

AVATAR PRESS

FREAKISH CONJOINED TWINS ON DISPLAY AT LOCAL SCI-FI CONVENTION



Chattanooga, TN – AP, January 18, 2003

In a bizarre show harkening back to the shameful traveling carnival side shows of old, a local Sci-Fi convention had in attendance, among a wide variety of freaks, geeks and other oddities, Randy and Julie, twins who are conjoined at the head. Julie, the older sister, celebrated her birthday today. Randy, the younger brother, will celebrate his in April. They told this reporter that they enjoy attending Sci-Fi conventions regularly because they feel they do not stand out as much as in the mundane world. A fact that this reporter can readily confirm based on my brief foray as a stranger in this strange land...(continue on page C-8).

AVATAR PRESS

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RANDY RANTS

I hope everyone had a great holiday season. I took a lot of time off and spent most of it doing nothing in particular (which felt really good). I won the lottery! Twice! Whenever I pass through Georgia, I usually pick up a lottery ticket. In December, I won \$5 that I used to buy more tickets in January. This next time, I won \$4. I'm definitely entering Publishers Clearing House this year.

I've yet to start my weight loss efforts for the New Year. I hope to start soon. I need to get a physical soon also due to various complaints.

I'm not very tasked right now at work (which may not bode well for my future) but I am learning more about Web technologies in hopes it will come in use on my current projects (DHTML, XML, VBScript, and ActiveX Controls).

I got a great deal for a second TV Tuner Card (\$17.80) for my main computer. Now I have don't have the excuse of missing TV to prevent me from working on zines. It's also a Haupauge WIN-TV card. I highly recommend them over ATI for ease of installation and use and great support web site.

My mom has had stomach problems (nausea and vomiting) for months. The latest x-rays still turned up nothing. Her latest medication seems to be helping but I think it's too soon to tell. I find it strange that her doctor put her on new types of medicine without even seeing her between visits, based solely on phone calls.

I will be working during February to get the next issue of the Southern Fandom Bulletin done.

I've signed up for a weekly acrylic painting class. Unfortunately, it has been cancelled two weeks in a row due to weather. I hope to have some paintings to show in art shows by years end. ☒

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EVENT REPORTS

I spent Thanksgiving being hosted by **Julie Wall**. She fixed a wonderful repast that was thoroughly enjoyable. What a cook! Her brother, **Jason** also fixed some wicked margaritas. Afterwards, we stopped over to visit **Charlotte Proctor**. It was one my most enjoyable Thanksgivings.

I took about three weeks off around Christmas to News Years. I spent a few pleasant days with friends in Durham, NC, watching movies and eating. Then I spend Christmas week in Lexington, NC with my mom. My oldest nephew actually did not blow up this year so Christmas was mellow. He actually has a job now (in a nursing home) making good money for a high school dropout. I hope he keeps it and earns enough to eventually move out on his home. I think everyone will be happier living apart.

After Christmas, I drove back home in time to attend **Julie Wall's** holiday party. It was fun with lots of guests, food, and drinks. Julie even did the Australian Wine Skit for us!

I spent New Year's over at a coworker/gamer buddies with a few other people. We watched cartoon channel while some people played computer games. It was a quiet evening.

I attended Chattacon. I will write up a longer report for the *NASFA Shuttle*. I had a good time, not the best Chattacon, but not the worst. Friday, we enjoyed the Guest Reception, parties, and sampled many drinks. We shanghaied **Greg Benford** and **Naomi Fisher** to get into one private party at one point. **Julie Wall's** birthday was that Saturday and we went out to dinner at the Big River Grill with **Bill** and **Linda Zielke**. Also attending were Shelly(?), Wolf, David, and Dudley, whose last names I don't know. The Shrimp Grits were good (as Julie can attest as she kept sampling them out of my bowl). Her Filet Medallions were good also. I sold four pieces in the art show (at low bids) and picked up a Powers print. I voted for DUFF and paid **Naomi Fisher** for my ConCave membership in one stop. The lack of hot water in the mornings in our room was a real problem though. ☒



