't kept tabs on all

my classmates. Several people decided they had no talent and quit writing. On the other hand, our class has also made its impact on the field. Tony Daniel, Wendy Council, Carolyn Ives Gilman, and I have all started professional careers in SF. A few others may break in over the next few years. Faeries are neither good nor bad, they are just powerful forces.

But Rob has asked me for memories of Clarion, not an explanation or defense. So here are a handful of things that will stay with me:

- Scott Card saying wonderful things about my first story (“Reaper,” later published in *F&SF*, February 1991) and, in the same two-hour session, doing a coldly terrifying job of dissecting the work of another student.
- aerobics classes with Karen Joy Fowler.
- lunch at a Mexican bar with Connie Willis, as she explained the origins of “All My Darling Daughters.”
- the constant wonder of Lucius Shepard, a man who defies all description: built like a Satan’s Choice biker, wiping his face with pages from his manuscript during a reading, showing us how to put words on paper; of all our instructors, Lucius was the one who taught me the most about writing, because he clarified so much about how you make descriptive passages work.
- Roger Zelazny diffidently tossing off tricks of the trade at a time when we were so tired we scarcely paid attention, tricks like how to write fight scenes and how to prepare novel outlines.

And did I return from Faerie-Land transformed? Only a little; only aimed in a slightly different direction, my skills broadened by a fraction and my insights deepened by a hair. But I’m a better writer for it.

(Jim has published in *F&SF*, *Amazing*, *OnSpec*, and *Tesseract* 3&4.)

...

CORY DOCTOROW, Toronto

Clarion 1992

“You learn technique in order to forget it” — Kate Wilhelm

I spent one hundred years at Clarion, from 28 June 1992 to 9 August 1992. During that hundred years, I accumulated a great body of knowledge about the mechanics of fiction, much of it self-contradictory. That was interesting but hardly worth a hundred years’ aging compressed into six weeks, not to mention the huge cash outlay.

I also received a great deal of criticism on my writing, from seven-teen fantastic classmates and several brilliant instructors. Again, interesting but not worth it.

I got to eat the execrable food at the Owen Hall Cafeteria, wander the streets of East Lansing, and deal with the thick-thick-THICK Michigan State University bureaucracy. Interesting, but, you know the rest.

However, taken on the whole, Clarion ’92 was worth every penny. How so? It’s one of those elusive things, it slips through the fingers like smoke, something like . . . something like the way you feel when a story is going *right*, just *right*, Hugo-time at least.

Clarion’s not about homogenizing one’s style to some humanist ideal, not about getting that magic “Clarion Graduate” on a cover letter, not about silliness with water-guns. Clarion’s about focusing down on that feeling of *rightness*, holding it, keeping it close to your chest while you sit at the word processor.

No regrets.

(Cory works at Bakka. He’s published in *OnSpec* and *Pulphouse*.) *

BOOK REVIEW

An Odyssey in Time

by Robert J. Sawyer

Russell, Dale A. *An Odyssey in Time: The Dinosaurs of North America*, University of Toronto Press, 1989.

This review originally appeared in Quill & Quire.

The bayous of Saskatchewan. The sand dunes of Nova Scotia. To Dr. Dale A. Russell of the Canadian Museum of Nature, these landscapes are as real as the dusty prairie, the Bay of Fundy. Indeed, his new book, *An Odyssey in Time: The Dinosaurs of North America*, is more about landscapes than dinosaurs, and that distinguishes it from the glut of other dinosaur books on the market. Lowland, upland, swamp, forest: each is a separate world to Russell, a tightly-woven ecosystem. He doesn’t just tell us that *thus-and-so-saurus* was yea long and weighed mumblety tons, as so many others do. No, Russell paints the entire environment, showing how one beast related to another, as predator or prey, as parasite or partner.

Once again Russell has collaborated with Eleanor M. Kish, the Robert Bateman of prehistory (their earlier book, *A Vanished World: The Dinosaurs of Western Canada*, was published in 1977 by the National Museums of Canada). Kish’s paintings are the ideal complement to Russell’s prose, dripping with detail and new interpretations. Her latest crop of brontosaurus have a lean and hungry look that would put Cassius to shame; her full moon over a monsoonal rain pond is painted larger than it would appear in a contemporary sky, and the crater Tycho, formed after the age of dinosaurs, is missing.

Of course, the book must stand on the strength of Russell’s prose. His writing perhaps isn’t quite as solid as the giant columns of a brontosaurus’s legs. No, it’s more like the nimble dancing of his favourite dinosaur, *Troödon*, a fleet fellow that had to keep moving, lest he lose his balance. Every time Russell looks as though he’s going to topple, he pushes ahead and regains a surer footing. Still, he’s got a bit too much of the scholar in him, and his prose periodically wanders dangerously close to academic writing.

He’s self-conscious of this, or so it seems, for he attempts to compensate for his fondness for the passive voice, his flirtation with the polysyllable. In the early part of his book, he spends much time discussing mammal-like reptiles and proto-dinosaurs. These beasts, some our direct ancestors, are not well-known generally, and rather than have the reader trip repeatedly over *thecodont* and *rhynchosaurus* and a dozen others, Russell proposes his own plain-English names. But instead of simply translating the Greek tongue-twisters, he makes up completely new terms: gatorlizards, owlguanas, cowturtles. Ultimately, it’s a disservice to the reader, and even Russell has trouble keeping his menagerie straight: the owlguana miraculously becomes an owlizard at one point.

Russell takes his title seriously: *An Odyssey in Time* is just that, a journey, period by period, through the Mesozoic. He devotes one chapter to the millennia before the age of dinosaurs; then a chapter to their dawn years, the Triassic (stepping far from the North America promised in his subtitle to do so); a pair of chapters to their heyday, the steamy Jurassic, when *Brontosaurus* and *Stegosaurus* held sway; and three chapters to the Cretaceous, the time of *Tyrannosaurus* and *Triceratops*, the period preserved in the rocks of Alberta’s Badlands. His odyssey builds compellingly, with the saurians evolving from tiny reptiles to giants, from just one of many forms of life to the lords of creation. And, as Bogey would say, there’s a wow finish: the sudden extinction of 90% of the life on the planet.

Russell has a storyteller’s feel for his material. He realizes that bones have come to life on his pages, and to stop now for a pedantic examination of theories would break the flow. Instead, he begins his penultimate chapter, “The Extinction of the Dinosaurs,” with a brief note to the reader making clear that he isn’t going to run through the usual litany of explanations that others set up just to knock down.

Instead, he brings the story to a rapid end, diving into the theory he personally favours: the aftermath of a comet impact killed the great saurians and most of their contemporaries. Here, and elsewhere, he shifts into Carl Sagan mode, waxing pseudo-poetic:

When the comet crossed the orbit of the Moon it was moving at a velocity of 30 kilometres per second and the end of the Cretaceous was three hours away. It seemed to hang in the sky like a second moon, or the eye of God, but no dinosaur looked at it with understanding. It suddenly swelled in the sky, and then a dark mantle spread across the firmament.

