

Challenger

13



STEVE STILES

CHALLENGER 13

fall 2000

Guy H. Lillian III, editor * P.O. Box 53092 * New Orleans LA 70153-3092

GHLIII@yahoo.com * 504/821-2362 * GHLIII Press Publication #898

Website under construction at <http://www.crosswinds.net/~ghliii>

Cover by Steve Stiles

Calligraphy by Tim Marion

CONTENTS

Bon Chance!	GHLIII	(Art by Kelly Freas; photos by GHLIII and Rose-Marie Donovan)	3
Waiting for Shakespeare	Greg Benford	(Art by Bryan Norris)	11
Shakespeare, Science Fiction, and all that Jazz	Russell Blackford		13
Anti-Android Therapy	Gene R. Stewart	(Art by Sean Russell Friend)	16
The American Election	GHLIII		21
The Zine Dump	the faneds of fandom		22
Safe Hands	John Berry		37
Caesar meadows' Micro-Cosmic Template	Bryan Norris		38
Gernsback Meets Aristotle	Jeffreys Copeland & Haemer		39
Slovakian Safari	Mike Resnick	(Art by Charlie Williams)	45
The Challenger Tribute: Toni Weisskopf	GHLIII		52
Epistles	our loyal readership		54
"The Pounding"	Charlie Williams	(Art by the author)	72
Challenger at Chicon	GHLIII	(Photos by Rose-Marie Donovan & GHLIII)	83

Challenger #13 is an amateur magazine produced for science fiction fandom, available for trade, contribution, letter of comment, \$6/issue or the hell of it. All rights revert to contributors upon publication. (c) 2000 by Guy Lillian III.



“Bon Chance!”

“You are about to learn a new definition of *power*.”

The guy used to work for Rosy at a weekly Florida newspaper. Behind him loomed the Vehicle Assembly Building, enormous, silent, awesome, the third largest edifice on Earth. A shift of my eyes and I was looking at the subject of his comment, poised on its gantry, a few miles distant. Scott, a reporter, was not exaggerating for effect. He’d been to a slew of these things and he knew whereof he spoke.

To Rose-Marie, onetime NASA brat, it was old hat. When she was 14, her father, Joseph Green, had hosted one of the epic parties in the history of science fiction. Present, among others: Dan Galouye, Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke. The site was Merritt Island, Florida, and the occasion was the launch of Apollo 11. Rosy watched the 36-story Saturn V fly the next day — and she’d seen most of the rockets rise since. Often she watched them from her daddy’s lawn. She had even seen night launches before. But here she was, because here *I* was, and she wanted me to see this.

This: STS-97, the space shuttle **Endeavour**, carrying solar panels to the International Space Station. Just another shuttle launch, one of many — but the first with Guy H. Lillian III in attendance. Drowning my fear of flying in vodka and orange juice, and comforted by perfect weather, I’d made the journey to middle Florida from New Orleans that morning. By now I’d sobered up. Leaving the plane to find those beautiful eyes laughing over a sign with my name, and her dressed like a chauffeur, had done much to bring me back to the world — a world which, at the moment, seemed rife with joy, and which now, seemed rich with excitement.

Rosy had secured press badges for herself and for me, calling me her photographer. So we had a superb vantage: the press site just across the lagoon from launch pad 39-B and just down the road from the VAB. Being part of the Fourth Estate brought additional benefits. Several hours before the 10 PM launch, we were bused across Cape Canaveral to a building called the OMC, where we waited behind barriers, scanned by SWAT cops carrying machine guns (index fingers extended past the trigger guard), including one watchful dude on the roof. A silver Airstream trailer sat in readiness. When the five astronauts appeared in their helmet-less red spacesuits, I spotted the Canadian in their midst, Marc Garneau. I shouted out, “*Bon chance!*” and was rewarded with an upturned thumb in reply.

It grew colder. Back at the press site we bought silly sweatshirts with launch paintings on the backs. It grew later. On the TV monitors set up before the press stands we watched Garneau literally twiddle his thumbs before they loaded him into the shuttle. The 10:06 lift-off time had been set to match a narrow two-and-a-half minute window to allow **Endeavour** to catch the space station with a minimal



use of fuel. Gazing at the shuttle — clearly visible, especially through binoculars — I remembered a friend's dreary experience, sitting through hours of anticipation at a launch to have it scrubbed at the last minute. For a moment as the countdown grew close we feared that would happen now, as a glitch appeared during a planned hold ... but then the familiar reassuring words came through: *Green* as in light, and *Go* as in *Launch*.

The famous digital clock on the lawn before us assumed yet another zero as the count dropped below one minute. The lagoon before us, said to churn with ducks, alligators, even manatee, was hidden by reporters and photographers hoping for a reflection shot. I lifted the binocs to my eyes. The egress tower angled away from **Endeavour's** side. Capcom's voice began to recite numbers backwards matching those on the giant digital timepiece. *Ten — nine — eight ...*

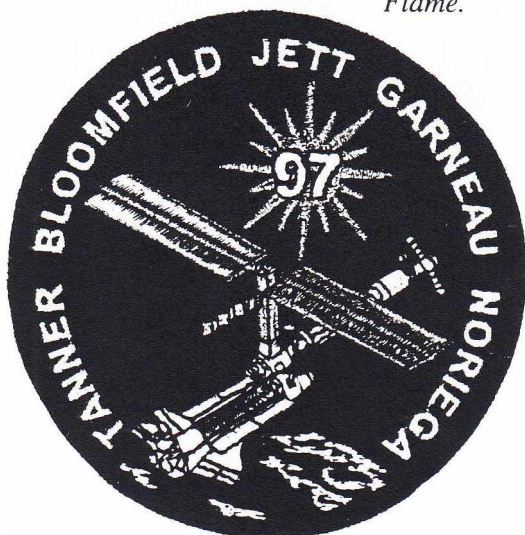
The nozzles at the base of the orbiter glared red. The rocket shuddered on the gantry and began to move upward. Then the solids kicked in and I felt the wrath of God.

Force.

Flame.

Sound.

Power.



The awesome flame smashed into the Earth, pushed against the earth, drove its cargo upward and away in a crackling roar of defiance that bruised your hearing like a volley of gunfire ten feet from your face. Flame too bright to stand through the binoculars, blasted down into the Earth, denying its hold, and noise that rattled the stand and shook the Earth drove me back to stare at the black cloud billowing beneath the rising rocket as it peeled up and away, roaring, crackling, the most intense and undeniable expression of *force* and *power* imaginable on this planet to any purpose under Heaven. "God! God!" I screamed, calling on the Creator to witness what wonder His children had wrought.

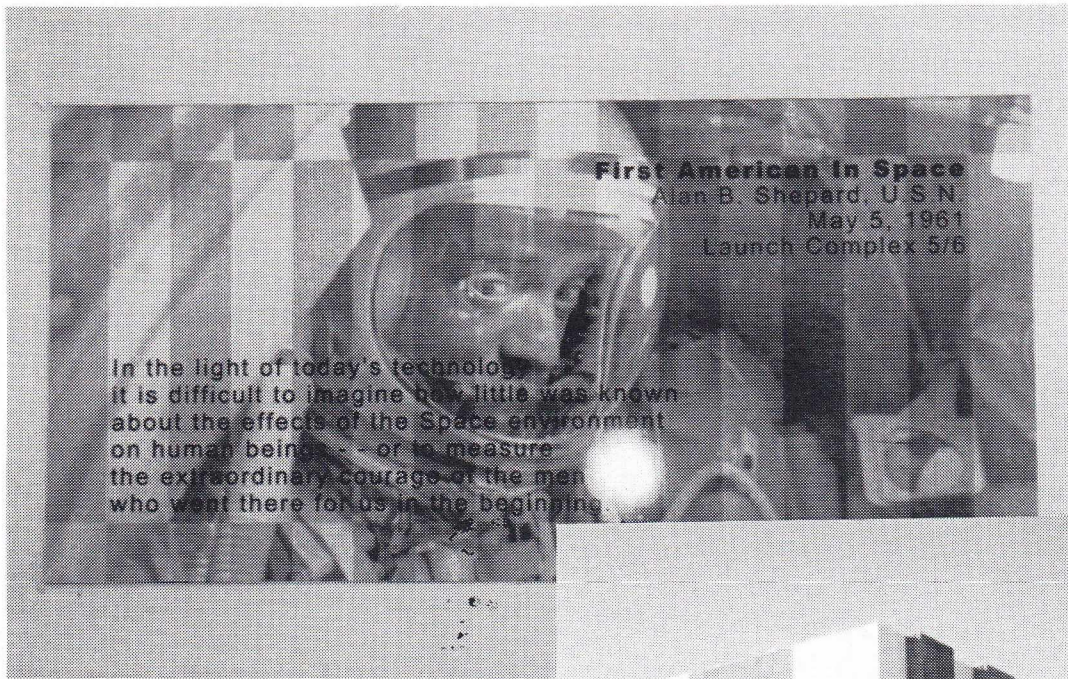
The flame was hidden behind the pillar of cloud. When it appeared again it seemed to dip lower, and became a dot, glowing blue. "Look! Look!" Rosy urged, and I saw the solid fuel boosters drop away from the spot of flame. Lower sank the dot, a new star speeding starwards and soon, across the horizon.

Acquaintances used to the ceaseless flatulence that normally courses from my mouth would have been impressed — and relieved — by the remainder of the night. I was stunned into silence.

Things look different from Cape Canaveral. The moon looks different. Over the next two days, Rosy and I toured the Cape and the Kennedy Space Center, and when I spotted Luna's tiny, dim crescent in the perfect blue sky, I realized she *was* different here. This is, after all, the place from which we attained our beautiful companion, symbolic of so many wishes and so many dreams; and because of what we did from Cape Canaveral, she is no longer the same. Still beautiful, but not mysterious; still lovely, but not mystic. From here, we went there, and the Moon is no longer a dream, but a place.

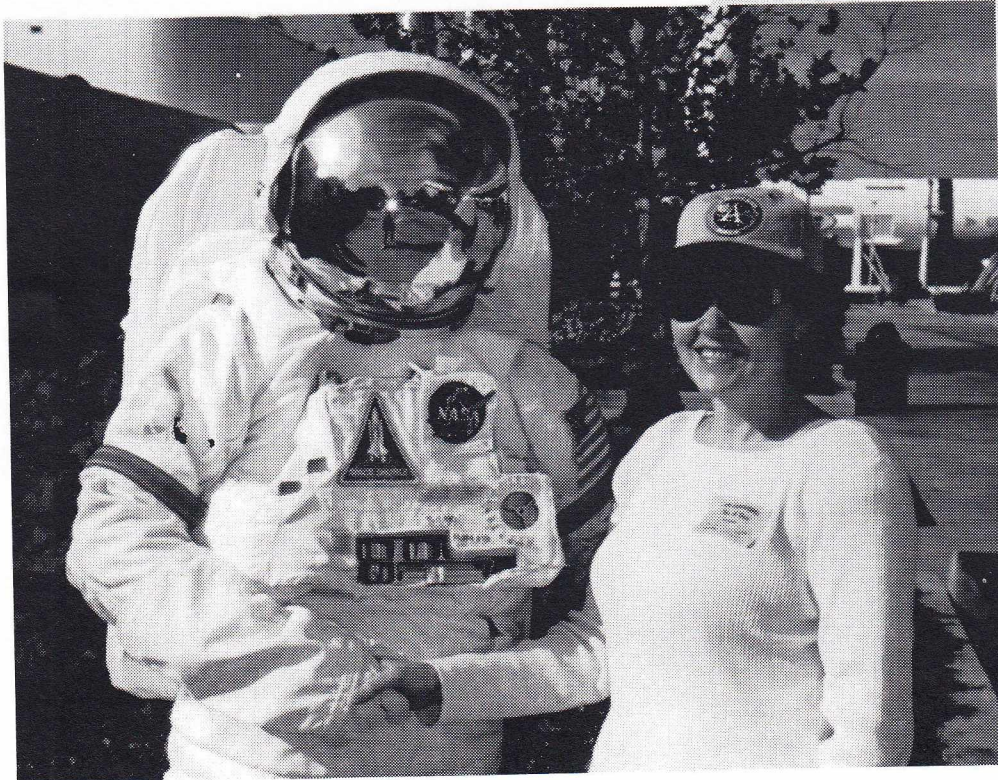
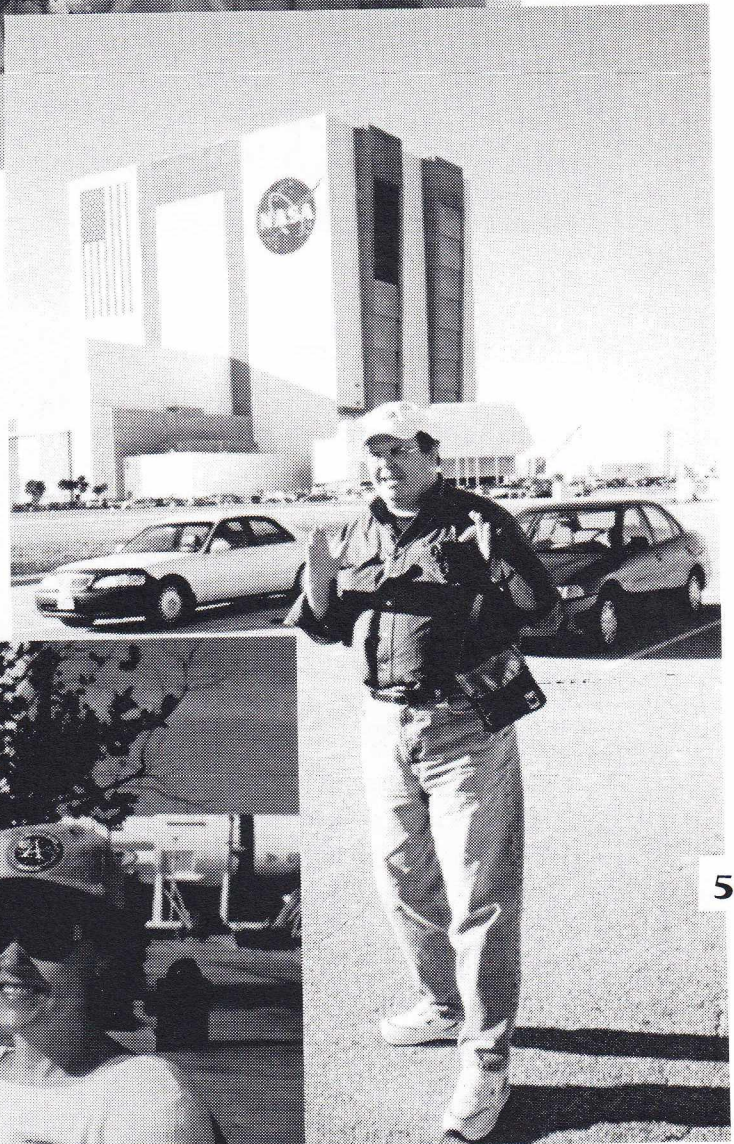
She cost us, though. Her innocence was not purchased cheaply.

The tour of the old rocket sites on the Cape was very different from that of KSC. KSC has Disneyfied its attractions into a cascade of visuals, films, exhibits — Rosy and I were photographed touching a moon rock — and souvenir shops. It was all well done, a few dozen cuts above the norm; I loved it, and even Rosy, well-acquainted with tourism there, was most favorably impressed. On the Cape tour, though, there were no films, no souvenirs — just old blockhouses, old rockets, slabs of concrete from which even the scorch has washed away ... and history. That history carried with it

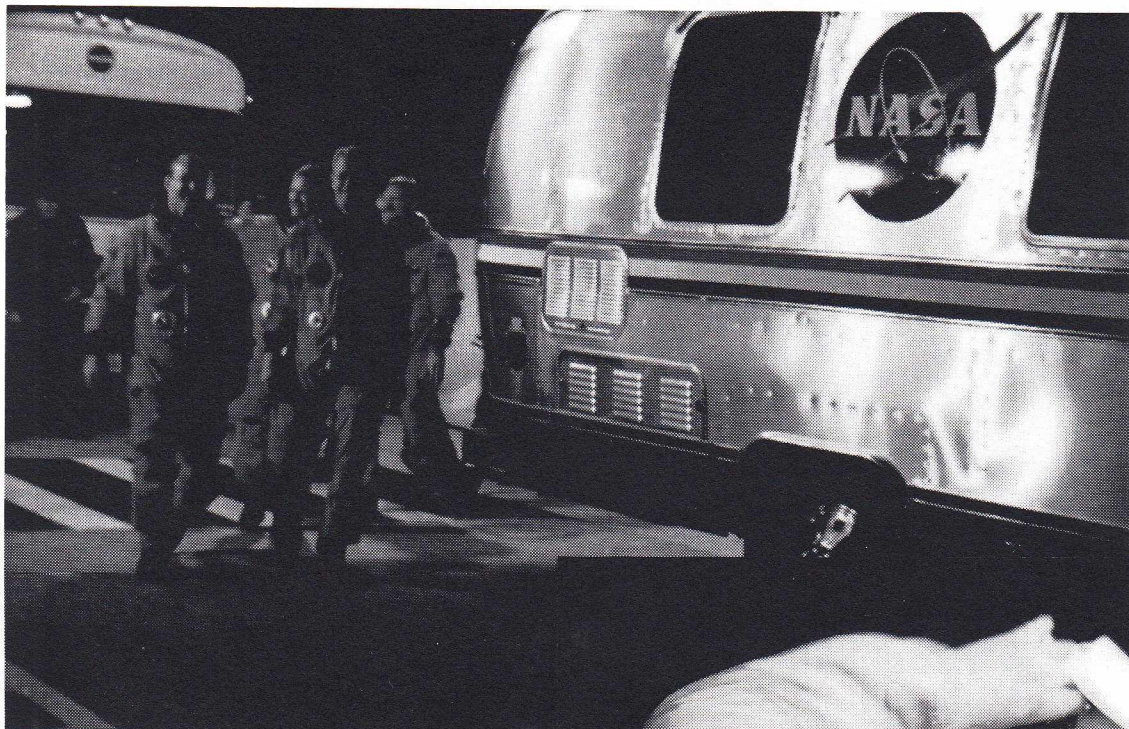


at the cape ...

Cape Canaveral and the Kennedy SpaceCenter were rich in eye-popping moments. Right: I'm not bragging, that VAB is *big!* Below: Rosy greets a spaceman.



*Photos by GHLIII and
Rose-Marie Donovan*



The astronauts come *out* ...

The shuttle goes *up* ...



And GHLIII goes *nuts!*



resonance, the one thing KSC couldn't match.

The almost comically primitive blockhouse for the Explorer launch was only the first memory-tickler for me. The cramped little concrete fist of a building was crowded with machines with less computing power among them — we were told with glee — than our wristwatches. Yet in early 1958 a miracle was achieved there. Well do I remember, in those first terrible months after Sputnik, watching Vanguard after Vanguard crash and burn. A terrible insecurity about my country's safety built in my 8-year-old mind. Would the Russians conquer us? Were we doomed? Well do I also remember the headline my dad held up to greet me one fabulous February morning: AMERICAN SATELLITE IS IN ORBIT. The exaltation ... the *relief*.

That satellite was a six-foot bullet called Explorer. It discovered the Van Allen radiation belts ... and more importantly, put America into space. The place it left from — Werner von Braun and Co. peering through thick, thick glass at the Jupiter-C rocket, barely 400 feet away — was this one, this place, right here.

Just down the road, another blockhouse, another pad, where an absurdly tiny Redstone stood, topped with a Mercury capsule, supported only by guy wires, the gantry long dismantled. An ugly frieze of Alan Shepard adorned the wall outside. Here, May 5, 1961, man entered space for only the second time. Mr. Alba let our 6th grade class listen to it on the radio. You think about courage a little differently when you think about courage on Cape Canaveral. I had to blitz myself into semiconsciousness to handle a smooth ride on a proven airplane for 80 minutes in cloudless weather. Consider Shepard's shorter but somewhat more pioneering flight. He didn't know if his vehicle was going to blow his keester to Hell&gone, since the only man who'd done anything similar was a world away, rode a different rocket, didn't speak English and wouldn't talk anyway. *But he did it.*

Courage is a word you must think of differently at Cape Canaveral, particularly at the site we turned into soon after. I forget the pad number, but Rosy said that, for years, NASA wouldn't let people go near it. It was a place of shame. Now the agency looks at it differently, and the place where Apollo 1 went to its destiny is now something of a shrine.

The pad is a ruin, dominated by the gigantic "milking stool" on which sat the Saturn IV-B. When Wally Schirra's Apollo 7 took off from this same site, returning America to its moon schedule, I thought it looked cool, that big rocket sitting high off the ground. Now nothing remains but the concrete torus held high by pylons, adorned only by a grim stencil, ABANDONED IN PLACE, and two tiny plaques. January 27, 1967 ... God alive, the sinking stone in my heart when *that* news first broke. I looked on gruff Gus Grissom as a father figure, a hero since **Liberty Bell 7** flew the day after my 12th birthday. If he'd lived, he'd've been the first man on the moon. And marvelous Ed White, the irrepressible athlete who'd walked in space during GT-4. And young Roger Chaffee, buried next to Grissom in those graves I'd visited in Christmas, 1983. The Arlington historian drove me all over the cemetery, and their places I'd especially asked to see. There were flowers on Chaffee's grave.

No one forgets. Nick, our guide, said that every January 27th Betty Grissom and other family members come to this place to remember the sacrifice here made. I looked at the ruined launchpad and saw it differently, as more than just a ruin. I saw it as a monument, accidentally profound, of serendipitous design. The milking stool could be a vast roofless pavilion, our gaze drawn upwards to the depthless sky. After all, the smaller of the two plaques read, AD ASTRA PER ASPERA.

We had passed, on our bus trip, a fenced-off Minuteman silo capped with a white concrete dome. The wreckage of the **Challenger** rests inside. That place too is regarded with shame, and no one may visit. Perhaps in time NASA will look at it differently, as they now regard the Apollo 1 site, and honor those seven as they now honor those three. It would be most proper.

You might not believe this, but as we drove on, a bald eagle sprang from the side of the road and rose, wings beating like a heart, for the sky.

In the KSC parking lot, as we drove up, we all but ran over Tony and Suford Lewis, who were in the area

for Smofcon '00. We enjoyed much of the KSC tour in their company. That night Rosy and I drove into Cocoa Beach, remembering our guide's funny stories about the the early astronauts' adventures on its avenues. *Our* only adventure was a disgracefully few minutes amongst fandom's secret masters, greeting Eve Ackerman and **Plokta's** Steve Davies, Pat Molloy and Naomi Fisher (*for DUFF!*), bidding honcho Vince Docherty (*U.K. in '05!*) and others before we headed back to the home of Rosy's dad and stepmom.

Joe and Patti Green have known and somehow tolerated me for decades, and I knew I could expect a warm and friendly time. But now Rosy and I had a bomb to drop which would make them look at me ... differently. As the mushroom cloud spread, I reminded Joe that it was all his fault: he'd introduced me to his daughter at MidAmeriCon in 1976. While Patti began assiduous planning for next June, Joe brought out the Talisker.

Talisker Scotch, brewed on the Isle of Skye, is well-renowned for its bouquet ... and its power. I was about to learn a new definition of that word. Protesting that, of course, this was *not* a test, Joe poured me two fingers and, smiling expectantly, asked me what I thought.

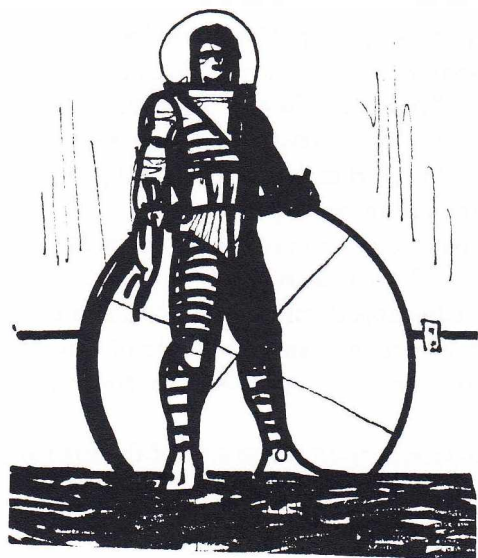
I took the world's most cautious sip.

Hoo! Wheeze!

... followed by the unmistakable suggestion of *smoke*.

During that wonderful evening Joe gave me a tape of the CNN launch coverage, and autographed two of his books. They will be treasured. So will that Talisker, which from time to delicious time *still* sends a smoky residuum through my memory onto my tongue. I may have to start imbibing on other occasions besides plane flights. I may have to look at spirits *differently*.

Life is going to be different. Later, we hied ourselves to West Palm Beach — yes, in infamous Palm Beach County — and laid the same news on Rosy's mother, Nita, and her noble husband Harold, who bought me a lobster and crab omelette. One could get accustomed to such treatment. I've known Rosy for almost 25 years, known *of* her for longer than that. Had I been quicker on my feet, and attended the 1968 DeepSouthCon, I could have met her then and there — when she was 13. (I was 19, and jailable; perhaps things worked out best as they did.) You will see, and read, of our visit to the Chicago worldcon later in this issue, of the decision we made there and the hope we took from it. Hold open if you can a weekend in June, 2001 for a visit to Merritt Island, Florida. We'll let you know specifics in the next **Challenger**. Wish us luck. Say, *bon chance*.



Reading and watching: just the stuff as winter creeps upon us: **Lost on Everest**, the story of George Mallory and Sandy Irvine and the 1924 expedition which *may* have taken them to the summit and certainly killed them, and **Vertical Limit**, weak eyewash which relies more on FX than story to convey the awe of the high mountains. You get a much better sense of the power and the danger of the Himalayas — especially great Chomolungma, the Mother Goddess to the World — reading of men who gave their lives for it, thirty years before Hillary and Tenzing “knocked the bastard off.” Climbing in primitive gear, with little but nerve and skill to guide them, Mallory and his youthful apprentice were on their way to the top when they vanished. They were on their way down when they fell ... as is evident from Mallory's frozen body, located last year on one of Everest's all-but-inaccessible slopes, sun-goggles pocketed, rotten rope about his waist.

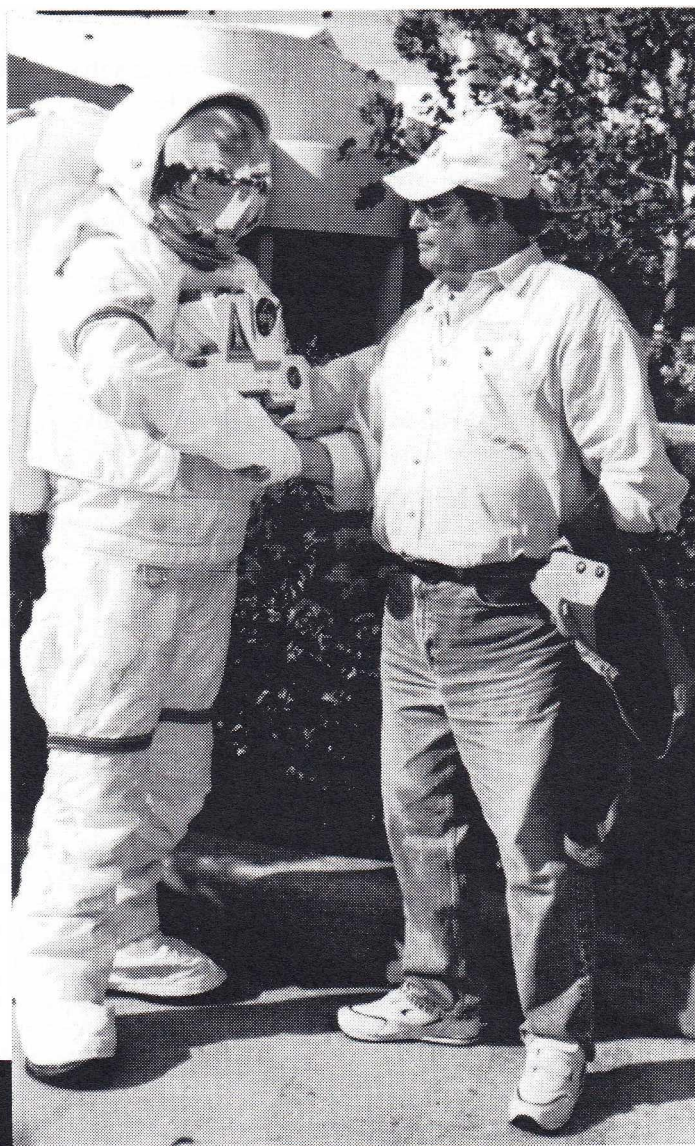
Did they summit? I doubt we'll ever know. *If* poor Sandy Irvine is finally found, he *may* have their camera with



at k.s.c. ...

Right: "Well done!" says
GHLIII to the space dude.

Below: Rosy and I at a hands-on
moon rock exhibition. 'Scuse me
while I touch the sky!



him, and the old plates *may* still hold images that *might* prove the case. But considering when the climbers were last seen, they could not have reached the summit in daylight, and there might not be pictures. The best we can logically hope for is that Irvine recorded their furthest reach in a journal, because the great Mallory did not.

The question isn't really to the point. Mallory's story proves other things — the appeal and the power of Chomolungma. His death, however noble and however glorious, was tragic: George Mallory had a wife he adored and children he loved; he would have rather gone home to his family, as any man would have. But he would not let go of Everest, and finally, the mountain would not let go of *him*. He is one now and forever with his mountain, which he climbed because it was there.

After Chicon 2000, I was in a great rush to expel an issue of **Challenger** into the world — hoping to up my schedule to thrice a year, spring, summer, fall. This issue is a bit later than I wished, but it is the third of the year, and hopefully the next will show no later than next April. I already have one of fandom's most original and creative artists working on the cover, and intimations of a theme. No, I won't name it. To do so would jinx it.

This is another *eclectic* issue of **Challenger** — translation, another mess. Themeless, haphazard, with no common topics nor common perspectives, but blest as usual with great contributors: Mike Resnick, Greg Benford, Bryana Norris, Charlie Williams, John Berry, Jeff Copeland, Steve Stiles, Teddy Harvia, Kurt Erichsen, William Rotsler ... all have ridden these pages before, all are old friends. Thanks. New to our pages are Julia Morgan-Scott, Sean Russell Friend, Russell Blackford ... and Rose-Marie Donovan. Special Thanks to her, for her existence.

And may we together wish each and every one of you a very wonderful holiday, and a serene — *please!* — New Year.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Greg Benford,
Russell Blackford,
Rose-Marie Donovan,
Mike Resnick c/o
Challenger

John Berry
4, Chilterns,
S. Hatfield,
Herts AL10 8JU U.K.

Randy Cleary
365 Shelton Road #105
Madison AL 35758

Jeff Copeland
3243 165th Ave. SE
Bellevue WA 98008

Kurt Erichsen
2539 Scottwood
Toledo OH 43610-1358

Nola Frame-Gray
P.O. Box 465
Inglewood CA 90307-0465

Sean Russell Friend
P.O. Box 2757
Brighton, East Sussex
BN2 1NT U.K.

Alexis Gilliland
4030 8th Street S.
Arlington VA 22204

Teddy Harvia
12341 Band Box Place
Dallas TX 75244-7001

Terry Jeeves
56 Red Scar Drive
Scarborough
YO12 5RQ U.K.

R'ykandar Korra'ti
5038 20th Avenue NE #1
Seattle WA 98105

Tim Marion c/o Kleinbard
266 E. Broadway #1201-B
NY NY 10002

Julia Morgan-Scott
108 Woodlawn Dr.
Chattanooga TN 37411

Bryan Norris
1710 S. Carrollton Ave.
New Orleans LA 70118

Scott Patri
Box 1196
Cumberland BC V0R 1S0
Canada

Marc Schirmeister
1555 Vista Lane
Pasadena CA 91103

Gene Stewart
1710 Dianne Avenue
Bellevue NE 68005

Steve Stiles
8631 Lucerne Rd.
Randallstown MD 21133

Thanks, y'all.

Greg Benford has graced several issues of Challenger with his unique critical vision. Just in time for 2001, here he is once more ...

WAITING FOR Shakespeare

Greg Benford

When I began writing fiction, as a graduate student in 1964, it was commonplace to regard the science fiction field as just entering its great phase. Of course, there had been the Golden Age of 1939-45, and arguably a Silver Age of the early 1950s ... but 1964 was rife with the hubbub of the early New Wave, and promise seemed to brim everywhere.

An academic then referred to the field as “waiting for its Shakespeare.” When others such as Brian Aldiss, particularly in his **Billion Year Spree** (later updated to **Trillion**), noted, H.G. Wells may have been the founder of modern science fiction and its Shakespeare all in one.

Wells indeed laid down many of the great idea-novels of the genre (though it wasn't quite a genre then), principally in his first decade: **The Time Machine**, **War of the Worlds**, **The Island of Dr. Moreau**, **The Invisible Man**. When has any writer had such a run, such a gusher of creation? Of course there were antecedents to many of his ideas. But he brought them to full, heartfelt dimension with true dramatic clout — and often, in novels that we would term novellas today, marvels of compression.

This he had in common with Shakespeare, who came to the young English stage and made it grow up.

But the New Wave advocates felt that truly adult SF would come only after the methods and crafts of the mainstream literary styles were imported to bring to fruition SF's themes. And Tom Disch did produce **Camp Concentration**, Joanne Russ **And Chaos Died**, Samuel R. Delany both **Nova** and **Dhalgren**, Roger Zelazny **This Immortal**, while Brain Aldiss, Michael Moorcock and J.G. Ballard had their peaks as well. Sadly, most of these works are long out of print, perhaps to be revived in a zombie-like way by on-demand publishing, which can cater to small audiences wishing to catch up on some of the fine works of the last half century.

But Shakespeare? None of these authors became the commanding figure Wm. S. was in his age. (Or may have been. There is curiously little documentation of Shakespeare the man — no letters, occasional pieces, not a single original manuscript. This had led some to suppose that Edward Devere, in fact, wrote the works, with the actor Shakespeare as a useful front. This leads to a wholly different reading of the plays and sonnets — an intriguing possibility, reminding us that even great figures can carry with them an artful ambiguity to this day.) How



art by Bryan Norris

Bryan
2000

come? Perhaps because no one can command the range of science, fiction and worldly knowledge demanded of a great novelist now. That may be why we have no looming figures of Tolstoy's scale. Science fiction, which takes on the largest issues confronting the human heart and head, demands much more than a conventional novelist needs to muster. Maybe it's impossible to become the Shakespeare of SF any longer?

Consider a smaller question: who is the reigning figure, still alive, in modern SF? My money would be on two old favorites, Arthur Clarke and Ray Bradbury. Clarke gave us **2001** and Bradbury **The Martian Chronicles**, works that will live a very long while indeed. Bradbury says he's not an SF writer, but he clearly came out of the magazines that termed themselves that.

But is either our Shakespeare? Somehow I doubt that either has the range to deserve that label. Of the two, Clarke comes closest, for my money. His amusing essays and **Tales from the White Hart** show his comic side, while many stories and novels display his grasp of the largest scales available to the modern intellect.

It is worth pondering who we will have to fill their shoes. Among living American SF writers, Fred Pohl and Robert Silverberg probably have spanned the greatest range, summoned up deep emotions and plumbed the reaches of many ideas. But neither of these fine gentlemen would pretend to be a Shakespeare, comparable to Wells.

And maybe there's a reason for that.

SF has become the preeminent genre, emerging from lowly pulp origins to rule the visual media. Alas, it is still a stepped-upon subsection of the lit'ry world, excluded from serious consideration, relegated to a box in the back at **The New York Times**.

But the written forms feed the visual ones, as many authors (like me) who have had their work purloined by screenwriters have woefully found. So we are influential, if not rich or famous. So here's an audacious thought: *maybe our Shakespeare was Stanley Kubrick*.

After all, in a stunning series he gave us in a mere few years **Dr. Strangelove, 2001: A Space Odyssey, A Clockwork Orange** — all near-future works of genius, derived from novels, two of them acknowledged SF. They showed us worlds nobody had visited yet, and made his name. When Kubrick died, he was going to resume work on a film about artificial intelligences, which he had already lavished years of script labor upon, working in turn with Brian Aldiss, Bob Shaw and Ian Watson. There was a flurry of speculation that Steven Spielberg was going to take up the project, but it seems dead at the moment, alas.

It's startling to entertain the notion of Kubrick as SF's Shakespeare — but remember, the Bard wrote for a visual medium, too. And in keeping with our station in life, nobody in the general culture thinks of Kubrick as a science fiction person at all...

Still, there is a deeper problem here, rummaging around for a science fictional Shakespeare. We are the genre, the inventor of fandom itself, fanzines, big fan conventions, a fount of cultural innovation. But rather than see ourselves as a partitioned piece of literature, better to say that we are a continuing conversation. No other genre refers back so far to its Golden Age(s), citing works and comparing writers — just as this column has done. In weeding out the new but derivative, by holding it up to the light of other days, we confer Grand Master status only upon those who truly extend our mental frontiers, and relegate those who merely rearrange conceptual deck chairs to the lesser ranks (where, these days, they get stuck writing franchise fiction and work-for-hire media tie-ins, just to make ends meet).

Our field comprises a way for the general culture to see itself in a fresh light. Science particularly has always used SF to think about the implications of its own work. That's why so many scientists have written SF (again, like me ... a phenomenon you can study further in some essays at my website, gregorybenford.com). Rather than look upon our great works as resembling classical symphonies, to be played in grand halls to a passive audience, think of us as a jazz band — swinging down Basin Street in full voice, blaring our messages, running riffs on old standards that have new variants, fresh melodic lines, improvisation as the blood and rhythm of the enterprise itself. Our band's sign might well read, **Jazz, That's What We Are** — because it's what we truly do well.

And New Orleans never needed a Shakespeare.



Shakespeare, Science Fiction

and all that **Jazz**

Russell Blackford

Gregory Benford writes that science fiction is an improvisational artform which, like jazz, does not need a towering figure such as Shakespeare. I agree that SF is highly improvisational in the way that he describes – and, to that extent, the analogy to jazz seems right. As for his "audacious thought" that Kubrick may be SF's Shakespeare, well I see the point – my only query is whether it's all that audacious. Before I reached this part of his essay, I was wondering if the towering works of the genre might not be prose narratives at all – novels and short stories – but certain films, especially **2001: A Space Odyssey**.

Those two thoughts, then, SF's improvisational nature and the importance of cinema, are plausible and consistent with each other. For all that, I think that the tone of Benford's article is a little too sanguine, a little complacent, about current SF and where the genre is heading.

Science fiction started out as a genre of prose fiction, but that soon changed in the age of radio and cinema. Narratives about rapid social change, the future, and the impact of science and technology can be told in any form that lends itself to narrative in general: epic recitation, live drama, prose fiction, comics, radio, cinema, television, or whatever the future has in store for us. And, while narrative is central to SF as an artform, SF-related ideas can be developed and debated in non-narrative ways, such as in lyric poetry and literary criticism. Science fiction motifs provide images for non-narrative visual art forms to an extent where SF illustrators often seem to be lionized more than the actual writers. At the same time, a parallel set of ideas infuses much modern philosophical writing.

Our culture provides vast scope for creative reactions to science, innovation and the future. Think of a great conversation spreading out from the science labs into every other place where we encounter thought and art, from technical philosophy to comic books and computer games. From the perspective of committed SF writers, fans and other dedicated SF readers, printed SF is at the center of this huge conversation. But at the same time, we have people "doing SF" – creating narratives about innovation and the future – who have little connection with the fannish or professional SF communities.

An interesting publishing phenomenon in my country, Australia, has been the recent success of a book called **The Deep Field** by a young literary writer, James Bradley. This book is set in the future, is largely about the psychological impact of radical life extension, and uses other SF-style technologies such as full sensory-immersion virtual reality. It has been embraced by the literary mainstream because of its dense, often poetic, language and its commitment to in-depth portrayal of character. It is not marketed or discussed as an SF novel. As it happens, Bradley is well-versed in SF and has written for the **New York Review of Science Fiction**, but he has no connection to fandom and no one here (except me) would think of him as in any way an SF writer. I'm sure we could recall other works such as this, part of the cultural conversation that I've referred to, but not pigeon-holed as SF.

Although this larger conversation is going on, what happens in the fannish and professional SF communities (as if these can be entirely separated) is an important part of it. It's not surprising that SF narratives by the committed professional writers should feed off each other and improvise with ideas – yes, much like jazz. At the same time, it's not surprising that a dominant entertainment medium such as the cinema should generate the most prominent individual narratives, as seen by society at large. It shouldn't even be surprising if some of the most important SF works of all were movies, such as Kubrick's **2001**, rather than stories told in printed prose.

This sort of reflection makes Benford's ideas seem very attractive, but it also exposes a problem. Consider how few towering works of SF ever came out of 20th century cinema. That leads me back to my point that Benford is a little too sanguine. For a start, it's not obvious that improvisational artforms and those which produce towering figures, reaching or approaching the heights of Shakespeare, are mutually exclusive categories.

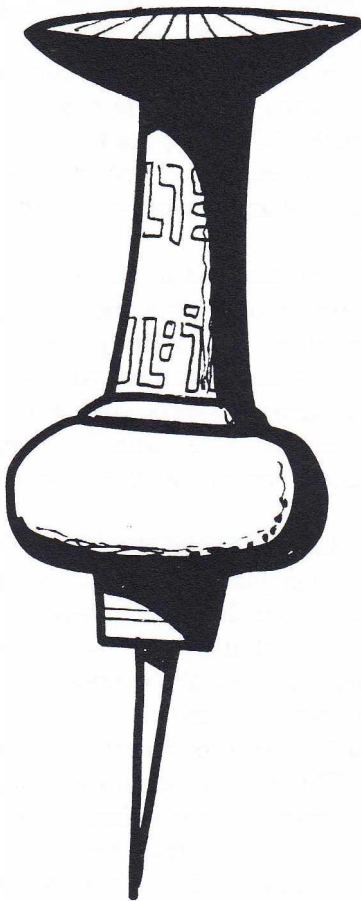
Of course, it's difficult to compare artforms that emphasize real-time performances and those which leave behind *compositions* that can be preserved for posterity. Prior to modern forms of audio and visual recording, the work of actors and musical performers was essentially ephemeral, unlike that of playwrights or composers (though this, too, was often lost). A musical form emphasizing one-off improvisations might have towering geniuses, but their genius could not be preserved like the text (even if corrupt) of a play, or like an operatic score.

Some compositional artforms are, indeed, highly improvisational in the sense that Benford identifies. Science fiction is only one case in point. Although the emphasis is not on performances that might change every evening on a musician's whim or electric light of inspiration, there is a developing body of work that reacts to previous work, sometimes by way of irony, satire, inversion, parody or mockery, or simply by "making it new" in keeping with the sensibilities and techniques of later times. This kind of self-reflection and improvisation is common to many artforms, not only jazz, with its radical emphasis on actual performance. Nor is it inconsistent with the presence of individual composers and works of genius.

Consider the tradition of English poetry. If we observe its development from, say, Milton to Yeats, we see a process of conversation and improvisation going on, similar to that which Benford identifies in the SF field. We see this in both the overall contours of the form's history and in much of the detail. Pope and Dryden react against Milton in a particular way, Blake and Shelley in another (and the generations of Blake and Shelley react fiercely against Pope and Dryden!). As we work our way through Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Byron, Tennyson, Yeats – reaching towards the present day – we can see the constant reworking of themes, ideas, even lines, from poet to poet. This has not prevented some individual works appearing sublime. If SF has failed to produce figures at least approaching the towering genius of Shakespeare – its Miltons and Shelleys – the improvisational nature of the genre is not an adequate reason.

Of course, it may simply be too early to make judgments about this. After all, are we convinced that mainstream contemporary literature has produced writers on a level with Milton or the great Romantic poets? No, but I'd be more confident of the place of Ted Hughes or Seamus Heaney, or of prose fiction writers such as Salman Rushdie, when judgments are made in two hundred years' time, than I would be about any current SF writer.

I do have concerns about the direction taken by mainstream literary writing during the 20th century, at the way some of the great Modernists – James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound – gave permission for those who followed to produce fragmented, obscure, essentially *private* works in a manner almost unprecedented in the literary traditions that I know. This has opened a gulf of incomprehension between much serious literature and the general reading public. However, SF suffers different problems that are associated with its very popularity.



RTUAL OBJECT. R

Perhaps Joyce and the others stretched the traditional forms as far as they could go, at least in certain respects to do with the intensity of language and the impression of psychological depth. That may be one reason, quite aside from sheer technological change, why it is timely that cinema and television have taken over as the popular narrative media. However, the technological and social circumstances we live in have further impacts.

For a start, cinema and television are essentially collaborative artforms. Notwithstanding the mystique of the director as *auteur*, it is not possible to speak of individuals working in cinema as equivalent to Shakespeare. If a comparison is made between Shakespeare and Kubrick, I want to ask, *Kubrick working with what scriptwriter? Kubrick working with what specific actors? Kubrick, even, with whose special effects?* Perhaps SF's Shakespeare is not Kubrick or any other individual, but just the free-floating world of modern cinema working at its best. In that case, we could look for a body of towering creative work coming out of Hollywood and other film capitals, without expecting one *auteur* to dominate.

However, what do we actually see? The dominant SF works in our culture are entertaining, in many ways dazzling, technical products, sometimes, as with the first two **Star Wars** movies, given additional strength and resonance by their respectful treatment of mythic archetypes. But the most prominent SF is essentially a body of work aimed at children and teenagers. That, of course, is not a contemptible thing. The production of intelligent narrative for young people, in whatever medium, is an honorable and difficult occupation. All the same, Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley and Yeats would not have produced such monumental works of literature if they were writing essentially for kids.