BOOK REVIEWS

Wicked: the Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West (1995) by G. Maguire. Book Review by Leana Justice

We're in Oz; it's OK to have sex with consenting Animals. I found not a single memorable quote in the novel. I did, however, finish reading, doubtless driven by morbid curiosity. Maguire successfully humanizes the 'wicked witch,' or Elphaba to family and a few college friends. She is a political dissident during the Wizard's usurpation of the infant Ozma's throne. Characters and brief subplots are drawn from Baum's novels (gnome king, southern marshes), but Maguire enriches OZ by forcing characters to operate within social, religious and political arenas. Elphaba uses the title 'witch' to tap land's powerful religious mythologies, layers of disparate religions heaped into the citizen's lives by propaganda, political decisions from Emerald City, and traveling clerics. The title 'witch' grants Elphaba immediate power/authority during a succession of critical conflicts, power that she fails to use correctly or quickly enough to win her way. 'Witch' is a pseudonym the protagonist assumes despite her very limited magical powers.

Ultimately *Wicked* is a novel of one individual's failures. Elphaba fails to (1) finish college (2) have a happy sex life (3) overthrow the Wizard (4) be a good mother (5) save her sister - now called the Wicked Witch of the East- or feel sorry she died (6) make her Dad love her (7) get her sister's shoes (8) get forgiveness from a wronged woman (9) help Munchkinland secede (10) rescue her 'adoptive' family (11) stop Dorothy (12) protect her pets/familiars from Dorothy.

After this novel, you will experience a heaviness of limbs and heart. Score: B-

The following reviews are by me.

Crypto-nomicon by Neal Stephenson

I enjoyed reading this very long book that weaves a story based on lots of semi-historical events in World War II and a modern day techno-thriller. The ride is worth the price of admission though the climax is mild. Computer geeks should enjoy this. History buffs might also enjoy the literary license on true events. I rate this book an "A-".

Dune: House Corrino by Brain Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson

The third book in the *Dune: House* trilogy was quite enjoyable. It wraps up all the plot lines of the two other books nicely and culminates with the birth of Paul

Atreides. I enjoyed the pacing and the insight into the back history leading up to *Dune* (one of my favorite novels). Some of the violence/action is rather dark but this is keeping with the tragic nature of most of the characters. I rate this book an A.

Spectrum 9: The Best In Contemporary Fantastic Art, Cathy Fenner and Arnie Fenner, Editors

This volume was beautiful as always. I could live without the overt political commentaries in the front (reviewing the years events) though. Standalone, I rate this book an A. In comparison to pervious volumes, I rate it as a B.

Dilbert and the Way of the Weasel by Scott Adams

I am a Scott Adams disciple. He is my prophet. I laughed over and over reading this and then I was very depressed when I was done as I realized that I was essentially laughing about a major component of my life (my work environment). This is a humor-writing book about work (and people) that Adams sums up as a new simple theory: "people are weasels". Then the next 348 pages are filled with examples and related Dilbert cartoons. I rate this book as an A- (X)



MUSIC REVIEWS

Okay, I admit, I went a little insane and rejoined the Columbia House Music Club. With the introductory CD's (still have five more to choose) and other offers and Christmas Gifts, I've gotten the following large number of CD's in the last month. Micro ratings accompany.

<i>Air Supply, Definitive Collection</i>	B-
<i>Alice in Chains Greatest Hits</i>	A
<i>Bare Naked Ladies Greatest Hits</i>	A
<i>Collective Soul, 7 Year Itch</i>	B-
<i>Creed, Weathered</i>	A
<i>Doors, Best of</i>	A
<i>Devo, Are We Not Men? We are Devo!</i>	B
<i>Essential Spring Break 2001</i>	A
<i>Foreigner, Very Best...</i>	B+
<i>Green Day, International Superhits</i>	A+
<i>James Taylor Greatest Hits Volume 1</i>	A
<i>James Taylor Greatest Hits Volume 2</i>	B
<i>Journey Greatest Hits</i>	A-
<i>Kinks, Come Dancing</i>	A
<i>Live in the X-Lounge</i>	A+
<i>New Order, Best of</i>	B
<i>Psychedelic Furs Greatest Hits</i>	B
<i>REO Speedwagon Greatest Hits</i>	B
<i>Simply Red Greatest Hits</i>	A
<i>StereoLab, Sound-Dust</i>	C