The prose may be a bit much, but Russell brings to his writing a humility and — dare I say it? — a bone-dry wit that is missing from Sagan's.

In the final chapter, Russell looks for the meaning, if any, of the dinosaurs and their demise. He knows enough not to try to tack a moral on the end of his story, but he does leave the reader with much to contemplate.

All in all, Russell's done it right: in a world full of books about dinosaurs, he's taken a different approach. No protracted debate about warm-bloodedness, no endless thrashing over ideas about the extinctions, no bogging down in charts and statistics. Instead, just a refreshing, vital glimpse at dinosaurs in context, alive, going about their daily business. *

BRIEF REVIEWS

Books for SF Writers

(These reviews by Robert J. Sawyer were originally published in The Canadian Book Review Annual)

Dublin, Max. *Futurehype: The Tyranny of Prophecy*, 1989.

Max Dublin is a research fellow at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. In this, his first book, he takes on the prophets of our age, the self-styled "futurists" who claim to be able to predict what tomorrow will hold. Dublin argues that such prediction can be pretentious, dangerous if followed, self-fulfilling and often driven by hidden agendas on the part of the futurists. He examines in depth the role of futurology in the military (predominantly in the United States), in education, and in attitudes about health. His case is well supported and his warning bells ring loud and clear. As we slide into the third millennium, *Futurehype* is an important book, and one that is ultimately as much about morality as it is about prophecy.

Dickinson, Terence. *NightWatch*, Revised Edition, 1989.

Terence Dickinson is astronomy columnist for *The Toronto Star*. This lavishly illustrated book captures the excitement and grandeur of the night sky, while providing a straightforward system for identifying the constellations. Full-sky star maps are provided for each season. These make heavy use of pointer stars: find two easily identified stars, imagine a line through them and your eye is drawn to the another object of interest.

The book has square pages so the maps can be turned to any orientation. Plastic spiral binding lets the user fold the book in half for easy use. On the pages facing the main maps are paintings showing the full sky as it actually appears. Twenty close-up charts examine small areas in detail. These tell us the names of major stars, how far away each is, and point out galaxies, nebulae, and globular clusters. Objects visible only in binoculars or a small telescope are included as well. This edition has been updated for use through the year 2000.

The book is rounded out with tips for buying a telescope. If you want to know more about astronomy, *NightWatch* is an ideal volume to have. *

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Public Readings

by Robert J. Sawyer

Most SF writers get called on from time to time to do readings of their work at conventions or public libraries. I've done a couple of dozen readings over the years; here are a few things I've learned.

First, it's a lot easier to read from a printout designed specifically for reading. I make a special printout in big type. The advantages: (1) fewer words per page mean you're less likely to lose your place; (2) if you're reading from a podium, you can place the pages on the podium and read them easily without having to squint. Also, if you're so inclined, you can give the printout away as a souvenir to someone in the audience at the end — this is a little trick I picked up from Steve Stirling; it makes for one happy fan. (Second choice: read from a regular manuscript. Last choice: read from the printed book.)

I always tell people how long the reading will be: "This is the first chapter, and it will take about thirteen minutes." Reason: there will be people in your audience who don't want to be there (dragged out to your reading by their significant others, etc.). I find letting 'em know how long it will take substantially cuts down on the "when will this be over?" shuffling.

Read dramatically, and don't be afraid to change volume. Nothing is more dynamic in a reading than the reader suddenly shouting an exclamation. Conversely, the absolute best reading I ever did was one that ended with the scene from my novel *Golden Fleece* in which JASON, the computer from hell, was trying to sleep-teach a human being into feeling guilty. I read the narration in a normal voice, but for the words JASON was whispering through the headboard speakers I actually did lower my voice to a whisper (albeit a stage whisper, so people could hear it in the back — it helps, by the way, to have a microphone if the audience is going to be more than a dozen or so people). The room was absolutely still, hanging on every word.

Make eye contact. Know your work well enough so that you don't have to be constantly looking at your manuscript. Look at your audience — indeed, at *specific* people in your audience (not just generally out at the room).

Don't be afraid to make subtle additions or changes for the sake of the reading. On a printed page, the alternation of speakers may be clear because of the way you've done paragraphing. If you have to add in a "Smith said," do so — but determine this when you rehearse the piece. Likewise, consider editing out unnecessary exposition: you may have cleverly put stuff into the scene you happen to be reading that doesn't become relevant until later in the book, but if the audience *for the reading* doesn't need to know it, think about chopping it out.

Old radio-person's trick: when changing pages in your manuscript, simply slide them from the to-be-read pile to the already-read pile. Don't bother flipping them over. Yes, when done, your story will be in reverse order, but you can re-collate the pages afterwards. The point is to cut down on paper noise. Also, doing it this way you actually have two pages face up on the podium at once — the one you're just finishing and the one you're about to begin. That lets you clearly see the transition over the page break, so your reading doesn't falter as you switch pages.

Take business cards to your reading. If you read well, someone may come up to you at the end and ask you if you'd be available to read at another venue, or to talk to a class or to a conference. Having a card makes it easy for them to get in touch with you later.

Finally, the best readings are the ones you get paid for. If you've published a novel or short-story collection, you should enquire about getting on the Canada Council's approved list for Public Readings; among the Canadian SF writers already on it are Candace Jane Dorsey, Phyllis Gotlieb, Terry Green, Tanya Huff, Judy Merrill, and me. The Council pays approved readers \$200 per reading plus travel expenses of up to \$800. Send a request for information on registering with the Public Readings Program to The Canada Council, 99 Metcalfe Street, P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8. *

SELLING YOUR WORDS

Invitation Anthologies

by Barbara Delaplace

Most sf authors probably have heard of “invitation-only” anthologies — anthologies that aren’t found in the usual market reports but instead depend on personal solicitation directly from the editor to the writer. Such collections have always been part of the sf/fantasy field, but they seem to have become more common in the past few years.

Many of my short fiction sales have been to these markets, and I’ve found that besides helping pay for groceries, they can be a good way to raise your profile with editors and fellow pros, one of whom could well be in the process of signing a contract to edit an anthology himself and therefore eager to find contributors. They can also be an effective way to stretch artistically, provided you don’t dismiss out of hand one that doesn’t initially appeal to you. Give it some thought instead. It’s possible you may discover a hitherto unsuspected skill at handling military sf, or sf-oriented mystery, or fantasy.

Why do invitation-only anthologies exist? In general, because the editor prefers dealing with a reliable professional, rather than a stranger who may turn out to have bizarre ideas about the editor/writer relationship, threatening mayhem or worse when those expectations aren’t fulfilled. By comparison, a writer who can be relied on to produce a saleable story by deadline, one which needs little or no editing, is a jewel beyond price. (And such jewels may be invited into future anthologies.) But there can be other factors involved as well. Some editors don’t wade through slush piles because they simply can’t afford to: don’t assume anthology editing pays well, because it usually doesn’t. Or the publisher may have set a short deadline, and the editor doesn’t have the time to read many submissions. And some editors are also busy writers themselves, in which case the time constraints may be a result of their previous contract commitments.