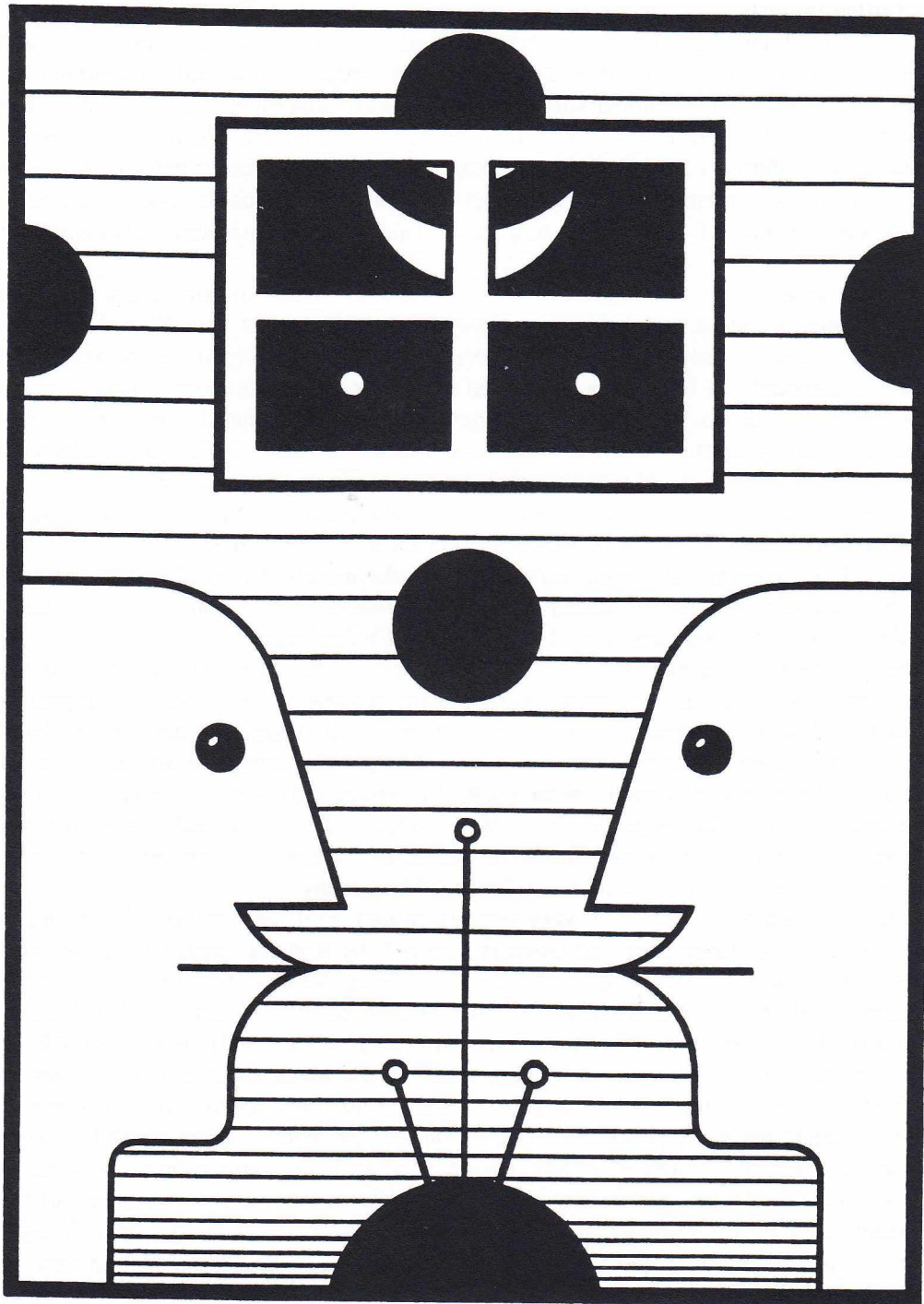
We have reached a situation where the cultural dominance of SF is closely associated with the marketing of our most popular works of narrative art (not to mention music) for a young audience. The dominance of SF in cinema has been achieved overwhelmingly by works aimed for this market. Meanwhile, our culture's truly sophisticated art, aimed at well-informed adults, has become inaccessible to the general population in a way that would have puzzled Shakespeare.

In that perspective, the dominance of SF in the form of **Star Wars** and similar is not such a cause for rejoicing. I enjoy these movies and would defend them in some contexts, but they appeal mainly to the kid in me, not the adult. By contrast, Shakespeare appealed to all classes and degrees of education, and to *adults* across the full range of sophistication, in a way that popular narrative art seldom does today, and the most popular SF even more seldom. Perhaps **2001: A Space Odyssey** is an exception, a work that can genuinely be compared to a Shakespeare play, but how many SF movies made since then have appealed to the emotions and intellects of experienced, well-educated adults? By contrast, how many have been downright insulting to our emotions and our intelligence? Too many.

I hasten to interpolate that some very interesting and intelligent prose SF is being produced by such writers as Greg Egan, Greg Bear and Gregory Benford, by Melissa Scott, Ursula LeGuin, Samuel R. Delany, Thomas M. Disch, Ian Banks, Gene Wolfe, Jamil Nasir, William Gibson. . . . The list goes on and on; I could name many others. But these are not figures on a par with Shakespeare or Milton, Shelley or Yeats – or, if any of them are, it is not yet obvious. Sure, their work is sufficiently valuable to justify our advocacy of it to the literary mainstream. Again, some of the blockbuster movies (**Blade Runner** is a personal favorite) do have much to recommend them. And I've mentioned that some writers who essentially work outside the genre produce impressive one-off SF works that are worth hunting down.

But we've reached a situation where sophisticated audiences, mainstream writers, most literary critics and (I suspect) the Hollywood hacks who buy SF ideas and popularize the genre all view "science fiction" as essentially a lurid variety of children's entertainment. This is not, as I once thought, a product of ignorance and prejudice; it is quite understandable. The genre has come a long way in its public prominence, but its image has not improved in the process. Prose SF is now dominated, in market terms, by media tie-ins that lack even the knowingness and high production values of the movies and television series on which they are based. If we expect SF to be a literature of ideas, a conversation about science, innovation and the future, we are justified in feeling disappointed. Science fiction may have become a dominant narrative genre but only at the price (all too often) of giving up its heart.

*



"Out There"

Nearly 20 years after his death Philip K. Dick still exerts an enormous hold on the imagination and spirit of his readers. Among them, Gene Stewart.

ANTI-ANDROID THERAPY

— reading Philip K. Dick's letters

Gene Stewart

art by Sean Russell Friend

When Philip K. Dick died, his wife Tessa offered to send a few pages of his correspondence to anyone interested enough to provide an self-addressed stamped envelope. Being Dickheads from way back, my wife and I were definitely interested. We sent our SASE.

What we got back is more than a mere memento, though, because of the emotion each letter carries. Both PKD's emotions when he wrote them and our own response to what he wrote imbue the letters with an aura of humanity so often missing from one's idea of a writer. It's a glimpse behind the public persona, the reputation, and even the posthumous fame and academic consideration Dick and his work have received. It's a privilege and we're sharing it with like-minded appreciators of PKD's work as a way of honoring his accomplishments in however small a fashion.

It's *anti-android therapy*, too, because it helps us remember that a human being created all those incredible images and concepts; all those erudite, *recherche*, and otherwise brilliant reference-systems; all those great books. A man, a husband, a father made those stories we love, and knowing that keeps each of us from falling into the unfeeling, inhuman coldness of androidism that so fascinated PKD as an ethical, ontological, and teleological problem. It was more than just philosophy when he wrote, it was survival of humanity, and of each individual, that concerned him. His letters were a Voigt-Kampf test for each of us lucky enough to have glimpsed the face and hands behind them, the heart and mind and soul of a guy who wrote science fiction stories — and so much more.

Letter One — It's dated July 21, 1981, and is addressed to his son, Christopher. It's typed, neatly, in pica. There are no obvious errors or signs of haste. Three paragraphs and a brief post script center the letter on one side of a sheet of 8.5 x 11 inch standard typing paper.

In the first paragraph he says he enjoyed the Sunday visit and regrets they can't spend more time together. He speculates that maybe someday he can buy a house and then Christopher can visit, and they can have a dog, cat, and "maybe even a rabbit." This struck me as poignant whimsey for an instant, until the next sentence, which tells of his friend Tim and Serena Powers, who "have a huge rabbit named Jennie" who "gets into lots of trouble." "One day she ate the telephone," he tells his son, without explanation. I imagine the rabbit chewed the cord, but the child-like image of a rabbit eating a telephone has a comic charm all its own, a gentle exaggeration reminiscent of A.A. Milne. One can only imagine the children's stories PKD might have written about Jennie the Rabbit. He describes Jennie using a cat's litterbox, then says, "... when she is spanked, she runs to the cat-box and throws all the sand out onto the floor ..." The Spanked Rabbit thus becomes a great unwritten fairy tale.

In the second paragraph, he mentions wanting to hear about a trip to "Knotts" (Berry Farm), and says he hasn't been there in a long time. This, too, carries a note of angst, or perhaps a longing for the innocence of childhood. "I was there before they improved it," he writes, and asks if it's true that there "... a whole bunch of new rides." An echo of Dick's sardonic wit and genuine distrust sounds in that word "improved," does it not?

Third paragraph brings in the typical note of paranoia full-blown. First he says that a letter would make him happy but that a phone call would do. He then says he's enclosing a couple of dollars. In what sounds like a hopeless prayer of paranoids everywhere he then writes: "Let us hope that the crooked

postmaster does not slit the envelope open and steal the money, which he often does, to the great distress of little boys.” And then, just like that, he signs off, “with love, Dad,” leaving us to wonder all the sudden whether he might have purposefully left out the couple of dollars, just to provide that twist of plot all PKD enthusiasts and genuine Dickheads know so well.

The post script promises that he’ll try to write more letters in the future, then says that he writes many people all over the world, as far away as India.

It’s as if India isn’t nearly far enough.

And as seems inescapable with things Dickian, the simple is not so simple and nothing is necessarily what it seems, especially at first glance. And once again, such considerations are not in the least androidal, but all too human.

Letter Two — This one shows a staple mark in the upper left corner. It’s dated September 25, 1981, and is addressed “Dear Linda”, whom he greets with a simple Hi. At once, though, he states, “I have devolved into a prophet and crank and am mailing out the enclosed. It is an addendum to my novel **Valis** ...” He says it contains the vision that the protagonist, “Horselover Fats, (me), was hoping for.” He claims it took seven and a half years but “... finally came ...” although he doesn’t explicate the difficulties. He asks that the vision be judged only by the “... very realistic concerns expressed in it.”

The second paragraph hopes all is well with Linda, then states that he’s worked so hard that he had to stop for a while. “I think this 22 million dollar movie **Bladerunner** based on my novel was just — is just -- too much for me, having to deal with power-broker types from Tinsel Town.” He then characterizes a dilemma that might pertain to him, to the movie, its producers, or any number of other things by writing, “So much money, so much power, so much at stake.” A caption for either the USA or Earth itself is thus offered. He ends the paragraph saying that he wrote a purely literary novel about a young woman in Berkeley, something he’s wanted to do for 30 years, and that he’s sold it to Simon & Schuster.

Third paragraph, again the last, asks Linda to write or call sometime. He asks for a photo of her child, and states that Tessa and he are on progressively better terms. In fact, they’re thinking of getting back together. “She needs more support in the raising of ol’ Christopher, who is a real handful.” And with a *Love, Phil*, that’s it.

A plaintive coda: He includes his address and telephone number under his signature. Again, a pall of wistful longing for a contentment never to be found hangs over the letter. One senses a sensitive man as trapped in many ways by success as he’s been trapped by failure. What this letter does not seem to be is the product of a prophetic crank. It’s sane and humane and calm, perhaps resigned, qualities cranks — and androids — just don’t exhibit.

Letter Three — This one’s much more jagged-edged and enfolded, and is dated April 2, 1979. It’s from before the reconciliation we’ve just pondered with him. “Dear Tessa,” it says, in a blunt opening, “Here is the support money.” Terse but not quite bitter is how I’d describe it.

Second paragraph sounds like the opening of one of PKD’s novels. “I woke up all screwed up and freaked out this morning; I don’t know why ...” He suggests it might be from having talked long on the phone with Laura, and “... learned from her how afraid she is of her mother.” More perfect fiction elements, yet they spring from real life. This deepens the empathy for the man behind the man in the high castle. “... It reawakens my own fears about Anne ...” his first wife, who is very jealous about Laura and the chance that PKD might form a lasting relationship.

Is he projecting worries into the fears of others, or is he simply stating the situation plainly? One cannot tell from context. “The ghosts of the past are still real.” He laments the “tragic” situation and labels Anne “dreadful” and states his intention to send Laura a fixed sum, which he specifies parenthetically as \$200 every month, “so as to effectively emancipate her from her mother.” This view of money as a panacea is soon to be proven a mistake in his own life, but one glimpses the dreams of poverty here, amidst the slumber of soon-to-awaken success.

“A terrible sense of desolation lies over me, though. Laura seems so close and yet a billion parsecs away.” And here, turning on a Dickian dime, he turns his mind to abstracts, and we get another glimpse of

the man, the man who used his intellect perhaps to duck for a while the shower of emotional and interpersonal troubles that so constantly soaked him. He says, "Last night I amused myself by practicing various ways to obtain the Fibonacci constant. Here's a strange one: $x^2 - x = 1$ equals 0. Solve for x . It's 1.618034, of which the Fibonacci constant is the reciprocal ($1/x$)."

He then types the word, "Also:" and fills the rest of the page with hand-written formulas. He adds, "Love, Phil," and then, in a hand-written post script he goes on with the formulas and mentions "... the Golden Section of the reciprocal ..." And then he writes, in his combination script/lower-case printing, "There are many formulas by which to derive the Fibonacci numbers. Why? It is mysterious."

Omni exeunt in mysterium, of course. Eschatology from chess-math ends up being a sort of fitting epitaph, at least for this phase of PKD's emotional life.

It's a complex letter, composed mostly in one formless paragraph. He is by turns blunt, pleasing for some sympathy, empathetic to the plight of others, angry, generous, suspicious, loyal, and desperate to impress, perhaps. He loses himself in intellectual pursuits when the equations of human relationships blur for him.

One is supposed to picture the solitary genius working away at his arcane numbers. In fact, though, the Fibonacci sequence is obtainable by simple addition. It is the sequence 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21 ... in which each new number is the sum of its two predecessors. His formulas are this sadly convoluted, a blunting of Occam's Razor on the grindstone of an obsessive-compulsive mind.

Please read the enjoyable historical paranoid fantasy **The Eight** by Katharine Neville for a fun — and overt — discussion and use of the Fibonacci sequence. As for what it is ...

It's used in computer programming — for example, in keeping track of trades or futures, as in the oil market or stock market — as well as in chess — where it describes the incremental/exponential increase of related to Complexity (Chaos) Theory and fractals, too, and is visualized often in tiles, an entire world of patterning unto itself. If you've ever enjoyed the endless staircases and looped waterfalls and the self-referential changing of fish into birds and back found in the art of M.C. Escher, then you've seen the Fibonacci sequence visualized. It is applicable as a description of many natural and man-made things, from the patterns of subflower seeds to architectural decorations.

One also imagines that PKD's own approach to plotting might have relied to some extent on the patterns if not the actual numbers to which he here refers so enigmatically. See **Ubik** for a great example of increasing complexity, which may well follow the Fibonacci numbers. Certainly his erudite and scholarly approach to research and knowledge in general brought him many such useful, elegant puzzles.

Letter Four — This letter is a single five-line hand-written paragraph, dated 4/30/77, which reads, in its entirety: "Dear Tessa, I am very impressed with the courage you are displaying under adverse circumstances. I am very proud of you. You are certainly an extraordinary person. I hope everything breaks right for you. Love, Phil."

That's it. And I can only hope that PKD was lucky enough to have received such a letter at some low point of his own sine-waved life.

Letter Five — A scrawl written on the wider axis of the paper, dated April 15, 1973, this one is less a letter and more a legal document of sorts, a holographic assignment of rights. It states that Miss Leslie Busby, "my fiancée," participated "... to a great extent ..." in writing **A Scanner Darkly** and that he owes her half of all income derived from it. It's signed Philip K. Dick, his professional signature, and on the bottom, appended in another hand (Tessa's), is the note that "Leslie Busby is maiden name of Tessa Busby Dick."

Had he anything more, or more precious, to give? A rough kind of love shines through this brief legal statement, and a gentle acknowledgment that maybe he did get by with some help from his friends, lovers, and wives. He knew that even his work was not created alone, not really, and this small testimonial indicates the high regard he had for honesty. It also shows a humble, almost Eastern Mystical quality sometimes felt, sometimes glimpsed in his fiction, albeit in entirely Western Material terms.

Once again, we are lucky to have even as small as chance as this to have our android tendencies

cured, by taking in the basic humanity of this genius, this writer, and this transcendent mind as it was displayed in personal moments of correspondence, which means balance, after all.



“... everything about me, every facet of my life, psyche, experiences, dreams, and fears, are laid out explicitly in my writing, and from the corpus of my work I can be absolutely and precisely inferred. This is true.”

PKD wrote that in his introduction to the collection **The Golden Man**. The intro is quite personal and human, very much an anti-android therapy regimen, and it's recommended as a codicil to this brief article, which is, after all, about only a paltry few of his letters. Still, one wonders if the sentiment quoted above was mere rhetoric, or if he genuinely believed it.

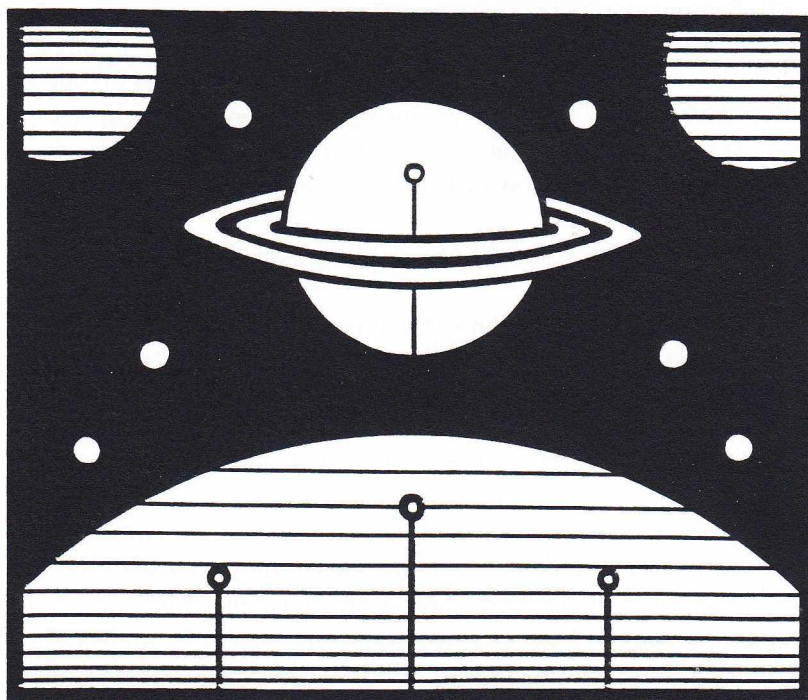
Or did he simply hope?

In any case, he left behind the work, and his letters enhance that brilliant canon by offering some personal shadings and shadows. Anyone else out there with letters from PKD should write in and share their contents with fellow Dickheads. In this way we'll get more of the man back onto the record, and eventually maybe we really will be able to infer him absolutely and precisely. Think of it! Resurrection at last, eh?

It's like the Human Genome Project, which is going to describe the human being's genetic code to the last chromosome and protein-sequence, eventually, as bit by bit the puzzle is solved, the mosaic resolved into a recognized image. Each bit of PKD we can get onto the public record fills in a bit more of the detail, and completes our picture of him to an ever-finer focus.

What could be finer? Knowing more, that's what. And, as an extra added benefit, as you get to know PKD and his works better, you get free real-time concurrent anti-android therapy, which will do until you find your own coupon with instructions on how to assemble your own empathy box from ordinary household objects. (See “The Little Black Box”, collected in **The Golden Man**.)

And remember: If they come for you, run, but *stay human*. It's humans who do all the really amazing stuff, after all.



THE AMERICAN ELECTION

an embarrassed editorial by Guy Lillian

George W. Bush will take office as president of the United States on January 20, 2001, the culmination of the most disgraceful display of power politics in the recent history of my country. For the first time in the seven years I have been publishing **Challenger**, I must address my foreign readers in shame.

Not shame in my fellow citizens, not even those misguided wretches who voted for the Texas governor. Almost half the country are Bush voters; throw a rock and you have a 50-50 chance of beaming one. (I like those odds — pass me some rocks!) My shame — our shame — is with Bush's operatives. We have allowed a pack of punks in business suits to effect a *coup d'état* in the United States.

Al Gore won this election. He won the votes of half a million plus more voters than did Bush, and I am convinced that a fair Florida vote and vote count would have shown him the victor there, as well. An illegal and stupidly designed ballot in Palm Beach County, coupled with thug tactics and judicial dishonesty on the highest level, has cost the American people the President of their choice, and elevated a shallow and undeserving puppet to the ultimate political office: America's representative to the rest of mankind.

It is a personal tragedy for Gore, of course. He has spent his lifetime in forthright pursuit of the presidency. His public service has been consistent and lifelong, conducted with imagination and courage. He came to his candidacy blessed with an outstanding resume, possibly the best any candidate has ever brought to the race. He won as large a plurality of the nationwide popular vote as substantial as the first presidential victory of Richard Nixon. He came within a single state of triumphing in the antiquated and anti-democratic electoral college, a residuum of colonial times. The only reason Congress hadn't bothered to abolish it was because, for the last century, it hadn't interfered with the people's choice of their leader. Now it has interfered, and the personal tragedy of one man has become a national catastrophe.

This election is a national catastrophe because we Americans have seen our proudest and most precious institutions sullied, misused, and disgraced. We've seen the authority of the individual vote abandoned to satisfy a coordinated mob. We've seen the concept of federalism — the authority of states to conduct and control their own business — eradicated by the political party sworn to uphold it. We've seen the dignity and the independence of the one institution we have held above petty power politics, the United States Supreme Court, exposed as corrupt and false. Justice Stevens — the best of the lot — was right in proclaiming the damage done to the reputation of the Supremes as all but irreparable. After all, if the Court can abandon its principles and its most sacred practices for a transparently partisan rationale, who's to say it won't do the same for reasons of personal profit? This decision is the Court's bleakest, most disgraceful, moment since *Dred Scott*.

The Republican Party once again proves itself willing to corrupt anything and anyone in the name of its single, overwhelming purpose: the accumulation of power. They hated Bill Clinton because they couldn't destroy him. He said recently that though he was shocked by the GOP's wicked application of its power, he was not surprised by it. Remembering Watergate, remembering Iran/contra, remember the noxious hypocrisy of the impeachment, none of us should be. The Republican voters I have known have principles to admire. The Republican operatives we have seen in action are the lowest strain of whore.

The damage to Al Gore is permanent. He is a plodding man whose charm is not instantly evident. Without the platform of the vice presidency to lift him above his lack of ready appeal, he will never win another nomination. Bush, of negligible character, experience, and wit, will have four years to serve as front man for the Republican machine. Though he achieves power over a capital whose walls stand upright and gleam in the sun, within, the national government is in ruins. Nevertheless, he will have four years to work his charm on our gullible and impatient people. He will be a weak executive — more like Warren Harding in office than his father — but he'll have America's loyalty by 2004, and that should be enough to win him re-election. And on and on. The effects of this disaster will be felt throughout our lifetimes.

It is a sickening situation. All we have, who voted for Gore, is the gratification — and it is truly that — of knowing that this time the majority was with us, and we were with them. I had convinced myself that I was alone. I was not. This time my people showed themselves capable of seeing past surface charm to substantive quality. If they did it once ... dare I hope that they — we — can do it again?

The Zine Dump

*Publications received between 8-2 and 12-16-00. Italicized zines were not in view.
We keep losing greats. I dedicate this section of **Challenger** to Ken Cheslin.*

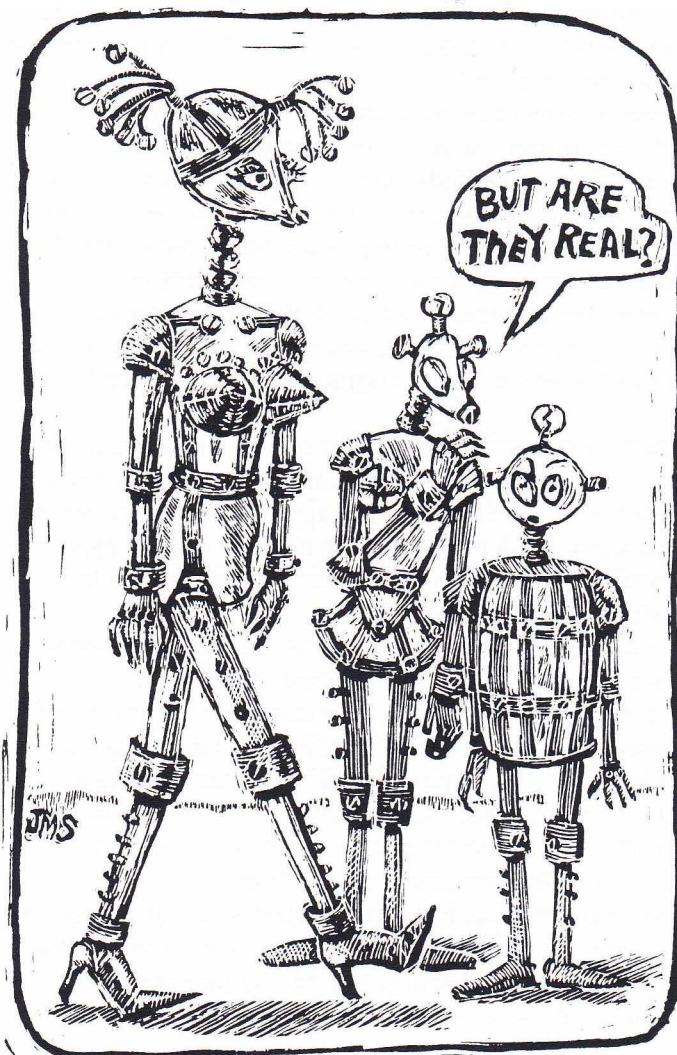
Aces #15 / Paul McCall, 5801 W. Henry St., Indianapolis IN 46241 / pmccall@indy.net / www.paulmccall.com / \$10, no subs / The grand news is announced in an interleaf, but is, of course, self-evident: this ace among zines devoted to the pulps is not dead, as previously announced. In fact, #15 is thicker than most, although it retains the usual attributes: a beautiful color cover by the editor, multiple reprinted

pulp covers, articles on magazine artists and other pulp esoterica (this time concentrating on *westerns*) with contributions by Jerry Page and many other knights of knowledgability, an enthused and informative lettercol. (Best: Tom Johnson's opening piece on The Leopard Lady and Madame Death.) Paul states that **Aces** has been cut back to an annual schedule. I regret the loss of more issues ... but I rejoice that we'll still be seeing this impeccable publication about the way the future was in the *genuine* future. N.B.: send Paul an sase if you want announcements of future issues. N.B. again: you should.

The Accidental Fanzine / Sheila Lightsey, 263 Elm St., Cambridge MA 02139 / sheilalightsey@yahoo.com / Begs the delightful editor: "I ask you — restrain yourself — no wah wah hoos, no drooling at least in public if you review it in **Challenger**. I am a brave woman to send it to you." Wah wah hoo! Great fun following Sheila on a *bathing* expedition around the world! Indeed, she focuses on personal cleansing to form a unique travelogue of her jaunts through Japan, Outer Mongolia (who else do you know who has been to Outer Mongolia?), and the Hammam in Paris, where she gets a *grommage* and a dramatic epililation. Is this the same funny and intelligent woman I once took on a *swamp* tour? Featuring exquisite art by Dan Steffan, this is certainly a unique publication, erotic as hell and wonderful fun. "I plan to do another," Sheila promises, and I surely hope so. Restrain your wah wah hoos whoever can!

Adventures in Crime & Space / Lori Wolf, 609-A West 6th St., Austin TX 78701 / e-mail: acs@eden.com; web: www.eden.com

after/shock/thoughts / vol. 1 issue 4 - vol. 2 issue 3 / Sabina E. Becker, 670 King St. E., Cobourg, Ont. K9A 4J8 Canada /



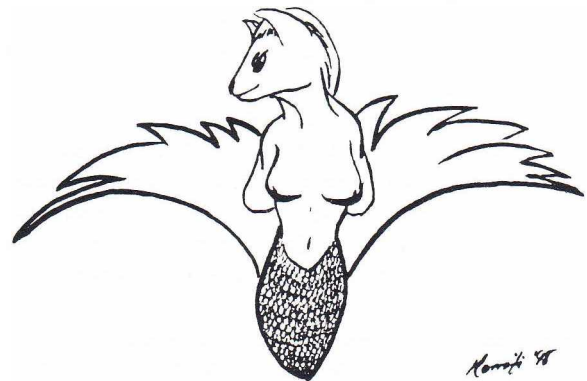
coldfire@sympatico.ca / \$2.50@ Cdn/US / "The world is now officially a crazy place," begins Sabina's latest issue, and *she* lives in Canada! Always a lot to these literate, bitter publications. Central to at least a couple is her perspective of free speech, a "thorn in her side." Her revulsion at pornography causes her to flinch back from an absolutist view. Well, she and I disagree: my iron-set, cement-clad motto is that, in matters of taste or decency, I make up my own mind. Strong, worthwhile writing, ever-challenging.

Angry Thoreauan #26 / Rev. Randall Tin-ear, P.O. Box 3478, Los Angeles CA 90028 / revtinear@angrythoreauan.com / www.angrythoreauan.com / \$3 / The what? About the only punkzine I got this time around, a slick jobby with much to offer, even if I find the usual nihilist tone of these publications tiresome. I enjoyed the zine reviews — only **Opuntia** is mentioned from our crowd, and they like it — and it's enlightening to see a one-time editor strike back at zines in general. Most compelling for me was the shaken cry of a Columbine parent agonizing over the societal screw-ups that contributed to the ugly aftermath of that tragedy: the cops, the media, and I suspect, the deity; the author apparently didn't lose his kid to Klebold and Harris, but what sort of universe is it, he weeps, where that might have been. Anyway, the pages and pages and pages of reviews of bands and zines and comics and so on proves how huge is the world of punk. Too bad it's not also broad; too bad its perspective is so bitter and so incurious.

Ansible #157-160 / Dave Langford / 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU, U.K. / U.S. Agent: Janice Murray, P.O. Box 75684, Seattle WA 98125-0684 / SAE or. / A beautiful eulogy section for Keith Roberts stands out in these issues of Britdom's epic newszine, which always conveys a dozen times more info and entertainment than its single page can possibly hold. I'm just a schmuck who thinks Dave should withdraw from the Fan Writer Hugo, so what do I know, but I vote for his continuing his Thog's Masterclass. Clumsy language is the heart of humor, especially if some idiot paid for it.

Aztec Blue Nos. 1-2 / Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Street, Mississauga Ontario L4Y 1C8 Canada / mmoore@pathcom.com / One of the stars of fannish lettercols premieres his own genzine, and it's most welcome! It's well-stocked with notable contributors, too: Mike Glicksohn on his fannish history; Joyce Scrivner on living with deaf parents; a two-part piece on visiting Albania by John Berry that's surprisingly funny — surprising because there's little funny about Albania. Murray's Chicon report — which he reprints

in his zine campaigning for the Canadian Unity Fan Fund — revels in names, including mine, that became faces at the convention. I know exactly how he feels.



Baloney #1-2 / The Tumbler Twins, a.k.a. Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas NV 89107, & Tom Springer, 15515 NE First Circle, Vancouver WA 98684 / LOCs to Tomsprung@aol.com / contributions or trade / It is always a boon moment in fanzine-land whenever Arnie Katz enjoys a supernova of energy, and starts a slew of new zines. Here is one with one of his most able disciples, Tom Springer, whose work is familiar from the lamented Vegrants clubzine, **Wild Heirs**. Content is mostly natter about how much fun it is to create a fanzine. Nifty caricature cover by the very able Ross Chamberlin, too. #2 showed via e-mail — a *horrible* way to distribute fanzines — and is mainly a cacophony of trumpets blaring forth Springer's TAFF candidacy, though Robert Lichtman chimes in to defend himself of the charge of being the puppeteer in command of Las Vegas fandom.

Banana Wings 15 / Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 7HA, U.K.; Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE, U.K. / banana@tragic.demon.co.uk / **BW** is the best Brit genzine — it has a wonderful wit, high variety, and is supremely faanish. Steve Stiles' jolly cover reflects the rich humor to be found throughout. Claire Brialey reviews **Rocket Boys**, made into the excellent film **October Sky**, and segues into a funny story about "explosives expert" "Q" and his efforts to supply propellant to local "rocket boys." Later she discusses the Fortean and their wild, sometimes contradictory historical theories — her piece makes me curious about the group. Juliette Woods appropriately talks about

trees, editor Plummer describes his office's disaster preparedness, and a trip to Reading prompts contemplation of "The Cost of Fanac": more likely a good excuse to scan old fanzines. More, more ... Ron Bennett relates a hilarious military lecture he heard in 1967 on spy-spotting, and Tanya Brown, in an elegant poetic bit, evokes the spirit of H.G. Wells by visiting Shoebury, and from Martians moves on to poignant personal memories. There's a fine faanish lettercol, with lots of people natter and gossip. Funny to see contributors like Teddy Harvia and Brad Foster and E.B. Frohvet (who mentions my name), so strongly associated with American zines, in this exemplary English one. Humor ... always humor. Interleaved: a GUFF ballot. Didn't vote: none of my business.

Barmaid #9 / Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpey, Worcs., DY12 INP UK / yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk / trade / One of the most charming Brit perzines, **Barmaid** is faanish to the core. Like the editor says about Novacon, in her report thereupon, you have to know the people — but just as at a warm and open convention, once you get into **Barmaid**, you feel you're among pals. Yvonne segues from lamenting her 40th birthday into a discussion of accents, presents a piece on guitarists by Malcolm Jeffrey and a nice squib on "Books as Pals". What sort of pals would Dave Robicheaux and Harry Bosch be? Warm, friendly LOCs, including one from me — not particularly flirtatious! What's Andy Hooper talking about?

Baryon Magazine 78 / Barry R. Hunter, P.O. Box 3314, Rome Georgia 30164-3314 / \$1.00 or the usual / <http://www.geocities.com/baryonmag> / Good book reviews of a variety of genre titles by the editor and Harriet Klausner, with special comics titles (**The Spirit Archives**) thrown in. Barry explains why all of his notices are positive: those are the only books he finishes! His ecstasy over Mike Bishop's "Blue Kansas Sky" has me anxious to scan it; apparently it's Hugo-worthy. Nice cover on #78 by Peter Howarth.

Batteries Not Included Vol. VII #9-11 / Richard Freeman, 130 W. Limestone St., Yellow Springs OH 45387/\$3@ / Consistently fascinating and entertaining look at the porn industry from within and without. The editor's reviews and natter are ably accompanied by Richard Pacheco's splendid and occasionally wise reminiscences, and memoirs and observations by such excellent writers as Lisa Falour, David Steinberg, and others. There is wit here, and sadness; sex wasn't meant to be sold, but sold it always had been, and the sellers deal with it with dignity or without, whatever they can muster. It makes for a valuable, enjoyable,

welcome monthly read.

Bento / David Levine and Kate Yule, 1905 SE 43rd Ave., Portland OR 97215 / david.d.levine@intel.com; kyule@spiritone.com / "editorial whim or the Unusual"

Ben's Beat 61 / Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave., Teaneck NJ 07666-2626 / One of my favorite per-cum-apazines opens with a photo of a sculpture by Janet, Ben's wife. It reminds me of my Hugo base design (see **Challenger #7**). Much good writing, including an epic personal portrait of Jewish family life. It's a wonderful story of genuine people, touching, sad, funny. "Broadway Beat", Ben's reviews of current theatre, follows, frying me in the juices of my own envy, particularly when he describes **Copenhagen**, a play about the mysterious wartime meeting between Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg. Books reviewed range from a George Eliot bio to Annie Proulx. How fine it must be to live such a life of the mind!

Birthday Party / Neil Rest, 1549 Birchwood, Chicago IL / Invitation to the same on December 2nd (even though Neil's actual birthday is December 21st; I always thought it sadistic to give birth to their kids so close to Christmas). Couldn't make it except it spirit, but happy times anyway, Neil.

Brooklyn! No. 30 / Fred Argoff, 1800 Ocean Pkwy #B-12, Brooklyn NY 11223-3037 new address / \$10 per 4 quarterly issues / Toni Weisskopf take note: *graffiti* is the central theme of this issue, with photos illustrating some of Brooklyn's finest examples. (Note to Fred: check out the trainside artwork on the northbound Amtrak line.) Also, a Brooklynese lexicon, subway natter, touring the borough by bus. Great pub for a great town: *tolja!*

Carved on Dead Trees #1 / Alison Scott, 24 St. Mary Rd., Walthamstow, London U.K. E17 9RG / A sprightly zine of zine reviews, available only to publishers of said zines. She's very kind to **Chall**, and compliments us on "the world's fastest surface mail." Considering the ghastly delay it took in getting #12 to Sandra Bond — and thence to Brit faneds — by M-bag, maybe I should forget about saving money and continue sending copies out that way. Anyway, this publication's criticisms are genuine but kind, and made utterly by-the-way by the birth announcement in latter pages for Alison's son, Jonathan Andrew Cain. Photos reveal the future P.M. to be a righteous dude, and his mother both pretty and proud.

Chicago Moon-Times #s 1-18 / The worldcon

publications staff could take pride in superior work in every instance; I won't mention them all here. The semi-daily Chicon newszine was a prime production of its kind, and I'm not just saying that because my picture is in #15.5, allegedly "reeling from news of the Toronto [worldcon] win." It kept us up to date on everything, it kept us entertained, and it kept copies of back issues available.

Conferring with Earthquakes #6 / Brin-Marie McLaughlin, 247 19th Avenue Apt. 6, San Francisco CA 94121-2353 / brininsf@aol.com / <http://members.aol.com/brininsf/index.html> / From the looks of the photos she runs in this issue, showing damage to her garage, I thought Brin had been conferring with *real* earthquakes, but t'was only a reckless driver. Other items in this neat perzine involve "Diet Porn" (whisper that first word around here; Rose-Marie thinks I need to lose weight), with an apt Brad Foster illo, Dr. Laura's homophobia, and a chucklesome exasperated account of "the houseguest from Hell," a 367-pound boob and boor who brought the joys of parenthood to Brin and her beau for one awful weekend. It wasn't a total loss; she got a funny article out of the experience.

ConJose Offline Vol. 1, No. 1 / P.O. Box 61363, Sunnyvale CA 94088-1363 / <http://www.conjose.org> / A very early fractional p.r. from the 2002 worldcon, giving new members, e-mail addresses, and a membership installment plan. One minor complaint: they don't tell us ConJose's dates, and member S124 — soon to convert to attending! — needs to schedule himself well in advance.

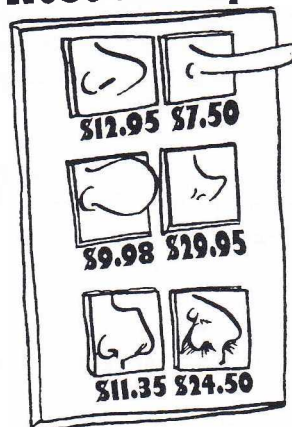
Corflatch Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones / Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas NV 89107 / crossfire@aol.com / trade / Sent by e-mail (see **Jackpot**), this is a long, detailed, elaborate report on the 2000 Corflu, replete with intense Katzian philosophizing on fandom and fanzines and the wherefores thereof. Arnie's perspective is particularly valuable — if a bit defensive — in dissecting fanzine fandom's tendency to clique. All the events and many of the personalities of the Seattle soiree get their due, and some critique: the topics asked in fannish Jeopardy, the primacy of air conditioning as understood by Las Vegants, TAFF, a ticklish topic, Linda Krawecka imitating the Space Needle (I've seen Linda, and I've seen the Space Needle, and no, it's not possible), and praise for Geri Sullivan and Robert Lichtman, in which I join. (Hey ... *Geri* for TAFF!) Lots about second-hand smoke, including a clever Rotsler cover, and many apt Billos inside. I always feel semi-wistful reading about Corflu; someday, someday ...

Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi No. 6 / Andrew C. Murdoch, 508-6800 Westminster Hwy, Richmond B.C. V7C 1C5 Canada / raven@wolf.spydernet.com / t.u. or \$2@ / This zine even has its own ISSN number! Andrew — after an *inimitable* Scott Patri cover — opens matters with zine reviews that remind me of mine, a review by Gene Stewart of a K.W. Jeter novel, and a long section on awards, including Canada's own Auroras (Murdoch swears his next loss will be as a professional) and Baltimore's Compton Crook Award for a first novel in this or a related genre. A long report on V-Con, which I guess stands for Vancouver, comes next, with the Penneys the only familiar fannish names except for Godzilla, featured in a panel on his mating habits. Hey, they have a kissing auction! DSC take note! A few Frohvet reviews finish the zine except for LOCs from the usual suspects (Joe Major promotes WigWam Village in 2003, bless him).

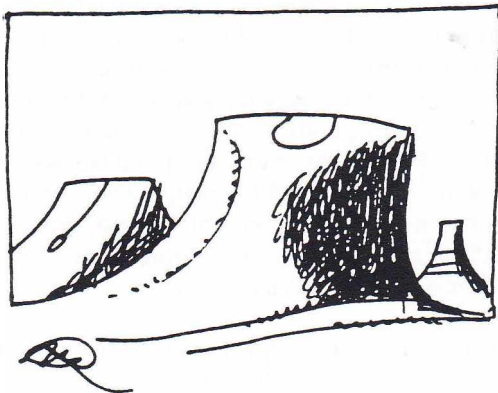
DASFax Vol. 32, Nos. 8-11 / Sourdough Jackson, 31 Rangeview Dr., Lakewood CO 80215 / jjackson@bwn.net / Four issues of the Colorado club's monthly pub, each featuring a good pen-and-ink cover (except for one photo of "the world's largest air gun"), a map to the next club party, an editorial by Sourdough, book reviews by Fred Cleaver, a calendar of local events, website addresses of interest, and so on. DASFA is looking for a meeting place; they'd be welcome here, but it's a bit far to drive.

Detours / Louis Russell Chauvenet, 11 Sussex Road, Silver Spring MD 20910-5436

Nose Boutique



De Profundis 332-335 / Marty Cantor, c/o LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood CA 91601 / Somehow the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society manages to make its meetings sound entertaining and fun in their minutes. In these issues of the clubzine those "menace" announce the demise of Curt Siodmak, the probable expulsion of three scofflaw members, and incorrectly credit Gherman Titov with being the second man in space (he was the second man in *orbit*; Alan Shepard and Gus Grisson preceded him with suborbital flights). Each meeting hails a patron saint of the club, including Ron Ellik, who once lived at my old college stompin' grounds, Barrington Hall (I once found photos of him and **Bull** co-editor Terry Carr, 15 years after their era ... and there's much more to the story). Watch for Bruce Pelz's fannish Mah Jongg card deck. LASFS always sounds like more fun than an eel at an orgy. I wonder how many years it'll be till I set foot in that clubhouse again.



The Devniad / Bob Devney, 25 Johnson Street, N. Attleboro MA 02760/ Frequent and brilliant ... and on the net. Bob talks well about everything; contact him, become part of his list, and vote him the Hugo he deserves.

Ditto #13 - PR 1 / unstated, but received with **Stet** #9 / Neil Kaden, 801 Timberwood Circle, Fairview TX 75069-9183 / kaden@alum.mit.edu./ <http://www.circlenk.com/ditto/> I wasn't able to go. How was it?

Ditto Haze / Bill Bowers / 4651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati OH 45238-4503 / eWorlds@Outworlds.net

DUFF 2001: Westward Ho / Janice Gelb, 1070 Mercedes Ave. #2, Los Altos CA 94022; Cathy Cupitt, P.O. Box 915, Nedlands 6909 W.A., Australia / Newsletter from the last two DUFF delegates reporting on the financial state of the Down Under Fan Fund and distributing the '01 ballot. Auctions etc. were

particularly lucrative in building up the current fund: combining US and Aussie totals, the wad tops \$20,000.

Erg 151 / Terry Jeeves, 66 Red Scar Dr., Scarborough, N. Yorks. YO12 5RQ U.K. / erg40@madasafish.com / I hope Teddy will take my amazement the right way, but the gentleman just had his 78th birthday, and **Erg** itself is 42. **That** is venerable! And **Erg** is wonderful — one of our pivotal connections to the way the future was, fandom's glorious heritage of spaceships and noble heroes. Superheroes form the basis of Terry's lead article this 'round, guys like The Shadow and Doc Savage and the Spider ... Somehow the pulps sound best when described by the guys who read them when. Jeeves wows me by revealing the date of Doc Savage's last adventure: it was 1949, the year I was born. He declaims upon another constant interest, old airplanes, and recruits Andrew Darlington and James Verran to review and editorialize. Letters follow — without addresses, *tsk tsk*, Terry! What a trip **Erg** is. Here's to another 42 years.

Especially Henry / C.F. Kennedy, 39 Claremore Avenue, Scarborough ON M1N 3 S1 Canada / itsmysite.com/necessarydrift / Cute fiction booklet, recommended for those with fondness for our canine pals.

Ethel the Aardvark Nos. 92-93 / Paul Lewis, Melbourne S.F. Club, P.O. Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Vic. 3005, Australia / MSFC_Ethel@eGroups.com / \$15 (for Australia), \$25 (overseas) for 6 issues / A fine Alan White cover and interiors — the dude deserves a Hugo nod! — adorn the latest issue of this splendid, even indispensable, publication of the Melbourne SF Club. Nothing wrong with Phil Wlodarczyk' "Demon Duck" atop #92, but he'll never win a Hugo with a name *that* hard to spell. Most faanish contents, taking no pains to avoid pictures and personalities of club members, but I like that: now you know the face behind the review. And there are reviews, lots of them, and good LOCs, and good art, and *great* vibes. I especially hail the presence of Paula McGrath, a spiffy one-time visitor to these environs.