Tomb Raider A
*White Stripes, White Blood Cells Plus** A

*This CD came with a DVD with four music videos and two extra songs not on the CD. I enjoyed it. ☒



MOVIE REVIEWS

I watched *The Other Guy* as a rental and had never heard of it beforehand. It's a fun silly goofy comedy starring Dave Foley (*News Radio*, *Kids in the Hall*) and Meg Tilly (*Bound*, *Bride of Chuckie*). If you are looking for a nice popcorn home movie to pass some slow weekend evening, I can recommend this. I rate it as a B.

Okay, everyone has probably seen these next two so I just give some comments.

Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers

Beautiful but suffers some in pacing. For people who berate if for differences from the book, "get over it." I rate this as a B+.

Star Trek: Nemesis (10)

The exception that proves the rule, "even numbered Star Trek movies don't suck." Out with a whimper with hokey plots, motivations, gadgets, and dialog. Good for puns though. "At least they remembered to make a Data backup". I rate this as a C. ☒



MAILING COMMENTS FOR SFPA 230

JEFF COPELAND

Hugo Box Scores

Thanks for the analysis.

Weasel Crossing

I read Scott Adams', *Way of the Weasel*, recently. It was funny and depressing (as it's so true to my working life). I hope Liz is doing better. Election 2000—"It's dead, Jim" to paraphrase McCoy. Thanks for the reviews. Thanks for the comments.

All the Quotes that Didn't Fit Anywhere Else 5

Thanks for the quotes.

Southern Fandom Press Alliance Egoboo Poll &

Ballot Results 2001

Ach! I'll do better on comments this year!

NED BROOKS

The New Port News 206

Hope to see you at the next DSC. I also hope war with Iraq can yet be averted but suspect it will start in February. Thanks for the comments about the SFC Bulletin cover. Your mother's problem bush might be a Japanese Plum Tree.

It Goes on the Shelf 24

Thanks for all the reviews of your eclectic collection. About HTML coding errors in the online version of the zine, some browsers are more "forgiving" of HTML syntax by design. I'll have to look up Randy Broecker's art work. Mark Bodé used to perform a live cartoon slide show of his and his fathers work with vocalizations at Dragon*Con for a few years.

DAVID SCHLOSSER

Peter, Pan & Merry 46

I also like *John Doe* and *Firefly*. I wish FOX would not be so ham fisted with *Firefly* (like they are with most of their SF shows). *Enterprise* is okay but *The Dead Zone* has most surprised me (exceeding expectations).

TIMOTHY C. MARION

The Curse of Cthulhu

This is very apropos title. Pettiness personified.

RICH LYNCH

Variations on a Theme 17

Thanks for the California trip report and the Coger obituary. He was at a convention I was at a few years ago and seems like a nice enough individual from my brief impression.

ARTHUR D. HLAVATY

Confessions of a Consistent Liar 79

I also think Art should be judged for its own inherent merits and not through any lens created by judgments of the artist, i.e. political leanings.

Derogatory Reference 100

Congratulations on your 100th issue! Very interesting ruminations.

NORM METCALF

Tyndallite, Volume 3, Number 104
RAEBNC.

BOBYE GEORGE POULWETTE

Anoit4her Issue I been thnnkin bout
Keep plugging.

RICHARD DENGROVE

Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette 78

The fellow who spoke at DSC about landing at the wrong airport was Vincent Di Fate. You have "pictures" of dinosaurs? ;-) You write on our zines! :-0 Thanks for the comments. I upgraded the other computer to Windows 98 SE. I'll only move to Windows XP whenever I buy my next new computer. Ah yes, I too think I would not be a bad husband. Having an opportunity to prove it is another matter. ;-) That picture of G.Gordon Liddy reminds me of the current leader of Iraq.