Who edits them? Check the shelves of the local sf/fantasy bookstore: almost any editor who has a collection there has probably done one or more invitation-only anthologies. Some of the more familiar names include Martin H. Greenberg, Gardner Dozois, Bill Fawcett, David Drake, Christopher Stasheff, and Mike Resnick.

And how do you *get* invited? Personal contacts are a help here, make no mistake about it. On the other hand, the sf/fantasy field is comparatively small, so it’s not very difficult to make those contacts. Conventions are the obvious places to meet editors; Worldcon, World Fantasy Con, and the major regional conventions tend to have the highest concentrations of editors per square foot.

Another source of contacts is computer networks, which are becoming a major way for people in the business to keep in touch with one another. More and more pros can be found on commercial networks such as Delphi, CompuServe, and GEnie. The last is probably the most popular for the sf/fantasy field, and fortunately for starving writers, is also one of the most inexpensive. A number of publishers — Tor, Ace, and Bantam, among others — have “official” accounts there, where messages can be exchanged with their in-house staff. A few anthology editors online even accept submissions by electronic mail, though this is by no means universal.

Finally, there’s the time-honoured method of writing (or, in this age of modems, emailing) a letter, particularly if you’ve learned of an anthology via the grapevine. A courteous, straightforward note informing the editor of your interest can result in an invitation.

What can you expect in the way of editorial input once you’ve secured that invitation? It depends on the editor and the type of anthology. Martin Greenberg, for instance, simply informs the participants of the anthology’s theme, leaving idea, approach, and execution entirely to the author. Others, like Mike Resnick, are more “hands-on,” happy to suggest different ideas and discuss ways of developing stories from them. Editors of shared-world anthologies, such as Bill Fawcett, of necessity have to operate a little differently since each story must fit into the overall universe of the anthology. In cases like this, the writer will generally receive a so-called “bible,” or general

outline of the shared world, which includes background information on characters, themes, history, and so on. Of course, all editors will inform contributors of deadline, length, word rate, rights purchased, and publication date (if known at that point).

Obviously, make a point of meeting the deadline and length requirements. (It’s amazing how many writers don’t.) While my experience has been that editors are understanding if informed as soon as possible — and *not* just the day before the deadline — about an unavoidable delay, it’s far better to have a reputation for delivering stories promptly. This is no hardship in any case, for deadlines are frequently several months from the time of story assignment.

As for meeting the length requirements, why should that matter so much? It’s because an editor contracts with a publisher to deliver an anthology with X number of words at Y cents per word, with (hopefully) Z dollars in the budget left for herself at the end, the latter being her payment for doing the tedious job of editing the anthology. If several contributors run over the word length, there goes the budget: it comes out of her payment, not out of the publisher’s pocket. Conversely, if everybody comes in short, she has to scramble at the last minute to find more stories. Of course a certain amount of leeway in length is allowed. But if the guidelines said 7500 words maximum and you’ve turned in 12,000 words, it had damned well better be the best story in the anthology or the editor will not be thrilled.

Developing a reputation as a fast, reliable source of “right length” stories can pay off handsomely in the long run. Editors have a solution to that headache of writers who didn’t make the deadline or ran short: a “stable” of dependable pros who can be counted on to deliver the goods in an emergency. The writer who can quickly produce a salable story may find himself part of such a stable — and busy anthology editors always have work for them.

Payment rates generally run from five to seven cents per word; all contributors to a particular anthology get paid the same rate (unless a Famous Author with Clout happens to be involved, in which case said author may get a little more). Payment, at least in my experience, is promptly upon acceptance: the cheque and copies of the contract arrive in the same envelope.

As for rights, it depends on the type of anthology. Most of the contracts I’ve seen for theme collections ask for non-exclusive world rights, with no appearance of the story elsewhere for a year after publication of the anthology. It used to be possible to “double dip” — in other words, to sell first North American serial rights before the anthology appeared — but in the last year or so, publishers seem to have become more reluctant to allow this. Nonetheless, it never hurts to inquire; a resale is always welcome news to the bank account.

Shared-world anthologies are, not surprisingly, a different matter. These are frequently part of a series, possibly with continuing characters, and the series name and/or major characters may be copyrighted to the editor or the packager involved. If subsidiary rights are sold that specifically include a writer’s story or characters, the editor may get a sizable percentage of the payment. Read the contract carefully to make sure of what’s involved.

Finally, a few miscellaneous items. I’ve found that editors seldom ask for story revisions: it’s only happened to me once (though I have heard an editor tell of sending stories back to their authors two or three times before being satisfied with the results).

On the other hand, galleys can be a real problem. Publishers like a fast turnaround but don’t take into account how long mail between the States and Canada can take to arrive. Generally galleys show up — if at all — in my mail box the day *after* the corrections were due. I haven’t yet found a satisfactory solution to the problem, and have made do by explaining the situation to the editor in advance and asking if he or she will check my galleys for me when the time comes.

Contributor’s copies seem to be something of a hit-and-miss situation. Don’t expect more than one (or at very most two) copies, and don’t be surprised to have to ask for them; sometimes a busy editor simply forgets to request contributors’ copies be sent out. Have patience, since it can take time for the publisher to get them mailed.

A closing caveat: this article is based on my own experience, and naturally experience depends on the individual. As always in this field, your mileage may vary.

MEMBER INTERVIEW

Andrew Weiner

This is Andrew Weiner's twentieth year as a professional science-fiction writer. He's the author of the novel *Station Gehenna* (Congdon & Weed, 1987), the short-story collection *Distant Signals* (Porcépic, 1989), and stories in *Again*, *Dangerous Visions*; *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*; *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*; *Amazing Stories*; *Interzone*; *Ark of Ice*; *Northern Frights*; *Full Spectrum*; and many others. Two of his stories have been filmed as episodes of Laurel Production's *Tales From the Darkside*, and *Station Gehenna* is currently under a film option by Europa Productions, California. A full-time writer whose byline has appeared in many of Canada's most-prestigious periodicals, including *Quest* and *The Financial Post Magazine*, Andrew lives in Toronto with his wife Barbara Moses and his son, Nathaniel.

The interview below was first published in the Japanese fanzine *Psyberboria*. The questions were posed in a letter from Yoshiyuki Tanaka in 1989.

Yoshiyuki Tanaka: When did you first start writing SF? Why did you decide to continue to write it?

Andrew Weiner: It's hard to put a firm date on it. I can remember writing science fiction short stories for school assignments at age 9 or 10. As I recall, they were mostly about rockets to the Moon, etc. At the time I was reading juvenile science fiction books, particularly those by the British astronomer Patrick Moore. (I grew up in England.)