Fanzine Fanatique Quarterly / Keith A. Walker, 6 Wire [?] St., Greaves, Lancaster LA1 9WF U.K. / Kwalker777@aol.com / I reel in anguish that I wasn't able to place a **Challenger** in the fall 2000 issue. Blame the damned M-bag. A very valuable guide to zinedom, concentrated on Brit and European publications. Some unusual entries. Keith tries to answer "Wot [sic] is a fanzine?" for the septuagenarian expatriate Peter Russell, and does as good a job as any. Note: must trade for some of these unknown titles ...

Evil evil evil / David Basden / I can't find a colophon on this punkish *cri de coeur*, given me by the editor — a pal of Cathy Cupitt's, I think — at Chicon. I think that's David streaking on the photo cover, his shame obscured by an Aussiecon Hugo (dreamer!). Somewhere in the issue Russell Farr gives two prerequisites for doing a zine: be young and be angry. This pub is young enough, for sure, but its anger is more sadness than anything else, as in "Jayne's" page of childhood fantasy, in which the parents of the princess love her very much and never ever fight. Very beautiful, very sad. But there's rich fannish humor, too, such as Aaron Jacks' rollicking account of picking his nose after chopping up chili peppers, and his collaboration with Sam Bentink, "Confessions of a Pathetic Loser aka My life is a piece of shit". I wouldn't be young again unless you paid me. Backover: a gopher.

File 770:136 / Mike Glycer, 705 Valley View Drive, Monrovia CA 91016 / MGlycer@compuserve.com / \$8 for 5 issues / Mike's joy at winning the Chicon Hugo dominates the first pages of his indispensable newszine, along with Rosy Donovan's already-classic photo of the two of us struggling over his trophy. (Looks are deceiving: I was actually trying to keep Mike from *dropping and damaging* the Hugo, by taking it home myself. *kof*) You can see that picture later in this **Challenger**; I've enlarged and framed it; it looms above my computer, symbolic of the faned's eternal quest for glory. Early in Mike's "News of Fandom" column is an item of even more importance to me than the Hugo. Then we're off ... the fan funds, worldcon bids, awards, obits, terrific reports by John Hertz, Dale Speirs and Joy Smith, another chapter in Steven Silver's **Jeopardy** saga, more excellent art by Alan White and others. One of my panels at worldcon dealt with creating a "focal point" fanzine. Ask Mike; he's done it already.

Flashback / Jerry Page & Jerry Burge, 193 Battery Place NE, Atlanta GA 30307 / \$6@, no subs or trades / Jerry Page has his Rebel Award; Jerry Burge deserves one. DSC, see to it.

The Floating Fan Vol. 1 No. 4 / Pamela Boal, 4 Westfield Way, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 7EW, U.K. / PJBoal@aol.com / Trade

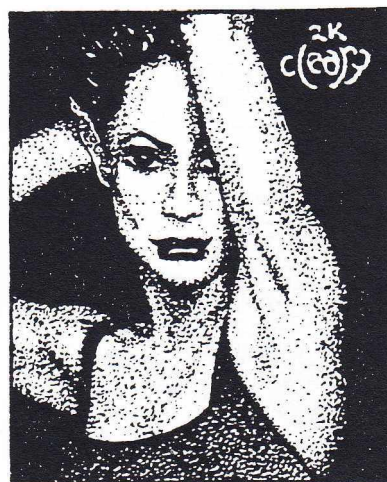
For the Clerisy Vol. 7 No. 39 / Brant Kresovich, P.O. Box 404, Getzville NY 14068-0404 / kresovich@hotmail.com / \$2 or trade / The zine "about reading" for the celerisy, a.k.a. those who read for pleasure. Not predominantly SF-oriented: Brant discusses Kenneth Roberts, Robert Penn Warren

(author of my favorite novel, **All the King's Men**), even Robert Graves. Very original zine reviews, many non-fannish. Kresovich also talks about the firing of Indiana coach Bobby Knight, who always impressed me as science fictional in a brutal, stupid way.

For Dickheads Only / Dave Hyde c/o Ganymeadean Slime Mold Productions, P.O. Box 611, Kokomo IN 46903

Fosfax #199 / Timothy Lane c/o FOSFA, P.O. Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281 / \$3 or. / I love these guys but I can't look at such a winger publication this season, sorry.

From the Dawn of S-F Fandom / Paul McCall, see **Aces** / "for sale at the cost of production and mailing" / T'row me in dat briar patch! Here is probably the most notable zine to plop into my mailbox this time. In a handsome digest format, with as cover by the editor, it consists of reprints of various pieces from the early fanzines of Mort Weisinger and Julius Schwartz, adorned with photos and reprinted covers and interior illos from the pulps. Fascinating stuff! Profiles of Arthur J. Burks, Frank R. Paul, Farnsworth Wright, and the immortal Hans Waldemar Wessolowski. I lament Weisinger's fannish writing style, which often abandoned pronouns (for instance, "Has traveled extensively"), but who am I to argue with a man with such check stubs? (In joke.) Best: Julie's piece on A. Merritt. It has been the greatest honor of my fannish life to know Julius Schwartz, and I even enjoyed interviewing Mort (see **Amazing World of DC Comics**; #7, I believe). This collection of their fannish work is invaluable not only because it keeps that work in print, but because it reflects the genre and its fandom as they were when they were new.



Galactic Patrol Gazette / MCFI, P.O. Box 1010, Framingham MA 01701 / info@mcfi.org / www.mcfi.org

Gloss 2 / Victor A. Gonzalez, 9238 4th Ave. SW, Seattle WA 98106 *NEW* / squib@galaxy-7.net / trade / Much of this impressive perzine is devoted to a personal history, as Victor touts his TAFF candidacy. (A ballot was included and quickly submitted.) Lilian Edwards reviews the current crop of Britzines, and has to skip a slew of them. Dave Hicks relives Plokta.com. The long, central letter column vibrates with controversy, response — by Ted White, Greg Benford, rich brown and others — to Ms. Edwards' revulsion last issue to White's article in another zine on Ardis Fisher. (That's a lot of "in"s and "to"s.) Lilian's replies are strong and well-considered; "post-modernist" or not, it's by far the most interesting exchange seen in this season's lettercols. Andy Hooper welcomes six new fanzines to the fray in his closing page of reviews.

Halcyon Days #86 / Robert Sabella, see **Visions of Paradise** / The lettercol for **VoP** comes in this separate zine, a neat idea. The names you'd expect to see, you see; I sometimes think lettercols are the sole reason genzines exist, to give our LOCsters outlet after outlet.

Idea 12 / Geri Sullivan, Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315 / idea@toad-hall.com / Got a great **Idea** in the mail ... TAFF tales dominate Geri's first issue in several years, from the color photos of Maureen Speller on the cover to Ulrika O'Brien's spiffy account of the genesis of her successful candidacy. Dave Langford contributes an involved --and photo-illustrated -- Minicon diary, welcome extended work from the overly-Hugoed author, Jeff Schalles continues his adventures in the

wimpy zone, and "The Guy Fawkes Songbook" comes in from John M. Ford and Elise Matthesen. A tremendous lettercol caps things — where would we be without our correspondents? — I love Geri's practice of tracing signatures. And I have to hail the superb reproduction on the interior illos, which someone has dressed up with expressive shadings. Maybe it's the twiltone paper, but I get a sense of excitement — and an itch in the fingers — unique to **Idea**.

International Revolutionary Gardener 3 / Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU U.K. / jehanna@gn.apc.org, josephn@globalnet.co.uk / This perzine has an intensity others do not. Judith's pages consist of a long, thoughtful, rather wistful tribute to Barbie dolls and their meaningfulness to girls. "Buying my own Barbie, from my own pocket-money, marked a stage in growing up." I like Judith's illo, too. Following a strong lettercol, Nicholas chimes in with "Observations from Life". Nattering on a variety of topics, all interesting or made so by the author.

Jackpot #1-3 / Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas NV 89107 / crossfire@aol.com / trade / Before I turn to the delightful content of these publications, by one of The Masters, I must voice a lament. This is the way to write fanzines, all right, but it's a *lousy* way to *distribute* fanzines. Each issue comes by *e-mail* in two or three parts, each fills my mailbox to capacity, each requires a substantial effort and expense to print out. Better to create a website for these excellent pubs — there are people who can do this for Arnie even if, like me, he's no computer whizbang — and use the e-mails to announce each new issue. Anyway, as to the zines themselves, they're *churce*. They begin with a welcome rundown on the epically long Katz fanzine career, including **Quip**, **Wild Heirs**, but for some reason neglecting Arnie's fine SFPazines, **Nemesis** and **Damnyankee**. His real career in publishing, a computer games critic *par excellence*, is touched on, too, and the glory of Spam — *real* Spam, if that isn't self-contradictory. Neatest thing in the first issue is a piece on baseball cards — my dad owned some beauties from the backs of cigarette packs; I had to make do with Topps. He praises the famous disc jockey, Jean Shepherd, and argues with Rich Lynch's decision not to trade **Mimosa** for electronic publications. (If anyone wonders, **Challenger** will trade with e-zines, but I much prefer paper.) And so much more — Arnie is a fannish polymath. He is also one of those guys who should have won a Fan Writer Hugo, and would have, and will, if fandom ever gets its nose out of its butt. His dedication is overdue for such notice by decades.



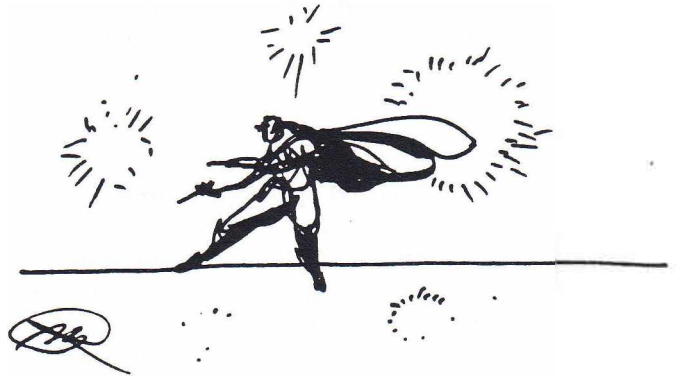
Janice's Adventures in Downunderland / Janice Gelb, 1070 Mercedes Ave. #2, Los Altos CA 94022 / <http://home.pacbell.net/jgelb/> / \$5 at Chicon, possibly the same by mail / Janice's opus features a cover by the Texas team of Teddy Harvia and Brad Foster, superb interiors by each, and incidentally, a lively, comprehensively detailed Australian trip report by the DUFF winner. We who share the Southern Fandom Press Alliance with Janice — she's the apa's senior female member, having been with us longer than any other lady and all but a handful of the guys — are used to such accounts of her conventionneering, but this is still marvelous fun. Part of the sale price goes to benefit DUFF.

Jomp Jr. / Richard A. Dengrove, 2651 Arlington Dr. #302, Alexandria VA 22306 / dengrove@erols.com / <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/7076/t.u>.

The Knarley Knews #83-84 / Henry Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton WI 53024-2017 / welch@msoe.edu or LethaWelch@aol.com / \$1.50 @ / #83 was prepared for Chicon distribution. Sheryl Birkhead's cool cover is the only artwork of hers I've seen this time around, and so it's especially welcome. Inside, Knarl "spumes" about the horror of retyping LOCs (while carefully encouraging readers to keep 'em coming), and notes success in scanning letters into process-able form. As long as you don't end up with "a fart of a fiendish scheme," you're home free with such technology. Sue's account of a trip to Brazil fills me with angst; I let my flight-o-phobia keep me from ten days in Rio one year. Charlotte Proctor talks movies, E.B. Frohvet hits on convention publications, a subject once near to my heart, and Gene Stewart laments his disastrous experience with "flamewars" in Trufen. This subject pops up in the next issue in Welch's editorial, which deals with on-line civility. Apparently many believe that chatrooms and lists serve mainly as excuses for venting bile and projecting paranoia in the guise of honest opinions. Peddle that poop in some other pasture, people! Anyway, Knarl goes on to describe a trips to Wisconsin (I wanna see Wawa) and the worldcon. He reveals that he created the cut-out figure depicted in my photo report elsewhere in this issue, praises the "architectural boat tour" we wanted to take but missed, and chimes in briefly on the Langford issue. On he goes, describing the Dallas Ditto I wish I'd made (I'd practically promised Dick & Leah Smith I'd be there), before ceding the zine to Sue, who takes us on a driving trip across Michigan's Upper Peninsula (which I only know through **Anatomy of a Murder** — I wanna see that Mackinac Bridge). Stewart talks **Twilight Zone**. The great Rodney Leighton talks fanzines ... getting the crackpot Ted White reviews of

Astromancer Quarterly and this zine reversed in order (I came first), but who mentions advice from the late Buck Coulson I'd like to see. All this and many, many LOCs ... there's just no time to delve into their substance here. *Quite a lot* to **KK**.

Kronos / Debra A. Hussey, 115 38th Ave. N., Nashville TN 37209 / dah2@hotmail.com / On-the-net local news, very up-to-date and all-inclusive, much recommended to all those within hailing distance of Nashville.



Lofgeornost #60-1 / Fred Lerner, 5 Worcester Ave., White River Junction VT 05001 / fred.lerner@dartmouth.com / Nice meeting Fred at Chicon! You'll find a photo of the moment elsewhere. Literate material here — #60 is an amazingly rich and detailed travelogue of Stockholm and Estonia — lots of umlauts and placenames my great-grandparents would have known. Food, monuments, weird respect for Americans and nifty **Vasa** shipwreck. The lead piece is #61, reprinted from a talk at the '99 World Fantasy Convention, deals with libraries' typically stultifying effect on fantasy. Say what you will about media SF; it did open the Muggles' eyes to the value of our genre.

Mainstream / Jerry Kaufman & Suzanne Tompkins, 3522 N.E. 123rd St., Seattle WA 98125 / jakaufman@aol.com, suzlet@aol.com / \$5 or trade

Memphen 270 / Greg Bridges, P.O. Box 820534, Memphis TN 38182-0534 / Trade / Boy, I like Tom Foster's art. His spiffy cover justifies the editor's suggestion for a Hugo nomination — but he needs to share his art with other, larger, more edited-by-me fanzines. Oh well, I'm sure he's loyal to my old friend Greg — whom I've known for 25 years — and this neat clubzine. Herein Greg and his wife Dana report on Chicon, give info on the Hugos, and Leigh Kimmel reports on the last Rivercon. Most striking item in the issue is Harris Lentz's letter and photo re his book on SF film and TV credits, *13,000 pages long* in m.s. — nearly 5 feet tall. I wonder what he'd do if he found out

he'd lost page 9,435?

Mimosa / Richard & Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 1350, Gaithersburg MD 20885 / e-mail: jophan@zdnetwork.com / website: <http://www.Jophan.org/mimosa/> \$4 or.

Never Quite Arriving / Christina Lake, 12 Hatherley Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8QA U.K. / christina.l@virgin.net / Trade

New Kind of Neighborhood / Ylva Spangberg, Disponentg 3, S-112 62 Stockholm, and Lennart Uhlin, Hogsatrav 22, 5 tr, S-181 58 Lindigo, Sweden / ylva_s@yahoo.com, lennart@sfbok.se / "the usual, we suppose"

News from Crime and Space Vol. 5 Issue 1 / Sara Felix, 609A W.6th St., Austin TX 78701 / www.crimeandspace.com / A new name for the newsletter of the bookstore I most want to visit. Adventures in Crime and Space, this edition touts signings by Terry Pratchett and Sean Stewart, and features reviews by the editor and someone named Scott. I ache to prowl this bookstore's aisles!

No Award #8 / Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore St. #105, N. Hollywood CA 91606 / martyhoohah@netzero.net & louishoohah@netzero.net / Marty's genzine maintains its high standards of writing and continues to improve its appearance — and I get the b&w print version (it's in color on the net). Sharp, unobtrusive graphics add much to the appeal of this compelling publication. Following a clever Ray Capella cover, Marty provides many goodies: a strange two-page Joe Mayhew cartoon strip, a Rick Sneary fannish glossary, another installment of Len Moffatt's LASFS memoirs,

this time focusing on the Outsiders, a good Joe Major review of Katz & Springer's **Baloney**, with emphasis on the 5-fugghead rumor, lively LOCs (much acerbic commentary by the editor). Best of all, though, is Milt Stevens' review/guide to **Dhalgren**, which is the

funniest piece I've read in many a zine. Poor Chip Delany. Well do I remember him chatting up his massive work in progress to Hank Stine at a Little Men meeting in '70 and '71, excited that a critical revelation had shown him a common theme — ruined cities — running throughout his books, and prevalent here. Well also do I remember Denny O'Neil's displeasure at having a distasteful gay character named after him, and the one phrase I noticed from my own failed attempt at the monolith: "the joined meat of their mouths." Milt's demolition of the tome is dry, befuddled, hilarious, but we should weep, not laugh. The book that was to be Delany's masterpiece turned SF's best hope into its biggest joke.

Nonstop Fun is Hard on the Heart two / Dwain Kaiser, P.O. Box 1074, Claremont CA 91711-1074 / dgkaiser@gte.net / Cool mini-genzine featuring color illos and a brief eulogy for Carl Barks that had me weeping when I first saw it: it was my first word that the Duck Man was gone.

Nova Express Vol. 5 No. 4 / Lawrence Person, P.O. Box 27231, Austin TX 78755-2231 / e-mail: lawrence@bga.com / 4/\$12 U.S.; 4/\$16 Canada & Mexico; 4/\$22 International / A handsomely produced zine, perhaps a little plain — except for its spooky cover — but refreshingly professional. It features some very distinguished contributors, a continuing Neil Gaiman interview (fine, but including "(inaudible)"s and such unnecessary glitches), an article about the serious problems afflicting comics distribution (Marvel — without Time Warner to back it up — is a quarter of a billion bucks in debt and primed for extinction), a piece on Brian Stableford, and odd reviews of obscure SF. At the zine's happy center is a cool "Listomania", several ten-best rankings, a list of SF hoaxes, Nobel winners who sullied their hands with the genre, and so on. Mucho fun.

On East Broadway 2-3 / Tim Marion, c/o Kleinbard, 266 E. Broadway, Apt. 1201B, New York NY 10002 / Slanapa zines by a guy I hadn't seen for decades before he turned up at Chicon, who subsequently proffered **Chall** some well-turned calligraphy and these zines in trade. #2 is a long report on MidwestCon, #3 invaluable correspondence with Harry Warner (who, by the way, promises to LoC **Challengers** 11 and 12 Real Soon Now). Also enclosed, **Mumble Gutter** 7, a FAPazine, in which he mentions a missing scene out of my current favorite movie, **The Manchurian Candidate**. I don't recall it from any viewing, so I think he got it wrong here. I can't believe Marion is 42 years old ... no, that's ridiculous; if he was 42, I'd be 51! What nonsense!



Opuntia #45-45.5-46-46.1 / Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7 Canada / \$3 @ or. / Here's the zine with the cactus -- does Canada have cactuses? And how does that numbering system go again? 45.5 contains sober reflections on A.E. van Vogt's life and career, a frustrating eclipse yarn (it was cloudy), and a nicely wrought section on the Canadian wilderness. 46 shifts gears to report on Con-version and artist trading cards, which I've never seen, and the next issue — .1 — offers an illuminating review of **The Languages of Pao**, the novel by that thoughtful gentleman, Jack Vance. (You'll see 46.1's cover parodied in **Plokta**.) Received with a polaroid photo of Dale's "Opuntia" license plate with a copy of **Chall** #12 beside it. Speirs is a righteously good writer on a continent-spanning range of things; Canada's most prolific faned continues to rock and roll.

Out of the Kaje / Karen Johnson, 35 Mariana Ave., Sth Croydon, Vict. 3136, Australia / karenji@labyrinth.net.au / the usual, whim, trade, or \$3

PhiloSFy/Alexander R. Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Rd., San Antonio TX 78239-4022 / alex_slate@hotmail.com / trade preferred Alex recently told Bob Sabella that he was gafia in terms of fanzines, but I have to tell him that I miss **P'SFy** and its righteous debates. Come back, wild man!

Pink Mind Wallabies / Karen Pender-Gunn, P.O. Box 567, Blackburn Vic 3130 Australia / fiawol@ozramp.net.au

Plokta Volume 5 Nos. 4-5 / Steve Davies, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks U.K. RG30 2RP; Alison Scott, 24 St. Mary Rd., Walthamstow, London U.K. E17 9RG; Mike Scott, 2 Craithie Rd., Chester U.K. CH3 5LJ / locs@plokta.com / www.plokta.com / A major hoot this fall was meeting Steve, another Hugo contender. Saw him briefly at Smofcon — the five minutes I attended! — and more satisfactorily at Chicon, where he gave me this issue. The cool Harry Potter parody cover is only the first bit of its nifty art. (I specifically exclude the photo of Andres Tobes in drag. *shuddddddd*) Mad in-groupish British humor abounds, and it's a tribute to Steve and Co. that though I don't get most of it, I love all of it. "Dr. Plokta's Baby and Child Care", the so-subtitled issue that follows, centers around the birth of Alison Scott's boychick, and her article is a true zinger. Yay team! The experience sounds joyous, but I'm just as glad I'm a fella and never have to go through it — from the lady's side of thing. Good writing, fine art, great spirit.

Poor Richard's Almanack #2-3 / Millennium Philcon / P.O. Box10 / Huntingdon Valley PA 19006-0310 / #1504A sits, and waits, and plots for the 2001 worldcon, though it's hard to sit when you can't wait and dialog is your strongest suit, and the progress reports are as handsome as this one ...

Probe 110 / Deirdre Byrne, P.O. Box 781401, Sandton 2146, South Africa / sfsa@newhorizons.co.za

Proper Boskonian / Lisa Hertel, c/o NESFA, P.O. Box 809, Framingham MA 01701-0203 / pb@nesfa.org / NESFA membership + a \$16 subscription, \$3/issue or.

Pulpdom / Camille Cazedessus, P.O. Box 2340, Pagosa Springs CO 81147-2340 / cazbooks@frontier.net/www.stationlink.com/pulpdom / \$24 next 6 issues in USA, no trades

Quasiquote 3 / Sandra Bond, 46 Stirling Road, London N22 5BP, U.K. / the usual, "I pound limey or \$2 yankee" / sandra@ho-street.demon.co.uk / Before I even open this creative pub — love that wrapabout cover — I must praise the editor for her help with British distribution of my previous issue. Thinking that I'd save big bucks by shipping all my UK copies of **Chall** #12 to a British agent, who would then mail them forth, I arranged with Sandra to take the job. Pinching every penny until Lincoln screamed for mercy, I sent the **Challengers** by something called an *M-bag*, on which I affixed a cool round holographic stamp and on which I pinned my hopes. *Two and a half months later*, Sandra finally got the zines. I saved a couple of dollars, but how much more, in terms of presence, did I lose? Maybe we should forget it, Sandra. Anyway, here's a rich pub, in which Sandra mourns Ken Cheslin, reviews Eastercon, declaims upon her clock-shaped-like-a-cow (seeing a lot of that lately), praises **Chicken Run**, which I too enjoyed. Avedon Carol's chat about London is compelling, as are the perspectives of many expatriates, and the one-&-only Dave Locke expositates (?) on the venerable SF cliché of an alternate Earth 180 degrees away in our own orbit. He is most amusing, but misses my favorite example of that bit: Alex Raymond's **Twin Earths**. (Is there a collection of that wonderful comic strip?) Nice Brad Foster illo, too. Perhaps the most thoughtful entry is Claire Brialey's pages on — not of — fanzine reviews. She disparages negative notices, and I believe I agree. Maureen Kincaid Speller contributes a long but funny article about home improvements — it is the fan that makes a subject fannish, not the subject — and then here come the LOCs. Good reading, and thanks again for the help, Sandra.



Quipu / Vicki Rosenzweig, 33 Indian Road, 6-R, New York NY 10034 / vr@interport.net / Trade

Rag Soup / Susan Higgins, P.O. Box 925711, Houston TX 77292-5711 / Ragsoup@aol.com / <http://hometown.aol.com/ragsoup/RAGSOUPindex.html> / A lovely on-line zine for children by one of **Challenger's** favorite people. Printed issues are \$1.50 to \$2. Samples given include a recipe for Orange Cream Ice Cream, a taste given mankind as a sign of celestial grace.

The Reluctant Famulus / Thomas D. Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian MI 49221-1627 / E-mail: [\\$3](mailto:tomfamulus@dmci.net)

The Rhizome Factor Vol. 1 No. 5 / Cathy Cupitt, P.O. Box 915, Nedlands, Western Australia, 6909, Australia / \$4A per. Extra overseas / This quality genzine may have been responsible for its editor winning the east-bound DUFF race last year; she gave me this copy at Chicon. This issue's theme is "women and speculative fiction," and Cathy begins it lamenting the sexism of Isaac Asimov, which she is too young to remember first hand and so is only now discovering. The statement she's reacting to is actually an observation I've made: that the true value of **Star Trek** is that it brought girls into fandom. Well ... didn't it? **Trek** figures strongly in this issue's pivotal article: Sandra Norman's incisive study of that fascinating psychosis, Slash Fandom. Couched in academic terms, it credits Slash with "playing with gender rules," creating "a hybrid of the male pornographic genre and the female romance genre." Most significantly, "[Slash] authors are *re-working* [my emphasis] their favorite male characters, keeping the bits they like (eg loyalty) and *reshaping* the rest." That says a lot. To my mind, Slash is the **Jenny Jones** of SF, foisting homosexuality on us, through male TV icons, to answer their fundamental bafflement and contempt for male sexuality. They have a total lack of understanding of masculinity and its motives. Slash

fans resent us, fear us, think of us as caricatures, and re-cast us as harmless quasi-females because they have no real concept of what we're all about. All I can say is — they shouldn't feel like that. We are *not* simple. We *do* believe in love. We even enjoy women. I love, for instance, the excerpts from Robin Pen's book on unknown SF films featuring females; it has the zine's best typo ("molten larva") and worst faux pas ("its skin [is] the same as that mysterious gook"). I know it's hardly an obscure film, but my favorite females in SF films are from Fritz Lang's silent days: Brigitte Helm's immortal dual role, saint and robot, from **Metropolis**, and the girl in **Frau im Mond**. I want y'all to remember the last scene in that otherwise fairly silly movie. If you want to understand the masculine dream, think of that.

Scavenger's Newsletter No. 199 / Janet Fox, 833 Main, Osage City KS 66523-1241 / [\\$2.50 per sample copy](mailto:foxscav1@jc.met) / "The monthly maketletter for SF/fantasy/horror/Mystery writers and artists with an interest in the small press." Very complete and interesting. This issue features an interview with poet Scott Green, as well as the usual listings of dozens of small press publications. Cool cover, too.

The Sci-File / Science Fiction Weekly / <http://www.scifiweekly.com>

scopus:3007 No. 10 / Alexander J. L. Bouchard, P.O. Box 573, Hazel Park MI 48030-0573 / ajlbouchard@juno.com / the usual / Most of this issue is written by Megan Bouchard, personal accounts that range from joyous — her triumph at the Buccaneer masquerade — to agonizing — their medical and legal problems. I hope I never take a trip under such horrible conditions, and I hope theirs improve. Other material leavens the general bad news: lively zine reviews, thoughts on governmental responsibility including a disturbing child custody case, about which I must hear more to form an opinion, and some very touching words on the Bouchards' friend and ours, Joe Mayhew.

SF Commentary 76 / Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood, Vict. 3066 Australia / [\\$A5, \\$US15 the single copy](mailto:gandc@mira.net) / The 30th Anniversary Edition, subtitled **The Unrelenting Gaze** / **George Turner's Non-fiction**. Gillespie deserves accolades and trophies for this effort. It's a magnificent volume. Turner's career surrounded Australian science fiction like an atmosphere; reading this awesome publication — 120 well-packed A4 pages — one wonders how any genre could survive without such a brilliant critic and observer. I love his analysis of LeGuin's **Dispossessed**, disagree with his critique of **Flow My Tears, the**

Policeman Said (which LeGuin's book beat out for the Hugo), learned from his speech to a symposium about John Campbell. Invaluable.

SFSFS 2000 Calendar / Carlos Perez, c/o South Florida SF Society, P.O. Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33307-0143 / Want to know Edmund Hillary's birthday? Diana Rigg's? Mine? The day **The Bridge at San Luis Rey** collapsed? The day they tried to bomb Hitler? The date of the first soft landing on Mars? None of these epochal moments are mentioned in the South Florida's club calendar, but many another notable anniversary is. By the way, all of the above points in human history were turned on the same date. I don't understand what SFSFS would think more important to note for *July 20th*.

Skug 15 / Gary S. Mattingly, 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin CA 94568 / gsmattingly@home.com / t.u., I guess / I didn't know of this publication until it arrived in the mail, but I do know Gary; he was in SFPA once upon a once upon, and was even part of its incredible 100th mailing. Nice colors on the cover, with work by the late Mae Strelkov to come; her last LOC shines in Gary's lettercol. In his long editorial, Mattingly touches on computer natter, Oz (the real one, or the unreal one ... the Baum one, let's say), his home brew, his dog, a trip to New Orleans during which he *didn't* call me, fandom (he knows Mike Ward and Karen Schaeffer), mooses (no squirrels), and much else. Wm. Breiding discusses **Lord of the Rings**, Bruce Townley contributes beautiful writing about barf and an affectionate satire of film noir. LOCs touch on Orson Welles — except for **Citizen Kane** I like him better as an actor, as in **Prince of Foxes** and **The 3rd Man** — and never mind what Robert Lichtman writes about when he isn't writing about Berkeley. Unique to this zine in SFdom is its emphasis on poetry, by Sean Russell Friend and others. It's a nice, artsy package.

Smokin' Rockets #1 / Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas NV 89107 / A beautiful e-mailed zine, adorned with extraordinary color illustrations by Alan White, who also handled the layout. Alan deserves a Hugo nomination for his gorgeous work on the various Vagrant zines. Joyce's text is more than worthy of such a superb package. In her editorial, "Mohave Mojo" (which hits a happy note here; I was born in the Mojave Desert), she chimes in on the current TAFF race, which hasn't yet degenerated into a bloody fofooraw, Corflu, wise words on privacy in this electronic age ... Joyce is a voice of kindness, good humor and common sense. She also blows my mind through a reprint — courtesy of Robert Lichtman — of a 1958 piece by my grad school teacher and

mentor, Fred Chappell, a biting critical review of **The Immortal Storm**. It's accompanied by Fred's parody of SaM Moscovitz's writing and spelling styles, for which only the term "devastating" will do. I'm glad Chappell was kinder in his writing workshops. A good John Berry piece completes these delightful matters.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin Vol. 7 No. 7 / Julie Wall, 470 Ridge Road, B'ham AL 35206-2816 / jlwall@usit.net / SFC membership or. / Home! Julie's seventh **Bulletin** has contents we've come to expect ... and that's good. Julie starts off matters with a long account of a recent trip to New York with Toni Weisskopf, discussing Duane Reade drugstores, the Museum of Natural History (site of my coolest moment, ever), sumptuous meals at Trump Towers and the famous Wo Hop in Chinatown (where are you, Chuck Spanier? And you, Gary Tesser?) ... I *dream* about visiting New York. The many con reports which follow are likewise long on personal business, which is good, but short on info such as attendance, which they could use. **The Bulletin** should be the repository for such factoids. But the spirit of Southern conventioning rules. Feller's fanzine reviews include trekkie pubs and Holmesiana, and are well-turned. There's even a play review by Rich Gutkes. Pat Gibbs — a *real* lawyer — contributes good book reviews, there's a list of Southern cons to come, and LOCs.

The Space Cadet Gazette / R. Graeme Cameron, 1855 West 2nd Ave. #110, Vancouver BC V6J 1J1 Canada / graeme_cameron@mindlink.bc.ca

Squiggledy Hoy / Bridget Bradshaw, 19 Hill Court Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 3JJ, Great Britain (n.b.) / e-mail bugshaw@cix.co.uk / webpage <http://www.cix.co.uk/~bugshaw>

Steam Engine Time / Bruce Gillispie, 59 Keele St., Collingwood, Vic. 3066 Australia, Paul Kincaid & Maureen Kincaid Speller, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ, UK / gandc@mira.net (Bruce), set@acnestis.demon.co.uk (Maureen)

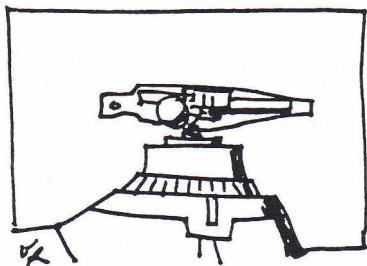
Stet / Dick & Leah Smith, 410 W. Willow Rd., Prospect Heights IL 60070-1250

Tangent / David Truesdale, 5779 Norfleet, Raytown MO 64133 / internet-103133.1350@compuserve.com; <http://www.sff.net/people/Dave.T/index.htm> / \$5 @, \$20 one-year sub.

This Here #6 / Nic Farey, P.O. Box 178, St. Leonard MD 20685 / nfarey@comappspec.com / trade / Joy reigneth throughout this issue of one of the strongest

Brit perzines, as Nic celebrates his recent marriage. (And at this *instant*, who should call but my own fiancée!) The happy event puts his natter about the boring Fan Writer Hugo, car troubles, and head lice into context. *Mazeltov!* Farey's informed opinions on new music are reminiscent of **Asterism**; his chatter on pro wrestling bring Arnie Katz to mind. Solid lettercol. highlighted by Ted White's response to Nic's critical review of his recent Ardis Fisher article. Farey's DWI experiences prompt Alexis Gilliland to describe booze's fading influence on fandom (I only drink on airplanes, but when I do, it's Katie bar the door) and Arthur Hlavaty to discuss AA. Capping all, an *inspiring* photo of Sandra Bullock — what a sexy nose; I love noses — and good fanzine reviews.

Timebound Vol. XXIV #7-9 / David Sooby, 12325 Pinehurst Dr., Kansas City MS 66109 / lensman@planetkc.com / Monthly news- and clubzine of the Kansas City SF&F Society. Remarkable production values — amazing that they maintain a monthly schedule — with good and even heartfelt writing. The zine leads from strength, with a Harry Warner LOC, incorporate a superb media column (with updates on **Star Wars Next** and Ridley Scott's bogus reading of his own movie; I'm more right about **Bladerunner** than he is), a reprinted Dave Kyle reminiscence about the schismed first worldcon from **Mimosa**, adding a very helpful guide, "The Neo's Corner", to explain some of Dave's terms. (And in a later issue, such fannish legends as the beer can tower to the moon.) The memorial section in #8 to KCSSF member Cindy Lou McEldery constitutes, of course, the strongest pages in these zines. It's a nice thing about fandom that it so movingly mourns its own.



Thyme / Alan Stewart, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia / a.stewart@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au / The or \$A 3; subscription \$A 15 / No issue seen here since 11-99!

Torch #113 / Dwight R. Decker, 20003 N. 23rd Ave. #193, Phoenix AZ 85027-4160 / deklane@aol.com / K- a zine by one of the supreme comics fans and a fond friend of my youth. S'been too long, Dwight. Opening

with a reprinted article about the demise of comic book shops. Dwight agrees with the grim prognosis for the graphic novel industry, and reveals that at the moment, no one is publishing Disney comics! Horrors! I'm almost glad Carl Barks didn't live to see this! DRD gives some welcome personal data — like me, he's "enjoying" a long-distance love affair — and discusses the otherwise forgotten **Supergirl** movie (remember the flopped newspaper ads which showed the Statue of Liberty — her *left* arm upraised?). Lots of '50s comics pages are reprinted, several K-a mailings are commented on (Carl Gafford is still a member! Huzzah!). Dwight closes with "Rocky and Her Friends", a long superhero fiction of the kind that inspired **Prime**, reviewed last mailing. I miss comics fandom. It got me started in this craziness and it has a beauty and community all its own.

Tortoise Issues 8 / Sue Jones, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury SY1 2BQ U.K. / sue.tortoise@talk21.com / trade / Sue shows enormous discipline in sticking so consistently to her themes, this time "perspective." She opens with a paean to Albrecht Durer, then reflects on her first year in her new pad. The building is sawdust-puffin' new by Brit standards, even though the editor reprints a photo of the edifice from 1905, and it dates from long before that. I liked her account of a visit to Oxford; I was surprised that they host a convention, Lexicon, at Exeter College. Stressing her theme, Jones discusses visual perspective, reminding me of some very odd landscapes at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. They boggled Rosy and me so much that I proposed marriage there, and she accepted. LOCs on Sue's previous issue, themed "English," are warm, as her countrymen wave the Union Jack. Her zine reviews mention several publications I haven't seen; can't have that! Next for this goodie: "Ten." Make of that what you will ...

Trap Door / Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442 / locs2trapdoor@yahoo.com / the usual or \$4@

Trash Barrel / Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood CA 91606-2308 / Trade / Valuable listing of fanzines — always a couple of new ones — from the cat in the hat.

Tripe Reportcard 41 / Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills CA 91344 / The beauty of Costa Rica wows Bruce this time, especially Puntarenas ... *not* filled with *futbal* stadiums. Bruce is surprised to find.

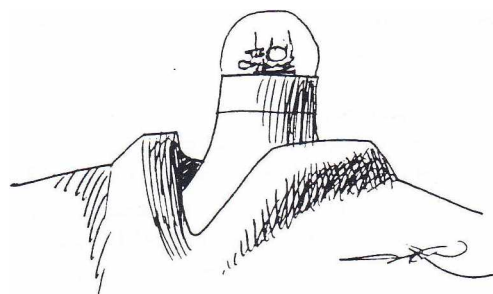
Twink 18-19 / E.B. Frohvet, 4716 Dorsey Hall Dr. #506, Ellicott City MD 21042 / The u. / At last! I got

to meet the elusive Eeb Frohvet at Chicon, and a photo of at least part of his face appears in my photo-report, elsewhere. Alas that I missed his party. Both moments find mention in E.B.'s own Chicon report in issue 19 of his fine *genzine*, which is replete with variety but rich with Frohvet's droll and acerbic personality. Fronted by a fair example of Franz Miklis' "good girl" art, #18 praises **Chall**'s Hugo nomination, a most gratifying response. (It does me great good to see him argue about **Chall** #10 with Lloyd Penney.) The latest segment of Frohvet's superb series about black characters and writers in science fiction turns to the early works of Samuel R. Delany ... and brings a wistful smile. Well do I remember meeting Chip at Quinn Yarbro's house in the late sixties carrying a sack with all of his early Ace doubles, the same novels E.B. discusses here. It was an exciting time, as we exulted in the energy he and Zelazny and Harlan and so many other new talents were bringing to the field, and we waited for him to publish the *big* novel we all knew would change SF forever. Frohvet analyzes **Nova**, too, bringing forth ideas and themes I was far too young and stupid to appreciate in those golden days of long hair and tear gas. Evocative Margaret Simon art here, too. The zine continues with Bob Sabella's splendid reminiscence of *Clarion* 1972, and one of the strongest lettercols in fandom. #19 — called **Gremflood** for some reason — has more good material, a sercon piece by Lyn McConchie, the aforementioned Chicon report (I had a better Friday than Eeb did ... but, I had a better Friday than *anyone anywhere* did), Gene Stewart and Wm. Breiding (two of my favorite, if most dissimilar, fan writers) ... followed by terse, funny fanzine reviews, some pointed, and more solid LOCs. For **Twink**'s info, the connection between Newt Gingrich and SF is through Baen Books. He's buddies with Jim and Baen published his dreary fiction back when Republicans imagined he'd be the next King of Earth.

Vanamonde Nos. 373-377 / John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St. No. 409, L.A. CA 90057 / Trade / A pleasure to meet John at Chicon. You'll see his picture elsewhere. Here in *Vanamonde* you'll meet his mind, one sharp facet at a time. Haiku? It's all over these issues, which otherwise consist of mailing comments to Apa-L.

Visions of Paradise #85-86 / Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake NJ 07828-1023 / bobsabella@nac.net / Here's one of the more unique and interesting zines out there. Bob Sabella's zine is intellectually oriented, and orientally intellectual, if you get what I mean. He begins with diary entries from the spring, dividing his natter between family and teaching matters. It's compelling to see him try to help his high

school students cope with life. Follows a fascinating slice of Tibetan life from Fei Fei Li, a former student: she evokes with energy and respect the spirit of that mountainous land. I want to see Lhasa. I want to visit the Potala palace. I want to lie on the Sky Burial platform and seek nirvana. I want to climb to those chilly monastic ruins atop the Baichu mountains. Ever the strong reviewer, Sabella brings deep perspectives to **The Martians**, **China Mountain Zhang**, and **Bridge of Birds**, not to mention Harry Potter and other worthy tomes. But Bob ... it's dangerous for a faned to print a sentence like "I've read a lot of science fiction lately, so I think I'll read some literature next"! Nice mixture of art throughout, with a sexy Franz Miklis bacover that's surprising for such a brainy zine. Smart is smart but we know what makes the galaxy *really* turn on its hub. #86 champions **For the Clerisy** for its reviews of mainstream fiction, and follows its lead, discussing **Underworld** and **The Shipping News** as well as McIntyre's **Moon & the Sun** ... and prints a picture of pretty Fei Fei.



Wabe #2 / Jae Leslie Adams, 621 Spruce St., Madison WI 53715; Tracy Benton, 108 Grand Canyon Drive, Madison WI 53705; Bill Bodden, P.O. Box 762, Madison WI 53701-0762 / jaeleslie@aol.com; billzilla@mailbag.com; benton@uwalumni.com / t.u. / A *superb* Brad Foster cover — a dragon — and impeccable electrostencilling are the immediate impressions struck by this small but evocative Wisc-zine. A cute Wisconsin glossary, a paragraph by Andy Hooper about his diabetes, and a sharp lettercol all seem backdrop for Jeanne Gomoll's WisCon GoH speech about the origins of the feminist convention. It's lively and friendly, but I must disagree with Bodden's claim that it's "a reminder of why feminism is every bit as relevant and important today as it was in the 1960's and 70's." It mostly reminds me of the joys of fannish group projects, no matter what the political purpose.

Western Romance #2 / Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas NV 89107 / joyworley@aol.com / trade / Here's a happy trip report on a train ride through the west rich with detail

and emotion, and adorned by fine Alan White artwork.

Westwind #252-4 / George Nyhen, NWSFS, P.O. Box 24207, Seattle WA 98124 / mwsfsinfo@sfnorthwest.org / free to members; dues \$20/year / Handsome Alan White and R'ykandar Korra'ti covers front these issues of the fact-filled journal of the Northwest SF Society. Party and event announcements, birthdays, convention planning and reports (including Rustycon, in #254), local bookstore autograph sessions ... a lot of information is given. The rainy northwest has its act together. I'd like to see more articles by local fans; Burt Webb's series on alien life, beginning in the last issue, is well-done and fun. #253 features an interesting interview with Greg Bear, and opens with photos of would-be super-heroes; I wonder what Duploboy and the Meeps in Black thought of **Unbreakable**.

W.O.O.F. #25 / Victoria A Smith, no address / Not much to this silver anniversary edition of the Worldcon Order of Faneds – three natterzines, a handwritten OO, and a couple of issues of the daily Chicon newszine. Are apas – certainly annual ones! – *passee* for today's Net-numbed fanwriters?

Worldcons Remembered / Carol Roper, no address / \$5 / Outstanding collection of filk songs published by and distributed and sung from at (what?) Chicon. Too bad my submission of Don Walsh's "Dromezoa!" didn't get there in time. "*DrohhhhhhhhhhOH! Mezoa ev'ry night we lie beneath the skies / and to our disgust / in the fading dusk / we find our spines are growing eyes ...*" Never mind.

The Wrong Leggings / Lilian Edwards, 39 Viewforth, Edinburgh EH10 4JE, U.K. / L.Edwards@ed.ac.uk

Late arrivals: **Ansible** 160 ½, 161, and **Langford Meets Swamp Thing**, the first done especially for TropiCon, where editor Langford was guest, the last a report a long, funny (of course) report on the same.

Barmaid #10, prepped en route to, from, and at Corflu, featuring joyously Yvonne-ish reports on Eastercon, Plokta.con, a nice article by John Berry and a long red-nosed bastard of a joke that I understand about as much as I do the hairy doofus in the dress ...

Ben's Beat 61, featuring a *tres* cool report of a 1913 political fiction, in which the Jewish President of the United States averts impeachment by invoking moral law, and a most moving account – with photos – of Ben's visit to Germany and its Holocaust memorials, in addition to Broadway news and other standards of Indick fanac.

Ethel the Aardvark December issue, with a

Christmas Carl Barks cover reprinted from **Donald Duck**; lovely Alan White illos within, along with an autobiographical sketch, reviews of **Star Wars** books and a look at the next Lucas opus. All fades in the blinding beauty of **Buffy** actress Alyson Hannigan, whose appearance at a local shopping center is glowingly described by Sue Anne Barber; the lady is apparently a champ.

Opuntia 46.5d, another outing from the incredibly prolific Dale Speirs, this time dealing with Canadian politics ... at least *their* country wasn't stolen.

And I cannot forget the outstanding e-mailed writings of Joan Breiding, mountaineer47@hotmail.com, who creates beauty infused with wisdom in a series of observations she calls "Notes from the Asylum." I understand a new issue of **Mimosa** is imminent, too ... but I have to get this **Challenger** in the mails before the postal rates go up!

Illustrators for this zine-crazed section include: Julia Morgan-Scott, R'ykandar Korra'ti, Kurt Erichsen, Bill Rotsler (of course), Randy Cleary, Teddy Harvia, Scott Patri, Joe Mayhew.

A ZINE-ORIENTED LETTER

Geri Sullivan
gfs@toad-hall.com

I'm writing to apologize for attributing the wrong fanzine in my LoC reply to William Beiding (p61, **Idea** 12). I didn't hear from him that [his] essay was in **Challenger** until December 15th ... Just 'cause you deserve to see the egoboo buried within that embarrassment, here's the pertinent paragraph from my October 30th e-mail to William: *The question at hand is *which* fanzine published ["Home Sickness"]. My eyes remember seeing it, but can't focus the memory sharp enough to tell me if it was in Outworlds or Trap Door ... or elsewhere. All I remember for sure was it being a 'zine I think highly of, and being delighted that another faned had picked it up.* My apologies for not correctly attributing **Challenger** as the 'zine that published William's essay.