GUY H. LILLIAN III

Spititus Mundi 192

Sorry about your car blowing up. Good luck with DUFF. Thanks for the kind words for my first SFC Bulletin. Good luck with the next Challenger.

Guy and Rosy for DUFF
Hope y'all win.

JANICE GELB

Trivial Pursuits 104

Funny cover! Sun announces layouts before they happen? Intergraph (my company) never announces them. Condolences on your sprained ankle. Ouch. Thanks for the World Fantasy Con report.

The Giants Win the Pennant! The Giants Win the Pennant!

Congratulations on the enjoyment. It's just money.

GARY BROWN

Uncle Lon's Unofficial Box Scores 36

Where are the late bird stats? ;-)

Oblio 143

I've also made my second bedroom become my comic book room recently. I have several months of comics to merge into my collection. Good luck with your efforts. I had some friends in Sigma Nu at NCSU and remember that Frat fondly.

SHELIA STRICKLAND

Revenant 15

Sorry for your computer problems. Good luck with the course work.

TOM FELLER

Frequent Flyer

Good luck with the house building. "VeriChip" – Chilling concept. Thanks for the con report.

DON MARKSTEIN

The Sphere

"Homeland Security" scares me too. Republican majority does not equal total control. The differences between Republican and Democrat in actions are as slight as the differences in their rhetoric are broad.

Good luck getting your European stuff in print in English if Gladstone reprints them.

My condolences on your nephew.

Thanks for the comments. I think I may be done with buying state of the art computers when slightly older ones are so much cheaper and just as good for I need.

MIKE WEBER

Ascending Descending

Nice little zine. I envy color printing. According to a History Channel show I saw, the highest G-force experienced voluntarily by a human who survived was 45 G's (done in Air Force Rocket Sled experiments). It was for a fraction of a second and the guy was pretty beat up but fully recovered.

That Was The Year That Was

Thanks for the CD. Cool! Thanks for the extras on there. I used my DVD player to play the video and audio portions. Eclectic.

JANET LARSON

Passages 16

Here's to another five years of membership! Thanks for the doctor information. I really need to get a physical soon. I also agree we need tort reform but think maybe we'll just end up shooting all the lawyers finally. I think we need medical insurance reform also.

STEVE HUGHES

Random Thoughts

Alabama also now a Republican governor (after Florida-like Election Problems). Interesting Interest comments.

A Christmas Ornament for SFPA

Cool!

Comments 17

Good luck with the book. Hope to see you at DSC. By the way, I don't think we are looking for Jewell. I think he was the innocence security guard that was wrongly suspected of the Atlanta Olympics bombing.

LIZ COPELAND

Under the Knife with the Armadillo 56

I hope you are recovering well from your surgeries. Take it easy.

GARY R. ROBE

Tennessee Trash 50

Thanks for the trip report. Congratulations on your scout training. I've never been on a military ship like the Charleston. I'll have to do that on vacation someday. I've never heard of the Halloween Witch back porch tradition before. Thanks for the reviews.

T.K.F.WEISSKOPF REINHARDT

"Yngvi is a Louse" And Other Graffitos 80

I would love to take a New York Museum vacation

someday. Thanks for the trip report. I'll have to borrow my friends 5 DVD LOTR set now that you gave it good reviews. Funny poem.

EVE ACKERMAN

Guilty Pleasures 26

Good luck with the agent search. Raphi turned down a girl inviting him to a Salsa dance so he could study! I wish now that I had spent less time studying in college and more time dancing. :-) Thanks for the reviews. Wow on the blood spurt.

GEORGE H. WELLS

Somewhere...

Sorry you missed Hank and Toni's visit. I envy you meeting Erin Gray. I really enjoyed her outfits as a lad when she was on the TV show, *Buck Rogers*. ☒



FINAL COMMENTS

I did mailing comments! I'll try to do more next time. Hope your winter goes well and spring comes soon. ☺

Sincerely,

Randy B. Cleary ☒