I suppose I first started sending stories to magazines when I was 16 or 17. I sent them to the British magazine *New Worlds*. I got some encouraging rejection slips from the editor, Michael Moorcock, and later from his associates like Graham Hall and James Sallis, which helped to keep me writing, but I never did sell a story to *New Worlds*.

At that time I was very much under the influence of J. G. Ballard and William Burroughs. I was writing a series of highly condensed and cut-up short stories that were mostly about a burned-out astronaut. A few of these stories were eventually published in university and amateur magazines. One of them, "Empire of the Sun," became my first professional sale (to Harlan Ellison's *Again*, *Dangerous Visions*). I was 18 when I wrote it, and it shows.

I never did find out exactly how "Empire" got to Ellison, but I know it was through James Sallis: I had sent the story to him at *New Worlds*, and he had taken it back to the U.S. with him to read. Somehow it ended up in Ellison's slush pile. Probably *New Worlds* wouldn't have published it anyway.

I signed the contract for the story in the spring of 1969. It wasn't published until 1972. (Lucky I wasn't in *The Last Dangerous Visions*.)

Why I to continue to write SF? A very tough question. I continued to write after selling "Empire of the Sun:" more short stories, half of an abortive novel (later recycled, vastly changed, as a novel-ette, "Getting Near The End"), but I didn't sell anything. In the meantime, I was writing a great deal of rock and movie criticism, for English magazines and newspapers, and getting paid for it. So I tended to spend more time on non-fiction. But I always kept coming back to SF. Perhaps because I had sold one story I thought I could sell another. If I hadn't sold "Empire of the Sun," I'm not sure that I would have persisted.

In the end there was a six-year gap between "Empire of the Sun" (which Ellison bought in 1969) and my second published story, "The Deed" (sold in 1975 to *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, published in 1978). I guess much of what I was writing then was too experimental for the traditional U.S. magazines, and maybe not very good either. At any rate, by the time I wrote "The Deed" I had become a more conventional writer . . . although I hope not entirely conventional.

By then I was living in Canada, and all my fiction since "The Deed" has been written here: initially in Montreal and since 1977 in Toronto.

Why do I continue? I guess because of the possibilities that SF offers, even though so little work published in the field (and I include most of my own work) takes advantage of those possibilities. In fact most SF (again including most of my own work) is a waste of time.

YT: What do you think about the meaning of the alien in your work?

AW: My interest in the alien is as a metaphor. I have absolutely no interest in attempting to imagine the actual physiology of actual alien species on a planet orbiting a G-class sun with a gravity of 3.2 Earth etc. etc. Nor do I want to read SF that tries to do this. I don't know if there are any aliens out there, but even if there are I'm almost certain we'll never meet them. Aliens are projections of the human mind that play the role once played by angels, demons, and so on. See my story "Going To Meet The Alien" (*F&SF*, August 1987) for a longer diatribe on this subject.

YT: I see in your writing the influence of Freud. What would say his most significant influence has been?

AW: I studied Freud in university, both his clinical psychology and his theories of social organization. I'm more interested in Freud as a social psychologist, and this interest comes out in my early story "The Deed," which is based in Freud's theories of the "primal horde." There is really no scientific basis for this theory, but it's a wonderful myth, one which sheds considerable light on the workings of leadership, social hierarchy, and patriarchal culture.

There is a Freudian analyst in "Klein's Machine" who thinks that SF is an Oedipal literature (I actually borrowed this idea from the philosopher Philip Slater — see his book *Earthwalk*, 1974). I don't necessarily agree with this. But neither do I disagree.

Freud himself makes an appearance in another story, "Comedians," (about an alternative universe in which Freud is a foul-mouthed comedian). But this story is a joke: and part of the joke is that the behaviourists are at least partly right. Inner drives interact with the external environment to produce different results: now a psychoanalyst, now a comedian . . .

So I'm by no means a pure Freudian. But I do enjoy playing around with his ideas.

YT: Are there writers that you would list as major influences?

AW: There are many writers who have influenced me over the years, beginning with Patrick Moore.

I suppose the strongest influences within science fiction have been J. G. Ballard and Philip K. Dick. Also the C. L. Moore of "Vintage Season." But I should also mention the British scriptwriter Nigel Kneale (author of the "Quatermass" TV and film series), along with Robert Sheckley, Alfred Bester, Arthur C. Clarke, Frederik Pohl, Ray Bradbury ("The Egg" is a sort of homage to Bradbury), and Isaac Asimov (particularly his SF mysteries). I can see traces of all of them threading through my own work.

Stanislaw Lem's *Solaris* is a major influence on my own novel *Station Gehenna*, although primarily at second hand: I've read the book, but it was the wonderful Tarkovsky movie that made the greater impact, and I don't care for Lem's other work.

Perhaps the last SF writer to have a direct impact on my own work was Barry Malzberg: much of his work is tedious and repetitive, but some of his short stories are excellent, and a few of his books are just wonderful, including *Herovit's World*.

I've also been influenced by writers poised between SF and mainstream fiction: Kurt Vonnegut (particularly the early books) and Walter Tevis (particularly *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, a direct influence on "Going Native").

Outside SF, I would point to Raymond Chandler (I've written a number of mutant private-eye stories), Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, and Graham Greene.

YT: Which science fiction authors do you admire among your own generation?

AW: I admire William Gibson both as a stylist and as an astute interpreter of the evolving information economy. I think he is by a long way the best we have.

Among the other so-called cyberpunks, Louis Shiner stands out: *Deserted Cities of the Heart* is the best SF novel I've read in some years. I also admire Bruce Sterling as a critic and polemicist, but am less enthusiastic about most of his fiction.

I greatly admired John Kessel's "Another Orphan." I look forward to reading his first solo novel. [1992 AW note: I've read it — *Good News From Outer Space* — and it's great.] Among other contemporary short SF writers, I enjoy Lisa Goldstein, Pat Murphy, Walter Jon Williams, James Patrick Kelly, and Terence M. Green.

YT: What do you think about Canadian SF?

AW: It's hard to define a separate identity for "Canadian SF," when most of the writers come from elsewhere (Gibson and Spider Robinson from the U.S., Michael Coney and myself from England, etc.) and when most of the work is first published elsewhere.

That said, I can see a Canadian influence on my own work, to the extent that it sometimes deals with issues of survival in a hostile environment (e.g., *Station Gehenna*) and of cultural marginality (e.g., "Distant Signals"). I can't speak for anyone else.

YT: Please tell me your reminiscences of some of your stories.

AW: "*The Alien Station*" (*Asimov's*, October 1984): This was inspired in part by David Bowie's song "Starman." On another level it's about cultural shifts, like the birth of rock 'n' roll (alluded to in the story) and the impact of the British "pirate" radio stations in the mid-60s. And it's about the loss of innocence: how most movements in popular art, in the end, get co-opted by the marketplace.

I used to write a lot about rock music, for *New Musical Express* and other publications. I stopped doing that when I was around 25: I thought that was too old to be a rock writer. But I still write about music in quite a number of my stories.