Of course no apology is needed; I'm just glad you liked Chall #10 (and put it in such grand company). I had good luck with that one: the Southern Fandom Press Alliance named it their favorite zine of the year.

John Berry's career as a fingerprint expert produced articles a'plenty for the vocation's journal, Fingerprint Whorld. John gave Challenger reprint privileges, and a privilege it is ...

SAFE HANDS

John Berry

During my early years in a provincial fingerprint bureau I remember two prolonged bouts of crime committed by a burglar, with an eight year period in between them . . . this was not coincidental . . . he served three-quarters of a twelve year period of Preventive Detention.

Before the first long sentence, he admitted over fifty burglaries, mostly safe jobs; the safes were all opened with the crude 'sardine tin' technique.

It was a pleasure to visit his scenes, because he didn't wear gloves, and for a young fingerprint man it provided a wonderful opportunity to examine scene of crime and obtain offender's marks, all elliptical whorls, all speedily identifiable.

After his release eight years later, safe jobs in his localised area immediately re-started, except this time, fingerprints were hard to find. But after a couple of dozen jobs, he started to get blase about the whole business, and complete sequences were found, and once again he got a prolonged period of P.D.

He was released again after six years. When notification of his release date came from prison, I got out some spare sets of his finger and palm impressions, anticipating being able to visit safe jobs with them, and make immediate idents at the scene, which I had managed many times previously with this criminal.

A month of inactivity was shattered one Monday morning when six safe jobs occurred in one large building . . . all the safes were opened in the same rough manner, indicating the P.D. man had struck again. I did not visit these crimes, but the fingerprint men who did examine them, whom I knew to be dedicated men, did not find any offender's marks.

The following weekend another series of safe jobs were discovered in the city centre. I did an exhaustive examination of each scene, and my frustration grew when I found glove marks everywhere.

Obviously it had to be expected that after long periods of imprisonment, no matter how thick he was, it was bound to eventually strike him that his carelessness with his fingers and palms had caused his prolonged incarcerations. He had presumably brooded on this for six years, and decided that henceforth he would be circumspect in his future criminal career.

He was unmarried, and had spent most of his life in prison, and he had confided in his fellow prisoners that he liked being in prison, but that he would give the fingerprint men 'a run for their money' when he was next released.

The last premises I visited on this particular Monday morning was a paint store. The floor was ankle-deep in ballast, with small denomination coins scattered everywhere. The twisted metal at the back of the safe was rusted and would not hold fingerprints, and the 'point of entry' marks showed woollen gloves had been worn.

I packed my fingerprint brushes away, and turned to go, but, somehow, hypnotically, my eyes were drawn to rows of bottles on high shelves. They were all perfectly aligned, except for one bottle, on the top shelf, which was placed slightly in front of the other bottles, and was therefore noticeable. I don't know why, but I got out my brush and powder, climbed a ladder, brushed the bottle, and on it I found a right thumb on one side and the right sequence on the other. They were all long elliptical whorls, and superbly placed to ensure that the patterns were not obstructed by the labels. There was no alternative but to conclude that the marks had been placed purposely. In some psychologically warped way, he felt he had to leave his 'prints' at the scene, but in places where scene examiners would never have any requirement to inspect.

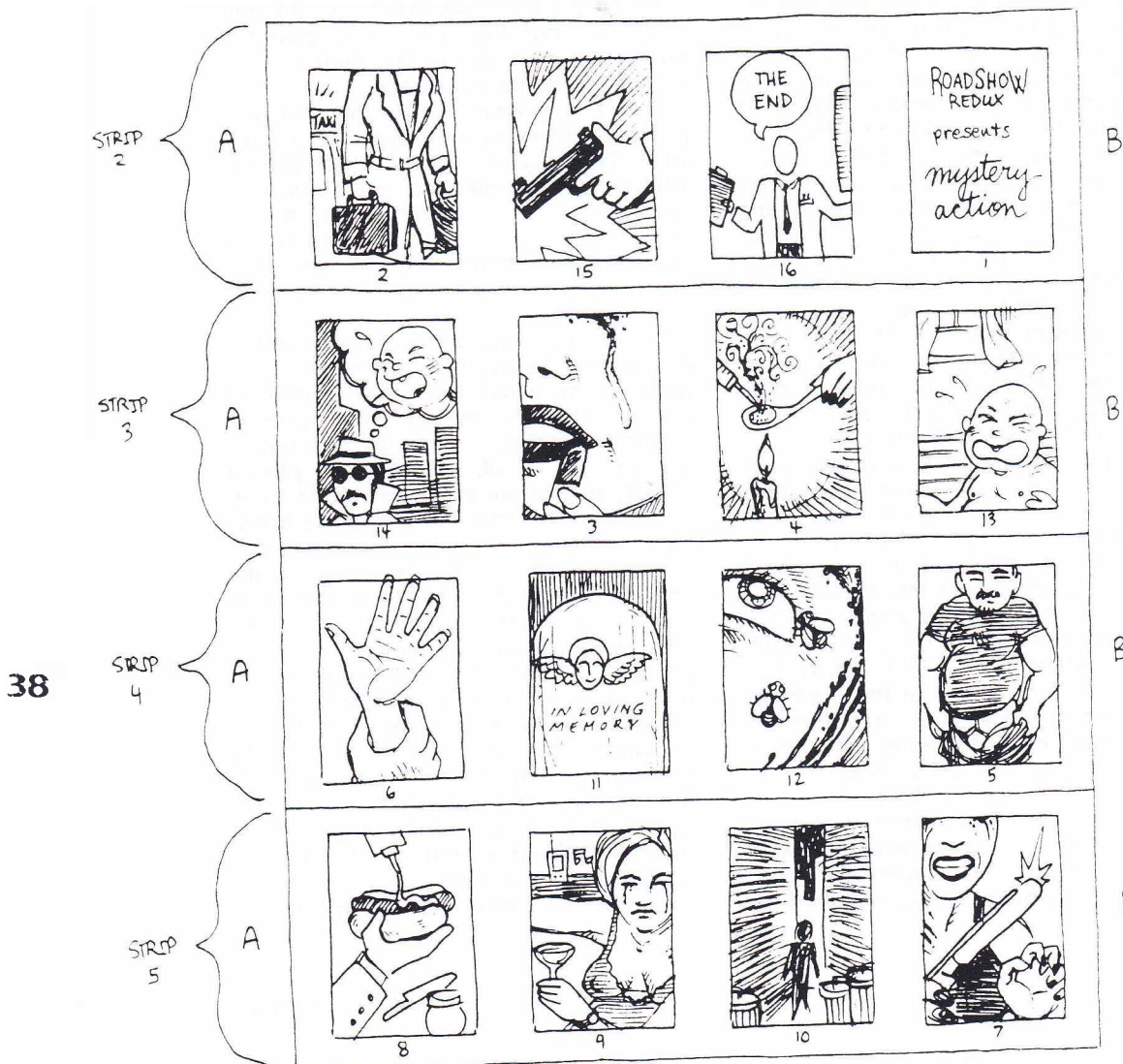
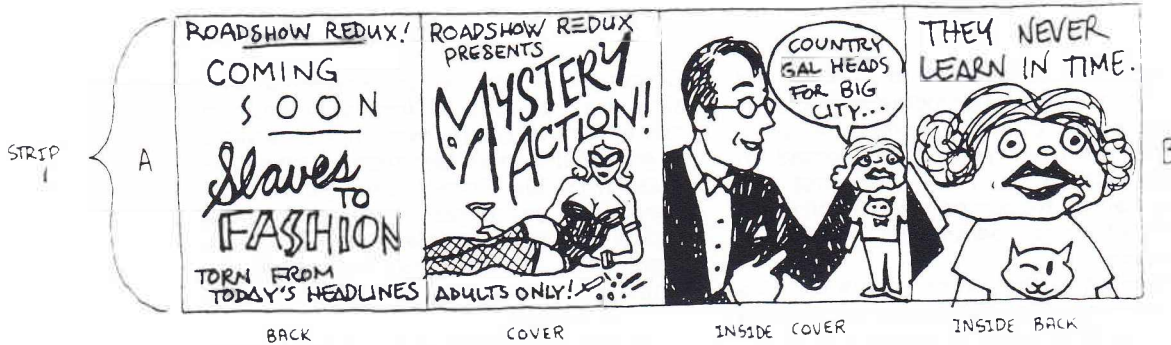
I mentioned this idiosyncrasy to my

CAESAR MEADOWS' MICRO-COMIC TEMPLATE



HEY FOLKS!
IT'S
TIME TO FILL
THE WORLD
WITH LITTLE BITS
OF ICONIC
DELIGHT!!

- FILL IN BLANKS WITH COMIX (FOLLOW THE PAGE NUMBERS)
- CUT OUT THE FIVE INDIVIDUAL STRIPS (1 COVER / 4 INTERIOR PAGES)
- FOLD STRIPS IN HALF AND USE DOUBLE-STICK TAPE TO ATTACH THE BACK OF SIDE A WITH THE BACK OF SIDE B OF EACH STRIP
- FOLD TAPED STRIPS IN HALF AGAIN, ASSEMBLE IN PROPER ORDER AND STAPLE!

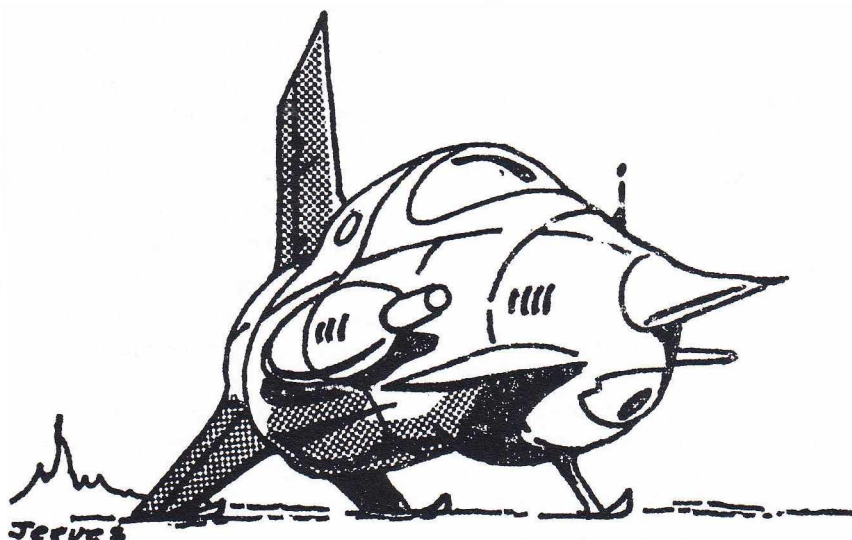


* REMEMBER TO MAKE COPIES BEFORE CUTTING IT UP IF THIS IS THE ORIGINAL

Jeff Copeland works for a large company near Seattle, but despite his lamentable Northern address, has recently been elected Official Editor of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance. His efforts for *Confederation*, in 1986, included creating a computerized method for counting Hugo ballots ... but what follows tells all. Jeff writes, by way of introduction:

"Jeff Haemer and I have written a monthly column for Boston-based Computer Publishing Group since 1992. In this particular entry, part of our 'Work' series, we discuss voting in general and the preferential ballot tally used for the Hugos in particular. One of our purposes in May, 2000 when we wrote this column was to mention Challenger's Hugo nomination. Little did we suspect six months ago that by the second week of November the whole country would be consumed by questions of how votes are counted.

"We were pleased when Guy asked for our permission to reprint this and that he persisted even when warned that only the true nerds among his readership were likely to persevere to the last word. Both of you can find the software and test data from this article at <http://alumni.caltech.edu/~copeland/work>, along with most of our columns since 1995."



Gernsback meets Aristotle

Jeffreys Copeland & Haemer

(originally appeared in *Server/Workstation Expert*, July 2000)

It's not the voting that's democracy; it's the counting.

— Tom Stoppard

He sighed wearily, "I just accidentally wrote an S-F novel, okay? I didn't mean to apply for citizenship in the Twilight Zone."

"I don't think you can apply, Jay. I think fandom takes hostages."

— *Zombies of the Gene Pool*, by Sharyn McCrumb

For a long time, one of the ideals of western civilization has been the democratic election. And the ideal of the democratic election has been the majority winner. But what happens to your election if you have more than two candidates? How can you ensure a majority winner? And how can you ensure that the winner really reflects the wishes of the voters?

We've talked before in these pages about different types of elections. Our final article for *RS/Magazine* and our first for *SunExpert* were a pair of columns about using a CGI script to tally United States electoral college votes. (February and April 1997.)

As you may recall from your high school civics class, each state in the US has a number of electoral votes

equal to the number of its federal legislators. Today, in most states, all those votes are cast for whoever wins the plurality of votes in the state. The new president is the one who wins a majority of the 538 electoral votes. Unfortunately, this means that to become President of the United States one merely has to win a plurality of the votes in the eleven most populous states, and not one single additional vote.

Is there a better solution? The problem is old, well-studied, and answered. That answer is "No."

In 1951, Nobel-Prize winning economist Kenneth Arrow proved, in his Ph.D. dissertation, that no "best" voting scheme exists, as soon as there's more than one voter. (You can always satisfy a dictator perfectly.) Arrow's Impossibility Theorem had roughly the same impact on political science that Godel's Incompleteness Theorem had on mathematics.

Basically, the thing to do is pick a scheme that's mostly fair, and get on with politics as usual.

That fact doesn't stop people from coming up with interesting and useful alternatives. For illustrations, let's consider two examples from studies by Jean Borda and the Marquis de Condorcet for the French Academy in the eighteenth century.

Borda's is probably the more obvious method. The first-ranked candidate on an n -person ballot is given n points, the second-ranked candidate $n-1$ points, and so on, with the last ranked candidate being given one point. The points for each candidate are totaled, and the winner is the one with a plurality. (This may be familiar to the sports-literate among our readers: Borda's is the method used to determine the annual ranking of college football teams by poll of sports writers and coaches. Why this method is used instead of simply seeing who wins the most games is a mystery to Copeland, who is a football anti-fan.)

40

Condorcet came up with a different technique. He suggested using the rankings on the ballot to figure out the results of elections between each pair of candidates. The winner of the election is the "most preferred" candidate in these pair-wise tallies.

Some election activists suggest that changing voting schemes — say, to this sort of preferential balloting — would break up our two-party system and decrease the polarization of our political process. Our counter-examples would be Israel and Italy. Both are parliamentary democracies with multi-party elections. However, in the former, the political process is polarized to the point of preventing a peace settlement; in the latter, the political process is so unstable that the average lifetime of a ruling coalition

since the end of the second world war has been less than eighteen months.

Enough about geo-politics, let's change gears for a moment.

A Practical Application.

Time flies like Ken Arrow.

Fruit flies like a banana.

— Anonymous

At the eleventh World Science Fiction Convention in 1953, the membership first voted on what has become a staple of the science fiction world: the Hugo awards. The awards are named after the Luxembourg-born writer and editor Hugo Gernsback, who founded *Amazing Stories*, the first of the pulp SF magazines. That first year, the winners included Alfred Bester for his novel *The Demolished Man* and Phillip José Farmer as best new SF author. Nearly half-a-century later, there are thirteen categories of Hugos, and the "Best New Author" award has been institutionalized as The John W. Campbell Award, named for the editor of *Astounding*, and the man who shaped short SF for the middle part of the century.

We remembered the Hugos a couple of weeks ago when the nominees for the 1999 awards were announced, and we found our friend Guy Lillian on the ballot for his fanzine, *Challenger*. This all reminded us that a column on tallying the Hugo ballots has been rattling around in our topic drawer for a while.

(In yet another sign of how far in advance these columns are written, the nominees were announced in mid-April, but the final voting deadline is July 31st. This leaves a month before the World Science Fiction Convention — in Chicago this year; see <http://www.chicon.org> for details — for Mike Nelson, the Hugo administrator, to tally the ballots.)

In any case, this brings us to the Hare method, which dates to the middle of the nineteenth century. Because Hare's method is used in Australia, it's sometimes referred to as an Australian ballot, even though it's more properly referred to as a preferential ballot. (The Australian ballot is in contrast to the Austrian ballot, in which you hold an election and the Holy Roman Emperor gets as many votes as he wants.)

In a Hare count, the first-ranked choices on each ballot are tallied. If no candidate has a majority, the candidate with the lowest vote count is eliminated, and ballots for that candidate are redistributed based on their second-ranked choices. We continue until one candidate has a majority of the votes currently available.

Let's begin by positing a file of ballots looking something like this:

```
Moby Dick
Prisoner of Zenda
Pride and Prejudice
Tom Sawyer
War and Peace
No Award
/*
0 4 1 3 2 5
0 0 0 0 0 1
0 0 0 0 0 1
4 3 2 5 1 0
0 2 1 3 0 0
1 4 3 6 2 5
0 0 1 0 2 0
0 0 1 0 2 0
```

We have a list of the candidates, a separator, and then a line containing each ballot as a list of ranks. The first voter ranked *Pride and Prejudice* first, followed by *War and Peace*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Prisoner of Zenda*, and *No Award*. “No award” is a special case: for Hugo voting, it's provided in case the voter feels nothing deserves the award that year.

We can begin a Perl script to count the ballots in the usual way:

```
#!/usr/local/bin/perl -w
# tally a Hugo-like preferential ballot
# $Id: tally,v 1.12 2000/05/10 ... jeff Exp $

use strict;
my %candidates;
# hash of candidates names still alive
my %tally;
# hash of arrayrefs of votes per
# candidate for each runoff round
```

Because we've used `strict`, we need to declare variables. We need a hash of the candidates who have not yet been eliminated, `candidates`. We'll need a similar hash, by candidate, of the votes at each elimination round, `tally`. There are two interesting features of note here. First, we haven't said what's stored against the candidate's name in the hash `candidates`. It doesn't matter: Once the candidate is eliminated, we delete the name from the hash, so the presence of a candidate means it's still active. Second, `tally` is actually a hash of arrays, or more accurately a hash of pointers to arrays, or “arrayrefs” in Perl-speak. How we add and extract data from this structure will become apparent as we go along.

We're assuming the input file is on our standard input, even though we could have provided a named file on the command line instead. We need to grab the contents of the file nonetheless. We could build a very C-like loop to grab do this, such as:

```
# read candidate names
while( <> ) {
    chomp;
    last if( /\s*\/ );
    push(@candidates, $_);
}

# now read the ballots themselves
$count = 0;
while( <> ) {
    chomp;
    $i = 0;
    while( s/\s*(\d)(.*)/$2/ ) {
        $ballots{$candidates[$i++]}[$count] = $1;
    }
    $count++;
}
```

Instead, we'd rather do this in a Perl-like way. For example, to read the candidates' names, we use:

```
my @candidates;
# ordered list of all candidates

# grab the candidate list...
{
    local $/ = "/*\n";
    chomp ($_ = <>);
    @candidates = split "\n";
}
```

We redefine the record separator, `$/`, to be the marker between the candidates and the ballots. Once we've read the whole candidate list — chomping the record separator in the process — we split the list into our `candidates` array. We do this whole operation inside a block to insulate the `$/` redefinition. Notice that we've defined an array `@candidates` which we shouldn't confuse with the hash `%candidates`. Perl keeps them distinct by the way they're referred to; so can we.

We then invoke a similar loop to read the ballots themselves from the file.

```
my @ballots;
# ordered list of all ballots

# now grab the ballots
while(<>) {
    my %ballot;
    @ballot{@candidates} = split;
    # use the hash slice
    push @ballots, {%ballot};
}
```

We use a hash slice to split up each line of ballot into its component rankings. What's a hash slice? In effect, the line `@ballot{@candidates} = split;` is a Perl multiple assignment that says

```
($ballot{$candidates[0]},
 $ballot{$candidates[1]}, ...) =
split($_, / );
```

This means that we have values like `$ballot{'Moby Dick'} = 4`. We end the loop by pushing the hash

%ballot onto the array @ballots.

We talked about the hash %candidates earlier. We now need to populate it for the candidates still active — at this point, all of them. Again we use a hash slice:

```
@candidates{@candidates} = @candidates;
```

Again, this is a multiple assignment that says

```
($candidates{$candidates[0]},  
 $candidates{$candidates[1]}, ...) =  
 ($candidates[0], $candidates[1], ...);
```

(Notice how we can tell when we're referring to the hash %candidates and when we really mean the array by checking what brackets we use.)

Counting the votes is a simple matter as we outlined above. We count the first-place votes, and if there is no candidate with a majority, we eliminate the lowest-ranked candidate, redistribute its second-place votes to the remaining candidates, and repeat. Reduced to code, we say:

```
while (1) {  
    my %results = one_round @ballots;  
    if ($results{Winner}) {  
        print "We have a winner! ",  
              "$results{Winner}\n";  
        last;  
    }  
    warn "We have a loser! $results{Loser}\n";  
    foreach (@ballots) {  
        $_->{$results{Loser}} = 0;  
        # throw away votes for eliminated  
        # candidate: make them "don't rank"  
    }  
    delete $candidates{$results{Loser}};  
    # keeps @candidates the list  
    # of ACTIVE candidates  
    die "No more candidates!"  
    unless %candidates;  
}
```

This infinite loop tallies each round of ballots. We'll look at the subroutine that does that in a moment. For the moment, you need to know only that `one_round()` returns a hash containing two possible key values, either "Winner" or "Loser". If there was a majority winner, it is contained in `$results{Winner}`. If there was not, the lowest vote-getter is `$results{Loser}`. As a side-effect, `one_round()` also populates the %tally array, as we'll see anon.

If we actually have a winner, we print a message and break out of the infinite loop. If not, we print the name of the candidate to be eliminated, and then we set that candidate's rank to zero on each ballot. In other words, we assert that no one voted for the candidate. Then, we eliminate the candidate in our hash %candidates by using `delete`. If there are no more candidates for the next round, we have a real

problem, and we take a fatal exit.

The loop is fairly simple in concept, and made simple in expression by our notation, but a lot of the action is hidden. For example, what magic happens in `one_round`? Quite a bit, it turns out.

Magic Routines and Results.

The `one_round` routine is also deceptively simple, once we've looked at it:

```
# return a winner or loser  
sub one_round {  
    my @pref_list = pref_list @_;  
    my $min = @pref_list;  
    my $winner;  
    my $loser = "No losers!";  
  
    foreach my $candidate (keys %candidates) {  
        my @votes =  
            grep {$_ eq "$candidate"} @pref_list;  
        # pref_list is a list of  
        # highest-ranked active  
        # candidates from each ballot;  
        # we "grep" to get just  
        # the current candidate.  
        $winner = $candidate  
        if (@votes > @pref_list/2);  
        ($loser, $min) =  
            ($candidate, scalar @votes)  
            if @votes < $min;  
        # "scalar" ensures that count  
        # is used  
        push(@{$tally{$candidate}}, scalar @votes);  
    }  
    return $winner ?  
        (Winner=>$winner) : (Loser=>$loser);  
}
```

The largest magic, which we'll defer examining, happens in the first line, where we use the routine `pref_list` to create a similarly-named array containing an array of the highest-ranked candidate on each ballot. That is, `@pref_list` contains something like "Moby Dick, Tom Sawyer, Moby Dick, No Award, War and Peace, War and Peace, ..." We set the minimum number of votes — that is the lowest tally we've seen so far — to the length of that array. We declare local variables for winner and loser.

We need to determine the tally for each remaining candidate, that is any candidate which still has a key in %candidates. If we had `@pref_list`, in a file, we would say something like

```
grep "Moby Dick" pref_list | wc -l
```

In Perl, we do the same thing with the `grep` line in the code fragment. The count of entries in the resulting `@votes` array gives us the number of votes received. If that number of votes is greater than the half the length of `@pref_list`, that is, the number of ballots still active, we have a winner. Why not just return here? Because we really need to know the vote tallies

for the remaining candidates in this runoff round. If the count of votes for this candidate is less than the previous lowest tally, we save that data with a multiple assignment. Notice that we're explicitly saying `scalar @votes` which gives us the number of entries in the array here: if we didn't, we'd just get the first entry in that array assigned to `$min`.

Lastly, we add the count of votes to the tally hash entry for the candidate. The odd bit of syntax `@{$tally{$candidate}}` is the array referred to by the hash entry. Remember that tally is actually a hash containing arrayrefs, which we need to dereference before adding the new votes.

Finally, falling out of that loop, we return one of Winner or Loser.

We finish up our subroutines by looking at what happens under the covers of `pref_list`.

```
# make a preference list
sub pref_list {
    my @ballots = @_;
    my @pref_list;
    # an array of ballots
    # each, an array of active candidate
    # names, in preference order

    foreach (@ballots) {
        my %rank = reverse(%$_);
        delete $rank{0};
        # delete any "don't rank"s
        push @pref_list, $rank{(sort keys %rank)[0]}
            if(%rank);
    }
    @pref_list;
}
```

We begin with the array of ballots passed as an argument. Remember that this is actually an array of hashes indexed by candidate. For each ballot in the list we are presented, we invert the sense of the hash using `reverse(%$_)`, which gives us a list of candidates keyed by rank. In other words, we started with entries in ballots like `$ballot{'Moby Dick'} = 4`, which we've turned into entries like `$rank{4} = 'Moby Dick'`. In the inversion, any candidate with a rank of zero — that is, one who received no vote or was eliminated — is overlaid into `$rank{0}`, which we delete. Then if there are still entries in the hash `%rank`, we add the entry with the lowest-sorting key — the highest-ranked candidate — to the end of `pref_list`. It's `pref_list` which we return once we've examined all the ballots.

This highest-ranked business bears a moment's examination. In the normal course of events, when a candidate is eliminated, we want to promote the ranks of all the other candidates. If *Moby Dick* were eliminated, we'd promote everything ranked lower by one position, even if *Moby Dick* weren't in first place.

But that doesn't really matter. All we really need to do is change *Moby Dick* to "unvoted," since we're using the highest *remaining* rank in the `pref_list` subroutine. Put another way, the absolute rank is unimportant, it's the relative rank remaining that matters.

But what about the results? Even though we've printed out the name of the winner in our main while loop, it would be nice to see the totals at each runoff. We could use a simple loop like,

```
foreach my $name (@candidates) {
    print $name;
    while( my $n = pop(@{$tally{$name}}) ) {
        print $n;
    }
    print "\n";
}
```

There are two problems with that scheme. It's in candidate order rather than in some order related to the vote totals, and it doesn't format the tally grid in a very appealing way.

We can solve the first problem by sorting the tally hash. But we want to sort the hash by the last entry in the array, that is, the last vote total each candidate received before being eliminated. We can use a convenient bit of Perl syntax, and say `@{$tally{$x}}[-1]` to get the last vote count for candidate `$x`. Alternately, we can use a different bit of syntactic sugar and say `$tally{$x}->[-1]` as we've actually done here. We want to sort the tally list in reverse order of that entry. In code,

```
sort {
    $tally{$b}->[-1] <=> $tally{$a}->[-1];
} keys %tally
```

This uses a slightly more complicated comparison than the normal Perl sort example,

```
sort { $a <=> $b } @array
```

To print out the full results, then, we say,

```
my $sort =
    sub { $tally{$b}->[-1] <=> $tally{$a}->[-1] };

foreach (sort $sort keys %tally) {
    my @a = @{$tally{$_}};
    printf "%-20s" . "%5d"x@a . "\n", $_, @a;
}
```

We could have printed the vote counts by shifting them out of the array, but this shows them printed in a single statement. Note how we've constructed the `printf` format specifier out of pieces, the central one of which (which prints the numbers) depends on the size of the array `@a`. We also extract the sort into an anonymous subroutine just to keep our `foreach` line uncluttered.

This gives us output like:

Pride and Prejudice	355	359	408	455	573
Prisoner of Zenda	235	236	264	321	414
War and Peace	178	179	215	272	
Tom Sawyer	197	202	211		
Moby Dick	147	152			
No Award	56				

Notice that we're counting on the array's being in chronological order, which we got by using the earlier `push()`.

Notice also that *Tom Sawyer*, which finished well-ahead of *War and Peace* in the first two rounds of voting, was eliminated by the very next round. Despite our good intentions and careful programming, it's possible to concoct input data that produce even more egregious outcomes: Arrow's Impossibility Theorem in action. And — now that you have the code — we leave it to you to demonstrate this.

Finishing Up.

The program we've presented is fully functional as far as it goes. Using idiomatic Perl tightens up the notation over the more complicated code we would have used in a C or Pascal version. In fact, there are roughly 75 lines of Perl code here, not counting didactic comments, in contrast with about 900 in the corresponding C program. However, we've deliberately left some things out which take up space in the C version. We present them to you now as exercises.

- If there is a two-or-more-way tie for first place, our program will declare the first of the tied candidates a loser, and go on to the next round. Fixing the code to recognize this situation is an easy exercise. How would you resolve ties like this? Remember that there is no "right" way: "fairness" is in the eye of the beholder.
- A related situation occurs if there is a tie for last in earlier rounds, but you can add the option of discarding all the last-placers at once. How would you implement that?
- How would you wrap this code into a program to tally all thirteen Hugo categories?
- In a Hare-tallied election, the second-place winner is not necessarily the candidate who comes in second in the first tally we've shown here. It's actually the candidate who would have won if the first-place winner were eliminated. Fix the code to determine second-place, third-place, and so on. Show the intermediate vote tallies.
- When we started writing this column we were intending to talk about the input problem, too. How would you write a program to capture the data into the input file we've used for this program?

- As important as input is validation of the data. We've just blithely assumed that the data we're seeing has no invalid ballots. Two kinds of invalid ballots are ballots on which two candidates are given the same (non-zero) rank, and ballots that have a gap in their rankings. How would you detect such errors? Other errors? Can some of these botched ballot be fixed? Should they?

We've deliberately simplified both our discussion of electoral theory and the specific history of the Hugo Awards, just touching enough of the high points to set up the problem. (This is a problem we have a bit of experience with. Copeland and his wife, Liz, have actually administered the Hugo Awards, and wrote the code that does the real tallying.)

On the issue of the history of voting, there are some good references out there if you want to do further study. We can suggest:

- Rob Lanphier's article on "Perl, Politics, and Pairwise Voting" in the Autumn 1996 issue of *The Perl Journal*.
- Niemi and Riker's "The Choice of Voting Systems" in the June 1976 *Scientific American*.
- Donald G Saari's book, *Basic Geometry of Voting*, published by Springer-Verlag in 1995 (ISBN 3-540-60064-7).

In our coding efforts, we owe quite a bit to Tom Christiansen and Nat Torkington's *Perl Cookbook* (O'Reilly, 1998, ISBN 1-56592-243-3). Tom and Nat's book provides more than 700 pages of interesting problems with copious discussion of the hows-and-whys of the Perl tricks used to solve them.

On the other hand, if you're interested in the past history of the Hugos and other literary awards, check out the AwardWeb web page at <http://dpsinfo.com/awardweb>. If you're a rules lawyer, you can find the codified process for Hugo nomination and voting in the constitution of the World Science Fiction Society, at <http://www.worldcon.org/rules.html>. Or for a more up-to-date version, see <http://www.chicon.org/wsfs/constit.htm>.

And in a ceremony at WorldCon in September, as every year, we'll find out how well this all works. Until then, happy trails.



Mike Resnick's diaries of his overseas adventures have become a popular staple of recent Challengers. Here is another.

SLOVAKIA SAFARI

Mike Resnick

Thursday, September 14: Boarded a plane in Cincinnati and flew to Chicago, the first leg of my trip to Bratislava, the capitol of Slovakia, where I was to be Guest of Honor at Istrocon. (I eventually found out that "Istro" means "Danube" in the local language.)

From O'Hare, I transferred to an Austrian Airlines plane that would take me to Vienna, about 40 miles away from Bratislava. It was one of the nicer transcontinental jets I've been on. Better than average food -- nothing you'd accept in a cheap restaurant, but not bad for an airplane -- and a TV set built into the back of each seat, so you could look straight ahead and watch a choice of three movies, each shown in four different languages. I can now tell you that the live-action **Flintstones** sequel is equally unfunny in English, German, Czech, and French.

Friday, September 15: We land at 9:00. I clear Customs in perhaps five minutes, then emerge into the area where dozens of people are holding up signs with the names of the passengers they are there to meet. Only there is no RESNICK sign. I look again. No sign. I walk all through the area, checking signs that are way at the back, held at half-mast by drivers who are busy drinking coffee. Still no sign. I check the men's room, in case my driver had a little too much to drink the night before. No sign.

9:15 comes and goes. So does 9:30. And 10:00. And there I am, all alone in a country where I don't speak the language, waiting for a driver from *another* country where I don't speak the language. I don't even know where my hotel is, so I can't pay a taxi to take me there.

So at 10:15 I decide to call Martina Pilcerova, the one Slovakian I know. I walk to the phone booth, dial her number, and can't get through. I try again. No luck. I walk up to a woman at an information counter and ask her how to call Bratislava. She tells me the country code is 421. I try again. No dice.

Finally, at about 10:30, I walk by an American who is calling somewhere on a cellular phone and ask him how to call Bratislava. He says the area code is 421. I explain that it doesn't work. He says that if I don't dial 00 *before* dialing 421 it will *never* work. I say "Oh." I call Martina. She tells me that Ivan and Roderick, who are picking me up, called her from the border, where every few days the Austrians are feeling their oats and hold up traffic for a few hours. They told her that it looked like they'd be two hours late, and would she please call the airport and have them page me and tell me what was going on? She dutifully called the Vienna airport, which dutifully forgot to tell me.

Anyway, Ivan (the con chairman) and Roderick (my interpreter -- well, one of them, anyway) show up at about 11:15. We are a little confused for a while, since no one can remember where they parked the car, but eventually we find it and get going, and we cross the border and arrive at the Suza Hotel and Convention Center at about 12:45, which is convenient since I have a press conference scheduled for 1:00.

I meet the other Guest of Honor, Ted Raimi, a very bright, very amusing guy who plays Joxer on **Xena: Warrior Princess**. I don't watch television, and had never seen **Xena** until they told me he would also been there, so I finally watched a couple of

episodes, and I must say that he's a marvelous comic actor. He's also a writer (he did three scripts to **Sea Quest**, his prior TV show), a science fiction fan (he's even read some of my books), and a fellow Midwesterner (he was raised in Detroit, and his father spent 43 years in the furniture biz, in competition with Roger Sims' father.)

So we did the press conference and took turns trying to give funnier answers than each other, then went off to lunch and decided to collaborate on a couple of stories.

I spent the afternoon hanging out in the convention area, signing books, meeting fans. I have to say that the Slovakian fans are the friendliest and most enthusiastic I've encountered. All of them speak at least a little English, which was a good thing since I don't speak a word of Czech or Slovakian.

I went to my room at about 4:00 to take a nap, since I hadn't slept on the plane...but the Olympics were on, so I watched a bunch of sports that we never get to see in America, narrated in a number of languages we never get to hear.

At 6:00 I went back down to opening ceremonies, and then, after they sat Ted and me in the middle of the front row of the auditorium, we watched a 45-minute fashion show that convinced me that the Slovaks are not only among the friendliest people on Earth but also have the prettiest women.

Ted gave a 90-minute presentation -- mostly questions and answers -- while I went out to grab some coffee, and then I did a scheduled one-hour stint of questions-and-answers that stretched to two hours. And when the two hours were over, I suggested that, since it was ten o'clock, it might be a nice idea to get some dinner.

Well, the hotel restaurant was closed for the day, so three fans volunteered to drive me into town -- the hotel was rather isolated on a lovely hill overlooking Bratislava -- and we were soon wandering through the centuries-old section of town known as "the Old City", looking for restaurants, and being rebuffed. Finally, the fifth one we tried was still open, and we went down

into a brick cellar with a curved ceiling and sloping walls, where I had some veal and onions.

When we got back, I remembered that I had been invited to a party at midnight, so I went to the appointed room and just managed to wedge myself in. There were no suites at the hotel, and the rooms were not very large. Each had two beds. So at the party maybe six people sat on each bed, which is certainly a good way to get to know each other better. There were also balconies, and seven or eight smokers would crowd onto the balcony. The host would supply booze for everyone (and Coke or Pepsi for me, since I don't drink, a fact that alternately shocked and horrified all my new friends. Each of them was sure that I simply hadn't found the right booze yet, and kept trying to get me to drink whatever they were drinking.)

(Side note: one thing I had a devil of a time getting in restaurants, or anywhere else, was simple drinking water. Everyone sold and supplied water, but it was always seltzer water, for which I have never developed a taste.)

I finally started falling asleep at 3:00, so we swore eternal allegiance to each other and I toddled off to bed.

Saturday, September 16: I got up at 9:30, went down to have breakfast, got stopped by so many fans and autograph seekers that I never did make it to the restaurant, and gave a speech at 10:30. I was done by noon, so I stopped by the restaurant, which was both indoors and outdoors, sat down outside, and tried to order some lunch. No one there seemed inclined to make sandwiches, so I had a couple of eggs, and before they arrived I was joined by eight or ten members of the Alien 5 club (so named because Hollywood has used up the first four **Aliens**), and we visited for a few hours. Then I had to sign autographs again, where I met one of my Czech publishers (there aren't any Slovakian sf publishers), who gave me my author's copies of **Oracle**, and told me that after he publishes **Prophet** (which will need a new

Hi! I'm **Mike Resnick**,
 Author, Editor, and Fan!

When I attend
 a convention, I
 sometimes have
 just **TOO MUCH**
 to do to have
 any **FUN...**



So I use **BIG MIKE®**
 the amazing
 inflatable
CON-GUEST!



I can simultaneously
 attend **PANELS---**

WHAT DO YOU THINK,
 MIKE?

MIKE?

HISSSSSS



BANQUETS---

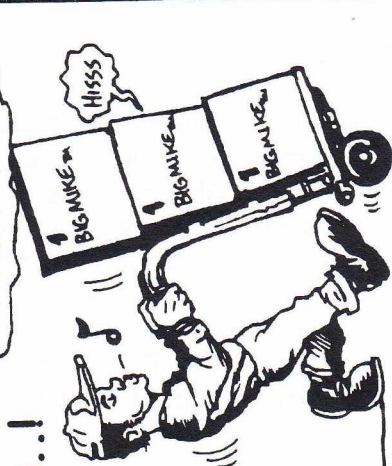


**EVEN
 PARTIES---**



Need a cheap guest for your con?
**Inquire
 about
 rates..!**

THREE **BIG MIKE'S™**
 FOR BALTIMORE-



title, as he changed **Soothsayer** to **Prophet** last year) he wants to buy **Ivory** and **Kirinyaga**. Also met some of my magazine publishers, a friendly batch of folks who want more Resnick stories, which is always an easy way to put me in a good mood.

Martina took Ted and me out to dinner, and then I hit the Alien 5 party til about 4:00 AM, returned to my room, watched some Olympics (which were on 6 or 7 different channels, 24 hours a day), and went to sleep.

Sunday, September 17: One last autograph session in the morning, and then the convention was over. I swapped e-mail addresses with fans from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Poland, promised to keep in touch, and bade each of them good-bye. And suddenly Ted and I were the only residents of the entire hotel. Martina came to the rescue and took us to the Old City, where we wandered around for an hour, strolled up and down the Danube, stopped at an outdoor restaurant and had some espresso and pretended we were on the Left Bank in Paris, and finally went to a Chinese restaurant.

Ted and I returned to the hotel at about 5:00, and decided to meet for dinner at 8:30, since we knew the restaurant closed at 9:00. I watched some Olympics, did a little writing, and went down for dinner at the appointed time. I was still full from lunch, so I thought I'd order something light. Ted felt the same way, so we went through the menu and hit upon "fruit balls", which we thought would be little round pieces of orange and watermelon and the like. I don't know quite what a fruit ball is, but I know it was the single worst dish I've ever had. I took one taste, pushed it aside, and settled for a dinner of coffee and diet Coke. Ted got two bites into it before doing the same.

I wrote and watched the Olympics until about three in the morning, but that dinner was so bad I never felt another pang of hunger.

Monday, September 18: Martina picked us up at 8:00 and took us to Brloh, the

science fiction bookstore that seems to be the hangout for most of Bratislava's fans. They made arrangements for Ted to sign a few hundred photos of himself and Lucy Lawless on Tuesday afternoon, and I signed their entire supply of Resnick books and SF magazines with Resnick stories and/or interviews in them.

Then it was decided that Martina and a young man named Milan would take us to Orava Castle, some three hours north of Bratislava. At first neither Ted nor I were thrilled with the idea of traveling six hours round-trip just to see a castle, but then we figured: we're strangers here, they recommend it, what the hell else would we do? So we agreed, and we were both thrilled that we did, because it was the highlight of our stay there.

As you drive north from Bratislava, the land starts getting hillier, you pass an occasional castle, and then suddenly, after a couple of hours, you're in the tree-covered mountains, driving alongside absolutely clear streams, passing more castles...and then, finally, you come to Orava Castle. The only word for it is Awesome.

It is built into the top of a mountain, and is close to 400 feet from top to bottom. It was built in three parts, all of them melding into the mountain and connected only by stairways. From the top -- and I must have climbed a zillion stairs to get there -- you can see for miles. It was easily defensible, because the only means of approach was straight up what had to be an 80-degree incline.

When we arrive it was closed -- most things seem to be closed in Slovakia on Mondays -- but then I found out what traveling with Joxer means. If you're Mike Resnick, you might occasionally get special treatment at a convention or a bookstore -- but if you're Joxer you get it everywhere you go in the world. The castle caretaker saw that Joxer was with us, and the iron gate opened like magic.

The castle had literally dozens of rooms on all different levels, including a museum of weaponry and another one filled with stuffed bears, wolves, eagles, and other

animals that had been hunted and killed on the castle property. Both the silent **Nosferatu** and the Klaus Kinski version had been filmed there, as had **Dragonheart** and a number of other movies. You took one look and you knew why.

After we'd spent a couple of hours touring the castle (and my heart had stopped trying to explode after climbing all those stairs) the caretaker told us that the manager of the castle was at a hotel two blocks away and wanted to invite Joxer and his party to be his guests for dinner. So off we went to the hotel, where the manager turned out to be a sweet guy who has never missed an episode of **Xena**. (It brings you back to reality pretty fast. If I sell 200,000 copies of a paperback throughout the world I'm doing great. If 50 million people a week, worldwide, watch Ted, he's doing below average.)

The name of the hotel's restaurant was the Krechma. Most of you are too young to appreciate that, but years ago Theodore Bikel recorded a song about the Krechma, one verse of which goes:

"In the corner is dancing Natasha.

All the men are beginning to pant.

When she dances her shoulders they vibrate,

And when she's singing you see that she can't."

Probably not the same place; never saw a single dancer.

We drove home, said goodnight to one and all, and went off to sleep (Ted) and watch the Olympics and write (me).

Tuesday, September 19: Ted had a radio interview at 8:00 in the morning. The station sent a cab for him, so Martina picked me up at 8:30 and we drove to Brloh, where Ted joined us an hour later. He had a convention to attend in London the next weekend, and asked Henrieta to make his plane reservations. I had picked up so much work at Worldcon that I decided to see if I could get home a day earlier, so as long as she was talking to a travel agent anyway I asked Henrieta to see how much it would cost to change my

flights from Thursday to Wednesday. It was very inexpensive (though she and Martina, who operate on a different economy, thought it was outrageous and that of course I should stay until Thursday), so I agreed to pay the fee. I was told that I could use any credit card to *buy* a ticket, but I could only use cash to pay the penalty for *changing* tickets, and that I was expected at the travel agent's office with my money at 1:00 PM.

So Martin, a friend, took me out into the Old City to find a bank. The first one we found wouldn't take American Express, Diner's, or Visa cards -- the ones I had -- and would only accept Master Card, which I didn't have with me.

So we went to another bank, and I picked up a few thousand korona (don't panic: it's 51 korona to the dollar). Henrieta drove me to the agent, I exchanged my Thursday tickets for new improved

Wednesday ones, and then I decided I'd better call Carol and tell her I'd be home a day early and give her the new schedule for picking me up at the airport.

Simple, right?

Martin takes me around the corner from Brloh to the Slovakia Phone Company, which has maybe thirty booths for making international phone calls, and every booth accepts American Express cards. So I dial my number...and get a recorded message informing me that the Resnicks have Caller ID and Reveal, and that I cannot be connected without revealing the number from which I am calling.

I had forgotten about that feature, so I go to the lady who seems to be in charge of the place and ask what the number of my phone is. You'd have thought I asked for a state secret. She absolutely refused to tell me, and indeed looked like she might call the police any minute. I had Martin explain Reveal to her, but I don't think he fully understood it either. Anyway, after ten minutes it became apparent to me that I could die of old age before anyone would tell me the number of the public phone I was trying to use. So I went back into the booth and called my daughter, Laura -- who wasn't home, and

had forgotten to turn on her answering device.

Now I was getting desperate, and the lady at the counter was glaring at me as if she was sure my next step would be to plant a bomb in the building. Then I remembered that Pat and Roger Sims don't have Reveal, so I phoned them, got hold of Pat, and asked her to relay all the information to Carol.

Then I went back to Brloh. Ted was doing yet another TV interview, so Martina and Martin took me to the City Museum, a fascinating building which seems to have been built over a series of torture chambers some centuries ago. Anyway, the torture chambers and devices are all on display. Then you climb to the higher levels and basically see the history of Bratislava, everything from royal robes to cabinetry to gorgeous glassware to every other aspect of the city's past.

After we left the museum we spent another 90 minutes window-shopping in the Old City, and then we got back to Brloh just in time to see a line going out the door and halfway down the block. Right: Ted was autographing photos. He finished by six o'clock, and then eight of us went out to a Mexican joint called Club Hysteria for dinner. It was a lot of fun -- I don't remember much about the food, but I remember we were all laughing our heads off for about three hours -- and then, since Ted's plane took off at 7:30 and there was always a chance the Austrian border guards would be feeling their oats, it was decided that he should leave at about 4:15 AM...which meant that I should leave at 4:15 AM, since I was going to the same airport (though my plane left more than three hours later than his.)

Wednesday, September 20: I get up at 3:30 and pack, and Ted and I meet Martina in the hotel lobby at 4:15, and she announces that we have to pick up Ivan, because she hasn't been to Vienna in three years and is afraid she'll get lost. So we get in her car and drive a few miles to this gas station which has a tiny restaurant, and there we find not only Ivan, but Henrieta and Juraj Maxon,

who is one of the two best SF artists in the country (Martina is the other one). It seems they decided to keep Ivan company, and to say good-bye to us yet again, and they have been sitting there for six hours, drinking beer and waiting for Ted and I to sleep, wake up, pack, and stop by to pick up Ivan.

We have another good-bye in which we all hug each other and swear eternal friendship, and then we go off to the airport, and the Austrian border guards don't hassle us at all, and suddenly it is 5:30 AM and we are in the Vienna airport, and my plane isn't leaving until 10:55, which is a long time to be in the Vienna airport.

Ted buys some breakfast -- it's too early in the day for me to have anything but coffee -- and then he goes through the gate to wait for his plane, and Martina and Ivan doggedly decide that their duties as hosts require them to spend the next four hours in my company until my flight is called...but Martina is barely able to keep her eyes open, and I know that if she stays there another four hours she's going to fall asleep at the wheel going home, so I insist that she leave, and announce that I'm going through security where they can't follow, so she finally gets up and we say good-bye, and I thank her and Ivan for inviting me and for all the many courtesies they've extended, and then I go through security, spend a few hours sitting at a restaurant drinking coffee, and finally my flight is called and I board the plane.

The flight is a little longer going home than coming here, because this time we're bucking headwinds, and it lands at 2:00 PM Chicago time, after more than nine hours. Now I have three hours to catch the 4:50 flight to Cincinnati. I'll land at 6:55 Cincinnati time -- it's a 65-minute flight, and I lose an hour by crossing time zones.

So I wait three hours, and board the plane, and we leave the gate, and we're second in line to take off, and suddenly the pilot announces that the Cincinnati airport has been closed due to thunderstorms, and that they're due to pass out of the area in an hour or two and we're going to sit right here until we get permission to take off. In the

meantime, the stewardesses go up and down the aisle passing out pretzels to everyone thereby guaranteeing a huge demand for water, which of course they can't fulfill.

We sit, and we sit, and we sit, and people are calling Cincinnati on their cell phones and being told that the weather's beautiful, and United keeps swearing that it's pouring, and finally United says, well, it's not raining any more but the airport is still closed, and people on cell phones are saying the hell it's closed, Delta's taking off and landing every 30 seconds, and then United decides not to talk to us any more, and at 8:20, three and one-half hours after we leave the gate, we take off. We land an hour later, and the

stewardesses stand by the door telling everyone they hope we had a good flight, and those passengers who don't just glare at them say things like "You've got to be kidding, right?" and the stewardesses don't seem to know quite what to reply to that.

Carol is waiting for me, and I throw my arms around her 25 hours after Martina picks me up to take me to the airport.

This was my fourth trip out of the country this year, my third across the Atlantic, and much as I loved all of them if I don't take another 9-hour plane ride for a while, that'll be just fine by me.

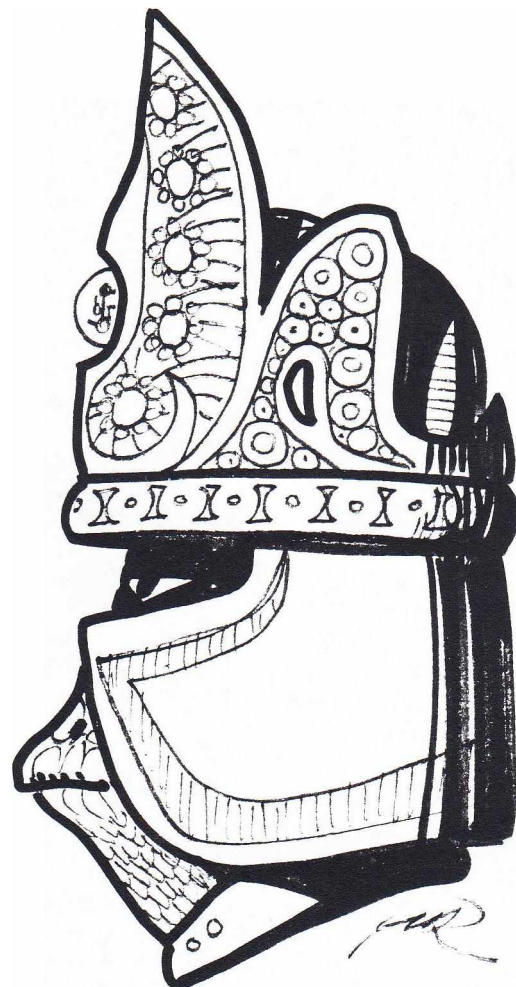
"SAFE HANDS" *Cont. from page 37*

associates, and we created a new form of fingerprint examination. We disdained the initial 'point of entry' preview . . . we ignored the debris of safes and twisted metal drawers. Instead, we adopted a tactically sited position of observation and just perused the scene, heads moving round like radar scanners . . . looking for something unusual . . . out of reach . . . not in its normal context.

I'm certain that those particular scenes of crime examinations created world records for mental concentration, physical agility, time consumption and powder usage. He had planted in our minds the certainty that, somewhere, he had left us a sequence to find. One young fingerprint officer found the elusive elliptical sequence on the handle of a lavatory chain. There was always the possibility that this was coincidental, as this particular criminal did not include leaving his personalised 'calling card' at his scenes.

Eventually he was caught, but, for the first time, he pleaded 'not guilty' to all cases. Evidence of identity was produced in the two crimes at which fingerprints were found. He smiled smugly when the bottle in the paint shop was mentioned, but evinced surprise and embarrassment when the lavatory chain handle marks were produced. The jury swiftly found him 'guilty' and he 'took into consideration' a further sixty crimes.

I left the bureau before the elliptical-whorl man was next released, but I do not anticipate that their ident figures will increase on the strength of this criminal's proclivities.

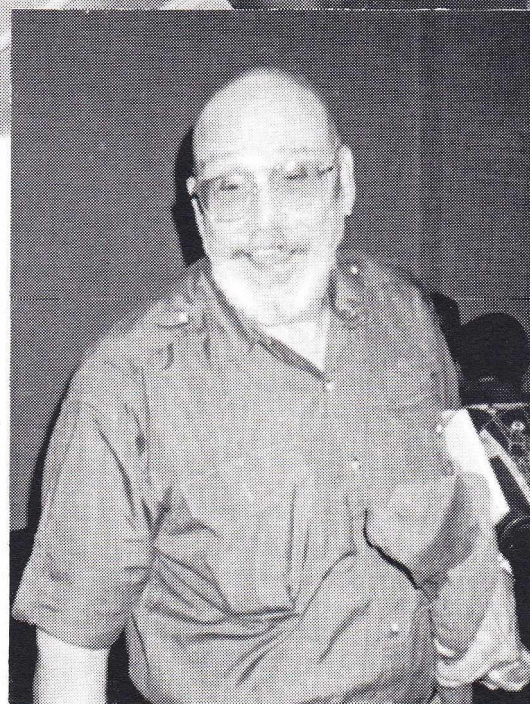


*The
Challenger*

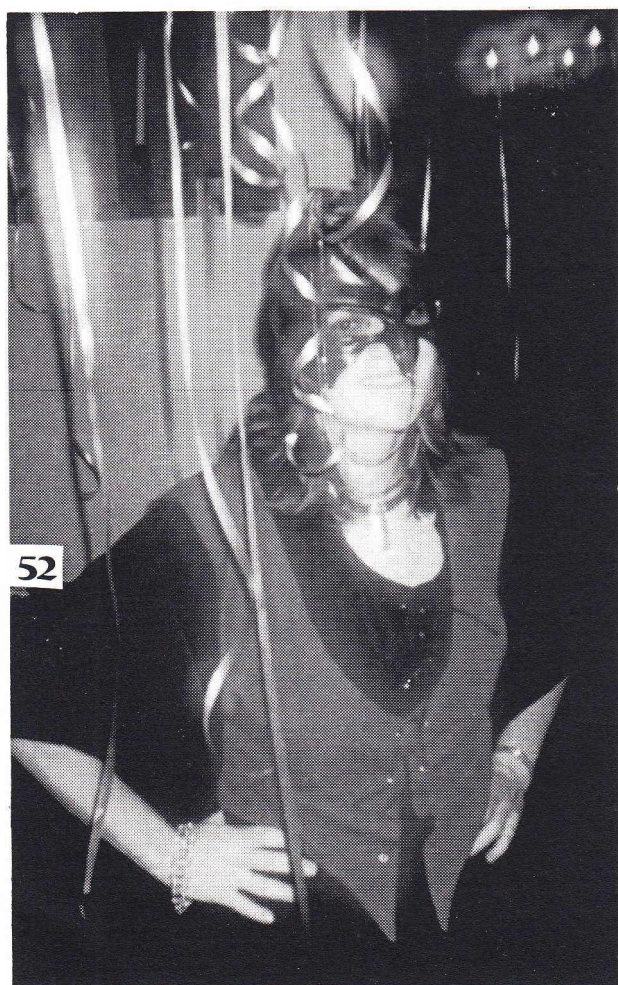
Tribute:

Toni Weisskopf

Fifteen years ago or so, a cute teenaged girl showed up at Southern SF conventions, wearing clothes a *cowboy* would throw away. Since then, she has become one of SF's pre-eminent book editors, and one of the South's foremost fan publishers and historians. She is one of but two people to be honored with DeepSouthCon's Rebel *and* Phoenix Awards for outstanding service to the region both as fan and as pro. (She's even won the *Rubble* Award ... so she won't get a swelled head.) Now she tops them all: she's a **Challenger** tributee.



Toni's "old man", *el grande*
Hank Reinhardt!





Lois McMaster Bujold
won three Hugos for
novels published by
Baen ... and edited by Toni.



**Buddy JoAnn
Montalbano**
affixes a Toni-
sized bracelet



... and "yunge
Toni" is driven
in by fellow
SFPAns **George
Wells** and
Ned Brooks.
'Atta girl, Toni!

EPISTLES

Editorial Request: Those who LoC Challenger by e-mail, please include your street address. We faneds use other lettercols to swell our mailing lists - so if you let me print your address, you'll get more zines!

WAHF: "Acceptable Risk". Rose-Marie Donovan. Joe Green. Ben Indick ("You sound like "Love finds Andy Lillian" or something, but actually I'm happy to see a pro bono lawyer can be joyful, even in Summer [you know, it's a Spring-time phenomenon]"). Martina Klicperova. Teri Santoro. Julius Schwartz (we *must* give a Hugo to **Man of Two Worlds**). Ruth Shields.

Dale Speirs
Calgary T2P 2E7

I am on vacation in Crowsnest Pass. First time I've been here in 25 years. Alas, the WigWam Motel is gone, so it looks like Toronto in 2003.

Recount! Recount!

Bob Devney
25 Johnson Street
N. Attleboro MA 02760

I'm a rotten e-mail correspondent, but occasionally like to shock people who have kept up their

end and sent me things from time to time by reciprocating at least once a decade when they least expect it.

Like now, for instance.

Thought of you t'other night as I watched a fascinating documentary running on the PBS show **Frontline**. It showed selected moments from a few days in the working lives of an assistant DA and a PD in Boston in 1999. Would love to know what you think of the show, and, if you caught the Boston one, how the justice systems in the two cities differ.

Have always admired your selfless work, sir, and the references you make to it that truly great zine **Challenger**. But having spent just a few minutes watching something that may approximate your work world, my awe is redoubled.

In particular, there was an odd, white-haired little guy in a bow tie, a defense attorney, who spoke briefly but convincingly of the absolute terrors and joys of his job. In some way (not the oddness, now) he seemed to catch an attitude of, of, almost abandoned involvement in the work B an involvement that I've felt reading your own accounts. You both seem to give it all your battered but still hopeful hearts in a way that's, dammit, noble.

But speaking of hearts - many congratulations, Guy, on your marriage! Just read the mention in **Locus**. In my usual mode, now would be the time for me to quote Pepys at a wedding, something like: "Strange to say what delight we married people have to see these poor fools decoyed into our condition." But tonight I'll just wish you and the missus well, and happy holidays.

I missed that Locus notice. Could someone 'rox it for us?

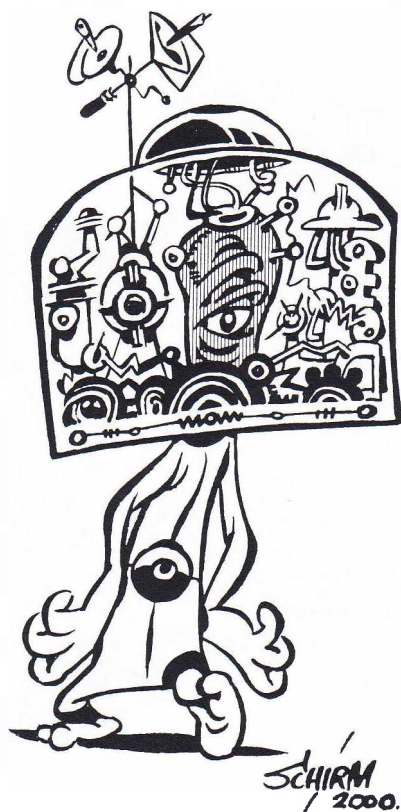
Tim Marion
see "Contributors"

Challenger is quite a hefty package. And even so, it isn't obvious that it's 100 pages. I have to say, though, that all that white paper looks a little too stark and bright to my eye. I realize you are trying to reverse the standard fanzine trend of having white covers with colored interiors, but it wasn't really more attractive because of this. Also, the margins are a little brutal. Do you not have "mirror margins" in your word processing package, a feature that will allow you to print closer to the right-hand edge on odd-numbered pages, and further away from the gutter on even-numbered pages? Still a readable zine, but it would be a help.

I enjoyed all your reprints from comics fanzines and your fanzines of the past. It is obvious, isn't it, that Neal Pozner drew Conan to look like Roy Thomas, the **Conan** comics scripter at the time?

Actually, that's supposed to be me. C'mon, Tim, you knew me in 1977 ...

I think I have those lavish issues of **Is** that Tom Collins did. I don't think he ever sent them to me at the time, however; I think he just sent me a **RAPSzine** or something, for some obscure reason (and only one of those!). I eventually got the **Ises** through buying fanzine collections, but still haven't read them (of course). I remember meeting Collins at only one convention, and he seemed a little upset that when David Anthony Kraft took over Fictioneer Books, he didn't do so with any acknowledgment toward him (such as a mention of being the editor of the Robert E. Howard western



volume, *Vultures*).

Interesting review of PRIME. When you mention Wendy Fletcher, both oldtimers like myself (who may not know) and relatively newer fans would probably have appreciated a parenthetical comment to the fact that Wendy married Richard Pini and became the Wendy Pini of *Elfquest* fame.

And your mention of EST prompts yet another Gary Tesser story. At one point Tesser was heavily into EST, and insisted that both Jeff and I attend sessions with him. Jeff actually obliged him at one point, which I guess only gave him encouragement to bug me. Finally Gary got to be so annoying with his insinuations (part of their philosophy, to annoy someone until that person gives in), that I spitefully decided to deliberately string him along. "Welllllll," I would begin, as though considering it. Then ... NAH!" He would ask again. "Welllllll ... NAH!" Not getting it, he would merely insist again. "Welllllll ... NAH!" I answered. This began to work. In other words, he finally got frustrated and stopped. Maybe this is the way to deal with *all* Esters! (Gary is no longer involved with them, and I very much enjoyed his company at a recent PhilCon.)

Irvin Koch
1623 White Oak Drive
Chattanooga TN 37415-6325

Organization: Agency for Adoption of Angel Cats

Challenger 12 was sent to a long gone address rather than what you had on me from SFPA so it's a miracle it was forwarded to where I am. it got to me when I came back from Chicon, which meant about a month before I could *breathe*, much less LoC.

Of course it's one of, if not *the*, best fanzines I remember ... going back to 1963, but that's not a LoC <G. There was only one item that I *HAVE TO* respond to.

Frohvet: South East Convention Fandom, Inc. - a.k.a. Charlotte 2004 B tried to get a Labor Day Weekend date ... just so we could be on the same weekend as Dragon*Con. Unfortunately, the only dates the facilities were available that was "summer" at all, and did not conflict with Pennsic Wars, was the week/weekend before that.

The original "temporary" address for the bid was in Lancaster SC, about 30 minutes drive South of the convention center, where our Director who actually lives in the area, Tom Martin, lives. There was a very brief interregnum, between that and the PMB in Charlotte, which used my address, in GA. In fact, the interregnum was so brief that about the only place it was seen besides a very small handful of flyers, was in Challenger.

Richard Dengrove
2651 Arlington Drive #302
Alexandria VA 22306

This is letter is full of warnings for people. For one thing, I have to warn you not to have parents who are ratpackers. I am glad mine are in good health because when they die, I and my brother and sister are going to have to clean out my father's books and mother's clothes, which have taken over the house. My brother's room remains the Goldwater room although I am not certain he remembers who Goldwater was. The

buttons are still up. My parents never took them down. Also, having read Robert Sirignano's article, I have a warning. It's not going Postal we have to worry about; it's going Postal *Supervisor*.

In addition, I have to warn Katabas you can't tell Lovecraft by his cover. You couldn't tell anyone by his cover in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a matter of form that people expressed racist views. Just as they claim to be shocked by them right now. It was what you did. Lovecraft may have feigned to despise all non-Providence non-Brahmans, but he married a Jewish woman, I hear. And helped her, as he had many others, with her writing. When they divorced, they remained friends.

I have to warn Mike Resnick about his articles. It isn't that I haven't enjoyed him charming us with his charmed life. But he better watch out that someone doesn't pirate his restaurant reviews and start a guide competing with Michelin.

Ah, I see a wonderful article about Faust by someone whose name slips my mind. Also, I once again found Curt Phillips interesting. Someone always falls to follow the rules and gets away with it. Whether it be in surrendering Confederate flags or remaining a Cherokee in North Carolina.

Ron Salomon
1014 Concord Street
Framingham, MA 01701

Thanks so much for sending me the Usuald, Challenger #12. Greatly impressed me. Now comes lunchtime rambling. Whilst the ish at hand deserves better, between work and physical training [which I'll explain shortly] and family/spouse and children, well, letterhacking unfortunately gets a lower priority than I would like to give it, at least until someone finds the missing daily 25th and succeeding hours.

Regarding the Stars & Bars, like beauty is in the eye of the beholder, intentions ditto. So while the best meaning intentions can be, uh, intended, when it looks like a slap in the face of the general public (or at least some of its members), that's when lines need to be drawn, when it comes down saluting which flagpole. Have I confused you yet? Me, I do that first thing most mornings. But yeah to Curt Phillips, I think we are too different now to venerate the flag like we used to. Has changed even in our lifetime, when it comes to Stars & Stripes. Another thing the War changed, in the '60's, our flag lost its luster, so to speak, or at least a lot of the respect it had previously been given. Where would Ralph Lauren be today without it? Me, I think people cut from whole cloth are more important than the cloth.

I don't know either, must be a sugar high.

The knowledge that John Berry was a fingerprint expert must have eluded me until now. Time to watch *Night Shift* again? I do enjoy the grotesque now and then, and his column was lovely in that respect.

Guy, I do enjoy seeing Charles Bronson filmically (?) do the Deed, that is, give just desserts, and I even think I could throw the switch open the IV line in person, but I am honest enough to not want to get to know the evildoer. Having worked within the confines of a state prison for the better part of a year and having daily contact with inmates, up to and including convicted serial child molesters (Fells Acre Day School

back when, here in MA) and murderers, as I (often) remark, "I bet Hitler was a good dancer," as there is always a little good in the most black of hearts, the good shouldn't outweigh the black, so I am not a bleeding heart, and I think is a cruel injustice to make society pay out for the upkeep of lifers and lessers. Although I don't think it would have any visible results in the way of easing traffic congestion at rush hour, I do think it would be for the good of the many to dispose/kill the bastards. Was there ever a so-called civilization where the emperor or his/her equivalent didn't put thumb down on occasion?

I gotta eat something!

Robert W. S.'s Reasons to Go Postal. I could have lived without knowing them, but it does make me feel more sympathetic to the postal employees. But yeah, kill those murderin' (fairly convicted) bastards too!

Stinson: I used to read the stuff. Actually, as my two boys become older and I try to push the "stuff" their way for their literary consumption, I bet I will be reading a bit of sfnal stuff soon just so there'll be none of that "Do what I say" around here. I've been this year collecting lists of alternatives to Rawlings, and writing down the titles/authors of Don D'Amassa's SFC reviews of juvenile skiffy. And actually I have already read one Yolen novel in recent months, so I guess in a small way I still do read the stuff, but shhh, I a fan!

I'd much rather look at the scanned photos taken at the 2M DeepSouthCon. Lessee, what's the next con I want to get to but can't afford?

I did read and enjoy Richard Dengrove's Faust article, really enlightening to me. Even as we approach the new Millennium, all knowledge continues to remain in fandom, eh?

Too many fen of my generation dying, that's for sure. I am trying to do what I can to personally prevent, or at least delay for a few more decades, my own future time down under (6 feet). My doctor's diagnosis of: fatal no-cure disease B yes! Have a nice and not too sweet life! Take the pills and lose weight! has got me going to a personal physical trainer and a dietician and a diabetes specialist doctor for at least 14 weeks, to hopefully get me on the right path to shirk pounds, not responsibility, to myself and family, and by extension the Greater Family of Fandom. I am tired of carrying the Weight these many years. Now if I can only convince my mouth to stay shut more often ... Light a candle for Roscoe or whatever, willya? I gotta stop thinking about life as just one well-stocked consult.

Well.

Great LoColumn and many names remembered from the dim congoing and letterhacking past. Does typing The Usual to many of the zines you list/review in *The Zine Dump* count for much, caloriewise? Anyway onward with pleading pocsards. Is all Lillian's fault, faneds.

I am currently enjoying the Resnick read, but in order to get something out now rather than later maybe too late might as well forget it, will end this letter to ya know. As the talking envelope said, "I know when I'm licked."

Kate Yule

<kyule @ spiritone. corn>

Just read *Challenger* 12, of the stooping-bird

cover. Is it my imagination, or is that bird supposed to look like you?

My feathers aren't that dark.

I enjoyed the brief piece at the end about your Granaw, and the selection of family photos. I met a goodly number of my family this summer, scattered along the East Coast. Family history is a good thing.

Mike Resnick has a gazillion Hugos, Nebulas, published works etc., and takes interesting trips to exotic places. This makes it all the more frustrating that what he gives you is yet another "And then I did... and then I went ... and then we ate..." trip report. Obviously there's a market for this genre (consider E. Leeper's fanwriting nominations) but I'm not it. I now know what time he got to the airport, what he had to drink with which publisher when, and how many hours of CNN he watched at what time in the morning ... but the store "that has Paris' best selection of out-of-print English-language science fiction" goes unnamed! Aargh!

Have been listening to a course on American History from The Teaching Company. Professor Louis Masur's lectures on the Civil War - and what led up to it - have done a good job of showing me how both sides could sincerely believe they alone were upholding the Principles of the Revolution and nobly following the One True Gourd.

Brin-Marie McLaughlin

247 19th Avenue 6

San Francisco CA 94121-2353

brininsf@aol.com

Challenger 12 was a delight, as always. Thank you for continuing to send it to me, despite the fact that I rarely LoC and only send a six-page thingy in return. I recently got chastized in another fanzine for having such a paltry offering, at which point I told the faned who grunched that if s/he really didn't think the trade was equitable to go ahead and drop me from the list of recipients. I also said I wasn't mad or anything, and that I would continue to send hir *Conferring With Earthquakes* until told not to. I then received a follow-up note that crept dangerously close to persnickettyhood, citing my lack of concern about being dropped from that mailing list. I responded with something along the lines of, Gee, if I weren't concerned, I would have ignored what you said and tried to wheedle you out of additional issues of [Zine]. Instead, I addressed the difficulty immediately, and I very honestly and without malice said to go ahead and drop me if s/he didn't think our trade was fair. In other words, I left it up to hir. Nevertheless, the faned previously mentioned *did* have a valid point B and I'm saying the same thing to you, namely if you don't think our trade is fair, let me know and we'll see what arrangements can be made so I can continue to receive *Challenger*.

I'll settle for your delightful perzine and a few loaves of San Francisco sourdough bread. All right, for your fanzine.

Your opening editorial about going through your mother's home and keeping some pieces that are of sentimental value struck a place deep in my heart; after my mother died, my father did not allow me or my brother near the house until after he had remarried a year later and his new wife had gone through her possessions and taken the ones she liked. I did get some

things, but only after the choicest bits had been gleaned. So, I'm telling you now, in all sincerity, do not feel guilty about taking possession of your mother's things. Be glad you had the chance. Dad probably threw away hundreds of things of my mother's that had no earthly use except to be treasured by one or the other of his younguns for sentimental value; my brother Jon and I are still both mystified as to why he handled things the way he did. But, we also think grief is an individual experience in that everybody must handle it their own way, so, out of respect for him and his new life, we are living with his decisions regarding Mom's Stuff.

Re: Jury Duty. The one time I actually had to report to City Hall as opposed to just being on telephone standby, I did not get chosen. I think it may have had something to do with the fact that I was vociferously and copiously blowing my nose through the interview, or maybe it was because I was wearing my pentacle pendant outside my shirt instead of next to my skin where it usually is. We'll never know, shall we?...

Robert Kennedy
1779 Ciprian Avenue
Camarillo CA 93010-2451
(805) 987-41164
robertk@gateway.net

It was great meeting you at Chicon 2000. As promised I voted for you as #1 and am sorry you didn't win the Hugo. Better luck next year.

Like I said, let's get silly in Philly!

Your Editorial was quite interesting and your comments about your Grandmother were especially cherished, as were the family photos. Old family photos should always be prized.

My Mother died last year at the age of 97. My Brother and I gave all her furniture to his children. Clothing was donated to her PEO thrift shop. There are, however, still bags and sacks of her things piled up in my living room. It is very hard going through her things. Among other items, it appears that she saved almost every letter going back to high school. The letters have to receive at least a cursory review as there may be information of importance. I have found some good genealogical items that she must have forgotten about which take me back not only to the **Mayflower**, but also to an ancestor who was at Concord on 19 April 1775. Now, there are many people who do not care about the **Mayflower**, especially since Europeans were here well before it arrived. But, it does take me back to 1620. On the other hand, I find it incredibly exhilarating to have an ancestor fighting at Concord when the British attacked and which was the day on which our War for Independence started. (A side issue here. This war was not a Revolution since those fighting were not trying to overthrow the government. It wasn't even a Civil War. It was very definitely a War for Independence. If we were good little Marxists it might be called a War for National Liberation.)

Wow - what treasures! I suspect you've anticipated my suggestion and contacted a university library to find a permanent place for these goodies.

All of the articles were interesting and I hesitate to point to any one of them. However, especially enjoyed were Curt Phillips's "Rally to the Colors", John Berry's "Getting Into One's Work", J. G. Stinson's "Going

Native", and Gene Stewart's "Lovecraft's Dick". You have an incredible Fanzine section.

"The Zine Dump" has been fairly criticized for lacking critical juice. Guilty ... it's just that zines are works created for the sheer love of creating and I can't dampen anyone's enthusiasm with nit-picking.

Milt Stevens: It was nice meeting you at Chicon 2000 since we only live about ten miles apart. Personally, I like jury duty.



Alexis A. Gilliland
4030 8th Street South
Arlington, VA 22204

A week before Chicon, Challenger #12 arrived in the usual way, for which many thanks. The more things change, the more they stay the same ... pp 29-34 are redundant in my copy,

Arrrgghhh.

but Stinson's article on C.J. Cherryh was excellent, as was Resnick's piece. I enjoyed the pictures of your grandmother, four points describing the trajectory of her life.

A trajectory which continues into glory.

A comment hook is provided by your article, "Mickey D' ... The Short, Savage Life of Joel Durham", which tells an ugly story with admirable directness, and concludes by asking if it wouldn't have been better to have put Joel on Death Row to begin with. My answer is no, and my reason is that the Criminal Justice System is necessarily run by human beings, and is therefore subject to error. In this case the CJS erred on the side of mercy, and in general that is how I would prefer it to err, freeing or inadequately punishing a few felons who should get the death penalty, rather than killing a few **innocents** hapless losers for whom a competent defense might have inspired a reasonable doubt. Of course the CJS manages to do both, so I suppose that proper quality control would ensure the execution of no more than one innocent in ten, while sparing no more than one felon in three. Liberals and conservatives might argue about those numbers, but realistically they may be about the best that can be done. We note that the Governor of Illinois suspended the death penalty after 13 of 24 cases were reversed on appeal.

In the letter column, E. B. Frohvet gives a good precis of the Palczynski case omitting only that the two hostages managed to give their captor a sedative before escaping. They told the police he was sleeping on the couch in the living room, and the police went in. The official report said that Palczynski had been sleeping with

a gun in his hand, and when startled awake raised his gun instead of dropping it. The police shooting was thus officially justified, a decision that seems sane and reasonable in the circumstances. Speaking of police procedure, I recently witnessed an accident; a car turned left into the path of an oncoming vehicle and was spun 180 degrees. Lots of damage, no personal injuries. The officer on the scene took my testimony and gave me a witness subpoena, so at the appointed time (9AM) I went down to Arlington Court House and sat around for about an hour until the case was called. The officer had it right, and I suppose I was there in the unlikely case that the driver of the turning vehicle was going to argue. Or maybe to lend truth and verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative. In any event, I wasn't cross-examined or even asked say much, the whole thing being disposed of as a *pro forma* bit of business.



Janine G. Stinson
P.O. Box 430314
Big Pine Key, FL 33043-0314
tropics@aol.com

My "Going Native" article looked splendid, and the illos you chose for it were out-freakin'-standing! Most especially, I liked the one on p. 17: it reminded me of Niun sitting at his favorite thinking spot. <g> Thanks so much for making me look so good! Now I just hope someone besides you and I read it. <g>

See above!

You are all saved from any jury-duty/famous-people stories from me. I've never served on a jury (and likely never will - see my spousal attachment explanation that follows later) - and the most famous person I ever met was Billy Cobham. I'll send a free paperback (SF/F/H) book and if I get a list made up, there may be choice allowed to anyone who knows that name and can recall why he could be considered "famous." Yes, I'm serious, and no, you won't have to pay postage. This offer lasts until I run out of paperbacks to give away.

Re: Joseph Major's p. 56 comments on the "militarization of police." Certainly there are plenty of opportunities for abuse and mistakes in law enforcement, just as there are in any other field. I think it's the fact that police officers use deadly weapons that makes their work more scrutinized. Police officers are not immune to bad intelligence, either. If they get hoodwinked by informants about which house is the drug house on a given street, I can almost guarantee that the next search warrant they do will be very carefully planned and double-checked five times. And any person whose house was illegally entered by law enforcement officers has legal recourse available through

the courts. It isn't a perfect system, but this isn't a perfect world. Lots of people still drive after they've been drinking alcohol, even with harsher laws for drunk driving.

"Every little burg and hamlet seems to have its very own SWAT team..." Granted, but if you look at those burgs and hamlets on maps, it's highly likely that many of them are very close to exits from interstates that aren't too far from major cities, or are midway between midsize cities. Drug runners use these "burgs and hamlets" to funnel their products to suburban and rural traffickers. Gangs like the Crips and Bloods have been well-documented by law enforcement agencies in their use of such geographical distribution plans. Towns of 10,000 or less are no more immune to drug trafficking than any city.

"Against unarmed people, however, they are far more violent." On what do you base this statement? If all you're using as a basis are the media reports you've read, seen or heard, you have only part of the facts. Police officers die at routine traffic stops at a horrific rate, often for no other reason than that the stopped driver hates cops and had a gun handy. The reason search warrants are served at speed and with the use of surprise and force is because, even with good intelligence (the kind that proves to be actual fact), the cops who are breaking down the doors have no guaranteed knowledge of what's on the other side of that door. Based on past experience, police officers have come to expect that any structure which houses possible drug dealers is going to also be heavily tricked out with weapons of nearly every description. Cops are not interested in getting into shootouts every night, as a general rule. They are more interested in staying alive. Those who like shoot-em-ups seldom last long at most law enforcement agencies, because they create way too much paperwork (and that's an old cop joke, folks).

"...it makes me think that the route to success for a team of burglars would be to dress like a SWAT team and break into houses, businesses, etc..." It's already happened, more than once. If I recall correctly, there was a case of this sometime within the last year in Miami. There are laws in most if not all states that prohibit anyone who is not a sworn police officer from pretending to be one.

Of course I'm a bit defensive about police officers - I'm married to one.

I'd also like to note that there are companies and law enforcement agencies enthusiastically pursuing non-lethal means of stopping and capturing suspected lawbreakers. These methods include immobilizing foam, pepper spray, nets propelled from shotgun-like devices, strips of metal spikes set across roadways to stop drivers fleeing police, electronic devices that can be remotely piloted to get underneath a speeding car and deliver an electromagnetic pulse to stall the car engine, and several other methods. Pepper spray, as far as I know, is widely used in U.S. police departments, if it hasn't already become standard equipment.

Mr. Major, if the Louisville Police Dept. has a citizen ridealong program, I suggest you try it out. Maybe you already know this, but I think it bears repeating: police officers have to interact with people who do bad/illegal/nasty things to other people or other people's property more often than they interact with the average,

law-abiding person. Every law enforcement agency has at least one "bad apple" (my quotes), and the media feasts on the "bad cop busts" (my quotes) that seem to happen on a regular basis in big cities like New York and Los Angeles. But think about this for just a moment: if you were alone in a room with about \$100,000 in cash sitting on a table and no one was watching you, and no one had counted that money yet, what would you do? Can you guarantee that you wouldn't succumb to the temptation to steal that money, or maybe part of it? Cops who participate in drug busts face this temptation every time they serve a search warrant, and that's why the chain of evidence in drug trafficking cases is so critical for convictions of the drug dealers and "major players" in the drug trafficking business.

We're all human. We all make mistakes. Just because a person is a police officer doesn't make him or her immune to temptation. The fact that so many police officers regularly, successfully resist such temptations should be reassuring. But I guess the habit of shooting down whoever seems to rise too high above the masses is too deeply ingrained in human behavior. We do it to politicians and celebrities (which is not to say that they do or don't deserve it, just that it's done by the media and others), so why not cops?

As a former intelligence analyst and a current newspaper reporter, I have learned not to believe everything I read, see or hear, especially from the media, and that includes newspapers. Outright falsehoods have been printed and spoken many times and for many years before I got into the news business, and I don't expect such things will go away anytime soon. There are bad (as in lacking talent), unethical reporters in print and on TV and radio (and the 'Net) who apparently have no interest in publicizing the truth, just themselves. Let us also remember that history books are generally written by the winners, or those in power at any given time. I've discovered that "the more you read, the more you know" is one of the truest things ever said or written.

One of the mottoes I learned as an intelligence analyst was, "Consider the source." I've found that it has served me well in many areas of life besides the intell game. I recommend it to everyone.

I have to dispute what you imply about crooked, incompetent, or brutal cops. Cops have too much power to be given much in the way of slack. If they misuse their authority, either on purpose or through clumsiness, they should leave either their freedom or their badges on the desk. New Orleans is reeling these days from a suspect's account of having his rectum probed for drugs - with pliers. A free people must not tolerate such atrocities.

Cuyler Brooks
<nedbrooks@sprynet.com>

Much thanks for the zine. Sorry you didn't understand my comments about ascii text files. I don't know what software you do **Challenger** in, but most DTP softwares allow a file to be save "as ascii". That puts you halfway to HTML, because an HTML file is ascii B whenever you look at a web page with your browser you can invoke "source" and see exactly what HTML code produced the page. An HTML source is just the raw ascii text with some typesetting instructions added. But I see that Brandt seems to have the job well in hand!

Salutes again to Robert Brandt for his help in getting **Chall**

onto the Net!

Glad to hear you got the job thing cleared up. it sounds like the new job will have more variety anyway.

Except financially, it's an improvement down the line.

I don't know that you should complain about the failure of of the contributors to follow your suggestion for an "American" issue B when I first heard of the infamous HUAC or AHouse Un-American Activities Committee" I wondered what activities could possibly be investigated that were not fully American, one way or the other. Putting rancid yak butter in your tea, perhaps? **Challenger** 12 is quite American enough, from the glorification of the Late Unpleasantness to the tales of Disgruntled Postal Workers.

And the shuttle launch, and the worldcon ... and the crimes.

Hey, it's where I live.

Gene Stewart's article on HPL and PKD certainly has a novel and exotic format, but I didn't feel that I learned much from it. Dengrove's "Historical Faust" is excellent, a good example of how little legend has to do with the original facts.

The assorted comments on the idea of "Southern SF" show how silly the original idea was - neither "Southern" nor "SF" have tight enough definitions for there to be anything to discuss. David Drake mentions Manly Wade Wellman B I didn't know that much about his background, but it's pretty obvious that if he was a "Southern" writer it was by choice.

And wise choice, too.

Rodney Leighton mentions his mailbox being vandalized, certainly not a Southern crime particularly, but we do have a lot of it here.

We have a lot of mailboxes!

One resident in an Atlanta suburb lost his mailbox 17 times! Is it just that a mailbox is a convenient target, or is there a component of anti-intellectualism in these assaults?

In the year 2000, with a Republican coup d'etat in progress, I wouldn't doubt anything.

E.B. Frohvet
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506
Ellicott City MD 21042

Receiving a new **Challenger** is always agreeable, but in this case I was pleasantly surprised as I hadn't expected it until some time after the Worldcon. Hopefully, we will have a chance to get together for a drink or three.

Nice to see you there! How do you like your photo?

Sadly, I agree with your assessment on p. 50: you ought to win the Hugo, but probably won't. I would be thrilled to be proved wrong on this prediction. Speaking of which, thanks for the comment about "hoping to return the favor". Not bloody likely, but it's the thought that counts.

*Fanzine fandom should dedicate itself to promoting deserving but neglected talents for the Hugo. Your **Twink** certainly has a place on my ballot.*

I agree with you and Robert Sabella, term Limits on the Hugo Awards are a bad idea whose time may have come. Unfortunately that is not an event of high probability either; The Usual Suspects and their friends run the Business Meeting as a private fiefdom, turning a nominally democratic system into a self-perpetuating oligarchy.

I am open to suggestions. What can we do about it?
 Having no desire to re-fight the Civil War (there are already far too many people making a living at that), I will let go our dispute over "distinct nation" with the cliché, "History is written by the winners." American independence from Britain [and] Texas' independence were promptly and internationally recognized, and have stood the test of time. The American insurrection which resulted in the Civil War failed, in less than five years, and was never formally recognized by any foreign power to my knowledge.

Ben Indick comments about having an extra copy of the auto registration so he and his wife can each carry one. The law in the state in question was that the registration had to be carried in the car. Which is where I keep my registration now, in the glove compartment. I keep the title at home.

Interesting that the last issue seems to have prompted lots of folks to reminisce about the legal system, mostly jury duty. Seeing a letter from Ken Cheslin is an awkward moment, as just yesterday Robert Lichtman informed me that Ken had died suddenly. Apparently Ken and his wife had gone to lunch, they were walking down the street, and he just collapsed and died. I did not have the privilege of having known Ken in his fannish heyday, but even a slight acquaintanceship is something to be remembered.

I share your judgement of Plokta as "too ingroupish". But I would miss it if it ceased to arrive...

Me too! Fun as rich as theirs is infectious even if you don't know the people.

I can't find much to say about the "Mickey D" article; except that the Lutheran bishop of the Maryland/Delaware Synod recently retired. A good man, surely, a worthy man, someone you could respect even if you didn't belong to his Church. But every time an execution was imminent in Maryland, this good man would lead a delegation of religious leaders to the Governor to plead for mercy for another heartless psychopath like Joel Durham. Maybe the good clergyman should have read this article.

I just wish the whole world was made up of people like him.

Unfortunately, there are also people like Joel around.

A most interesting sermon piece by my friend Janine Stinson about various characters in the books of C.J. Cherryh. She could have made a similar case for Kurt Morgan in *Brothers Of Earth*, or Tully in the Chanur books. Indeed, alienation even among humans is a recurring theme in Cherryh: see *Finity's End*.

Incidentally, I wondered what you thought about Pete Sampras' 7th Wimbledon victory and record 13th Grand Slam title? Darkness descending over London after a three-hour rain delay; the tournament referee hovering, obviously with intent to halt the match for darkness; Sampras' parents, chewing their fingernails up to the elbow in obvious agony; the Duke and Duchess displaying the proverbial Royal patience. Pete, clearly weary and in pain, digs deep for one more big serve; Pat Rafter's return flies wide. As the crowd erupts in cheers, flashbulbs ripple in the gloom, Sampras raising his arms in triumph admixed with relief (Rafter wins the second-set tie-break, the whole match turns around): in the background can be seen the lineswoman, dutifully calling Rafter's last shot "out", ignored by everyone but still doing her assigned job. If that don't do

it for ya, then you're not a tennis fan! I've got it on videotape, though it may be a while before I can watch that tie-break again.

I still miss Connors! Anyone got a tape of the U.S. Open final in 1978, the "Night of the Blood Beast"? Cash money offered!

Fred Lerner mentions a restaurant that can "cook buffalo as well as anyone in South Dakota." I am left wondering if that is a goal worth aspiring to.

Gene Stewart
 17 10 Dianne Avenue
 Bellevue, NE 68005
 Ph: (402) 292 - 8656

Go for the Hugo, **Challenger**. Hope you've got a speech ready.

Yeah — "C'mon, Mike, let me hold it!"

Congratulations on at least landing a job you can stand, and I hope the money improves or another opportunity comes along. Life: What a joker.

My parents spared me the nursing home routine by up and dying. Sounds like you picked the right kind of memento. And yes, clearing up after they've vacated feels like burglary or even looting. Barbara Kingsolver's book *The Poisonwood Bible* is supposed to underscore the point that we just don't need so much stuff, but as any pack rat can attest, stuff resonates, for those with minds to see., and so it can be as hard to part with as a spleen in the wilderness.

Speaking of wilderness, sometimes it walks and talks, as in that Durham example. Bracketing it with a floater was a good idea; kept things in context. The NO KILLING sign cracked me up; ah, human futility.

Okay, there's Cthulhu, and HPL, but is that PKD or Hemingway wielding the aerosol. Ubik? In any case, cool illo; thanx CW [Charlie Williams].

Rich Dengrove's article on the historical Faust was excellent stuff, which is no surprise at all considering the source. Brings back memories for me of Gelnhausen in the evening, fog in the ruins, the Dom's bell chiming.

David Drake's take on Benford's article makes some good points worthy of ponderation. And as George Bush Sr. proved, sometimes a Texan can be from Kennebunkport... Or is it the other way around?

GHLIII's autograph for Ben Indick: Perilously close to Vonnegut's in *Breakfast of Champions*, n'est pas?

Martin Morse Wooster: I agree, writing's more like jazz, but it's still pilferage. Regarding your point about Jane Austen redux, see my comments later on Straub's *Mr. X*.

Marty Cantor: Railing against a documentary style in Stone's *JFK* makes me wonder if you're arguing that artists ought to be forbidden to work in certain styles on the off-chance some moron might make a mistake about it? So as Poe, Bierce, Anderson, Twain, Hemingway, and others hammered out increasing realism in writing, they ought, to have been barred, on the off-chance some semi-literate KKK drone might mistake it as reporting? Too realistic a painting might be mistaken for a photograph by any number of the uninitiated, might it not? Is that allowed? Should all cinema verite be retroactively burned so it doesn't inadvertently confuse those who drool into their popcorn? This diet's affecting you, Marty.

Susan R. Higgins's "The Yellow Leaf" reminds me in some ways of O. Henry's "The Last Leaf". Good little vignette.

I've just recently finished reading **Hannibal** by Thomas Harris and it struck me that this fine book is another example of Gregory Benford's thesis about Southern culture reaching out to a wider world. Harris is a Southern gentleman and his latest is so well-written, so well-conceived, and so well-done in all particulars that one is forced to wonder if a writer from another sub-culture or tradition could have done so well.

It is an updated reformulation of the Gothic in all its Baroque splendor. The book makes other thrillers seem pallid and unthrilling, even as it elevates the genre to a new standard and, yes, toward literary validity no academic would dare acknowledge.

While it's not for everyone, **Hannibal** is more than just a sequel to **The Silence of the Lambs**. Its quite simply one of the best books of its kind B the psychological killer/thriller B ever written. The writing is superb, both controlled and often lyrical, with passages of immense power, and stretches of irony and humor that are layered like a good wine. His attention to detail does not slow his masterful pace, and although the book is big, it's concise, not a wasted word or scene. Savor this one, it's special.

Nevermore by Harold Schechter, a true-crime writer's first novel, is not by but is about an eminent Southern gentlemen of letters, Edgar Allan Poe. It's also about how Davy Crockett of all people helps Poe plumb the depths of his parents' legacy; they were actors, one blessed and lauded, the other literally booed off the stage. This has longterm effects, many nasty of course, but some charming and insightful.

A first-person account written in an ironic pastiche of Poe's arch tone, the book is full of humorous and macabre touches, and offers a glimpse not so much into a life or a time, but into a mode of fiction we all seem to enjoy despite its largely Southern origins, the Gothic. It also touches upon the Tall Tale in its delightful contrast between Poe's aesthetic, neurasthenic sensibilities and Crockett's full-bore Western wilderness expansiveness. That neither character is sullied shows Schechter's got no axe to grind, refreshing in historical fiction.

As for Peter Straub's **Mr. X**, it's Lovecraft filtered through Jane Austen, simultaneously literary and genre-generic. Good genre material - a modern, realistic retelling of Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror" with references from other stories of HPL's - handled in a literary manner like this renders it a thing of neither pride nor prejudice. It's a transplanted Midwesterner's mid-Atlantic take on a Yankee yarnspinner mythos, if put regionally - as we seem to be doing since Gregory Benford's article - and it's effective as no one of these, nor a combination thereof.

The afterword cites a person named Lumley who pestered HPL and who apparently believed the Cthulhu mythos to be literal revelation. (One wonders if he was related to Brian Lumley, who later mined Lovecraft to good effect.) This jumping-off point sets up a wonderfully fecund seedbed for ideas to sprout, and yet we get neither a wild ride, as Brian Lumley or early Ramsey Campbell might have given us, nor a semi-serious jaunt through darkness as Clive Barker might

offer, but a sober-sided descriptive sequence of overly-decorous couplings with occasional low-budget SFX tossed in for the sake of disinterested argument. It's at least as underwhelmingly literal as Updike's **Witches of Eastwick** ...

It's perhaps indicative that I finished this 500 page book only to be confronted by a short story advertising Staub's new collection that I simply could not finish. It was too literary without being literary enough, or perhaps too genre without being true to its genre. In short, too dense a path to bother with, considering the clearing we were headed to. Elliptical, verbose, and self-indulgent without being revealing, the narrative had no hook, and the would-be zingers had no sting. It was internal dialog without any immediate point. Joyce Carol Oates does this sort of thing much more coherently, and revealingly, and I say this knowing full well that Straub intended the book to echo a jazz riff. His structure's a bit too obscure even while being a bit too obvious, and his denouement makes one wonder if one missed the climax. Rolling over and going to sleep is definitely an option here.

As Robert Johnson may have said, right before that crossroads encounter with Old Scratch, "Even white boys get the blues. I guess."

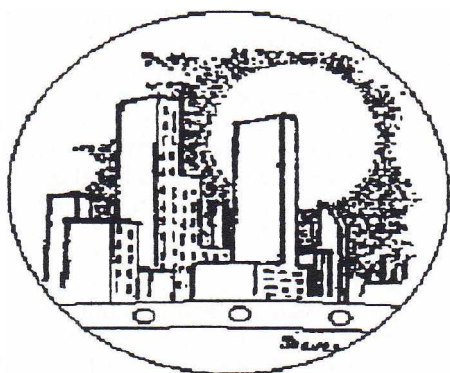
William Breiding

As usual, in **Challenger** #12, the best was your own work. I was beguiled by the youthful you of 30 years ago, of the way you wrote back then. Though I am nine years your junior and was two years away from discovering fandom when that piece was written, the style, method, chutzpah, full-of-one's-self reminded me much of my own writings from the late '70s from MidAmerican on the '80s.

The piece on Joel Durham was another great opinionated slice of PD life. With this piece I was reminded why Ted White and Mike Glicksohn find you so reprehensible, as you occasionally annoyed me with your in-your-face attitudes that don't mesh with mine. The difference, I believe, between those folks and myself is that I'm willing to embrace the overarching themes that run through your heart and your fanzine and see there a kindred that is sometimes disguised by style and broad strokes, and let the small things go. But of course these folks may not view it as "small" matters of style,



but even if it is an essence, ham-handed or not, there are things here worth listening to. Pursuits of the heart and of excellence are not always the same thing and the lush and arid do not always yield gorgeous flowers.



Arthur D. Hlavaty
206 Valentine St.
Yonkers, NY 10704-1814

On Challenger #11 ...

Sorry, never did get around to writing to lastish. I survived being weird & smart in elementary school largely by being a wiseass. I didn't quite have to do the Class Clown "It's bad luck to hit somebody like that" bit that George Carlin talks about, but I did take advantage of the fact that someone who's laughing violently cannot at the same time hit violently. After I'd survived elementary school, my parents decided to rise above their Lefty principles and send me to private school, where I was more tolerated and even appreciated. I honor them for it.

Beautiful letter from Sally Syrjala. Some who grow up with violence just pass it along, but there are those, like Sally, who let the wheel stop with them, and I wish we knew how to create and inspire more such. To echo her last sentence, thank you for including her in *Challenger's* circle.

Harry Warner, Jr., on the other hand, gives us an excellent inadvertent satire of the Totalitarian Mind: When you see something that frightens people, always suggest a solution that involves lotsa laws and cops, and see how many of your other prejudices you can have them enforce while you're at it. Violence in real life? Let's outlaw violence in the movies, not that there's any evidence that would help. oh, yes, and let's crack down on 'villains portrayed in a favorable manner.' (Giving the idea that some people are so evil you can't say anything nice about them is a wonderful way to stop violence.) And of course, let's suppress Bad Words. Harry managed to restrain himself before leaping on his other hobby horses of drugs and abortion, but I imagine it was a near thing.

I hadn't heard that story Joseph Major told about Ted Kaczynski's sufferings in infancy, but there's an article in this month's *Atlantic* about how Kaczynski, shortly after arriving at Harvard as a 16-year-old prodigy, was subjected to a psychological experiment where he was surrounded and reviled for all of his beliefs, kind of like a liberal in the *Fosfax* lettercol. The article suggests that the ordeal may have influenced Kaczynski's post-Harvard career choice. Of course, there were a number

of other subjects of the same experiment who presumably have not gone on to become bombers.

I'm with Gene Stewart that the courts should be extremely careful about establishing physical guilt, and less so about making sure that defendant is Evil, rather than Crazy. I'm thoroughly shocked by the number of physically innocent people who've been spared the death penalty only by DNA evidence, but that's doing some good. Even the Shrub, with the eyes of places other than Texas upon him, has paused his state's serial killings over a particularly dubious conviction.

But on another topic Gene raises, I'm not sure there's evidence that the demand for new ideas is producing significantly more bad craziness in Ph.D. dissertations than in science fiction. In both, there's probably a lot of Same Old Stuff disguised to look new, some obviously bad results of the desperate quest for newness, and only a few genuinely original and genuinely good ideas. There aren't that many Greg Egans in SF, and I'm sure there are some like him, only with critical theories, in academe.

And on Challenger #12 ...

After the e-mail debacle of my previous LOC, I have learned my lesson: I will print out the file and send it to you by real US Postal Mail as our ancient ancestors did.

I must disagree with Gene Stewart's one-sided distinction between H.P. Lovecraft and Philip K. Dick. I do not believe that Lovecraft was afraid of women. To be sure, he hung out in subcultural areas that were overwhelmingly male - horror writing and amateur journalism - but he seems to have gotten along with those women he did meet. His marriage was brief, but not miserable; it ended over geographical incompatibility, more than anything else, and afterwards his ex-wife testified that the sex had been satisfactory. (Perhaps 10-year-olds would say that Lovecraft was a latent homosexual, but I hope they would outgrow it. "Latent homosexuality" was essentially a way of crudely stigmatizing all those who did not fit into the Procrustean double bed of het-monogamy-with-children, and it now may be one of the more discredited elements of the Freudian dogma, which is saying something. One could almost argue that it was never more than the Shrink Biz's way of calling people it didn't like cocksuckers.)

Lovecraft's anti-semitism and other ethnic bigotry struck me in large part as a reflection of the customs of the age, and like T.S. Eliot's, as a form of social climbing, emulating his supposed betters. (I consider it evidence of genuine social progress that this sort of thing is now associated with trailer trash.) That Lovecraft would have applauded Nazism if he'd lived to see it is at best a guess. Thomas Wolfe, at least as Judeophobic on the page as Lovecraft ever was, visited Nazi Germany and was revolted by it.

Gene's statement about Dick's feelings for women is contradicted by the record. *The Dark-Haired Girl* is a record of sickness and obsession, and there is evidence that a lot of that seeped into his personal life. Like many men who worship Woman as Life, Fertility, the Earth, and like that, Dick was often intolerant of actual women, especially those who did not wish to be

Life, Fertility, and the Earth. (Though the intelligent and likable narrator of *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* seems to have been a sign of progress.)

*That woman is likable? *yih* I think she's an interesting protagonist, and grows in the course of the novel, but she's cynical, strident, and arrogant, in short, a screen on which Dick projected Timothy Archer's Christian humanism.*

Dick's love for the working class is likewise exaggerated, in part because he believed it himself. He had that sentimental preference for the proletariat over the intelligentsia that is common among those who know many more of the latter than the former. But the actual little guy characters he portrayed so well - like Tagomi and Leo Bulero - were middle-management types, reminiscent of the record store owner who so impressed Dick at a tender age.

Nevertheless, I like Dick's fiction a lot more than Lovecraft's.

There are many areas in which I would not presume to question Fred Chappell's expertise, but I believe he is mistaken when he says that there has been no science fiction about agriculture or food. Heinlein's *Farmer in the Sky* comes to mind, as does the conflict between the Feed and the Seed in Neil Stephenson's *The Diamond Age*. I imagine other readers will find more.

P.J. O'Rourke says he decided that he didn't mind being called a Nazi because no one ever had a fantasy of being tied up and sexually used by someone dressed as a liberal. I wonder if he is aware of Joseph Major's theory that Communist uniforms are also sexy.

On another issue Joseph raises, I've always thought that one case where a police officer believed that a killer had gotten off easy because of liberal excuse-making, and eventually took the law into his own hands to deliver a final verdict, was Dan White's suicide.

I must send a zine to this person who talks of crimes against nature. I remember that when I was working in the San Francisco courts in the mid-'60s, the Penal Code warned against "the infamous crime against nature," not otherwise defined. I am informed the situation has changed out there. On the other hand, Molly Ivins reports that the Texas legislature passed a new crime-against-nature law because the old one was declared unconstitutional. Afterwards, the two leading sponsors of the law shook hands and had to be reminded that it was no longer legal for a prick to touch an asshole.

Joseph Major
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040
(502) 584-9926
jtmajor@iglou.com
<http://members.iglou.com/jtmajor>

Editorial: Chaos Theory: I once took a stress test and after counting up all the points I had scored, determined that I was dead. You seem to be even deader than I am.

I seem to have been resurrected. Have an Easter egg ...

Marty Cantor was perturbed to learn that [your] court had been abolished, but pleased to hear that you did still have a job. Let it be a challenge to you. (Have you ever thought of getting into the business of writing true crime books? With your skills and empathy you

could do well.)

I went so far with one true-crime idea as to contact agents ... and then the subject decided to write his own story. Not published ... yet.

When you take up the job of chronicling the family, you end up inheriting all the family pains. But your nieces and nephews will appreciate, someday, the trivial things that you saved of their ancestors. Maybe even your brother's wooden sled "Rosebud". . .

Rally to the Colors!: A cousin of mine in Hopkinsville is the great-granddaughter of a regimental flagbearer who survived Pickett's Charge. He is buried on the farm of another relative of mine.

Russell, the relative of mine who wrote the family history told me a story once. His father, Julian, wanted him to come talk to his (i.e., Russell's) great-uncles Langdon and Phil. But Russell wanted to play, and did. Langdon and Phil had served with Mosby. Sixty years later, Russell was still kicking himself about that.

Getting Into One's Work: Morbid and grisly humo[u]r seems to be the anodyne of those involved in criminology. Either laugh at the grim circumstances, it seems, or go mad.

Mickey D: As I said, you could write true crime books. For example, you could write a book about Joel Durham.

You read my mind.

"Lwop" (Life without parole) is often proposed as the life-affirming alternative to the death penalty. But then one gets into issues such as happened with Durham, and other cases where the prisoner is murderous, since he has nothing to lose. And we end up with Supermax prisons, the sort of incarceration that would be condemned as unfit for animals.

What else would do for someone like Durham? The plain fact is that a warehouse-style penitentiary like Angola is simply inadequate to control a violent sociopath. He needs to be locked down and constantly supervised and never, ever trusted.

Wherein the Magic ... : And the many pastors who have commended Rowling's books as decent entertainment are ignored. It does not fit the model.

Going Native: Two consecutive items on SF/F! The Fanzine Control Board will pull your license for this.

Lovecraft's Dick: Oh dear, a third item. You are doomed. At the next Corflu they will cast your ashes onto the sewer.

Sonia Lovecraft, who ought to have known, said that HPL was passive, not asexual. She had to get him going.

Derleth did not revise any of the "classic" stories, such as "The Call of Cthulhu", "The Shadow Over Innsmouth", *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, *At the Mountains of Madness*, and so on, or of course "The Colour Out of Space". The so-called "Derleth-Lovecraft collaborations" are stories written by Derleth based on comments by Lovecraft.

It has always been my view that Lovecraft's greatest supporter was his greatest traducer. Derleth devoted immense energy towards making HPL's works available. Yet, in his nonfiction writings and stories, he imposed on them a set of concepts totally, er, alien to HPL's original ideas, beginning a trend that led us to comic-bookish wars of the Ancient Ones and Elder Gods

that in no wise resembled the cosmic indifference of the original stories. (The way that, thanks to Marvel Comics and Robert Jordan, Robert E. Howard's grim, self-sufficient hero Conan has become Generic Muscular Fantasy Hero.)

Lovecraft's view is that:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

"The Call of Cthulhu"

Our limitation to the tiny field of human knowledge is what saves our sanity, that beyond that small lit island of what-we-know are vast fields of cosmic indifference, the perception of which will cause our brains to spontaneously deliquesce and run out our ears.

By way of contrast, Dick maintains that reality is no more than a veil, to be pierced by various chemical means (i.e., the drugs in "Faith of Our Fathers", the **Dangerous Visions** story, that enable the protagonist to see Chairman Mao as the evil ravaging demon he is [and after reading about the Great Leap Forward, I entirely concur with that judgment]).

Feed those two to the shoggoths! Ia! Ia! Phnglui mgw'l'najh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl Jhtagn! Hail Nyarlathotep! And Azathoth! Dagon! Dagon! Dagon! Dagon and Yig and Tsathoggua! (Remember the great invocation in "The Call of Cthulhu", set in, I guess, Jefferson Parish: "[In] the wooded swamps south of New Orleans", he says.)

That's probably *Plaquemines* Parish. No sane man goes there, even now.

D ... S ... Sea!: From *The Revelation of St Hugo the Fannish*, Chapter 1:

9. I Hugo, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Tucker, was in the isle that is called Jekyll, for the word of Roscoe, and for the testimony of Tucker.

10. I was in the Con on the Beaver's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the opening ceremony and the dead dog: and, what thou seest, write in a fanzine, and send it unto the seven fanclubs which are in Mundania; unto Lunarians, and unto NESFA, and unto Vegas, and unto London Circle, and unto SFC, and unto Philly, and unto LASFS.

Joe ... therapy is difficult ... but it is rewarding ...

The Historical Faust: While "Faustus" is the Latin for a fortunate person (Sulla the Younger, the son of the dictator L. Cornelius Sulla Felix ["lucky", and itself a common name for cats by the pun with "felis", cat; hence my big marmalade tomcat is L. Cornelius Sulla Felix] was Faustus Sulla) it is also the proper Latinization for "Faust", which means "fist". Thereby Johannes Tritheim had a byname that was both macaronic and amphibologic.

Wigwam Village - End of the Trail: Say it ain't so, Guy!

Is so. You have been gifted with a remembrance (see photo later) in thanks for your support.

Why not ask about the con chair for Angola in 2006? It should light up your life.

Epistles: Fred Chappell: Uh ... In "Life-Line" Dr. Pinero is killed and his invention destroyed. "Misfit" has a edge-of-the-envelope setting where bullying would be fatal. In "Requiem" D. D. Harriman dies on the Moon, happy, but at a terrible cost. "If This Goes On ~" was revised to omit the happy ending. "The Roads Must Roll" has a problem solved, but with underlying conditions hardly resolved. "Blowups Happen" balances hope with peril, portraying a society which is generating a nice touch there - its own seeds of destruction, presenting a just-get-by solution to its problem. "Coventry" is about a man who gets shaken out of his naivete and decides to take up a dirty, grueling, but necessary job. And we have not yet got to 194 1. This is "up&atom rahrah bullyboy" material!

If Bellamy was in the forefront of nineteenth-century SF ... **Equality**, the sequel to **Looking Backward**, has a scene where the Leetes take Julian West to a farm to see how the Nationalist revolution has improved agriculture. At the farm, the Labor Army conscriptees assigned there sit at their ease on large items of agricultural equipment. I take it that the Nationalist (Bellamyite) movement was mostly urban.

Milt Stevens: Harpo Marx recounted what happened when a friend advised him to get on the unemployment gravy train - his sort of work being erratic at best, even though well-compensated when it happened. So he showed up for his initial application in good clothing. He realized that his garb looked rather out of place among the immigrant workers, so dressed down for the second interview. Not that anyone would make the connection between this bald fellow named "Arthur H. Marx" and the movie guy.

Then there came the problem, during the second interview, of explaining how it was that he had worked one day and been paid ten thousand dollars. "You mean \$10," the clerk said, but no. Then the poor fellow asked "Doing what?" Harpo showed him. Poor fellow. Harpo's friend the famed critic Alexander H. Woolcott once commented that unsuspecting people suddenly confronted with the famed Harpo Gookie were observed to wake up screaming in the middle of the night for months afterwards. I do believe Harpo gave up on the unemployment bureau after that.

As for "Memorable Meals" (memorable for what reason is a different matter), I have had no fat ice cream. Styrofoam is cheaper and tastes better.

Alexis Gilliland: If dreaming of a planet inhabited by giant intelligent chickens does not come to pass, he can always watch **Chicken Run**, the fowl **Great Escape**.

Lovely film!

Lloyd Penney: Niagara Falls in '98 deserved better, if nothing else for **Astromancer Quarterly**, the finest bidzine yet. When I heard that they were reduced to Worldcon-only bidding parties, I knew it was all over but the shouting.

A lot of those classic **Twilight Zone** episodes had that HPL-ian attitude, of the small island of reality

with a lot of madness-inducing terror without. Another classic TZ author was Earl Hamner, Jr., as in "The Waltons". And I remember a couple of episodes of that show that came across as very *Twilight-Zoneish*. For example, there was the episode with Elizabeth (the youngest daughter) and the Ouija board ...

Ned Brooks: Why bother to muck with HTML? WordPerfect, and I believe Word, will automatically convert to HTML, though the conversion may not be as elegant as writing it yourself.

Southern SF writers: Stanley G. Weinbaum was born here in Louisville. What does that make him?

The Zine Dump: Do you think you are one of the Five Fuggheads sent *Baloney*? According to reports, about the whole mailing list did.

Batteries Not Included: Well, you know, the only reason those two women in *Friends* can afford that preposterously huge apartment is that they are high-priced call girls.

Probe: But Criswell also predicted that the world would come to an end in August 1999. Seriously, while I hope South Africa can bid for a Worldcon, I also would like to see their people get some hands-on experience in volunteering. If they do not then flee, screaming, then we can take seriously their mad bid for a Worldcon.

If the superheroine on page 74 is on "Apokolips Now", one hopes she will not be squashed by Moby Brando, the great white whale.

Mike Resnick's French Safari Diary: Actually, "Je suis le roi du monde!" should be said while standing on the bow of *le Titanic*, the plus-grande ship du monde. For standing atop le Tour Eiffel, one should say "Regardez-moi, maman! Summat du monde!" though fining one's quarante-cinq at les flics is not recommended as an accompaniment.

Back in *Science Fiction Review*, many moons ago, John Brunner reported about a French SF con which seemed to be one piece of ill-management after another. I guess they have learned something since then.

Between Delta and Northwest (I remember Laura's little essay about how getting from Baltimore to Cincinnati on Northwest, and how it would have been faster to walk) the Resnicks seem to be remarkably ill-served in the airline business. Perhaps if Mike came down here he could get better and faster service. He would have to wrap himself up as a UPS package, but given the service problems described that *still* would be better service.

My Grandmother: My grandmother is in the picture above my desk at work, sitting with under a tree at their farm with my grandfather and their three children - my father, his brother, and their sister, the only one left. Grandmother died in 1964.

Lisa's grandmother Macie Thomas died last year. She did not quite get to hold her great-great-granddaughter Erin.

I remember an essay by Bob Shaw on the customs and rituals of Home, and how they fade when a parent dies. At the time, BoSh was the only one left, an only son who had outlived his parents. And now he too is gone, taking that with him

I have a picture of my great-grandmother, with all nine of her surviving children (including my grandfather), their spouses (including my grandmother),

and her grandchildren, all ten of those then (and there would be sixteen more). It is like the one on the back cover of *Challenger*. I guess it was taken sometime in 1910. The last one from that picture died in 1998. I met Herbert a couple of years before he died. He looked so sad; but then he was blind. His wife had died; they had no children, and he was just waiting to go on. He was my father's first cousin. There are fewer and fewer of his generation left, and with every one who passes on, I lose a little bit of the remaining ties to him.



Martin Morse Wooster
P.O. Box 8093
Silver Spring, Maryland 20907
(301) 565-7820

Many thanks for *Challenger* 12. I suspect if you declared that the theme of the next issue would be "Bad Boss Stories" that your post office box and e-mail would be flooded with material, but Robert Whitaker Sirignano's piece would be a good place to start. I can sympathize with his treatment at the hands of a former Marine; I once had a boss who was a former Marine. His first words to me on starting the job were, "Martin, you have abandoned the life of a freelancer and joined the corporate workforce." He then ordered me to get a haircut and buy three white shirts. He was also obsessed with showing how tough he was; you could never admit to him that you made a mistake, because he took this as a sign of weakness.

I haven't had a real job since Mr. Marine, but I have had lots of clients. The oddest one was my One Week of Federal Contracting Hell, where my client was a woman who boasted that she had had no sleep for three days before the conference because the event was so important that she couldn't afford to snooze. She also gave me the single dumbest instruction I've received in 12 years as a freelancer: "Put more richness into the

writing, Martin." Luckily her partner gave me more precise directions, so I could finish the contract, get paid, and never deal with them again.

I seem to have come in late on the discussion of how to deal with celebrities, but I'm reminded of the man who approached Robin Williams on the street and said, "You know, you really make me laugh." Williams replied, "You know, you really make me laugh."



When I run into a celebrity by accident. I generally leave them alone. The only time I have ever been on Hollywood Boulevard, I saw Randy Quaid stumbling down the street I also once saw Robert Prosky taking in Gilbert & Sullivan at a local theatre. But in both cases, I thought it best not to interrupt them. But I wouldn't mind telling a celebrity that I particularly enjoyed a particular performance. Actors (and other artists) always like to hear sincere praise. I also wouldn't mind to get celebrities to autograph something they produced. For example, if I ever was in the same room with Edward Norton, I'd be eager to get him to sign his brilliant recording of Tom Wolfe's "Ambush at Fort Bragg."

But I'm puzzled by Milt Stevens' claim that scores of out-of-work actors are collecting unemployment checks. Actors are not employed in salaried jobs, but work on retainer or by the job. Since they aren't paid salaries, why are they getting unemployment?

It all depends on the employer. If he paid UI tax on the actor while he was working, and the ham had put in enough time at the job, and if he didn't leave for a reason that was his own doing, then he could collect. One of my favorite claimants when I worked for UI was a freelance cinematographer, another was a ballerina, and a local theatre company came in every six months to suck up their graft.

Steven H Silver
3084 Antelope Springs
Northbrook, IL 60062
(847) 272-0689
shsilver@sfsite.com
<http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag>

Your article about meeting David Scott and Al Worden in 1971 took me back to my meeting with David Scott several years after your own. Scott was the

first astronaut I've met (I've since met at least one from each moonwalk) and I was just a kid, still young enough to think that there was a chance that I would some day have the opportunity to walk on the surface of the moon.

Scott was in Chicago to present a "moon rock" to the Adler Planetarium for permanent display (it's still there, you may have seen it when you were in Chicago for Chicon 2000). My father and I were at the planetarium and talking to Nelma, a friend of my father's who happened to work for the planetarium in the public relations department.

I was rubber-necking, trying to play spot the astronaut and failing miserably. Nelma asked if I had seen David Scott yet and I replied "No." She informed me that he was directly behind me.

I turned around to see... a perfectly normal looking man sitting at a table eating a sandwich. There was no space suit or Snoopy hat. No NASA logos adorning his blazer. There was absolutely nothing to set him apart from any other person in the museum that day. I felt disappointed that an astronaut would have the gal to be normal.

Nelma introduced us and we spoke for a few minutes. I blathered on about him walking on the Moon and my own desire to follow suit. He told me that if I really wanted to, someday, I could be among the men who returned to the Moon. Our whole conversation lasted about two minutes. It left several marks on me. I've forgiven Scott for being a normal human being instead of the pulp-fiction hero astronauts were supposed to be. I understand his words of encouragement to be as much about hope for himself as they were for me.

Although I know I will almost certainly never walk on the Moon, let alone go into space, I still hold out the hope that, should she want it, Robin, my 2 1/2-year-old daughter, will have the opportunity. When I met Eugene Cernan last year, the sixth Moon-walker I met, and the first astronaut either my wife or daughter had met, Cernan signed our copy of his memoirs with a message that he hoped Robin could live long enough to see, if not be, a Moonwalker.

The way Mike Resnick drops authors' names in his "French Safari Diary", you might be excused for thinking he's a wide-eyed fan instead of a seasoned author. Of course, one of the great things about Mike is that no matter how seasoned an author he is, the fan, if not necessarily wide-eyed, still shows through. Connie Willis, Orson Scott Card, Paul McAuley, Brian Aldiss, Jonathan Lethem, James Morrow, Richard Matheson. It almost sounds like he was dropped into a latter day version of a 1920s Parisian coffee shop with science fiction authors replacing the Lost Generation. Mike's aside about not being able to enjoy the Louvre may rank as one of the best lines I've read in a travelogue since Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*.

Your article about Joel Durham was unsettling, to say the least. Not only your description of Durham and how cold he was, only showing his anxiety (?) by bouncing his leg, but you feeding him peppermints throughout the trial gave the scene something of a surreal feel to it.

It was surreal. I feel sorry for people like Durham; they're empathetically retarded, woefully incomplete. And that

makes them dangerous, and necessary to control.
Mark Proskey's tribute to Cara Sherman is a very nice feature.

Actually, I wrote all but the note about her death. It is important to remember those who were once fan and have left, either because they have died or gaffed. Because it is so important, I scheduled a panel, "Remembering Our Losses" for Chicon to talk about the various members of the SF community, both fan and pro, who have died in the past year. Unfortunately, the list grows longer and longer.

A few late words about Joe Mayhew. I met Joe for an all too brief time at BucConer and had nothing to do with him again until earlier this year when I contacted him about doing a cover for my first venture into fan publishing: the Program Participants Guide for Chicon (which would later be expanded to include biographies). I explained the book would be distributed only to program participants and include a few articles on moderating panels, attending the convention, the history of programming and information about what to do when you arrived at the con. Joe informed me that he probably wouldn't be able to do the cover, but what did I have in mind. I wrote a brief description of what I wanted. A front showing a panel at an SF convention made up of a motley assortment of aliens, monsters, fans, etc. The backover a view of the same panel from behind the table, showing assorted hi-jinks. Something in the description seemed to catch Joe's imagination and sense of humor because he agreed to the illustration.

Unfortunately, the cover was not to be. The deadline I had given Joe came and went. After about a week, I decided I would drop him a reminder. I logged on to the computer to send off an e-mail. The first incoming e-mail I downloaded was a message indicating that Joe had been hospitalized.

I only met him once. I got to know him through his ubiquitous art. I wish I could have gotten to know him much better.

Mayhew was quite a cat. We are lucky he walked among us while he did.

When the next **Challenger** is published, I hope Chicon is a fading, good memory for everyone who attended.

You've got your wish.

From: TvmFeller('q~ "aolxort i Block address
Add Addresses
Oate: Wed, 30 Aug 20W 09,5636 EDT
Subject: Challenger # 12
To: ghliiiCayahoo.com

Tha-nk3 '1r,r ae-nding t1le 7-lne. 'e should aee yoiU
i1n, chicar4c, in a feW

TVve never sPent- a-MLAy timn 4m St. jnhn thp- '5&pt'st
p&rJoh, drlive-n pa-st a-tany tim.es. i dread the dav when
we'll have to clean u the house of PX4talZ

-P
imother . She

ca-5e
A-nitta o_r er ~-A7,t ,i-j -eep,

n a, 1- F: 'I t Z, ,

"n

otheE h_- ~ ndj alfeady!, Qt: ril-te go, t1arou-igil-l thrlr hu-ia-
se- airld write- dowl 1_1

wanted. Thev"11 have a hia ycir d sale h-lore

,abr4 1-he f4nal move to
Florida T c-' egnarj r L - , - 7 - , w n
1-1-io yea_r 4;; yeariq on, gn

I L_ I_ -11 J_ 11! ~

T jill -rpnt ra,7e T,anqfc ~rd mity flr5t cho'ce
fiDr BeAt, Fan Wr' ter,

011-11,; Leadl hei, had 1,-L 4 Th- s e. b
r e f

Behold once again the perils of scanning. Now, here's part
of what Tom **meant** to say ...

Tom Feller
P.O. Box 68203
Nashville TN 37206
Tomfeller@aol.com

Thanks for sending the zine. I dread the day when we'll have to clean up the house of Anita's mother. She has a lot of worthless junk, but we'll have to go through it first in case there's something Anita or her sister will want to keep.

One positive result of the O.J. Simpson trial is that many states now require police officers to make an arrest while investigating a case of domestic violence. Even if charges are later dropped, there is a record in case a pattern develops.

But who gets arrested? The man? The non-complaining party? Is the arrest automatic? What if there's no problem, and the cops were called in by a nosy or vindictive neighbor, or a crazy spouse? No arrests without probable cause that a crime has been, is being or is about to be committed... that's the LAW.

Joy V. Smith
8925 Selph Rd.
Lakeland FL 33810-0341
Pagadan@aol.com

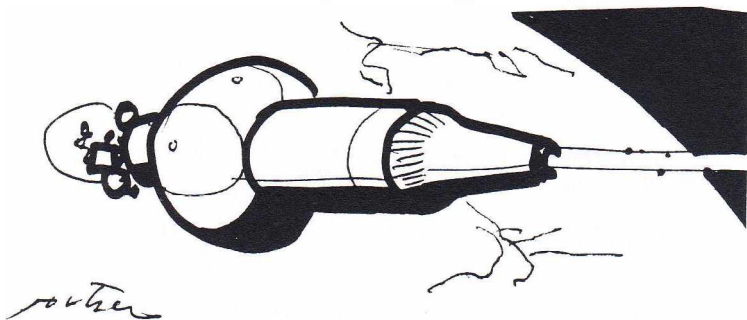
Excellent cover on **Challenger** 12, the summer issue; the first three pages of mine are missing though.

Agggggghhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!

I enjoyed Curt Phillips' article on Confederate flags and rallying to the colors. And John Berry's article about the photographer was fascinating. Your article, "Mickey D" was scary. J.G. Stinson's article, "Going Native. The Human as Other in Selected Works of C.J. Cherryh," was interesting, as was Gene Stewart's look at Lovecraft and Philip K. Dick. As usual, a great selection of articles! But wait, the Faust article was interesting too and really thorough.

And thanks to David Drake for his piece. I

never knew that Manly Wade Wellman, one of my favorite authors, beat out William Faulkner in an *Ellery Queen's Magazine* mystery contest. I enjoyed your Apollo encounter piece and Mike Resnick's diary too. Also the epistles and the illos - great selection, including the ones with Resnick's piece. I always like your photos too, and I wanted to say how much I liked seeing your old family photos. I have a lot of old photos too, and I hate to think of them going to waste in all those boxes. (I had a couple published in *Yesterday's* magazine and want to send some to *Reminisce* some day.) Hey, a web site is a good way to display a few too.



Milt Stevens
6325 Keystone St.
Simi Valley, CA
<sardonicus@email.msn.com>

This is the first LoC I've written since getting back from Chicon. There's nothing like the post worldcon blahs to slow down the pace of fanac. If I were one of those shape shifters from *Star Trek*, I'd probably ooze into a bucket and refuse to assume any shape whatsoever for the first day or so. By the second day, I might extrude a tentacle in search of a cup of coffee. Now that a week has passed, I've pulled myself back together and am ready to put some sort of words in some sort of order.

Gene Stewart seems to be trying to master the Dick Geis trick of arguing with himself. H.P. Lovecraft and Philip K. Dick seem like a particularly disparate pair of writers. I guess that makes them a good choice for this sort of an exercise. It's sort of like, compare and contrast: spaghetti and Cincinnati.

The traditional view of Lovecraft represented him as being a recluse, but when you start adding up all the stories of Lovecraft's visits with various people it seems like he wasn't really all that reclusive. As a correspondent, he seems to have been in contact with half the people on Earth. His racist views weren't at all unusual for a man who lived in his time and place. Anti-immigrant sentiments were pretty general in the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Philip K. Dick would be an odd duck in almost any aviary. At LACon I in 1972, Jerry Pournelle expressed the opinion that the concon should pay for some of Dick's expenses, because he was penniless. I expressed surprise that a man who had sold so much science fiction could be entirely broke. Jerry pointed out Dick had been married six times. That could definitely do it. I don't know whether his many marriages reflect a particular liking for women or an addiction to doing things that were bad for him. His life seemed to be one long series of self-destructive choices.

Even before reading Robert Whitaker Sirignano's article on not too tightly wrapped post office supervisors, I had been reading similar material in my daily newspaper. USPOD has become aware it has a very serious management problem and has had one for a long time. Going Postal is a very apt term for running amok in the workplace. It happens far more frequently in the postal service than in any other sort of work environment. Before these recent revelations, I would have thought of being a mail carrier as being a low stress job. Pick-up your mail in the morning and go out and deliver it. Aside from an occasional dog with an attitude, what could be simpler? Apparently, bad management can make almost anything intolerable.

It would seem all three of the supervisors in Sirignano's article were Vietnam veterans. Of course, the demented Vietnam vet has become a standard feature of popular culture. There may be a reason for that. I've sometimes joked that I was a Vietnam veteran, and my discharge papers said I was allowed to run amok at any time. Little do they know that I was this way long before I went to Vietnam.

The Vietnam veteran has been seriously slandered from almost every quarter - including the most famous vet of the recent past, Al Gore. The common view has become that using Daddy's clout to fink out on any meaningful service, without the saving stipulation of conscientious objection to the war, is somehow superior to actually going to Vietnam, if you had a non-combat job. Hypocrisy rules. Literally.

Before reading Richard Dengrove's article, I don't believe I'd seen anything on the historical Faust. In a later age, Faust could have had an excellent career as a politician. Come to think of it, Congressman Faust does sound like a promising idea for a story. The only thing he would have to worry about is how many other congressmen have sold their souls as well.

What about corrupt Supreme Court justices? (Can you tell the day on which I wrote this comment?)

Mike Resnick's description of Norman Spinrad in Paris does sound like the Norman Spinrad I have encountered in the past. Spinrad is one of the few people who can be an Ugly American even in the United States. His manner of dealing with waiters and waitresses is legendary. Spinrad's first encounter with a for real French waiter must have been something to see. I imagine that's why Spinrad doesn't appear again after the first page of the article. He was probably in the hospital recovering from injuries.

For the record, I've always enjoyed Spinrad.

Since you were asking about Tom Collins, I've seen him at a LASFS meeting within the last year. He has been living in Hollywood for at least the last few years.

Wanna hear from him!

Richard Dengrove
2651 Arlington Drive #302
Alexandria, VA 22306

The theme is the legal system. Something I have had no experience with at all. I was called for jury duty twice. Once about twenty-five years ago I had to wait in a room full of would be jurors. Was it for about a month? It seemed that way. You got to know the people there. But I was never impaneled. The lawyers considered me unpredictable and gave me the thumbs

down. Being considered unpredictable and getting thumbs down, the story of my life.

My second call for juror duty came about a year ago. Fortunately the time it took was much shorter, one morning in the room full of people. I was about to be called in for Voir Dire. And the plaintiff settled out of court. I was told to call in another day and see whether my number came up. It did not. Such has been my legal career.

I do know someone who has had a great deal to do with the legal system. A friend lives in the District of Columbia. Because many in the District do not wish to serve, he has been called a lot. He has gotten to decide on murders, gang warfare and all that good stuff (?). He tells me that when he started out, the elderly ladies who make up most of the jurors would throw the book at criminals. But recently they have been afraid of revenge.

However, my mother has had far experience with the legal system than either he, or even you, Guy. Not as a public defender or a juror. Or a prosecutor, judge or bailiff. She was a courtroom sketch artist for fourteen years (1973-1987). John Chancellor's news in New York sent her to courtrooms all over the New York-New Jersey area. And every once in a while elsewhere - to Guyana once. She won Emmys. She literally put a human face on the courts; an artistic rather than a legal purpose.

Then, in her late sixties, the fourteen-hour days and office politics got to her and she retired. Later, she collaborated on a book. It apparently sold well enough - at least in the Washington area - but was not in print for long.

Her sketches make the book just like they made her legal career. I wish I could send some, Guy, and you could publish them in **Challenger**. But they belong to my mother and she still makes money off them. I will have to be satisfied to describe several which lend themselves more easily to description.

For instance, you see David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz is drawn looking out into space. Is he looking at Sam, whom he claimed ordered him to commit his forty-four caliber murders? Certainly his world is not ours.

There is Africa of the MOVE group in Philadelphia, whose commune loved rats and kept gasoline on the roof. He peers at us as if he is peering at Tanna Tuvans. We are the foreigners. My mother said that Mick Jagger looked awkward testifying in court over a law suit. But her sketch reveals someone who, as we have figured, radiates introversion and intensity.

The defendant that strikes me the most is Sidney Biddle Barrows. Because she is the diametrical opposite of her sketch. My mother describes her face as having porcelain perfect skin and beautiful features. She looks all proper, sleek, in her choker necklace and society beret. And there is the sneer of a snob on her face. She was in fact a socialite. On the other hand, she was also the Mayflower Madame. She ran a call girl service. And that is what the cops busted her for. She was such a puzzle to my mother that my mother bought her book. I don't know whether the book resolved anything, though.

I hope this gives you a hint about my mother's curious career.

Henry Welch
1525 16th Avenue
Grafton WI 53024-2017
<welch @ msoe.edu>

Thanks for **Challenger** 12 and once again congratulations on the Hugo Nomination. We missed you this past weekend at Ditto and Dallas. This is a great small fanzine convention that I find much more enjoyable than Corflu.

My worst meal(s) would have to be my mother's Turkey soup. She used to boil the Thanksgiving carcass until it had imbued the entirely too large pot of water with the faint taste of something not quite resembling turkey and a huge quantity of fat. It was truly horrible and I was always hard-pressed to eat more than an spoonful or two without gagging.

Your article on the astronauts was a bit confusing. I think this was because you were trying to be hip, stylistic, and creative at the expense of clarity. If I understand correctly you were making the point that the astronauts were simultaneously regular guys, yet not so regular. My only similar experience was meeting Jim Lovell (he is a regent for MSOE and I believe a native of Milwaukee) and Neil Armstrong when Neil was inducted into the EAA Hall of Fame. I was struck by the contradiction that a man who was so clearly larger than life (the first moon landing is one of my first memories that relates to the world around me) could be this short man with the quiet voice.

I am bleeding from the eyes with envy. You know what I'd ask Armstrong if I got the chance? If he'd ever gotten the chance to meet Yuri Gagarin. Same with Sally Ride: did she ever meet Valentina Tereshkova? Speaking of whom, does anyone know if the first woman in space is still with us?

As far as Linda Michaels goes the latest I've heard is that she has become involved in Day Lily fandom. Exactly what that is I'm not certain.

My recollection is that Sheryl Birkhead was only a few nominations shy of the Hugo ballot. I'll be discussing this in more detail in the next **The Knarley Knews**.

I refer you to my comment earlier. We faneds should make it our business to promote deserving and neglected Hugo contenders. Sheryl is one, Charlie Williams another.

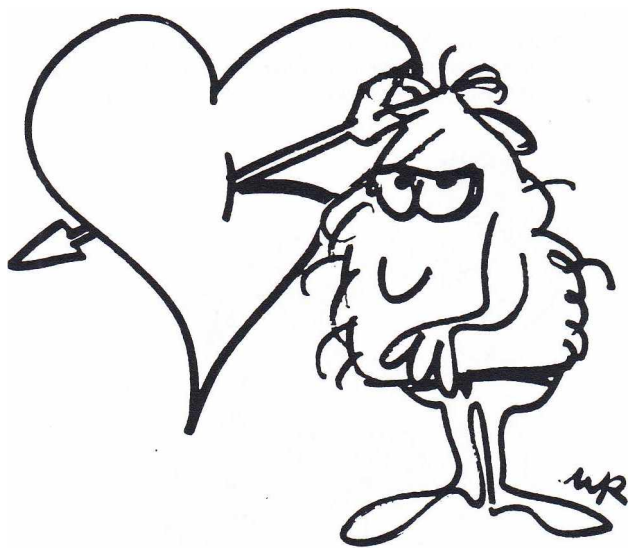


Robert Lichtman
P.O. Box 30
Glen Ellen CA 95442

Challenger No. 12 has been "seasoning" on my fanzine pile for several months now. It generally takes me longer to get around to reading, much less responding to, 100-page fanzines like yours; but it's time to write the LoC and get it into the files before it contributes any further to the toppling of said pile.

First off, my sympathies both on the death of your grandmother and the removal of your mother to a nursing home; I've had both these things happen to me and so I know they are *not* happy times. My grandmother's death has a particular poignancy; it happened back in 1978 when I was living at the Bay Area urban branch of The Farm and thus could have easily attended her funeral since it was down in L.A. However, my parents (read: my father) decided to make cutting my hair a contingency, I refused to do so, and so I missed the occasion. My brother and I put my Alzheimer's-stricken mother in a nursing home back in 1995 and, as you know if you've read TRAP DOOR's most recent issue, she died Christmas morning 1999. I did make it to *that* funeral.

My father went into nursing care at the same time, but at a different nursing home because he needed care of another sort than my mother. He died later that year ('95). Like you describe your brother being, my own brother was (and still is) also no sentimentalist, and it fell to me to sort through my parents' material plane. And like your ferreting through your mother's stuff, I saved a lot of "things with personal resonance," such as my Oz books, thousands of photographs and family papers, their "best" set of dinnerware (early '50s deco stuff, probably worth something on e-Bay), some bric-a-brac, a few lamps, and even some SF magazines and paperbacks I'd left behind when I moved out in 1965.



I hope that despite the cut in pay, your new job in St. John the Baptist Parish turns out to be an interesting and challenging one. Perhaps the money will follow. You don't say much about what's happening with your apartment perhaps this will precipitate a move closer to your new job? ~ or your exploding car. About the latter, I would be quite pleased to read that you got rid of that tiny Geo Metro and into something offering a little more protection to your love-conquered body.

Yes: a Geo Tracker.

Moving on to the issue, I quite enjoyed Curt Phillips' latest outing about the Civil War as pertains to his home town, all mingled together with tales of his childhood friend, Donna Marie, her move to San Francisco (was she a hippie?), and eventual move back to Abingdon to storyteller fame and bed and breakfast proprietorship. Living in Tennessee during the '70s as I did and having gigs that got me out and around much of the state, I remember passing by the Stone's River battleground at least once or twice and it was interesting to read Curt's story of what happened there. Ruth Shields' accompanying illo was a total blast, too.

Robert Sirignano's postal anecdotes were chillingly familiar. I worked for the post office for about eight months back in 1969 and 1970 and constantly ran across these fascist-type supervisors who gloated in their hard-ass ways. During the few months towards the end of my stint, I was carrying mail out of Station C down on South Van Ness doing routes in the Mission District and up on Bernal Heights. It got to be November and I came down with a fierce cold. I came in to work at the usual early-morning hour, but it became clear to me as I put up the route that my cold was turning into a fever, I was weak and dizzy, and I wasn't going to be able to complete my shift. After I finished sorting the mail and had it all ready to go, I went and told this to the fascist, who screamed and yelled at me that I *had* to stay or else. Do it yourself, I said, clocked out and walked away to his receding yelling. The other carriers saw this, and must've complained to the fascist's supervisor, because when I came back a couple days later he avoided me. I was very happy about a month later when a job I'd been working on getting at Columbia Records came through and I was able to leave my postal career behind.

I was never a fan of H. P. Lovecraft's fiction writing the way I was of Phil Dick's, so not having read the former's stories I can't say whether or not Gene Stewart is correct in comparing them in the way he has. But it does seem inconsistent of Ol' 815 to say, on the one hand, that one of HPL's stories stuck him as "eloquent and only slightly archaic," while on the other asserting that his ..racist bigotry and unresolved sexual orientation coalesced to make him a misanthrope, which in turn darkened the cast of his fiction." HPL had already been married the time "The Colour Out of Space" appeared in the September 1927 *Amazing Stories*; he and Sonia Greene married in 1924 and by 1927 they were pretty much separated, although they didn't divorce until 1929. (My source for this is Ms. Greene's chapter in *Lovecraft Remembered*.) My own interest in HPL is primarily in his activities in amateur journalism, where he was a BNF type from around 1914 until the '20s.

In the letters, I loved Fred Chappell's comment on student writers who've "never even squashed a

tomato worm." I grow tomatoes every summer in my tiny back yard and have dealt with my share of those annoying critters. They can be hard to see, but their handiwork gives them away as they strip the young vegetation from the tender new shoots of the plant. Once I spot the evidence of their destruction, I go out near sunset with my reading glasses on and carrying a flashlight. Shining it around in the foliage, with considerable effort I can spot them as they attempt to blend in with the leaves of the tomato plants. I yank them off the plants - no easy task since they cling with multiple sucker-like short legs - using several layers of folded paper towel. Rather than squashing them, I consign them to a dark watery death by flushing them down the toilet. I always flush two or three times to make sure they're gone.

That's utterly nauseating.

Like Milt Stevens, I have a story of not getting on a jury. I've only been called for jury duty twice, and only had to go in once. That was around the time that Charles Keating, savings and loan thief, had just gotten off *far* too lightly for the misery he inflicted on thousands of people with his white-collar looting. I was brought in on a case where some guy had robbed a pizza parlor in Petaluma. He hadn't used a gun, but he'd made it clear he had one with him. How long, I asked when it was my turn, will the defendant be jailed if found guilty? When I was told - it was something like five to fifteen years - I declaimed that it seemed excessive for the theft of several hundred dollars when compared to Keating. I was out of there fast. The other time I got called for jury duty was last year. The postcard was in the hatch of mail that accumulated for me at the post office while I was in the hospital following my auto accident. I responded that I couldn't serve because of the accident, MY lack of a car, etc., and suggested they try again in no fewer than six months. A few weeks later they sent another postcard. his time I told them the same thing and gave the name and phone number of my doctor. They haven't bothered me since.

I enjoyed Roger Waddington's little aside about the Nash Metropolitan, a car even smaller than your Geo Metro and probably even more dangerous. Yes, they were cute but that's about all one can say for them. There's one I spot occasionally driving around Santa Rosa and another that turns up less frequently down in Berkeley, and a no doubt inoperable one on the roof of an auto repair garage out on the way to Yosemite. I think Roger's having the diecast models is about as far as he should go.

Like Marty Cantor, I remember the kick I got when *Trap Door* was nominated twice for the best fanzine rocket. But both times it was under rather unusual circumstances - the first for 1986 when England got the '87 Worldcon (*Trap Door* was very popular in England at the time and had a huge circulation there) and the second time for 1991 when the Willises came over for Magicon and the Worldcon membership was swelled with more than the usual number of fanzine fans - and I never expected it to win. I already have a Hugo, anyway: the 1958 best fanzine rocket awarded to Terry Carr and Ron Ellick for *FANAC* at Detention in 1959. Its base is in rather shabby condition, but it was languishing in Carol's basement and I brought it home about five years ago. it lives on

top of the file cabinet containing the zines it honors.

That Hugo was won for zines done at Barrington Hall, where first Terry and, some thousands of years later, I edited the immortal Barrington Bull, my first solo zine. Oh, the terrible story I have to tell ...

Brin Marie McLaughlin's and my root canal experiences were the same: while I was well-insulated from the pain, I was entirely awake and saw the whole thing happening. I've only had the one experience at this, and hope not to have to repeat it. In truth, it wasn't all that bad.

It was me, not Mike Glycer, who eulogized Bill Danner in *File:770* No. 135. The same memorial article also recently appeared in *The Fossil*, the official organ of *The Fossils*, who are to amateur journalism as *First Fandom* is to us.

That's about it, except to note that I enjoyed your reprinted tale of meeting astronauts.

Illustrators for this section of *Challenger* have been Marc Schirmeister, Joe Mayhew, Alexis Gilliland, Julia Morgan-Scott, Korrtati, William Rotsler, Teddy Harvia, Randy Cleary and Steve Stiles.



Challenger's fascination with America's War Between the States is based in an abiding respect and love for the people who lived it and fought it. Here our old friend Charlie Williams provides a loving fictionalized account of that true story, as lived by his own family.

THE POUNDING

Charles Williams

Illustrations by the author



The big snow of Christmas 1893 had melted and washed away, and the new year began in western Kentucky with unnaturally warm weather. On Saturday, the sixth of January, there was drizzly rain and a mild earthquake at about half past nine in the morning. It was Katie Bacon Hill's wedding day.

Crocuses had poked up green shoots, thinking it was spring. Out west of Paducah tobacco stripping had commenced, plant beds were dug, and wood was chopped and hauled; colder weather would be required for hog-killing to resume. As Katie washed and dressed, the sun came out, and the earth trembled, just for a moment.

She packed her mother's wedding dress reverently. It had last been worn nearly forty years ago, and Adelia Kelley Hill had preserved it for her daughters. However, the eldest, Susan, was too stout to fit into the dress when she married Steve Megginson awhile back. Mary Jane, six years older than Katie, had been expected to marry next, but Katie's beau proposed first. Mary Jane watched enviously as Katie put the dress and her good shoes in a sturdy canvas bag.

"Bob'll be here in a little bit," Mary Jane reminded her sister. Katie closed her bag, nodding. Mary sighed and said, "I wish't was me going."

Katie looked at her sister's reflection in the mirror hanging from a nail in the wall of the cabin. "If I was you," she replied, "I'd be thinking twice about marryin' a man that's already got two children." Katie did not much care for her sister's beau.

Mary Jane was indignant. "That ain't the point. Besides, I'll Jennie and James like me. Lee just needs a little more time to get over losin' his wife, that's all."

Katie rubbed her cheeks to improve the color, then turned from the mirror. She hugged her sister and said, "Well, you'll be Mrs. Lee Ray before long. But in the meantime," she added sternly, "Today is my day."

Downstairs the girls found their mother already preparing a big dinner. Company was expected when the newlyweds returned from Metropolis, of course. There would be a Pounding. Each guest would bring the bride and groom household gifts – a pound of this, a pound of that.

Delia Hill wiped her hands on her apron and kissed her youngest daughter. "Another of my babies gettin' married," she said. "Lord, Lord." Delia had already seen four of her children wed.

Katie's Papa, Francis Marion Hill, sat by the fire, grinning at this exchange. He brushed the breakfast crumbs from his beard and arose to hug Katie, Too. "You all come straight back, hear?" he reminded her. "And be careful over at the ferry."

"I will, Papa. We'll be back before you know it."

Walter Hill, Katie's little brother, came bounding through the cabin door. "Rain' s quit," he announced. "Feels like April out there!" Katie stepped outside for a moment, coatless, looking out across the brown, denuded cornfields for her husband-to-be.

A trio of crows in a nearby cedar stand took wing, squawking in alarm. A beautiful black carriage came clattering up the road and stopped down at the gate. Katie waved and tried to call out a greeting, but she could not find her voice. It fell to young Walter to announce, "He's here!"

Katie Hill had met Robert Emerson Williams at church, and he'd been courting her seriously for the last four years. Katie was amused that he still couldn't remember all her relatives, most of whom lived within walking distance of one another. Bob was a handsome fellow and had ambitions of following his father in the mercantile business. Katie's family enthusiastically approved of him.

This morning Bob had ridden up the middle fork of Massac Creek from his father's store. By prearrangement, Bob had stopped at the home of Katie's relatives, the Fenwicks. Twenty-year-old Will Fenwick was Katie's cousin on her mother's side, and he would drive the wedding party that day in a proper carriage, as well as stand witness at the ceremony.

Katie nervously kissed her parents goodbye again and gathered up her bag. She stood for a moment looking down toward the gate where the young men waited. Bob and Will stood beside the shiny black buggy that had once belonged to Great Aunt Harriet. Bob removed his hat and called out, "You ready?"

Delia Kelley Hill stood behind her daughter in the doorway. She nudged Katie gently. "Go on, girl!" she whispered. Mary Jane took Katie's arm and walked her down to the carriage. Bob gave her a chaste little kiss and helped her up. Mary Jane tried to hand up her sister's bag, but Bob and Katie were staring at one another, and he had not released her hand.

Mary Jane and Will watched as Katie Hill reached out to tenderly touch Bob's cheek. Her face was pink and glowing, framed by her rich brown hair. Will and Mary Jane saw that Katie was no longer the plump child that her brothers and countless boy cousins had teased. For a few brief summers here at the end of the century, Katie would be the most beautiful thing any of them ever saw. Will looked around from the driver's seat and grinned, whispering, "Let's go if we're goin'." Bob murmured an apology and climbed aboard. Katie looked down at her sister's solemn face as Mary Jane passed up the bag, then across the yard at her parents and little brother.

"Papa," she called. "We're gonna need another witness. We'll take Mary Jane along." F. M. Hill shrugged his assent, and Mary Jane gasped with delight. She ran around to the other side of the carriage. In an instant she climbed up beside Will, and with a final wave the wedding party was off at last.

As they made their way up the ferry road, Bob listened to the cousins chatting about this uncle and that son-in-law. It was bewildering: Except for their parents, Bob and his brother John had no other relatives in western Kentucky. By contrast, Katie and Mary Jane Hill had kinfolks behind every tree: Hills, Kelleys, Trewollas, and more...

They arrived by late morning at the banks of the Ohio. The ferry took them across the river to Metropolis, Illinois, where they were to meet Reverend Samuel Olivell. The McCracken County courthouse was in nearby Paducah, but that was a dozen miles east. Metropolis was half that far, and the only inconvenience was the river.

Halfway across, Katie asked, "Did you feel that earthquake this morning?" Will Fenwick had, and he described how he'd cut himself shaving as the room around him rattled.

"Scared me to death, and I ain't afraid of nothin'!" he added.

"It was just a little earthquake," said Mary Jane. "Now, we had a real good one the year you was born."

Will chuckled. "Good thing you're old enough to remember," he said. Mary flashed her dark eyes at her cousin, and Will shut his mouth. He'd called her an "old maid" at a Halloween party last year, and his jaw was sore 'til Thanksgiving.

Bob peered down at the icy green waves of the river. "I wonder," he asked of no one in particular, "If we had another one now, if we'd feel it?" But they were at the landing and in Illinois. The horse and carriage clattered down the dock right on to Main Street.

It was a short ride over to the parsonage of Reverend Olivell. Katie and Mary Jane disappeared for a time while the preacher and his wife chatted with Bob and Will. When she returned, Katie wore her mother's white dress. She lit up the preacher's parlor like a flame. Bob Williams suddenly dashed out into the hall and fumbled around in his coat. After a moment he brought forth a nosegay of little white flowers wrapped in green paper. Katie gasped, and tears filled her eyes as Bob slipped the corsage on her wrist.

"How, in the dead of winter ... ?" she stammered.

Bob grinned. "Papa knows a man that runs a hothouse, a florist over in Paducah. He brought it out yesterday evenin'." Katie offered Mary Jane a chance to smell the cluster of blossoms, then took Bob's arm and turned to face Reverend Olivell.

"Dearly beloved," he began. As there was no one to give the bride away, that part was left out. Otherwise the ritual was a familiar blur of prayers, and of questions asked and answered. With the last amen, Bob kissed Katie firmly. The minister's wife brought out hot cider, then Katie rushed off to change.

"Katie Williams!" Bob called. She paused in the doorway, startled by her new name. "You'll put it back on when we get back to your Mama's," he said sternly. "I want everyone to see you." She blushed and nodded, then went off with Mary Jane. They closed the door firmly behind them.

Will toasted Bob with his glass of cider. "And that's the last order you'll ever give her," he laughed.

Delia Hill dug out canned vegetables and fruits, and she sent her husband out to the smokehouse for a ham. The house grew uncomfortably warm from the cooking. Delia opened the windows, although it was January.

The original log cabin had been built early in the century by God knows what pioneer family. It had later belonged to Delia's Aunt Harriet along with everything else in that part of the country. Harriet's first husband, James Owen, had bought up all this land when it sold for less than a dollar an acre. Their plantation home stood nearby, and boasted the only spiral staircase and galvanized bathtub in western Kentucky. Her second husband, Robert Enders, had been a riverboat gambler who'd return from each trip up the Ohio to pour gold coins onto her lap. They owned a virtual village of slaves. Harriet married again late in life to Lafayette Harrison. No children survived her, so she left everything to her sister, Anna Marie Kelley, Delia's mother.

When Delia and F. M. Hill moved to this old cabin in the 1880's, they added on to the original structure. F. M. was no carpenter, but he had put up an addition they called the "front room," bedrooms upstairs, and an attached kitchen in the back.

Two of "Sister" Sue's children arrived at the old home place in the forenoon. Hattie and Johnny – thirteen and eleven – rode an old mule the two miles from their home. Since they'd arrived so early at their grandmother's house, they played outside awhile with their Uncle Walter, who was actually a couple of months younger than Hattie. Their own mama wouldn't be coming, but she'd sent a present with the children for her sister Katie.

Delia sent the Negro girl Rachel out in the yard to watch the kids. Rachel was useless for much else, being profoundly retarded. When slavery ended thirty years earlier, Rachel's parents had left their little girl with their erstwhile master, and F. M. Hill didn't know what else to do but keep her. Rachel was a stout woman who could carry wood and wash clothes if you kept after her, but her favorite chore was sweeping the hearth. Rachel sat on a stump out behind the kitchen watching Walter and the Megginson kids play. In her lap she held an ancient rag doll. From time to time she'd rock it and sing a wordless little song.

The appearance of a horse and buggy down the road brought everyone out of the house. It was not the wedding party, but was instead Katie Hill's oldest brother, A. P. Hill and his wife. With them was Katie's Gran'ma, Anna Marie Kelley. Delia and the kids gathered around as A. P. and his wife helped Gran'ma into the house.

"Where's little Katie Bacon?" demanded the old woman as she pulled off her shawl. Delia removed her mother's coat, and F. A offered her the rocking chair by the fire. Gran'ma Kelley waved him away.

"They ought to be back anytime, now," Delia said, firmly steering her mother toward the rocker.

"It's early yet, Gran'ma," added A. P. He winked at his mother, but Delia frowned and shook her head. She got the woman to sit, at last.

"Well," snapped Gran'ma Kelley. "I like t'not found anybody to bring me," she said. This seemed unlikely, as she had nine children and fourteen grandchildren.

A. P. whispered to Delia. "Ma," he said, "She's been mad as a hornet since Uncle Teddy sorta *disinvited* her last week."

Delia glanced at her boy sharply. "An' I suppose you and Mollie want back your privacy?" The door banged open and Hattie and Johnny rushed in. Gran'ma Kelley was momentarily distracted by two of her great-grandchildren.

F. M. had been listening to his wife and son. He leaned between them and solemnly whispered, "Will Fenwick. Send'er home with Will, and let your brother Charley have a turn with her."

"A solution worthy of Solomon, Pa," said A. P., grinning.

"He is a quick one," Delia agreed. Across the room Gran'ma Kelley was listening attentively as Hattie and Johnny pawed at her. She laughed as the children knelt before her.

"Tell us *all* your names," cried Hattie. "It's so beautiful!"

"Please?" added Johnny.

"Well," said the old woman. "My mother Rowena gave me a very musical name that's just full of history. Tells where I was born, and all the names of my family."

"Sing it, Big Gran'ma," pleaded little Johnny.

Gran'ma Kelley closed her eyes and smiled. In a high, girlish voice she sang, "Anna Marie Margaretta Virginia Laphand Courtenay Trewolla Kelley."

"La la. la laa," answered a voice from the hall. It was Rachel, singing to her threadbare little doll.

It was half-past noon when the wedding party returned to the Hill house. Katie had been trying to explain the tangled branches of her family tree to her new husband. Bob's eyes glazed over. "Second cousin once removed?" he said. "Removed to *where*? How'd he get back?"

"I'm one of them!" laughed Will. The house came into view just then, and they saw a yard full of rigs and a crowd of family at the gate. Will. snapped the reins and they hurried on up the road.

Katie's other brothers, Barnett and Eddie Owen Hill, had just arrived with their families. Travelling with Eddie Owen was Mary Jane's beau, the widower Lee Ray, and his two children. Mary Jane squealed when she saw Lee Ray and commenced to wave frantically.

As the wedding party climbed down, cheers and laughter echoed far across the fields and down the lane. Katie's brothers passed her around, then took turns slapping Bob's shoulder and shaking his hand. Lee Ray broke away from Mary Jane long enough to offer his own congratulations.

When F. M. Hill finally reached Bob, he said, "You take real good care of my little girl." Bob assured him that he would, never fear.

"Aunt Dee," Hattie called. "When do we eat?"

"When everybody gets here, darlin'." Delia replied.

Gran'ma Kelley stood in the doorway. "Well, look," she said, pointing. "Who's that comin'?" A very old black buggy hove into view.

"Oh my Lord," moaned F. M. Hill. "I can't believe it."

Bob Williams felt Katie's grip on his arm tighten. "It's Mamaw!" she gasped, and the bride and her brothers quickly surrounded the new arrivals. The old woman wore a heavy black cloak and an old fashioned bonnet. She was Susan Moseley Hill, F. M.'s mother and Katie Bacon's Mamaw. The driver beside her was once a robust man, but he held the reins feebly. His gray suit did nothing to help his pallid complexion. This was Branch Moseley Hill, F. M.'s older brother. Neither had been expected today at the Pounding.

Amid the bedlam F. M. raised his voice. "What in the world are you all doin' out like this, and it winter?" He was concerned for them both. Branch was sixty-five and plainly not well, and Mamaw Hill was an incredible eighty-seven. Katie's Papa grabbed the horse's bridle to steady him.

"Oh, piffie," snorted the old woman. She looked down into the faces of her grandchildren and then out across the yard. "How many pretty days like this do I got left?" she asked. F. M. shook his head, resigned.

Mamaw got A. P. and Barnett to lift her down and carry her into the house. F. M. helped his brother out of the buggy and together they went to take care of the horse. By now the others had propelled the newlyweds into the house, where Katie put her wedding gown back on.

Delia had arranged a good linen tablecloth on the long dining room table. Bob and Katie stood by the window and the guests piled their gifts before them. A. P. and Mollie brought a pound of flour; Eddie Owen and Lizzie brought a pound of soap, and their children Maurice and Ruth a pound of nuts; Barnett and Mattie brought a pound of bacon and a pound of lard. Hattie and Johnny thought their mother "Sister" Sue, was clever for sending them with a pound cake.

Mary Jane's beau brought a pound of honey, which his kids Jennie and James shyly presented to Katie. Barnett Hill nudged Lee. "Is that from the bees we robbed up at your Momma's?"

Lee had a loud, shameless laugh that made everyone look. "Yeah," he said. "Lord, what a mess we made a-strainin' it! Got sticky all over *everything*."

THE CHARACTERS

THE BRIDE'S FAMILY

THE GRANDMOTHERS

DAVID KELLEY - m -
(1810 - 1880)

ANNA MARIE TRENOLLA
(1818 - 1894)

SUSAN MOSELEY - m -
(1807 - 1897)

BARNETT HILL
(1803 - 1883)

THE PARENTS

TWELVE
SIBLINGS

ADELIA FRANCIS KELLEY - m -
(1839 - 1917)

FRANCIS MARION HILL
(1833 - 1911)

BARNACK
MOSELEY
HILL
(1829 - 1894)

NINE
SIBLINGS

THE GROOM'S FAMILY

HENRY CALVIN
WILLIAMS - m -
(1839 - 1906)

CHARLOTTE
GRACE
(1844 - 1906)

THE
GROOM

THE
BRIDE

JOHN
ALMUS
WILLIAMS

ROBERT
EMERSON
WILLIAMS - m -
(1873 - 1941) 1894

KATIE
BACON
HILL
(1874 - 1959)

MARY JANE
HILL
1868 - 1922

RACHEL
OWEN
(1864 - 1894)

JOHN SUSAN A. P. EDDIE BARNETT WALTER

INTO MODERN ERA

SIX
SIBLINGS

ROBERT
EDWARD
WILLIAMS
(1903 - 1966)

CHARLES
EDWARD
WILLIAMS, SR
(1929)

CHARLES
EDWARD
WILLIAMS, JR
(1952)



KATIE BACON HILL WILLIAMS 1894

"Well, considering the *shape* we was in..." Barnett began. Then he saw how Katie and Mary Jane were glaring at them, and remembered that there had never been liquor in *this* house.

Meanwhile, Marnaw Hill beckoned to Katie. The bride rustled over to where the old woman sat bundled in a blanket, on a cane chair made long ago by passing gypsies. Mamaw presented Katie with a pair of lace pillowcases. "This was mine and your Grand-daddy's," she sighed. Katie held the pillowcases to her bosom and bit her lip to keep back the tears. Marnaw Hill patted the bride with a bird-like claw. "I didn't have a pound of nothing around, anyways," she admitted.

Gran'ma Kelley came slowly around the table, poking at the gifts. Then she kissed the newlyweds and presented them with a pound of sugar. Bob accepted the gift with grace, but again smiled inwardly; any of these things could be found on the shelves of his daddy's store. Still he was touched by the sentiment.

As Gran'ma Kelley made her way back to the rocker the front door opened, and F. M. and Branch came into the hallway. "Look who I got here!" boomed Katie's Pa. Branch held open the door for Bob's parents, Henry Calvin and Charlotte Williams.

Henry Williams wore a three-piece wool suit under his coat, and his wife Charlotte looked prosperous in her immaculate dark blue dress. Like F. M. Hill, Henry wore a full beard, shot with gray. Henry and Charlotte knew F. M. and Delia, and Bob came over to introduce them to the other Hill-Kelley kin.

"I know you," said Henry to Branch Hill when they shook hands. "You were by the store with your wife, right before Christmas. I didn't know you were F. M.'s brother."

"It's a small world, all right," said Branch.

"His *second* wife," said Gran'ma Kelley, hovering nearby.

"I beg your pardon?" asked Henry. Gran'ma Kelley and Branch Hill glared at one another. An embarrassed silence fell as the others listened helplessly.

"That's right," sighed Branch. "That was my Catherine you met." He glanced sorrowfully at the old woman who stood behind Henry. "Back before the war," he continued, "F. M. and me married two of the Kelley sisters – him to Delia, there, and me to Harriet."

"I named Harriet after my sister," murmured Gran'ma Kelley. "She died in childbirth." Henry shook his head in sympathy as Branch silently slipped away.

"Anna Marie!" barked Mamaw Hill from her cocoon by the fire. "That was thirty-five years ago. You leave my boy alone, now, will you?"

Delia bustled into this depressing scene with forced good cheer. "Let's eat!" she announced. The Pounding gifts were removed from the dining room table and dinner was brought out.

By the time everything had been eaten – even the pound cake – it was on up in the afternoon. It was getting chilly again, and clouds were rolling in. A. P. and Eddie Hill took their families and left, along with Hattie and Johnny. Lee Ray had to get going, too, and Mary Jane walked out to the wagon with him and his children.

Bob Williams barely noticed, for his father and F. M. Hill had fallen into a fascinating conversation. They were in the front room by the coal stove, across the hall from the log cabin where the old matriarchs sat by the fire, dreaming.

"Closest I ever got to the war was in the summer of '61," F. M. was saying. "I was a farmer, then as now. Didn't have any interest in shootin' boys from South Carolina or Massachusetts, either one."

Henry Williams was filling his pipe. "The war come to you."

F. M. nodded. "Grant occupied Paducah after the Rebels took Columbus. It wasn't so bad until they started sendin' around recruiting parties." He shook his head, still angry. "I'd go up in the woods where I had me a hollow tree."

Delia was bringing in more coffee. "I'd bury the silver and anything else worth havin'," she added.

"Anyway," F. M. went on, "Grant's army was camped on part of my farm one night, and I was sittin' in my tree. I could look right through a knothole at 'em." He made a circle with his finger and thumb and

peeped through it. "Well, that night General Grant visited the tent of one of his generals, and they sat out by the fire to talk about the campaign. My tree wasn't a hundred yards from that tent."

Henry Williams' eyes were twinkling. "You could've changed the outcome of the war with one shot!" he laughed.

F. M. sighed. "Later on I had to hide out again when the Johnny-Rebs were raiding in McCracken County. I didn't have no use for either bunch."

Henry had a faraway look. "I enlisted in the Army of the Confederacy that December. Company H, 1st Tennessee Cavalry. I was clerking in a store in Humbolt at the time, and I thought it was the right thing to do." He shook his head, smiling. "I probably shot at some of your cousins while we were moving around west Tennessee. And then I did a stupid thing." He paused to light his pipe and study his audience.

"C'mon, Pa," mumbled Bob. "Get on with it!"

"Well," Henry chuckled. "On March the twenty-second of '62 we were in a skirmish close by Humbolt. Afterwards I went over by home to check on things. Well, bedamned if the Yankees didn't capture me!"

"Ha! " barked F. M. "On your own doorstep!"

"That's right. The Yankees brought me up to Paducah as a prisoner of war. Well, I'd had enough of *that* after the first ten minutes, I can *tell* you. So I took the oath and got my parole. I never went back to Tennessee 'cause I found out my company'd listed me as a deserter!"

F. M. Hill was beside himself, whooping with laughter. "We're sure a couple of brave veterans, aren't we?" he asked. Branch Hill gave his brother a dour look and got up from his chair.

"I'm goin' to the outhouse," the old man said, turning uncertainly toward the hall. F. M. and Henry calmed somewhat, reduced to self-conscious chuckling. Branch Hill found no humor in their subject, even a generation later.

"Walter, go with your uncle," Delia called.

"Aw, Ma – " the teenager moaned from upstairs, right over their heads.

Will Fenwick came in from the kitchen and threw on a coat. "I'll go, too, Aunt Dee," he said. He took Branch's arm, and Walter held open the door. A gust of wind breached the shelter of the front room.

"S gettin' cold," remarked Charlotte Williams.

"Yeah, we better be goin' soon," agreed Henry. "We've got a few last presents for the bride and groom, don't we?"

"Oh, yes," said Charlotte, rising. She located her bag. "Here, Katie, we brought a quiltliner so you could start your own."

Katie thanked her mother-in-law. "I'll cover it with hollyhocks, Miz Williams," she said, "N' sleep on a bed of flowers!"

Then Henry dug into his vest pocket and produced a twenty-dollar gold piece. He handed the heavy coin to his son. Bob Williams was awed by this most generous of gifts, and looked at his father incredulously. Beside him Katie gasped when she saw what Bob held.

"I don't know what to say, Pa," Bob stammered. Henry was beaming, but F. M. and Delia were tight-lipped and silent. Suddenly Bob realized that his father had unwittingly shamed the Hills with such extravagance. Uncle Branch Hill came back into the house through the kitchen door. They heard him go into the living room and begin poking around in the fire.

F. M. gruffly cleared his throat and shoved himself up out of his chair. He returned in a moment with a cigar box which he placed before his daughter. Katie knew what it was before he spoke.

"You'll be needin' that, carrying around that kind of money." He winked maliciously at Henry.

Katie hefted the beautiful little pistol. It was a .38 with no trigger-guard. She'd fired it dozens of times. She loved its look and its smell, but most of all its feel in her hand. "Thank you, Papa," she said.

F. M. nodded. "You're welcome. You know," he said seriously, "There'll be times when Bob won't be home. There are men who would hurt you. You be prepared." He glanced at Henry Williams and added, "I'm

sure your father-in-law stocks plenty of ammunition at the store. There's five shells in the box." He sat down heavily.

Delia Hill stood nearby, holding an envelope. She handed it to Katie. "Daughter," she said. "You already have gifts. You're the seventh child, and that's special! The Lord made you special." She pointed at the envelope. "So you ought to have the Lord's Letter."

"Oh Mother!" Katie sighed. She opened the envelope and extracted several hand-written pages, very old and often-read.

"What is it?" asked Bob. Katie handed him the old parchment. In faded ink were written the Ten Commandments and several paragraphs of Christian instruction.

"A copy of a letter written by our savior Jesus Christ with his own hand," Delia said. "It was found sixty-five years after His Crucifixion, over there in the Holy Land."

"Mesopotamia," interjected Bob, reading the letter. "Place called Iconium. Translated by a converted Jew from..." he squinted at the page in his hand. "Hebron."

"You're serious?" Henry Williams asked. His wife caught his eye and shook her head in warning.

"This letter," explained Delia patiently, "has been in my mother's family since before they came over from England." She raised her voice and called to Gran'ma Kelley. "Hadn't it, Ma?"

"But this is incredible," Bob mumbled. Not a particularly religious man, Bob nevertheless felt the hair on his neck standing up.

Katie took the letter back from him. "Here's the best part," she announced. She read aloud: "*Whoever has and will keep a copy of this letter in his house, nothing will hurt him, neither pestilence, nor famine, lightning nor thunderstorms nor tempest. Glory to God and peace on earth, goodwill towards men*". "

Delia smiled triumphantly at Henry and Charlotte. "Lightnin's never struck this house," she said. "Praise Jesus."

Rachel had come into the room and shyly drew near the bride. "Sister Katie," she stammered. "Kin I give you my present?" She held out her worn little doll.

Katie looked at the big black woman, and tears were in both their eyes. "I can't take your baby, Rachel honey," she said softly.

Rachel shrugged. "Evbody was givin' you things. B'sides – he *wants* to go." Katie reluctantly accepted the threadbare bundle.

"What's his name, Rachel?" she asked.

The daughter of slaves looked surprised. "Why, that's Baby Jesus," she said.

No one laughed. In a silence that followed, F. M. cocked his head and frowned. "Listen," he said. "Is that sleet?" There was a hissing sound coming from outside.

Walter and Will came in through the front door, their arms full of firewood. Sure enough, ice pellets were bouncing on the porch step. The boys had left the door ajar, and suddenly a tiny black bird darted inside and flew frantically about. Mamaw Hill screeched a warning. Will swung his coat at the terrified bird.

In the front room the newlyweds and their parents leaped from their chairs and crowded the narrow hall. Delia ducked low as the bird fluttered into her hair and bounced away again. F. M. grabbed the broom and swung at the bird, grazing his brother on the backswing. Henry and Charlotte dissolved into laughter, but Mary Jane screamed, genuinely frightened.

The bird landed, exhausted, in Mamaw Hiff's lap. She stared wide-eyed at the thing as its tiny claws clenched in the quilt around her. Katie gently cupped her hands around the creature and picked it up.

Mamaw Hill looked at Katie with frightened eyes. "It did not come for me," said the old woman firmly.

"I know, Mamaw," Katie replied. She rose and took the bird outside. It flew away into the heavy gray sky, vanishing soundlessly in an instant. The sleet had turned into freezing drizzle.

Inside, Bob Williams was helping his parents into their coats. F. M. reluctantly handed Henry his hat. "I wish you all wouldn't go. Plenty of room here." Charlotte was hugging Delia goodbye.

Henry shook his head. "Got a store to open Monday morning," he said. "We've got a long drive, and

this weather's gonna get worse."

From the living room Gran'ma Kelley's voice could be heard. "Well, I ain't a'goin'," she barked. "I aint gettin' out in that."

But F. M. had been talking to Will Fenwick. "Aw, c'mon, Gran'ma," the young man said. "I'll take you up to Daddy's in Aunt Harriet's chariot. You'll be safe and warm."

Mary Jane stood by the fireplace. "Look, Gran'ma," she called. "I'll fix you a footwarmer." She shoveled coals into the pan and wrapped a quilted sleeve around it. Rachel came over, too close to the fire. "Get back there," admonished Mary Jane. "You can sweep the hearth in the morning!"

Gran'ma Kelley relented. Meanwhile Mamaw Hill had snared young Walter. She called across the room as she clung to him. "Will, 'fore you go, help Walter here carry me to the buggy."

As the old folks were bundled out the door and into their rides, the sleet became snow – great, silent flakes of wet snow. Bob Williams waved goodbye to his own parents and then helped Uncle Branch up beside Mamaw Hill.

"Branch," Mamaw asked. "Can you see in this mess?"

"We'll be fine, Ma," the old man replied, "if we get goin' before it starts to stick." Branch Hill turned to Bob, who handed him the reins. "Good luck, son," he said.

Then all the carriages and wagons and buggies moved off into the snow, which fell thicker and heavier by the minute. Soon they'd all disappeared into the swirling white fog, and all was silent but for the hiss of falling snow. A dog barked in the muffled distance.

Much later, upstairs, Katie held Bob tight under several blankets. They'd left the kerosene lamp on so they could see each other, and now lay listening to each other breathe. "Happy, honey?" Katie whispered.

"Why, sure!" Bob shifted around so he could sit up. "There's just one thing ..."

"Uh hunh?"

"What's this 'seventh child' business your momma was talking about?"

Katie's eyes were bright in the lamplight. "My gift," she said. "The seventh child has special grace, especially as a healer. And when I was younger, people taught me the right prayers and recipes and all." she shrugged.

Bob was grinning at her. "Like, how to charm warts off?"

"Well, that too. You got a wart somewhere you want fixed?"

"No!" Bob chuckled, and his laugh turned into a cough. "What can you do for asthma?" he wheezed.

Katie got up, modestly wrapping the blanket around her. She brought Bob a drink from the pitcher on the table nearby. Katie looked at her husband thoughtfully as he drained the cup. "There's other things too," she said after a moment. "Like when that bird flew in the room."

"Is that some kind of omen, then?"

Katie nodded. "Means somebody's gonna die." She shivered. "Everybody thought it meant Mamaw, 'cept for me and her. Then I was thinkin' it was for Gran'ma or Uncle Branch." In her heart, she knew neither of them would survive the year. She looked straight at Bob, and he could see the certainty in her eyes. "But it come for somebody else."

Bob believed her. "Who, then?" he asked.

She sighed, then turned down the lamp and came back to bed. They slept for a while until a loud cry from downstairs shook the house. Other voices were raised in alarm, and Bob could smell smoke. "Fire!" he cried, and he gathered up his new bride and crashed out of the bedroom to the stairs.

The house was full of smoke but nothing seemed to be burning. Bob and Katie found F. M. standing alone in the hall, weeping. The front door stood open, and outside in the snow women were crying. "What is it, Daddy?" demanded Katie as Bob brushed past them and out onto the front step.

Rachel sat out in the yard. Delia and Mary Jane and Walter were rubbing snow all over her. Bob crunched through the shin-high drifts out to them.

The big woman's clothes were burned, and all her hair was gone. One side of her body was entirely charred. Bob looked at the blood on the snow and got light-headed. Mary Jane Hill was hysterical. "Mama, I'm so sorry!" she wailed. Bob roughly pushed her aside, and he and Walter got Rachel up and into the house.

They put Rachel on a cot in the living room, and tried to make her comfortable, but it was no use. Delia and Katie held Mary Jane as they watched Rachel's breathing get shallower and shallower. Bob sought out F. M., who had calmed somewhat by now.

F. M. was putting on his coat. "What are you doing?" Bob asked.

The old man gestured vaguely toward the door. "Goin' for help," he said. Bob grabbed F. M. by the arm and nearly shook him.

"She's done for, sir." Bob lowered his voice. "Don't put yourself at risk." F. M. took off his coat, looking like he might cry again. Bob realized that, despite Rachel's color, she'd become one of the Hill girls. F. M. had lost a daughter. "What happened?" Bob asked gently.

F. M. wiped his eyes. "See that ring in the wall yonder?" he pointed. A metal hook was attached to the wall at the foot of the stairs. "Every night we tie a piece of string to Rachel's wrist and the other end to that ring. Hell, she thought she was chained up proper!"

Bob understood. Mary Jane had evidently forgotten to put Rachel on her leash, and she'd got up to sweep the hearth. Rachel had stirred up the embers and caught her dress on fire. Katie's bird had told the truth.

It wasn't long before Rachel stopped breathing altogether. Bob and F. M. and Walter wrapped her in a blanket and put her out on the porch off the kitchen. Delia and Katie got Mary Jane to bed and cleaned up the scene of the accident, and before long it was daylight.

John Williams drove out to get Bob and Katie later in the day. There had fallen nearly a foot of snow, and the going was rough. Bob was relieved to see his brother, for the silence of grief had filled this old house, spoiling the hope and joy of yesterday's wedding.

"You ready to go?" he asked the bride. She was packed and cloaked, and their Pounding gifts were loaded in a box on the wagon. Katie nodded silently. She kissed her parents and Walter goodbye; of Mary Jane there was no sign. It was bitterly cold.

They rode down to McKendree Church Road and across a rickety bridge, through a blinding glare of snowfall. All the way to her new home, Katie cradled against her breast a little rag doll. From time to time she'd rock it back and forth, singing a wordless little song, a song she would sing to her own children in the years to come.



Henry and Charlotte Williams died within hours of each other in 1906. F.M. Hill caught pneumonia and died in 1911; Delia lived til 1917. Her many grandchildren used to tease her in her old age by bringing her the newly-minted Lincoln pennies, which she'd angrily fling into the fireplace.

Katie Hill and Bob Williams had seven children, among them my paternal grandfather Ed, born in 1903. They moved out to the Old Home Place in 1918 during the Influenza Panic. Bob died in 1941, but Katie lived until 1959, and I

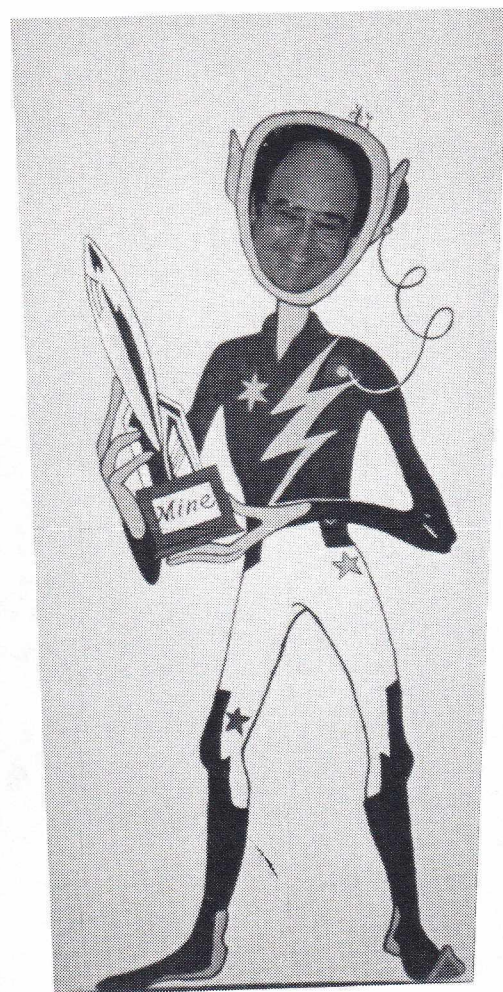
have vague memories of a frail old lady out in the yard among her hollyhocks. The Old Home Place was torn down in August 1945, and when a bonfire was made of the rubble, musketballs and arrowheads were found embedded in the logs.

Today my cousins still live on that site, the sixth generation of my family to dwell there, in a house built only last year that was deliberately made to look just like the Old Home Place.

Charles Williams

Challenger at Chicon

The 2000 Worldcon
8/31 - 9/4



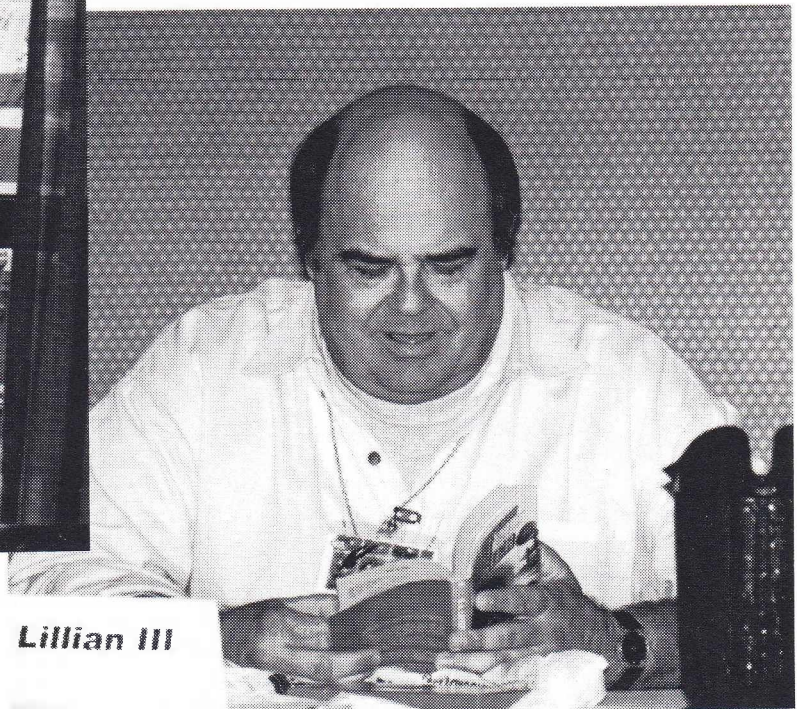
A photo-report by
GUY LILLIAN and
Rose-Marie Donovan





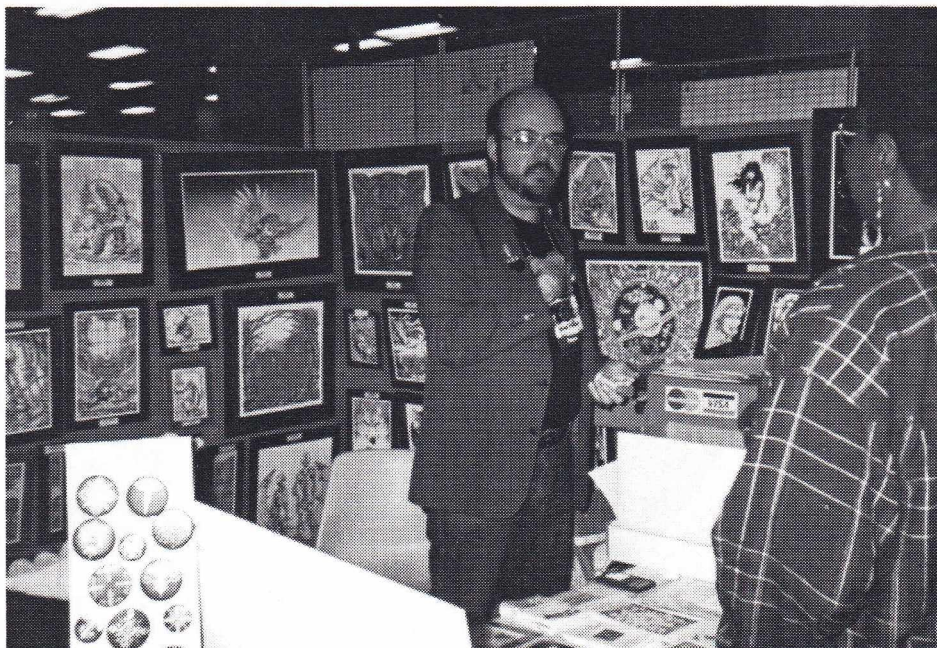
The view from Chicago's Hyatt Regency, room 1524 – East Wacker Drive and the Chicago River, flowing into Lake Michigan. At night: *fireworks!*

Below: my reading from R.A. Lafferty. I considered scenes from **Past Master**, but finally chose a chapter from **Space Chantey**, thrilling in Roadstrum's mad Irish rhythms.



Brad Foster, below, deals his stack of artistic goodies.

Lillian III

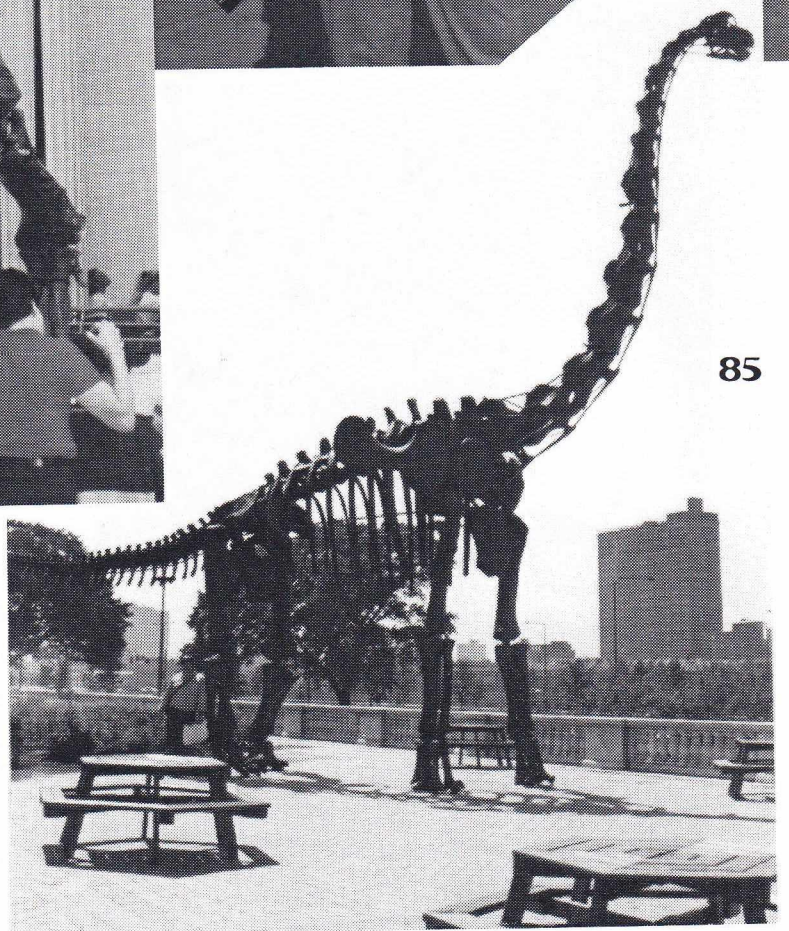
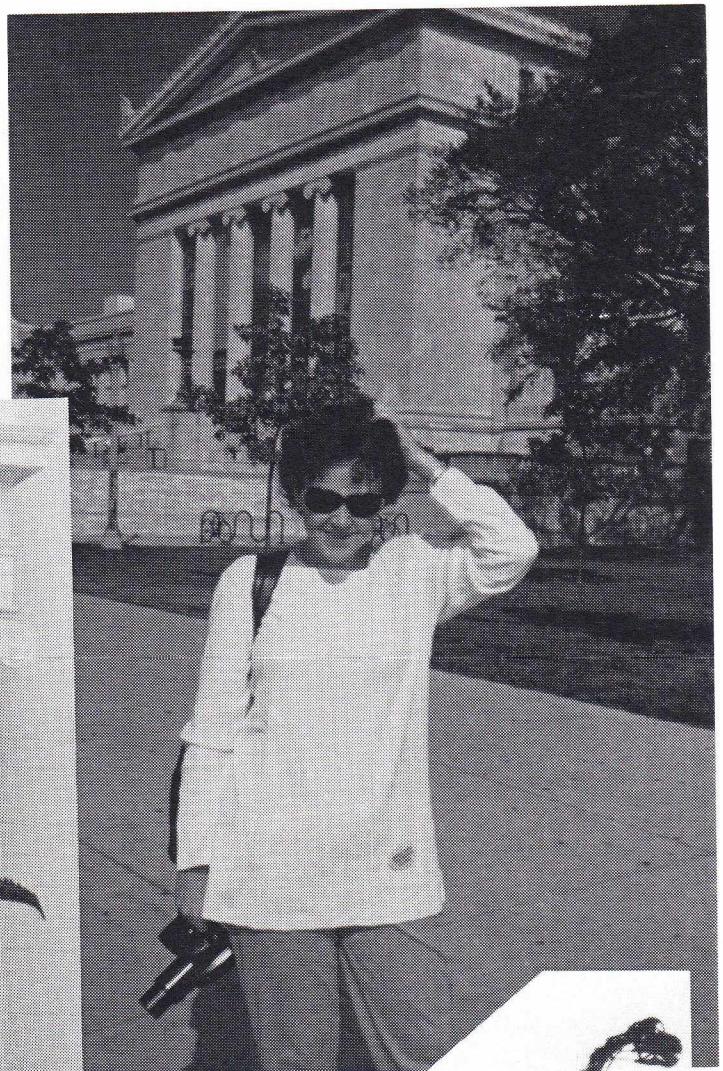


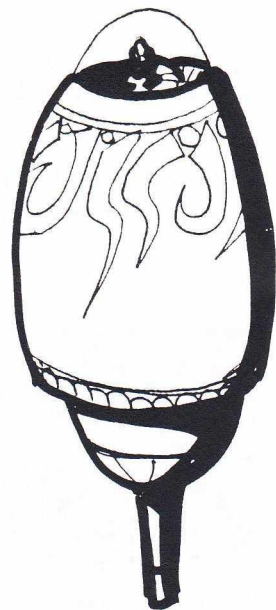
FIELD of DREAMS

Friday, September 1, was one of the best days of my life. It began at the fabulous **Field Museum** on Lake Michigan.

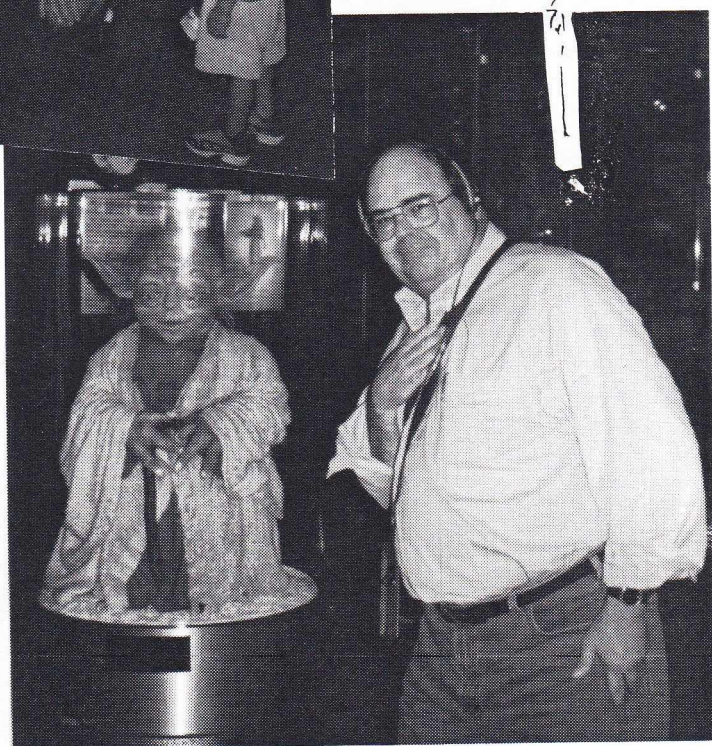


The largest T-Rex ever found, **Sue the Tyrannosaurus** is the Field's new superstar, but its incredible Brachiosaurus has guarded its gates for years. Time was when my spot in this photo would have been most unwise.



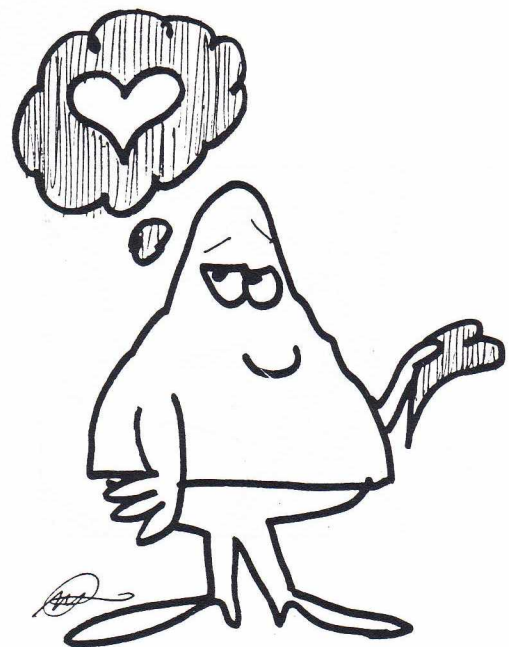
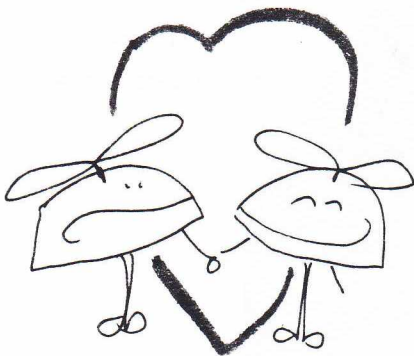


86



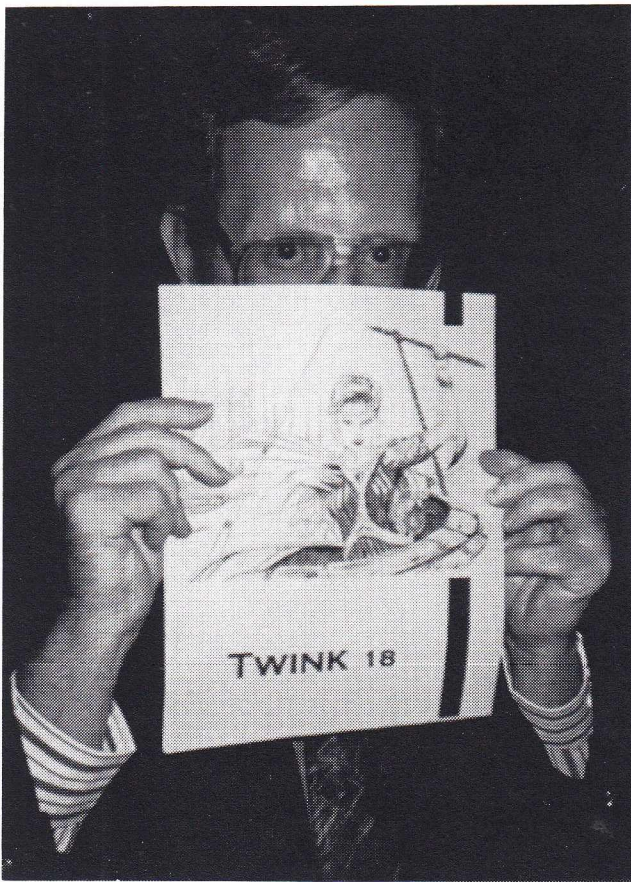
The Mythology of STAR WARS was the theme of a fabulous exhibit of costumes and props on display at the Field. Tapes of George Lucas and sound-meister Ben Burrt explained the classic mythology behind the saga. Left, Rosy confronts His Nibs, while above, I compare baldspots with Frank Oz's immortal Yoda.

After the Field, Rosy and I hied ourselves to the equally cool **Museum of Science & Industry** for its exhibit of **Titanic** relics. It was a fine exhibit and an awesome museum, including the Apollo 8 CM ... but it, and September 1, 2000, will be remembered for other reasons. Within 30 minutes of this picture's being taken, Rosy & I became engaged.

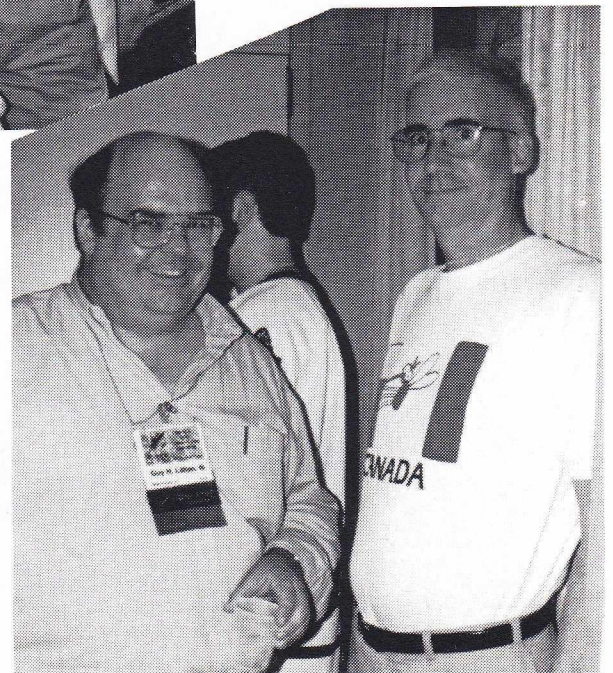
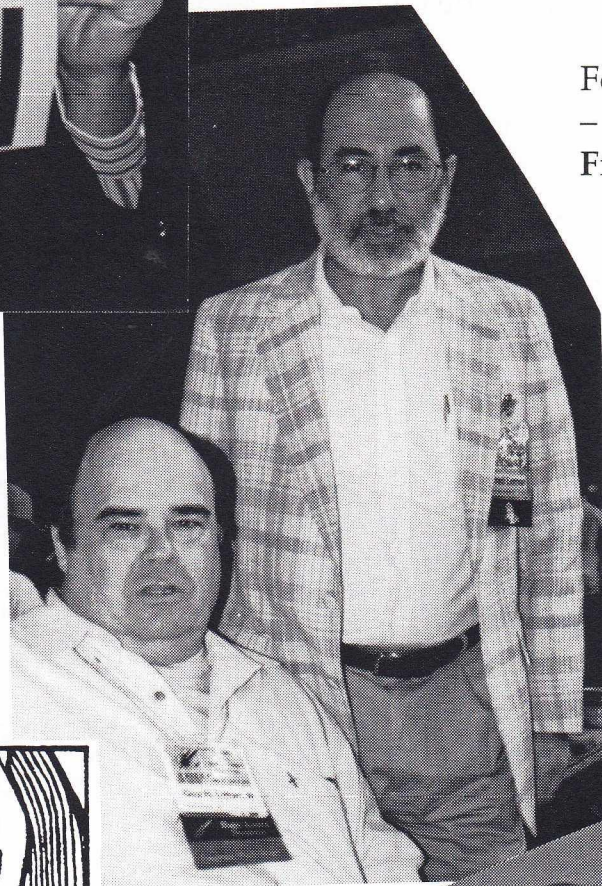


CHALL PALS

Names familiar from the pages of **Challenger** grew faces at Chicon – or sort-of, in the case of **E.B. Frohvet**, left.



Fellow men of character – i.e., men without hair – **Fred Lerner & GHLIII**.

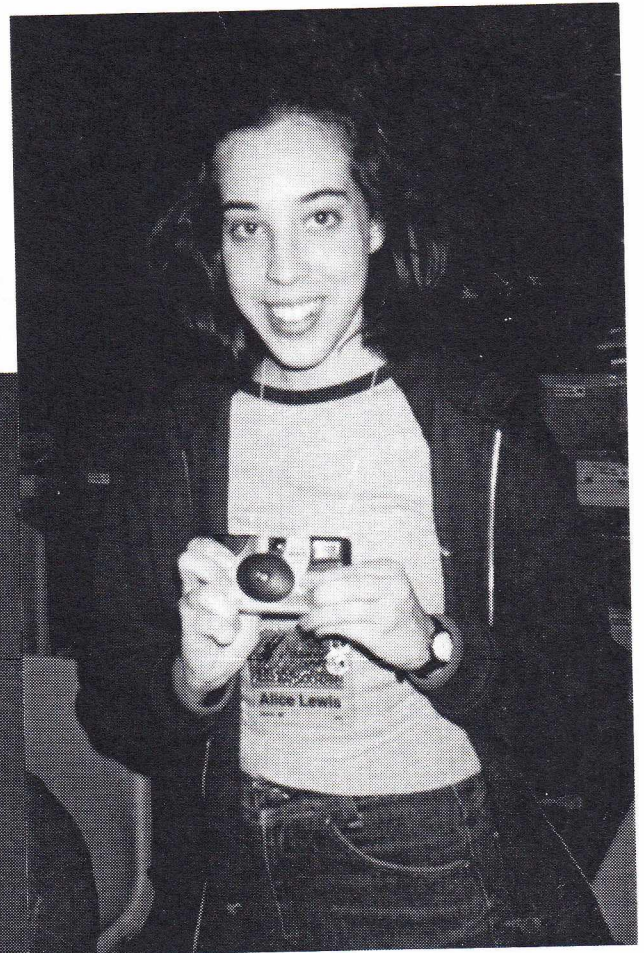


A main man from the lettercols and the far, far north, **Murray Moore**.

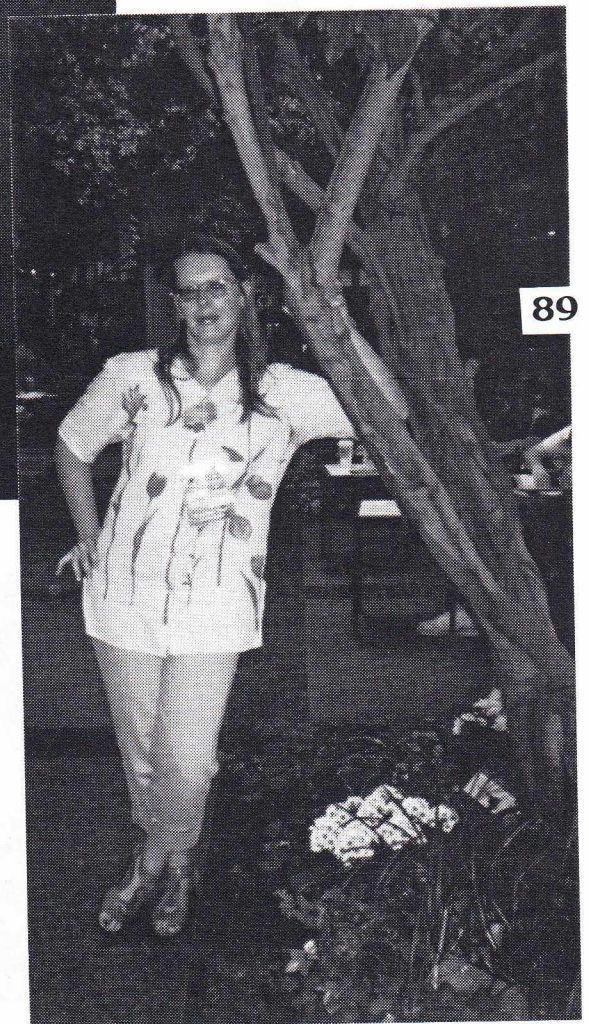
FRIENDLY FACES

Oh yes ... the worldcon. Right, the lovely Hahvahd girl **Alice Naomi Lewis** returns GHLIII's photographic favors

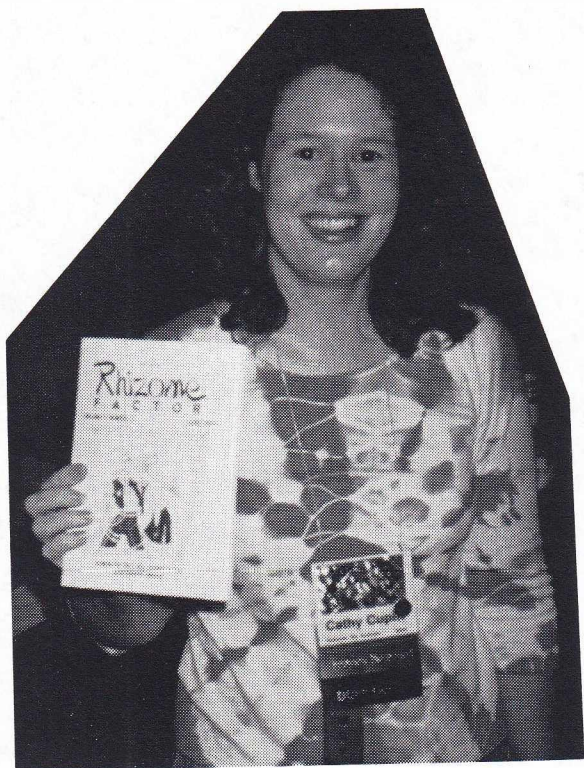
Elegant **John Hertz** shows off his finery and



Inge Glass blossoms in the Hyatt atrium. Inge and her husband **Tony** hit many of Chicon's theatrical events, including an opera, and visited New Orleans after the convention.



AROUND THE CON



DUFF's **Cathy Cupitt** was part of a righteous Aussie contingent, and young & cute to boot.



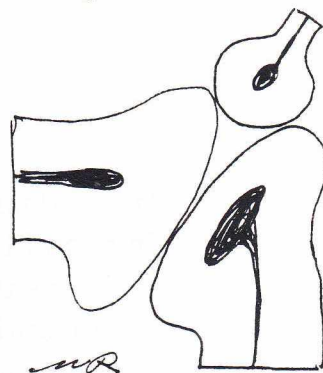
90



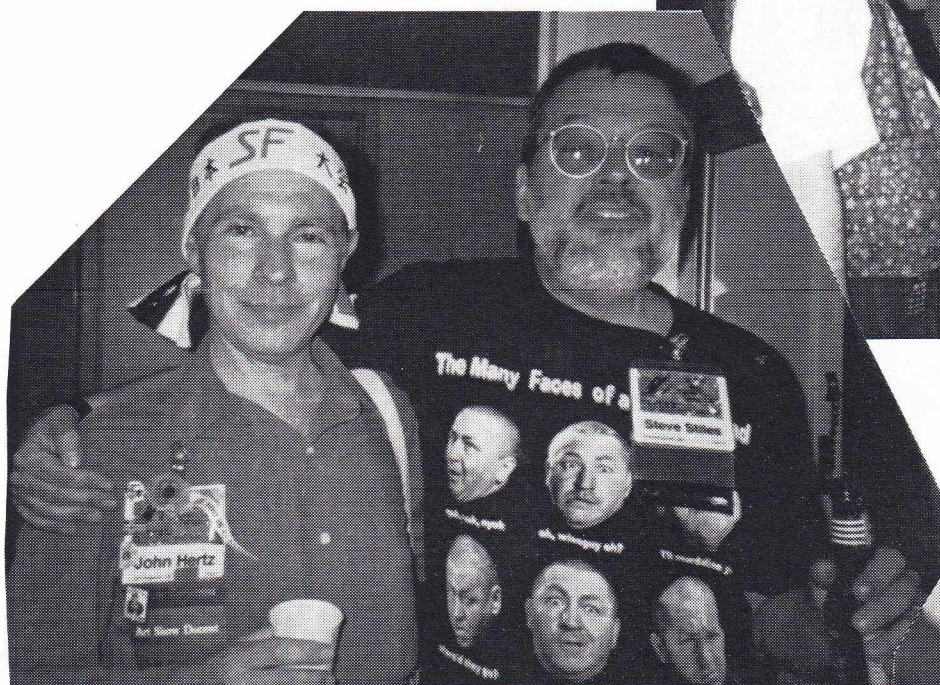
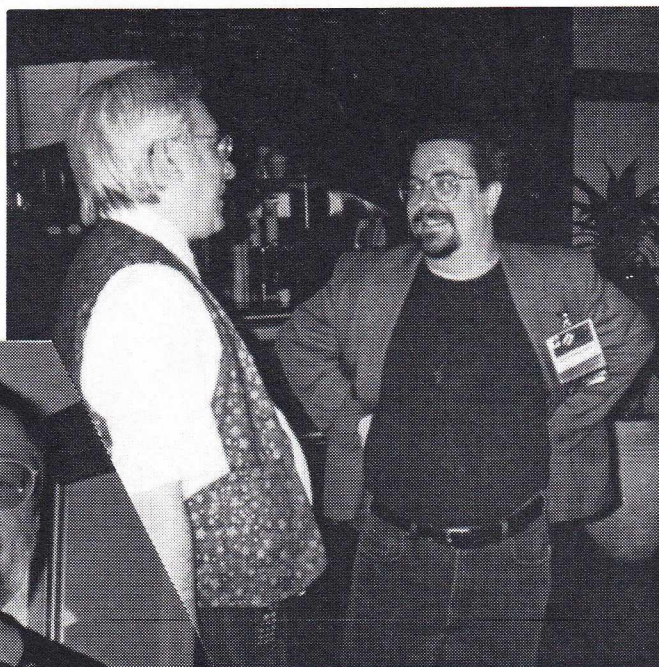
Right, Rosy inscribes **Dave Kyle's** worldcon memory book.



Niekas' **Ed Meskys** shares a snooze in the Fan Lounge with his seeing-eye dawg.

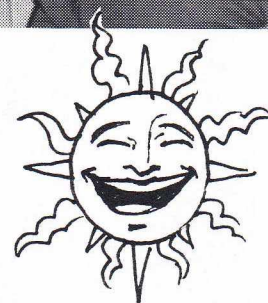


Ben Yalow and Patrick Nielson Hayden chat, John Hertz and Chall 13 cover artist Steve Stiles flaunt head gear and Curly shirt, respectively, and



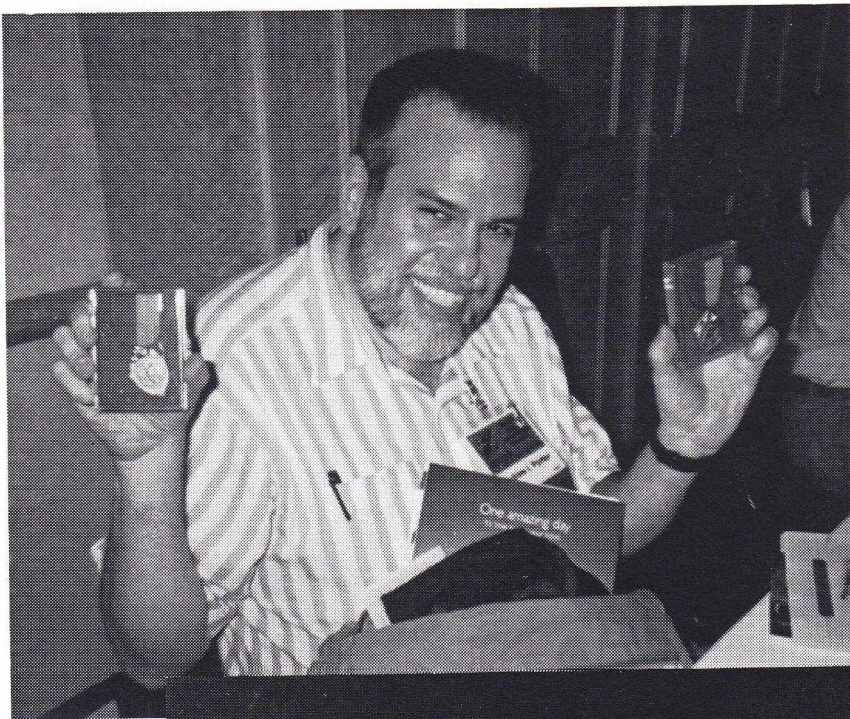
91

Spider-man overlooks gamers in the dealers' room!

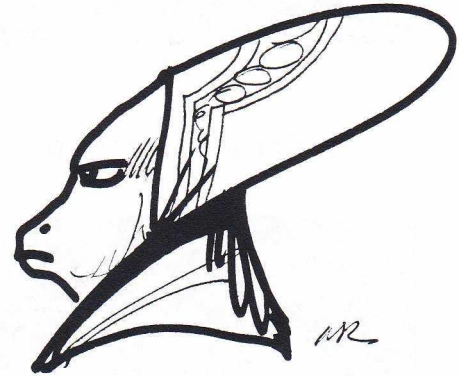




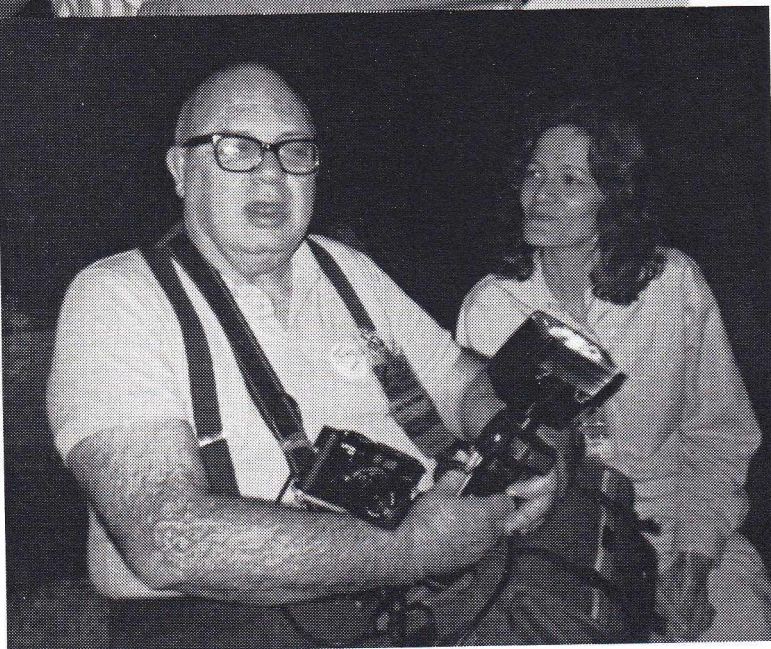
Rosy visits with longtime family buddy Kelly Freas...



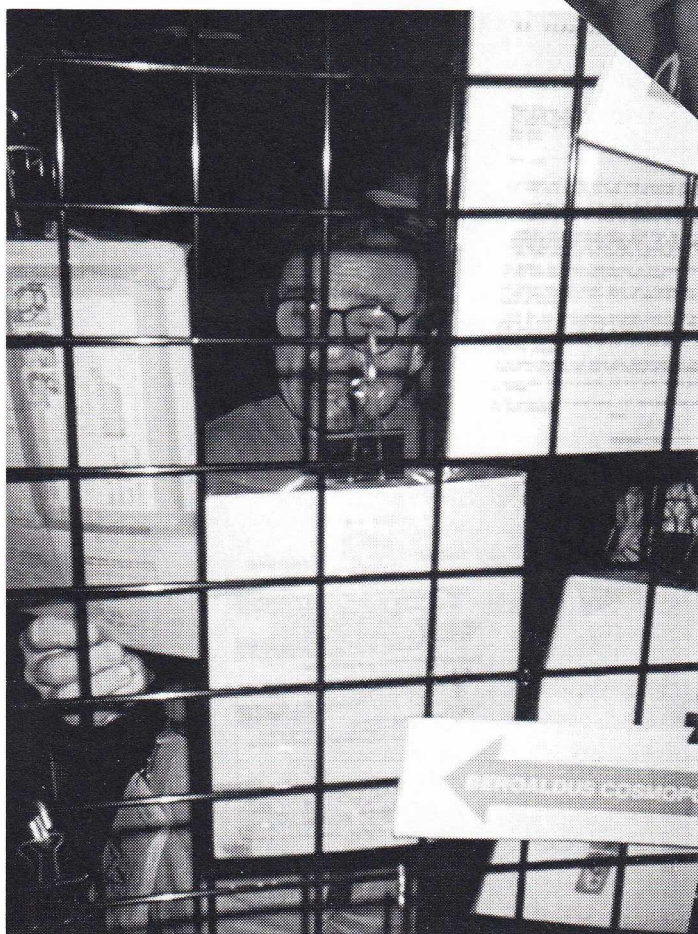
Andy Porter displays two Algol/Starship/S.F. Chronicle awards he never gave out ...



Jay Kay Klein hoists his photo equipment before recording yet another epic fannish moment.



My silliest panel asked,
 "Is There a Midwestern
 Fandom?", and the
Cincinnati Fantasy Group
 appeared en masse and
 tee-shirted to declare
 "Ohhh, *could* be ..."



93

Above, **Roger Sims** peers at and through a fanzine display, while badge-bedecked **Becky Thomson** wonders what life will be like without a worldcon to worry about.



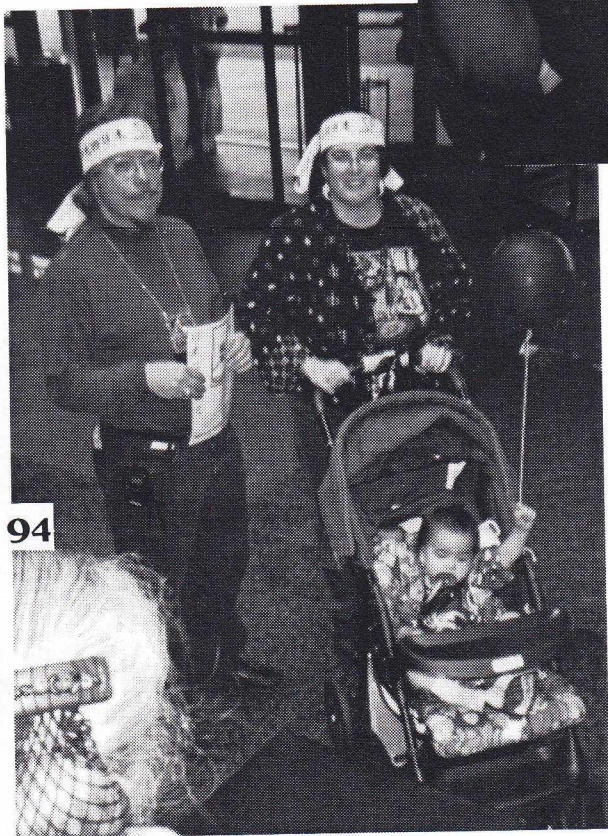
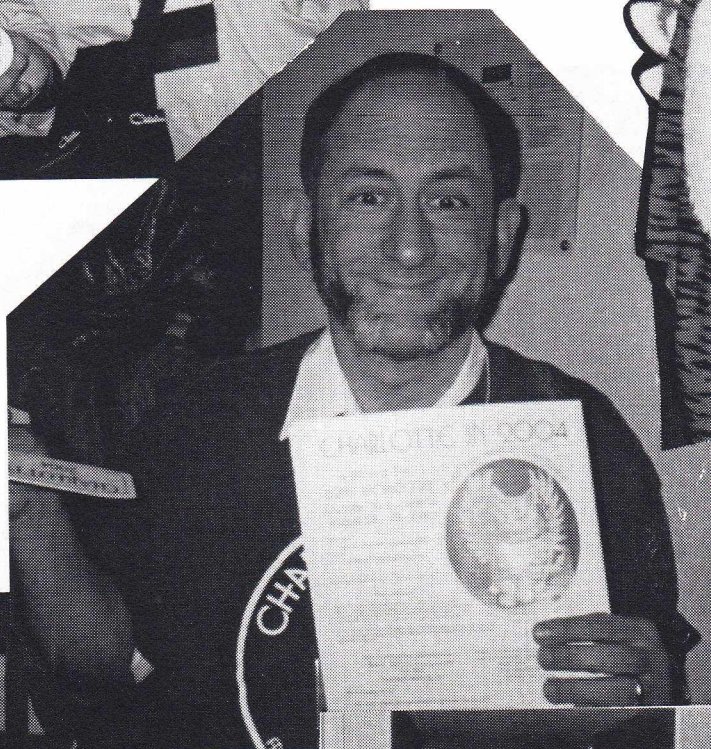


As the noble bid for Wigwam Village in 2003 plummeted to defeat, I presented Joseph Major with a beaded token – purchased at Wigwam! – for his support.



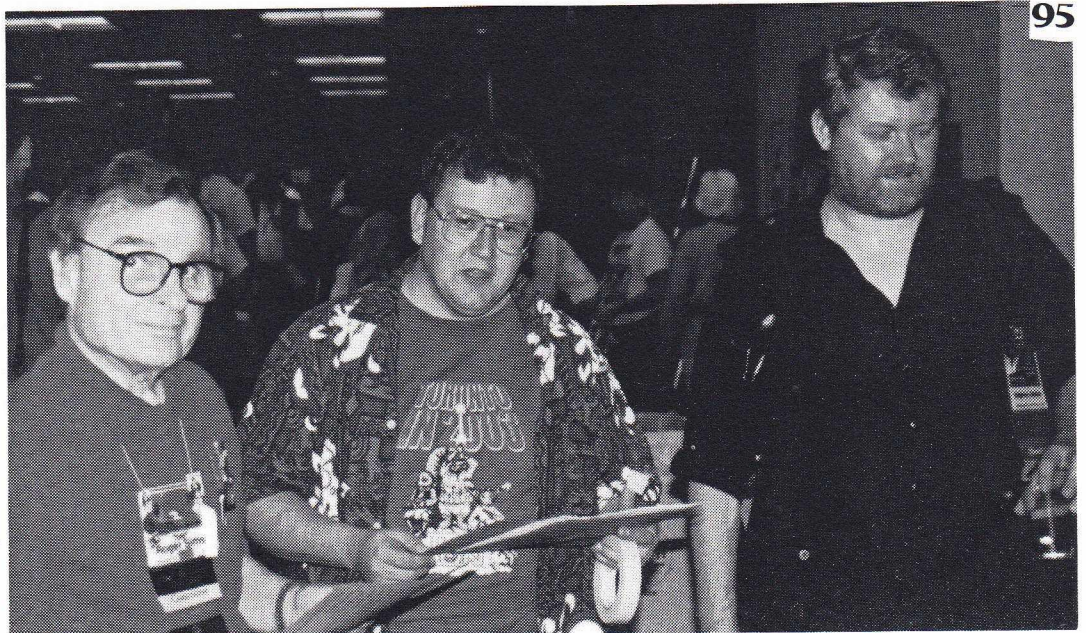
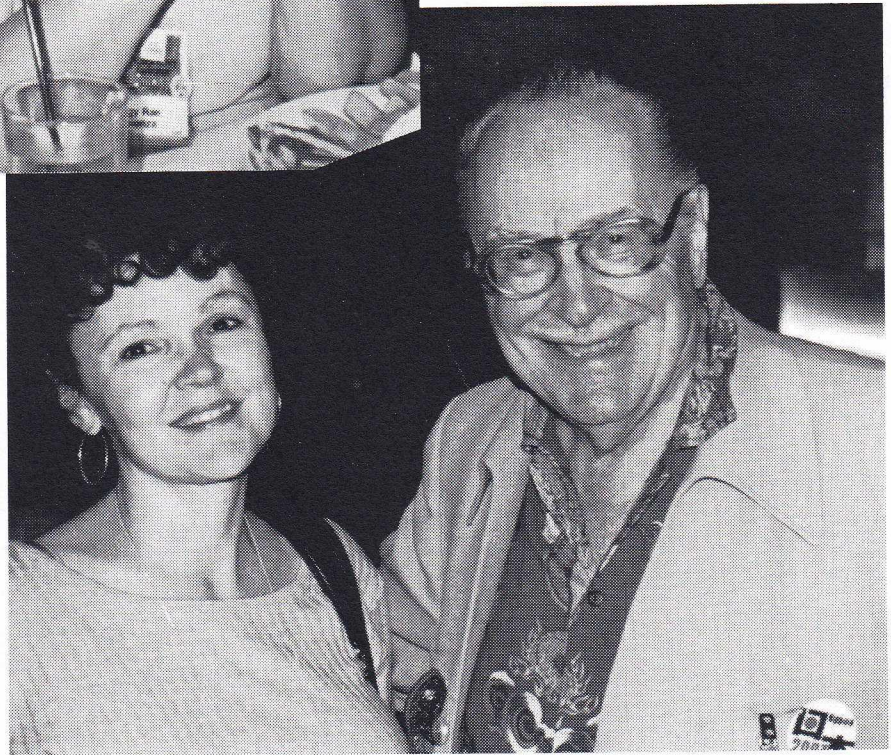
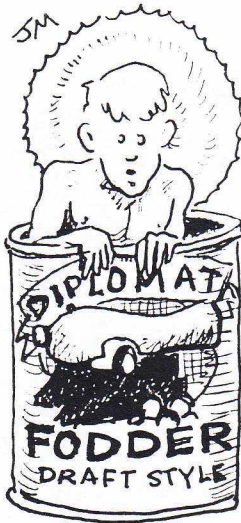
Irvin Koch and Kitty Hawk with “con fliers” (see the glider) for Charlotte in ‘04.

Below, Amy Thomson and *famille*.





Rosy & I shared a happy lunch with **Peggy Rae Sapienza** at one of the Hyatt's three great eateries, and hailed **Forry Ackerman's** happy lawsuit news.



Hale fellows well met – **Roger Sims, Lloyd Penney, Steve Davies**

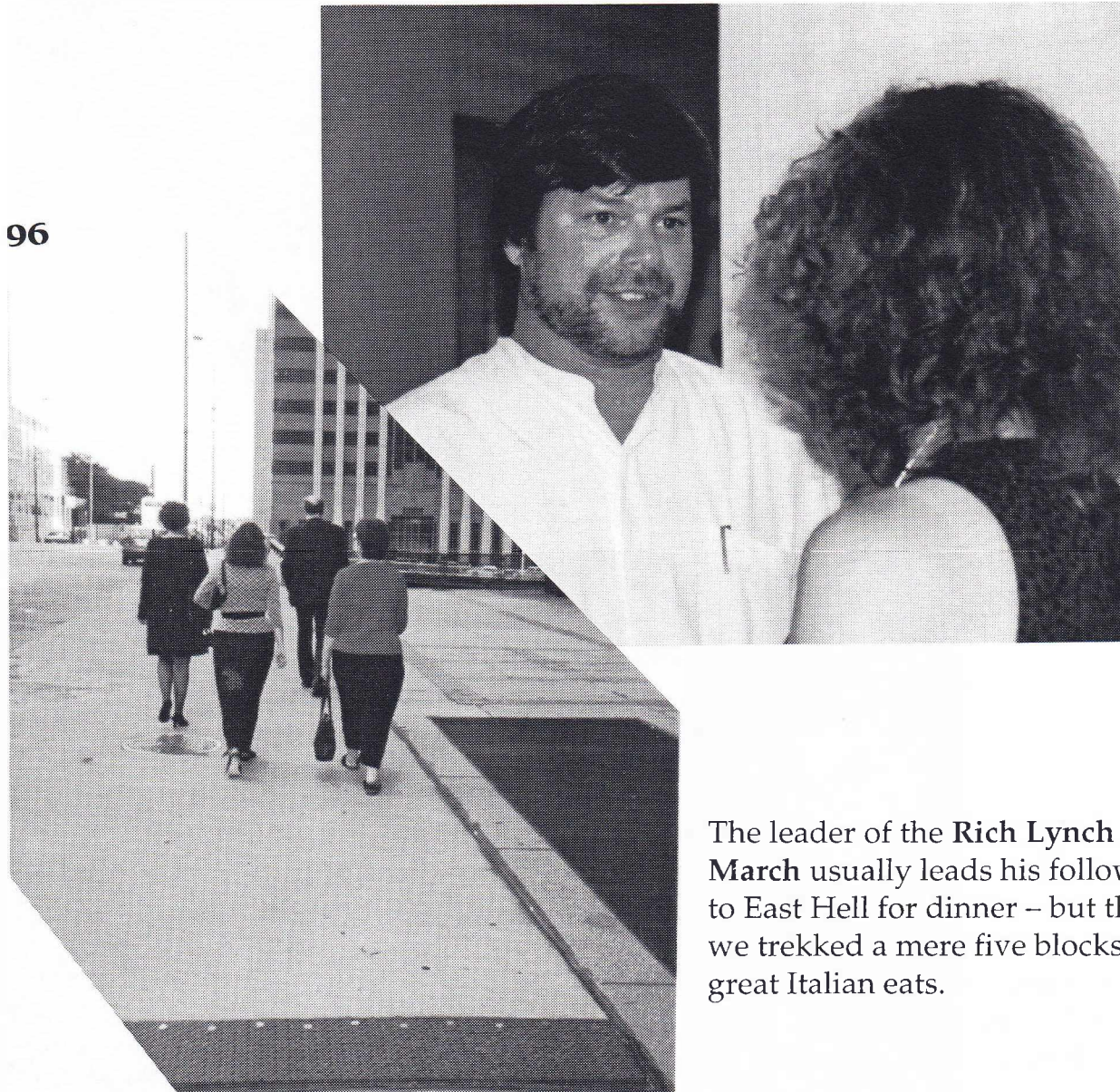


Saturday was a special day at Chicon 2000 ...

***HUGO** night*

Janice Gelb shares a guffaw with **George R.R. Martin**. "RailRoad" sat with Rosy & me at the Hugo ceremony.

Allen Steele wasn't nominated this year, but what does he care? He has two of the things already.



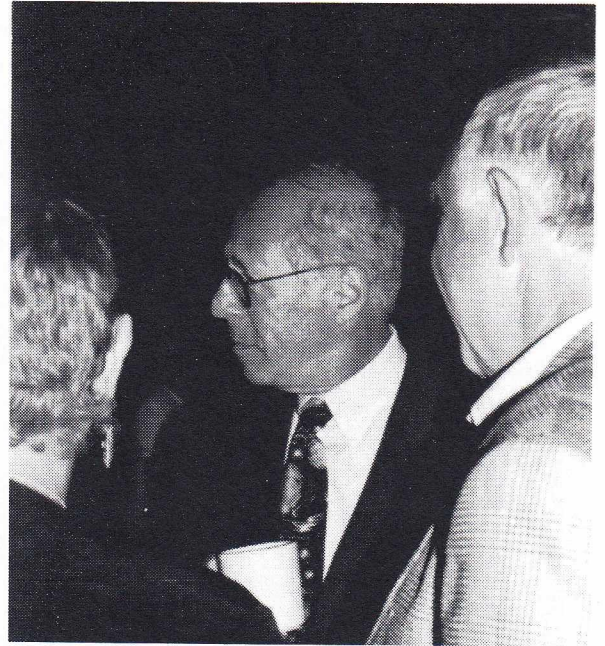
The leader of the **Rich Lynch Death March** usually leads his followers to East Hell for dinner – but this time we trekked a mere five blocks for great Italian eats.

THEM (the pros)



Joe Haldeman

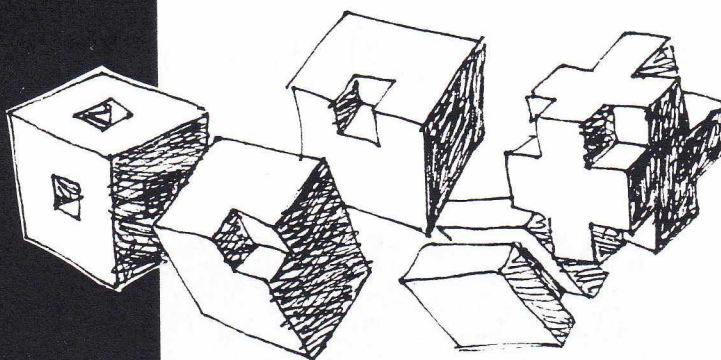
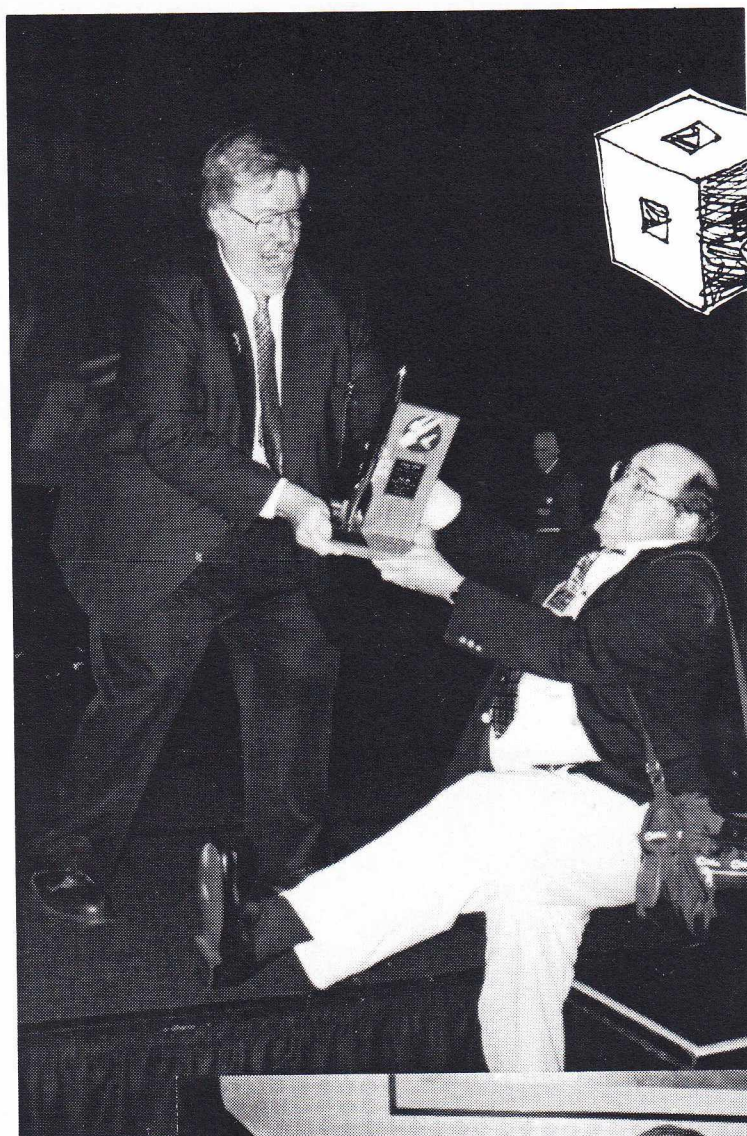
Silver
Robert Silverberg



Chicon GoH Ben Bova



All those who think
Lois McMaster Bujold
is cute, line up behind me



AFTER THE AWARDS

Challenger was nominated for the Best Fanzine Hugo ... which **File:770** won. In the spirit of good sportsmanship for which this fanzine has become famous, I proffered Mike Glyer my heart-felt congratulations.

And below, at the Hugo Los- ... *Nominees'* Party, Rich Lynch and I express our delight at Glyer's victory.





THE WINNERS ...

Of the Hugo, the Seiun (hi, Mike!), the Big Heart, the Campbell ... the Chicon elite!

Vernor Vinge's sprawling space opera *A Deepness in the Sky* barely nipped Bujold's *A Civil Campaign* for Best Novel.

99

Hey, just a suggestion ...





CODA

So not much happened at Chicon 2000, the World Science Fiction Convention. Not much but everything. My whole life changed.

I met **Rose-Marie Donovan** at a worldcon – MidAmeriCon, St. Louis, 1976. We hung together at SunCon, Miami Beach, 1977, and at Confederation, Atlanta, 1986, toured the gulfs of science fiction space, high in the atrium of the Marriott Marquis. We explored in tandem Nolacon II, New Orleans, 1988, and Magicon, Orlando, 1992. Surely it was appropriate that it all came clear, at last, at another worldcon, the fabulous Chicon 2000, which for many reasons – but one in particular – we will never forget.

To love another person is to see the
face of God.

– *Les Misérables*