"*Klein's Machine*" (*Asimov's*, April 1985): This story took years to write and went through several versions. An earlier version was turned down everywhere. I'm grateful to Shawna McCarthy at *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* for publishing it in the end. I thought it was much too oddball to see daylight.

In part, "*Klein's Machine*" is an imaginary picture of an SF fan. When I started writing the story I knew very little about fandom. I pieced together Klein from the reminiscences of SF writers like Robert Silverberg and Damon Knight in *Hell's Cartographers*, and from the handful of fanzines I had read. I now recognize that this is not an accurate picture of the typical fan. Yet somehow it's psychologically accurate all the same.

"*Going Native*" (*Night Cry*, Winter 1985): This story was bought by TED Klein for *Twilight Zone* but got shunted into a horror magazine called *Night Cry* instead. Almost no one noticed it, but it was bought for the U.S. TV series *Tales From The Darkside*.

I would like to think the story speaks for itself.

"*The Egg*" (*Amazing*, September 1988): I wrote this story soon after ghost-writing a couple of high-school science textbooks: hence all the stuff about "questions for home study." I was thinking of an old Bradbury story about a boy growing mushrooms in the cellar: the robot egg being the late-20th-Century equivalent. Like the Bradbury model, it is profoundly Oedipal. I also thought it was very funny, but no one else thought so. I recall Darrell Schweitzer (formerly of *Asimov's* and *Amazing*) singling it out as "lacking character development." Others thought it was "cute." Only *Amazing's* Patrick Price had the vision — or the poor taste — to publish it. ["*Klein's Machine*" and "*Going Native*" are reprinted in *Distant Signals*.]

YT: What are you currently working on?

AW: A novel about the near-future called *Downside* that I have been hacking away at on and off for a couple of years now, and that is causing me endless agony. *

MEMBER BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrew Weiner

Novel: *Station Gehenna*, published in hardcover by Congdon & Weed, Chicago, October 1987, as part of the "Isaac Asimov Presents" series. Paperback edition December 1988 from Worldways Popular Library.

Collection: *Distant Signals and other stories*, published in trade paperback by Press Porcépic, Victoria, December 1989.

Short Stories:

1. "Empire of the Sun," *Again, Dangerous Visions*, Harlan Ellison, ed., Doubleday, New York, 1972 •
2. "The Deed," *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* ("F&SF"), May 1978
3. "Comedians," *F&SF*, February 1979
4. "Getting Near The End," *Proteus*, Richard S. McEnroe, ed., Ace Books, New York, 1981 •
5. "Lost Alaskan Terminal Retreat Blues," *Quarry*, Vol. 30, No. 3, Summer 1981
6. "Station Gehenna," *F&SF*, April 1982
7. "The Third Test," *Interzone*, Summer 1982
8. "The Letter," *F&SF*, November 1982
9. "The Housing Problem," *Leisure Ways*, November 1982
10. "On The Ship," *F&SF*, May 1983
11. "Takeover Bid," *Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone Magazine* ("TZ"), June 1983
12. "Invaders," *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* ("Asimov's"), October 1983
13. "One More Time," *Chrysalis 10*, Roy Torgeson, ed., Doubleday, New York, 1983
14. "Distant Signals," *TZ*, June 1984 * •
15. "The Alien Station," *Asimov's*, October 1984
16. "Klein's Machine," *Asimov's*, April 1985 •
17. "Going Native," *Night Cry*, Winter 1985 * •
18. "The Investigation," *Borderland*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Spring 1986
19. "The Band From The Planet Zoom," *Asimov's*, July 1986
20. "This Year Next Year," *TZ*, August 1986
21. "The News From D Street," *Asimov's*, September 1986 •
22. "Waves," *Asimov's*, March 1987 •
23. "Rider," *Asimov's*, July 1987 •
24. "Going to Meet the Alien," *F&SF*, August 1987
25. "The Alien in the Lake," *Asimov's*, September 1987
26. "Fake-Out," *Amazing Stories*, November 1987 •
27. "Twenty-Two Steps To The Apocalypse" (with Terence M. Green) *Asimov's*, January 1988
28. "The Man Who Was Lucky," *F&SF*, June 1988 •
29. "The Grandfather Problem," *Asimov's*, August 1988
30. "The Egg," *Amazing Stories*, September 1988
31. "This Is The Year Zero," *Full Spectrum*, Lou Aronica & Shawna McCarthy, eds., Bantam Spectra, New York 1988
32. "Leaving the Planet," *Distant Signals* (collection), Porcépic, 1989 •
33. "Inspiration," *Distant Signals* (collection), Porcépic, 1989 •
34. "Eternity, Baby," *Asimov's*, November 1990
35. "Streak," *Asimov's*, May 1992
36. "A New Man," *F&SF*, July 1992
37. "Changes," *In Dreams*, Paul J. McCauley & Kim Newman, eds., Victor Gollancz, London, 1992
38. "Seeing," *F&SF*, September 1992
39. "The Map," *Northern Frights*, Don Hutchison, ed., Mosaic Press, Oakville, Ontario, 1992
40. "In Dreams," *Asimov's*, forthcoming

* Made into episodes of the TV series *Tales From The Darkside*
• Included in Andrew's collection *Distant Signals* *

MARKET REPORT

Ranking the Markets

by Edo van Belkom

Copyright © 1992 by Edo van Belkom

Each year the editors of *Writer's Digest* magazine publish their "Fiction Fifty," a list of the top 50 places for writers to sell their wares.

The magazines are judged on several criteria, ranging from the number of manuscripts they purchase in a year and how much they pay for fiction, to the amount of "Tender Loving Care" stories receive and how much of a showcase the magazine is for your talent.

It's expected that the top magazines in the SF genre would make the list easily, and of course they do. What's surprising about the list however, is the order in which SF's top magazine's are listed. For example, no one would argue that *Omni* isn't the top magazine publishing SF today, but the editors of *Writer's Digest* judged it 25th overall, well behind many less prestigious and lower paying SF markets.

The reasons for this are obvious. For one, *Omni* buys very few fiction pieces in comparison to, say, *Analog*. Another reason is that it publishes few stories by new writers. Finally, it has a very limited range of interest.

Fortunately, *Omni* is only one of twelve magazines included in the top 50 that publish science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

In order, the top SF magazines according to the editors of *Writer's Digest* are:

2. *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*
3. *Pulphouse: A Fiction Magazine*
5. *Amazing Stories*
6. *Analog Science Fiction/Science Fact*
15. *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*
16. *2AM Magazine*
19. *Weird Tales*
25. *Omni*
27. *Aberations*
33. *The Silver Web*
35. *Figment*
43. *Aboriginal Science Fiction*

Not a bad list to go by if you're sending your stories out to markets in descending order.

Be warned however, that just because a magazine is listed in the top fifty doesn't necessarily make it professional. Magazines such as *2AM*, *Aberations*, *The Silver Web*, and *Figment* pay a cent a word or less.

Also, be advised that inclusion in the *Writer's Digest* list can sometimes be the end of a small magazine that is barely keeping its head above water.

For example, a recent market listing of *The Silver Web* by editor Ann Kennedy began with this preface: "The *Writer's Digest* listing in May has elicited such a flow of manuscripts (up to 30 a day), that I have decided to close to submissions until Thanksgiving Day. Response time has increased recently to as much as eight weeks . . ."

Still, publication in a magazine listed in the top 50 that publish fiction is a feather in any writer's cap and these twelve markets should be looked upon as preferred markets when deciding where to submit a story of science fiction, fantasy, or horror, especially if your story has been rejected by your first three or four choices.

Take your pick:

- *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*; Gardner Dozois, editor; 380 Lexington Ave.; New York, NY 10168-0038.
- *Pulphouse*; Dean Wesley Smith, editor; Box 1227; Eugene, OR 97440.

- *Amazing Stories*; Kim Mohan, editor; Box 111; Lake Geneva, WI 53147.
- *Analog Science Fiction*; Stanley Schmidt, editor; 380 Lexington Ave.; New York, NY 10168-0035.
- *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*; Kristine Kathryn Rusch, editor; Box 11526; Eugene, OR 97440.
- *2AM Magazine*; Gretta Anderson, editor; Box 6754; Rockford, IL 61125-1754.
- *Weird Tales*; Darrell Schweitzer, editor; Box 134168; Philadelphia, PA 19101.
- *Omni*; Ellen Datlow, Fiction editor; 1965 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.
- *Aberations*; Jon L. Herron, editor; Box 8040; #13 544 Ygnacio Valley Rd.; Walnut Creek, CA 94596.
- *The Silver Web*; Ann Kennedy, editor; Box 38190; Tallahassee, FL 32303.
- *Figment*; J. C. Hendee, editor; Box 3128; Moscow, Idaho 83843-0477.
- *Aboriginal Science Fiction*; Charles Ryan, editor; Box 2449; Woburn, MA 01888.

...

There has been a lot of activity in the SF short-fiction market the past few months and there are a few new magazines on the scene.

Both *Tomorrow* and *Science Fiction Age* are science fiction magazines which debuted at the World Science Fiction convention in Orlando, Florida, in September. *Tomorrow* is edited by Algis Budrys and backed by the *Pulphouse* people, while *SF Age* is edited by Scott Edelman and is already reported to have a subscription base of around 25,000. Both are professional markets paying three to seven cents a word.

Other new magazines publishing SF are *Glimpses*, edited by Mike Haynes, which is looking for all three SF genres, and *Sequitur*, edited by Rachel Drummond, which is looking for fiction that "explores the darker aspects of society, technology, philosophy . . ." *Glimpses* pays a half cent per word while *Sequitur*'s pay scale begins with a minimum payment of \$10.

In anthology news, there are several new open anthologies to take note of:

Marion Zimmer Bradley will begin reading for her newest *Sword and Sorceress* anthology March 1, 1993, and will continue reading through till May 15, 1993.

John Betancourt is editing an anthology called *Two-Fisted Writer Tales*, in which the protagonist of each story must be a writer — and not in a peripheral sort of way, but integral to the plot. This antho opened June 15 and will remain open for some time as he works on other projects for his Wildside Press.

And finally, an interesting anthology few will qualify for is *Colorado Fantastic*, a collection of original and reprint SF/F/H written by writers who currently live in Colorado or who have lived their for substantial periods in the past. Stories must also have strong Colorado settings. The antho is edited by Steve Rasnic Tem and will pay four cents a word. A tough market to fit into, but you never know.

Take your pick:

- *Tomorrow Science Fiction*; Algis Budrys, editor; Box 6038; Evanston, IL 60204.
- *Science Fiction Age*; Scott Edelman, editor; Box 369; Damascus, MD 20872.
- *Glimpses Magazine*; Mike Haynes, editor; Box 751; Bowling Green, OH 43402.
- *Sequitur*; Rachel Drummond, editor; Box 480146; Denver, CO 80246-0146.
- *Sword and Sorceress* 11; Marion Zimmer Bradley, editor; Box 249; Berkeley, CA 94701.
- *Two-Fisted Writer Tales*; John Betancourt, editor; The Wildside Press; 37 Fillmore St.; Newark, NJ 07105.
- *Colorado Fantastic*; Steve Rasnic Tem, editor; 2500 Irving St.; Denver, CO 80211.

KUDOS FOR CANADIANS

Award Winners

Canadian works of science fiction and fantasy have won many national and international awards. I'll be distributing the following list of winning works at a seminar for the Ontario Library Association this month. An asterisk (*) marks works that have won multiple awards.

Aurora Award

The Aurora is Canada's people's choice award. Ballots are distributed through Canadian SF specialty bookstores and periodicals. Prior to 1991, this award was known as the Casper. Below are all the English-language fiction winners; Auroras are also given to works in French. (In the missing years below, either no award was given or an award was given for lifetime achievement rather than to a specific work.)

;1992 Best Novel: *Golden Fleece* (SF) by Robert J. Sawyer of Thornhill, Ontario. Published by Warner Books, NY, 1990. *

1992 Best Short Story: "Breaking Ball" (SF) by Michael Skeet of Toronto, and "A Niche" (SF) by Peter Watts of Guelph, Ontario [tie]. Both in the collection *Tesseract*³, published by Beach Holme Press, Victoria, B.C., 1990.

1991 Best Novel: *Tigana* (Fantasy) by Guy Gavriel Kay of Toronto. Published by Penguin, Toronto, 1990.

1991 Best Short Story: "Muffin Explains Teleology to the World at Large" (Fantasy) by James Alan Gardner of Waterloo, Ontario, published in *OnSpec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*, Spring 1990; reprinted in *Tesseract*³.

1990 Best Novel: *West of January* (Fantasy) by Dave Duncan of Calgary. Published by Del Rey, NY, 1989.

1990 Best Short Story: "Carpe Diem" (SF) by Eileen Kernaghan of Burnaby, B.C. Published in *OnSpec: The Canadian Magazine of Speculative Writing*, Fall 1989; reprinted in *Tesseract*³.

1989 Best Novel: *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (SF) by William Gibson of Vancouver. Published by Bantam, NY, 1988.

1989 Best Short Story: "Sleeping in a Box" (SF) by Candace Jane Dorsey of Edmonton. Published in her collection *Machine Sex and Other Stories*, Beach Holme, Victoria, 1988.

1988 Best Novel: *Jack, the Giant Killer* (Fantasy) by Charles de Lint of Ottawa. Published by Ace, NY, 1987.

1987 Best Novel: *The Wandering Fire* (Fantasy) by Guy Gavriel Kay of Toronto. Published by Collins, Toronto, 1986. This is book two of the "Fionavar Tapestry" trilogy; book one is *The Summer Tree* (M&S, Toronto, 1984) and book three is *The Darkest Road* (Collins, Toronto, 1986).

1985 Best Novel: *Songs from the Drowned Lands* (Fantasy) by Eileen Kernaghan of Burnaby, B.C. Published by Ace, NY, 1983.

1982 Best Novel: *A Judgment of Dragons* (SF) by Phyllis Gotlieb of Toronto. Published by Berkley, NY, 1980.

British Science Fiction Award

Given annually by the British Science Fiction Association.

1977 Best Novel: *Brontomek!* (SF) by Michael Coney of Sidney, B.C. Published by Gollancz, UK, 1976.

Arthur C. Clarke Award

A juried award sponsored by the British Science Fiction Association, the International Science Policy Foundation, and the SF Foundation, for the best SF novel published in Great Britain.

1987 Winner: *The Handmaid's Tale* (SF) by Margaret Atwood of Toronto. Originally published in Canada by McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1985. *

Compton Crook Memorial Award

A juried award given by the Baltimore Science Fiction Society for the best first novel of the year.

1983 Winner: *Courtship Rite* (SF) by Donald Kingsbury of Montreal. Published by Simon & Schuster, NY, 1982.

Philip K. Dick Award

An American juried award, given for the best SF novel originally published in paperback.

1985 Winner: *Neuromancer* (SF) by William Gibson of Vancouver. Published by Ace, NY, 1984. *

Governor General's Award

A cash award (\$5,000 in 1985), presented by The Canada Council.

1985 English Fiction Winner: *The Handmaid's Tale* (SF) by Margaret Atwood of Toronto. Published by McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1985. *

HOMer Award

The HOMer is a people's choice award, given by the 7,000 members of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Forum on CompuServe.

1992 Best Fantasy Novel: *The Little Country* (Fantasy) by Charles de Lint of Ottawa. Published by Morrow, NY, 1991.

1991 Best First Novel: *Golden Fleece* (SF) by Robert J. Sawyer of Thornhill, Ontario. Published by Warner Books, NY, 1990. *

Hugo Award

Voted on by the members of the annual World SF Convention.

1985 Best Novel: *Neuromancer* (SF) by William Gibson of Vancouver. Published by Ace, NY, 1984. *

1983 Best Short Story: "Melancholy Elephants" (SF) by Spider Robinson of Vancouver. Reprinted in his collection *Melancholy Elephants*, Penguin, Toronto, 1984.

1978 Best Novella: "Stardance" (SF) by Spider and Jeanne Robinson of Vancouver. Part of the novel *Stardance*, Dial, NY, 1979 [reprinted by Tor, NY, 1986]. *

1977 Best Novella: "By Any Other Name" (SF) by Spider Robinson of Vancouver. Part of the novel *Telepath*, Berkley, NY, 1976 [reprinted by Tor, NY, 1988].

Nebula Award

The field's only peer award, the Nebula is voted on by the active members of the Science-fiction and Fantasy Writers of America.

1984 Best Novel: *Neuromancer* (SF) by William Gibson of Vancouver. Published by Ace, NY, 1984. *

1977 Best Novella: "Stardance" (SF) by Spider and Jeanne Robinson of Vancouver. Part of the novel *Stardance*, Dial, NY, 1979 [reprinted by Tor, 1986]. *

Writers of the Future Grand Prize

A quarterly international juried award for new writers, culminating in the annual selection of a Grand Prize Winner.

1990 Grand Prize: "The Children of Crèche" (SF) by James Alan Gardner of Waterloo, Ontario. Published in *Writers of the Future, Vol. IV*, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles, 1990. *

UPCOMING EVENTS

Book Launches

Toronto: Bakka Books, 282 Queen Street West, will be launching *Northern Frights* on Friday the 13th of November, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Contributors who will likely be on hand include Carolyn Clink, Terence M. Green, Tanya Huff, Nancy Kilpatrick, Shirley Meier, David Nickle, Edo van Belkom, Karen Wehrstein, and Andrew Weiner, plus editor Don Hutchison.

Vancouver: Local SF writers Barbara Delaplace and Sean Russell will be signing at White Dwarf Books, 4374 W 10th Avenue, on Saturday, December 5, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Barbara will be signing copies of the latest anthologies with stories by her: *Whatdunits*, *Aladdin: Master of the Lamp*, and, if it arrives in time, *A Christmas Bestiary*. Sean, the author of *The Initiate Brother*, will be signing copies of his new book, *Gatherer of Clouds*. *

AURORA AWARDS

Early Nominations

Because Convention is being held so early next year (it's the second weekend in March, some *four months* earlier in the year than the 1992 Convention), nominating ballots for the 1993 Aurora Awards are being distributed now. Deadline for nominations: January 15, 1993. Don't forget to participate! *

FICTION SHOWCASE

Freedom by Barbara Delaplace

From *Alternate Kennedys*, Tor Books, 1992

Copyright © 1992 by Barbara Delaplace

Freedom.

He loved the sea and sky. The vast expanse of empty air and water filled him with an oddly thrilling sense of his own unimportance. Not for him that terrifying insignificance his fellow pilots felt as the ground disappeared beneath them. Here, all things shrank into their true, proper proportions, and freed him.

He smiled wryly to himself. They'd laugh at him if he told them that.

"Free?" they'd ask. "What d'ya mean you feel free out there? Don't you feel free right now? Man, I wish I had what you've got, J.J.: status, money, family connections . . . If those are problems, I could sure learn to live with 'em."

Sure they could.

But if they had all those, they'd also have his father, and he wouldn't wish that on anyone.

He shifted slightly in the cramped, noisy quarters of the cockpit. This was no limousine, that's for sure. But *he* was the one in control here. The powerful engine did *his* bidding, took him to where *he* told it. Took him to where there was just him, the sky around him, the sun above him, and the ocean below. To freedom.

He was never free at home. He always felt like an appendage. Even his nickname, J.J. Short for Joe Jr.: Joseph Kennedy Junior. *He didn't even give me a name of my own.* He clenched a fist. *Just a continuation of the family bloodline, that's me.* The family was more important than the individual.

No, that was wrong. The wishes of Joe Kennedy Senior were more important than the individual, particularly if that individual was his eldest son, for whom he had plans. That's how it had been all his life, it seemed — living out his father's plans for him.

"But I don't like to play football."

"Nonsense, young man — every red-blooded American boy loves football. You'll sign up for the team."

"Sir, I'd really rather sign up for swimming. Coach Roberts says I've got a good chance . . ."

His father's eyebrows lowered, a dangerous sign, but he kept his voice level. "I said you'll sign up for football. And I'll phone Coach Roberts and tell him you're not going out for swimming."

"But sir . . ."

"Enough!" *His father's voice was thunderous. "You'll do as I tell you!"*

And he did. Coach Roberts got the phone call, all right, and suddenly showed a distinct lack of interest in the swimming abilities of one Joe Kennedy Jr. He learned an important lesson then: it didn't matter what his thoughts, his wishes, his dreams were. What counted were his father's thoughts and wishes. And later on, his father's wishes had included Harvard and law.

"Law?"

"Of course. What else?"

"But I planned to go into journalism."

"NO!" *His father was furious. "No son of mine is going to waste his time scribbling words on paper! You're going to learn a proper skill, one that's going to be useful to you in the future — not fritter away your time at writing! Lawyers are important. They meet important people, make contacts, contacts you'll need when you go into politics."*

He tried to assert himself. "Father, I've already applied at

Columbia.”

“Irrelevant. I decide what’s best for you! You’re going to follow my wishes. That’s the end of this discussion.”

And once again, as always, he’d done as he was told. His friend Dick once asked him, over a cup of coffee in the mess, “But J.J. — why didn’t you just go ahead and go to Columbia?” He grimaced. “Dick, you don’t know my father.”

“So what? With your marks you’d be guaranteed a scholarship. A place to live is no problem — you’d have frats stumbling over themselves to rush you. And even if he cut off your money, there’s lots of on-campus jobs. You’d get by.”

He sighed. “My father has friends in high places — lots of friends — and that includes university presidents. A few phone calls, and I’d be out on my ass.”

“You’re kidding!”

“Oh, they wouldn’t expel me. They’d just call me aside for a quiet chat to explain the situation, how they knew I wouldn’t want to go against the wishes of my father. ‘A fine man, your father. And important to us here at the university.’ You get the picture.”

Dick looked at him with a tinge of envy. “I guess I do. Imagine having that sort of power — just a phone call.”

He smiled grimly. “Trust me, you wouldn’t enjoy it. It comes with price tags, big ones.”

“They might be worth it. I might be willing to give it a try.”

He smiled to himself. Dick might, too. There wasn’t a man in the military who could work harder when he had a goal in mind than Dick Nixon. He checked his compass heading for the umpteenth time. Reconnaissance wasn’t especially exciting, and a flier could easily get lost: too much featureless, empty ocean. You had to stay alert. But at least it got him up here where he could be free in the vault of the sky.

Not that he minded much being down below — much to his surprise, he loved life in the navy. He admitted it: one of the main reasons he’d enlisted was to get away from the all-pervading presence of his father. Then he’d gone to tell him what he’d done, apprehension gnawing at him. But for once his father approved of his actions.

“I joined up today.”

“Well done, Joe. Every American must do his duty to his country. I know you’ll bring glory to the Kennedy name. What service?”

He felt his heart lifting — his father was pleased with him! “The Navy.”

“Excellent! That will look impressive on your record after the war, when you go into politics. Help garner votes.”

His joy suddenly evaporated. Of course, he should have realized. “I hadn’t thought about that. I suppose it will.”

“Of course it will. We’ll make a point of playing up your service record. Make you a war hero.”

“Sir, I don’t think you can make a hero.”

“That will be quite enough, young man. I won’t tolerate impertinence.”

Impertinence. He sighed inwardly. As if he was still a schoolboy, not a man of twenty-five.

“Yes, sir.”

What else could he say?

Even then, Joe Senior had been making more plans for his son, planning to exploit whatever he could to improve his chances of being elected.

Never mind that I have no interest in politics. Never mind that Jack is the one with the charm, the looks, the drive for glory. He’d be a natural, and he’d love every minute of it. He’d make a fine politician, a fine President. Not me.

Somehow he just couldn’t seem to gather enough courage to defy his father. He was powerless against that supreme self-assurance. Yeah, I’d make a fine leader for the most powerful country in the world. Some man you are, Junior. How can you stand up to Hitler and Hirohito when you can’t even stand up to your father?

He found himself idly wondering if Hitler or Hirohito could stand up to his father, either.

“The Bouviers have a daughter. Pretty girl named Jacqueline. Blue-blood family. It’ll be a good match. We’ll arrange a few get-togethers, make sure it gets in the society pages.”

He won’t even let me choose my own wife!

His father was a monster that wouldn’t be denied. That familiar feeling of helplessness surged over him yet again, the feeling of things moving beyond his control.

“Face it, Joe, you’re a weakling.” He suddenly realized he’d spoken aloud; his words would be heard by the entire flight. “Ah, sorry about that, guys. My mind was wandering.”

No response. “Den Mother, this is Alpha Foxtrot Three calling. Come in please.”

The radio remained silent. “Den Mother, this is Alpha Foxtrot Three calling. Come in.”

Nothing. The radio set had been misbehaving for three days now, and each day the mechanics thought they’d got it fixed. He shrugged. Right now, it didn’t seem to matter. He could see the rest of his life stretching before him, all planned out. Planned out by a man who didn’t care a damn for Joseph Kennedy Junior, but only for his own ambition to make the Kennedys the most powerful family in the land. Royalty in a country that had proudly defied royalty.

He laughed bitterly. It wouldn’t even matter if he died right this moment. That wouldn’t stop his father. After all, he had more sons. He’d put on a black arm band and mourn, and then shift his attentions to Jack.

He’d make his dead son a hero who gave his life in the service of his country. He’d make certain the death of Joseph Kennedy Junior would bring even more honor to the Kennedy clan, who never asked (in public) what their country could do for them, but only what they could do for their country.

I’m powerless. No matter what I do, my father will make it serve him.

He craned his neck, glanced down at the immense vista of water. How peaceful and clear everything seemed here. Above was the incredibly blue dome of the sky set with the blazing sun. The firmament created by God, with the greater light that ruled the day.

I wish I could stay here forever.

Never again to worry about his father’s plans, but simply glory in the stark simple beauty of air, fire and water all around him. The thought of having to become earthbound again, of having to carry out all those plans made him feel unutterably weary. Down through all the years of his life, fulfilling someone else’s dreams, never his own.

Then it came to him.

A way to thwart his father. A way to carry out his own wishes. A way that set him free forever.

The one choice he could make, and his father couldn’t stop him. He could make it right now. A last flight to a blessed oblivion.

He set the controls, lowered the nose of his plane. It rocketed toward the wrinkled metal surface of the ocean. His hands clenched the arms of his seat. As the furious drone of the engine grew louder and louder in his ears, he kept his eyes raised to the heavens. In a few seconds, he would finally be at peace. The force of the impact would kill them instantly. He was sorry, truly sorry, about Dick and the others, but as his father had pointed out so many times, once you know what you want, you never let anyone stand in your way. You go out and you take it. And he finally knew what he wanted.

Freedom. *

This story originally appeared in the invitation-only anthology *Alternate Kennedys*. **Barbara Delaplace** has contributed to many other such books, including *Horse Fantastic*, *Dragon Fantastic*, *Dinosaur Fantastic*, *By Any Other Fame*, *Alternate Warriors*, *Alternate Presidents*, *Battlestation, Vol. 1*, *The Crafters, Vol. 2*, and *Journeys to The Twilight Zone II*. She lives in Vancouver, and is eligible for the 1993 John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer.