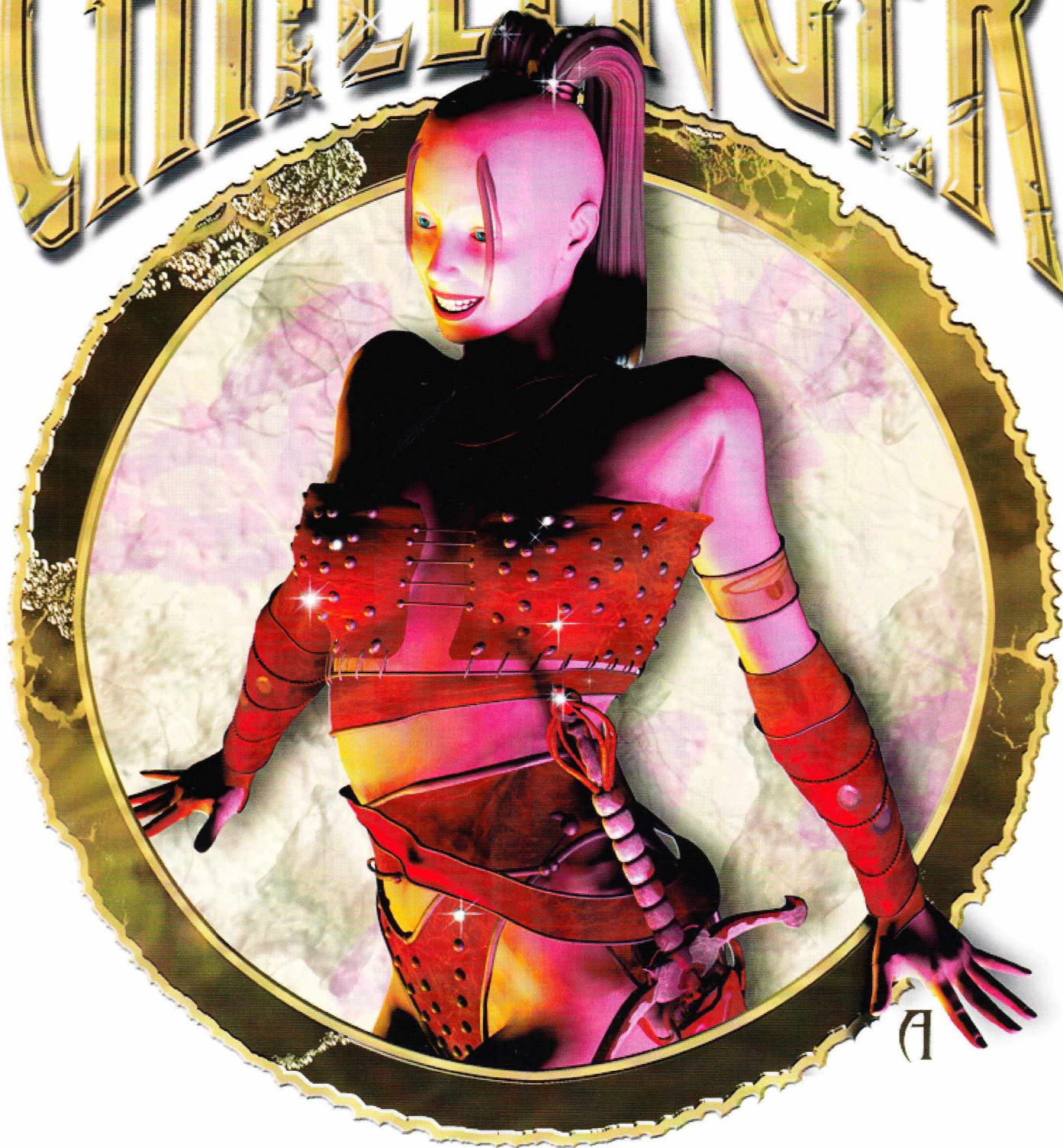


CHALLENGER



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CHALLENGER #23

Winter 2005

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GHLIII Press Publication #988

cover by ALAN WHITE

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GONE WITH

3

THE WIND...

It's funny the "firsts" you remember.

My first experience with a hurricane was in Claymont, Delaware, when I was 5 or 6. I remember watching the wind toss a trash can into the air and hurl it down the street. I remember being p.o.ed when the power went out, because the TV went out with it. Always the techie, I begged my father to make it work by candlelight. A day or so later we toured the wrecked coast, and among the debris I found the chrome hood ornament to a Mack Truck. A bulldog. Kept it for years.

It must have been around then that I saw the word "Louisiana" for the first time – on a bottle of hot sauce. My daddy was addicted to the stuff.

My first visit to Louisiana came many years later. I had just started at UC Berkeley. After Dad got transferred here, our family lived – briefly – in a town up the Mississippi river from New Orleans. My first, appalled impressions: stupefying heat, air so thick you had to swim through it, whitewashed shells spread on the roads instead of civilized California gravel, and my reaction when I asked for a men's room and was directed to a door marked "W". "Doesn't that mean 'Women'?" I asked.

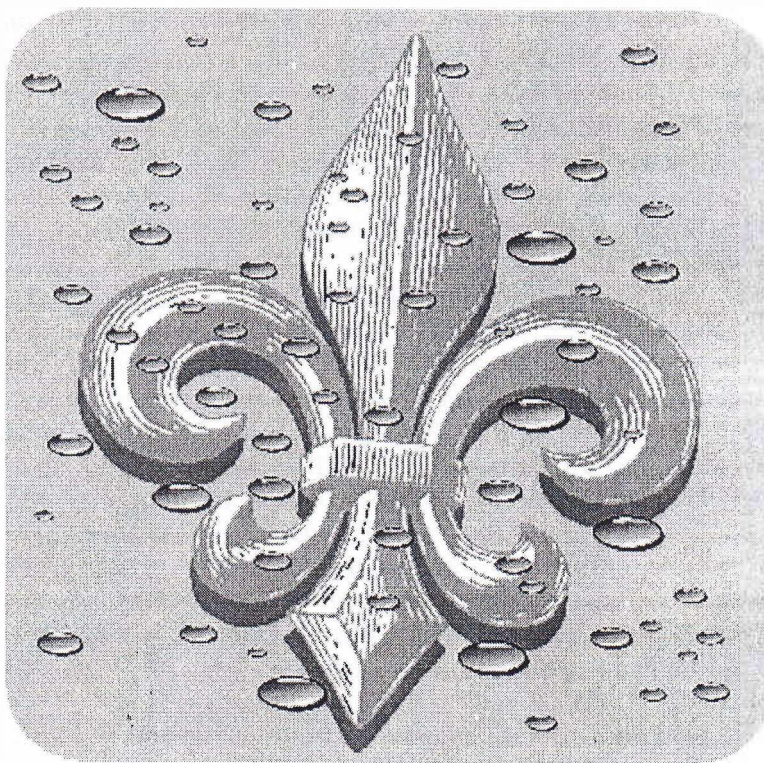
No. It meant "White".

My culture shock notwithstanding, Louisiana began to assert an appeal. Certainly this had something to do with the local girl who took me across the levee one day to show me the riverside flora. I can't remember her name, but vivid as today's weather is the way her dress clung to her body and how the sweat below her collarbone shone in the sun.

But my affection for our new home could mainly be ascribed to the legendary city downriver. The California I knew, you see, was a golden land, with little room for other than golden people. Undoubtedly this was just the paranoia of a skinny adolescent ... but life seemed locked tight against me. UC Berkeley opened that perception with culture, knowledge and challenge, bracing to one's brain and political passion. But N'awlins split me wide open, offering more *fundamental* connections with the world.

How? Why? I've always summed it up in a word: *Texture*.

Late on a summer night, riding through the non-touristy parts of the Quarter or around City Park or through the Carrollton or Gentilly neighborhoods, you experienced a strain of city-based synaesthesia. You could *hear* the humid heat, *feel* the debauched history, *taste* the defiant poverty that fed the fundamental



aesthetics of New Orleans. No true soul is pure, and New Orleans had *beaucoup* soul ... foxy, sexual, cynical, sweet – and above all, *sensual*. To the detriment of my weight but the delight of my soul, my life began to gravitate around restaurants – grand, expensive places like Brennan's, Commander's, Galatoire's (I never ate at Antoine's) – family seafood joints like Sid-Mar's, Bruning's, Fitzgerald's – tourist attractions like Café du Monde and Morning Call, homes of the impeccable beignet, and Felix's, where Dad introduced me to raw oysters – neighborhood havens like the splendid Italian cafe, Liuzza's, and Buster Holmes', red beans'n'rice so divine it got play on *Saturday Night Live* – skid row dumps like the Hummingbird Grill – even fast food stands, and there's no place like Popeye's. My skinniness was happily doomed. The phrase is more than a clever cliché, it is engraved on our spirits in gold: people in other cities eat to live, but in N'awlins they *live to eat*.

They lived for other things, too. I'll never forget my first stroll down Bourbon Street, the spinal column of NOLA's inimitable French Quarter. Jazz was in the air. I'm as musical as a boot, but even for me, a lot about New Orleans was encapsulated at Preservation Hall. It was crowded and hot and you squirmed on pillows tossed onto the cement floor – but you sat at the feet of genius. These were brilliant old musicians, contemporaries and bandmates of Louis Armstrong. They *came* from New Orleans, from forlorn and ramshackle slums like the Ninth Ward, where people were called *yats* because they said "Where y'at?", and when they played you could feel the sad sweet soul of the city glow in your very veins. Listening to Willie Humphrey play the sax or Sweet Emma Brown pound the piano with her one good arm made you cry for lost beauty. You could never hear that music played *quite* that way with *quite* that emotion anywhere else in the world.

Music and food were all very good, but we *are* talking about New Orleans and the French Quarter. Harry Flashman himself spoke to this topic, in *Flash for Freedom*, but I'll forbear quoting it. Suffice it to say that it wasn't only jazz that I remember from my first excursion to Bourbon Street. The rat-trap strip joints lining the avenue also imprinted themselves on my lizard brain. Mere blocks – and mere decades – away, Storyville had lured foolish gentlemen to waste their goods on high-yaller hussies, to the accompaniment of Jelly Roll Morton – and I saw the reprinted *Blue Book* to prove it. Clearly this strange new city of mine did not cloak its attractions keyed to a young man's emergent appetites.

New Orleans' brash sensuality really made its point in 1969. It was the year of the Jets and the Mets, the moon landing, People's Park ... and a meteorological bride of Frankenstein named *Camille*. On August 17, the Gulf Coast played host to the second hurricane of my life, a big, bad blow that savaged nearby Biloxi and tore at the Crescent City like no other storm since the infamous Betsy. My family spent its passage in the Royal Orleans Hotel. My brother and I ascended to the roof and watched the winds rip a banana tree to shreds. Some of my ideas about life were also shredded, for *Camille* was simply the crowning word in New Orleans' ongoing argument: *Live in this world, cher, for to be sure, you will die in it*.

Say no more. *Her* name I remember, and God bless and keep her, wherever she is.

I met that girl at a NOSFA meeting. The New Orleans Science Fiction Association was perhaps the second best thing about 1969. Back at Cal I'd discovered – through Poul Anderson, best and most generous of fellas – the Little Men, a group rich with professionals and Worldcon chairmen and important BNFs. Lovely people, and yes, Quinn Yarbro, I mean you. But we were of different ages and saw one another only on Thursday nights. NOSFAns were my age, with my interests and my enthusiasms, and most importantly, their lives literally revolved about the club. More so than the Little Men could ever be, NOSFA was a *community*. I practically lived with these soul mates. Through them I discovered fanzines – *viz* – and more to the point, found that fandom could be a righteous and fulfilling way of life. It's been that way ever since. My mates from NOSFA in 1969 are in large measure my mates now.

So those were the delights of New Orleans – delights that took a boy closed upon himself and opened him up – not unlike a Felix's oyster.

There were dark corners, of course, to Louisiana and the Big Easy. Public corruption was so common it became a spectator sport; the populace reveled in the state's sassy dishonesty. When former governor and current federal inmate Edwin Edwards ran for his last term against the racist charlatan David Duke, his

unofficial slogan was "Vote for the Crook!" (I did.)

Scandal wasn't always charming. Since Katrina, horror after corrupt horror has suppurated forth. Rumors of hospital euthanasia – helpless nursing home residents abandoned to their fates – and, as ever, obscene police misconduct. No one familiar with the New Orleans Police Department's internal war with brutality and venality could be surprised that bad cops stole cars and looted homes during the evacuation, and, a month after the disaster, beat a harmless drunk within a hair of death. Long before Katrina, New Orleans had two cops on Death Row. It was humiliating to the good police and enough to make even the biggest fan of the Big Easy blanch.

And then there was Race. That "W" on the bathroom door may have come down soon after we moved there, but the animus it betrayed has persisted – and will survive even Katrina. No other place that I have ever lived has suffered a worse racial and social divide than New Orleans. As someone says in this issue's letter column, the Easy was actually two cities, one rich with old family money, predominantly white, and the other locked in poverty in dilapidated housing projects (or "*pro-jex*," in the local lingo), and mostly black. Because of New Orleans' relatively small size, the two "sides" existed in close proximity – and mutual fear and loathing. It was tragic. Both were essential to the soul of the city: New Orleans drew its charm from its aristocratic heritage; its music, and its special sensual appeal, it took from its poor. As Clint Eastwood may have realized when he made the movie by that name in New Orleans, the city was a *Tightrope* – joyousness stretched tight over a chasm of bitterness, sadness, rage.

Noisy, dirty, dangerous, sleazy ... delicious, romantic, entrancing ... New Orleans sank deep hooks. Twice since my college years I've tried to leave, and twice I've come hustling back. This last time I stayed there for 22 years. That's a significant slice of a life. In that time I became a lawyer, worked a Worldcon, forged a life-altering friendship with a special neighbor ... and more. Since the century changed I've again taken on the joy, risk and hope of marriage, and when I brought my bride home, it was to New Orleans. When at the end of 2004 Rosy and I had to move to Shrivelpport (as she calls it), I was devastated – but I reassured myself that no matter where we settled, Rosy and I would often return to the Big Sleazy. There was simply too much New Orleans in me, and too much in New Orleans calling me home.

Then came Katrina.

And it's

Gone? Is it?

On October 23, 2005, Rosy and I returned to the Big Easy. It was a profoundly *wounded* place. Seven weeks after Katrina's passage, the streets were still rife with mud-coated, abandoned cars – some parked on the neutral ground, in vain attempts to avoid the high water. Taped-up or doorless refrigerators stood sentinel before almost every home. Mounds of trashed furniture, pulverized sheetrock, twisted gutters, mushed carpet, ruined clothes, downed trees, covered every curb. On West End Boulevard the mound was a mountain, taller than the empty homes around it. The flood's waterline showed brown on almost every building – knee-deep, neck-deep, higher, worse. Sid-Mar's – the funky restaurant where once we hosted Mercedes Lackey and DUFF delegate Norman Cates – was just a concrete slab. Bruning's and Fitzgerald's were ragged pilings. Inside the buildings, ruin festered and poisonous mold coated what walls remained, black overlapping polka dots shoulder-high. Rot and decay and corruption – real corruption. Everywhere.

Or practically everywhere. The French Quarter was an island of light and motion – the highest point in the city, in every respect. When the tourist trade returns Felix's and Galatoire's and Antoine's and Arnaud's will be up and running. Before the hurricane Preservation Hall was already featuring jazz merely inspired by the great artists of times before, because all the real guys were dead – it will surely reopen. NOLA's port facilities needed refitting, and now will get it. Bienville himself noted that the bend in the Mississippi is a perfect locus for commerce. Centuries of hurricanes haven't changed that.

Our people, SFdom, came through the storm physically okay, though all of their homes suffered

damage – Dennis Dolbear’s and John Guidry’s, as you’ll see, were nigh onto demolished. But I can no more imagine New Orleans without Dolbear or Guidry than I can imagine Dolbear or Guidry without New Orleans. I suspect all of *our* people will be back ... with one very special exception. See the *Challenger* tribute, later this issue.

But what of the poor, the disenfranchised, the people lived the short, sad, painful lives in the streets of the genuine Big Easy? Their homes and their ‘hoods *are* gone. Will W’s entrepreneurial fantasyland or Habitat for Humanity’s prefab constructs support a real community – with spirit, identity, history, and common ground? Can all the sweet charity in the world restore the soul of a city to itself?

New Orleans will re-open, and a lot of what the world envisions when it thinks of New Orleans will be there. The French Quarter will feature grand restaurants, and music that sounds like jazz will echo in the streets; streetcars will clang past the Garden District towards Tulane and Loyola Universities; the roof of the Superdome will be patched, and the Saints will return. But I question, how *can* this be real? . The real Easy lived for centuries on the razor edge of disaster, and now it has fallen. The soul of the city was its people – and its people are gone. How can the new New Orleans be anything more than a sanitized simulacrum of the raw reality of before?

We have no choice – we must wait and see. Mardi Gras, 2006 will fall on February 28th. We’ll be in the French Quarter, in the Big Easy, in the New Orleans that survives, celebrating survival. Join us.

THIS ISSUE --

Like an oak weighted with Spanish Moss, *Challenger* #23 hangs with memories of New Orleans and the catastrophe of Katrina. (Even Alan White’s luminescent cover could depict a Crescent City harlequin.) This issue reels from the destruction of New Orleans, and I’m only sorry I lived to see it happen.

Natives of the Crescent City pitch in with their stories and perspectives. On early pages, Linda Krawecka tell of witnessing Katrina’s fury –from across an ocean. Soon after, you’ll find Dennis Dolbear’s terrifying first-person account of the hurricane. See if you don’t agree that *Chall*’s original associate editor behaved *heroically* – and check out Charlie Williams’ inspired artwork. Peggy Ranson recounts leaving the city in the hurricane’s path – and coming home in its wake. Don Markstein’s anger at the abuse visited upon his home town sears the page. The pics rescued from John Guidry’s drowned photo albums reflect the city’s fannish past, and I myself dwell in remembrance of things past, horror at the present, and concern about the future. In addition, N.O. visitors Joe Major and Earl Kemp contribute memories – and welcome hope.

But *Chall* #23 is not entirely lost in the nightmare of Katrina. Joe Green reacquaints us with one of science fiction’s guiding geniuses. Mike Resnick’s classic “Bathrooms I Have Known” hilariously lives up to its title. Greg Benford’s 1985 speech on scientists and science fiction is still compelling. Elst Weinstein discusses cuisine he never sampled in the Big Easy. Alex Gilliland’s Morrie the Critic weighs in on Iraq. Check out Rich Dengrove’s words on the Red Planet. Finally, and most impressively, the great Aussie artist Dick Jenssen – a.k.a. “Ditmar” – proffers the magnificent tale of his life in fandom in our third installment of Sheryl Birkhead’s series of fan artist self-portraits. Look on-line for an astonishing color portfolio of Ditmar’s work.

To these folk, and to Sheryl, Randy Cleary, Mike Estabrook and all the other talents who have leant their wit to *Challenger* #23, we offer our thanks. Their happy presence in these pages is a necessary reminder not merely that life goes on, but that good wishes, generosity, and happiness are the best antidotes we have to the terrors of the night.

Of course, my most special thanks to *la belle* Rose-Marie, for her invaluable and unstinting assistance, support, and love.



A store across the intersection from the parish courthouse at Tulane and Broad in New Orleans. The smudge across "beepers" is the highwater mark from the Katrina flood. As of November, the courthouse, and all Tulane Avenue businesses, remained closed.

Watching

Linda Krawecka

"I know what this means. You don't understand ... *I know what this means!"* I was trying to let Dave know that this was serious, that what we were watching on the cable news networks wasn't just another hurricane moving into the Gulf. This was the one we always joked about, the one that I would use as a party piece: "Yeah, New Orleans is like a soup bowl. If you get the right hurricane coming in from the east with strong enough winds, it will sweep the lake right into the city". Then I'd shrug and laugh and have another drink.

But now it was happening. This was early Sunday morning UK time. Regardless of the hour back home, I called my dad living in Metairie and got his answerphone. Good. That means he got out of town. I then called my sister Debbie in the Biloxi area and got the same. Good. I sat by the television and began my vigil, watching the reports of wind speed and direction. Most of my relatives live north of the lake nowadays. For some reason I felt they'd be OK. They always stick together and look out for each other. But dad was still living near the city and Debbie was on the Gulf Coast near Biloxi. I was concerned.

Fox News and CNN were repeating the same thing over and over, showing pictures of idiot reporters standing in the wind saying "Yup, it's really blowing hard out here." I went to the internet and found a web cam set up on the north shore of the Causeway Bridge, pointing back towards New Orleans. There was a mass of traffic, all leaving the city and the sky was so very dark. It would get darker as the day progressed until the cameras stopped working. I managed to find a way of streaming into two of the local TV stations: WDSU and WWL and watched as they repeatedly told people to get out of town.

I called JoAnn Montalbano, the woman who's been my best friend for more than half my life. She was living on the northshore, close to where I had relatives. Thankfully I managed to catch her. She was frantic; she had her house to seal up and her parent's house too, as they were out of town. Her current fella, Tom, had gone into NO to secure something to do with his work place and was due back – but of course the traffic on the Causeway was incredible. I can't remember now what I said. Just a general "hang in there, I'm sure it will be OK" platitude – knowing that it wasn't at all going to be OK.

There was nothing to do now but watch on a glass tube at a distance of several thousand miles. I was glued to whatever media I could get hold of. Dave kept telling me to turn it off, that I was only upsetting myself but of course I couldn't. I watched through the night, grabbing a few hours sleep then began again in the morning. The whole time I'm telling Dave about hurricanes that I've been through; about Betsy when my aunts & uncles and cousins came to stay "just in case" because our house had a second floor. Or Camille when my Aunt's house in the ninth ward got flooded – but remained standing. I remembered the sound of the wind making a god-awful noise as it blew under our front door, of listening to a crackly transistor radio, the smell of the kerosene lamps and that eerie feel you get as a kid when you know that adults are worried and scared but are trying to make you feel better. Now I was one of the adults. And I knew to be worried and scared for the people of my home town.

So I watched as the hurricane approached and I watched the huge queues of people trying to get into the Superdome. Why are they queuing for so long? Why won't they let them in? This thing is on its way!

And I watched as it passed, and I was there when they started talking about first one, then another break in the levee and about the water rising. What levee? Where? There are a million miles of levee in New Orleans. The news was on every channel but it wasn't enough. I began running back and forth between my PC and the TV – looking for any information I could find.

And I watched as the next day started and we could see what was left in the wake; streets that I knew, areas that I had lived in, the gulf coast where I'd holiday, the whole landscape of my past – looking like other pictures I'd seen on TV – of tsunamis and earthquakes and floods. But this wasn't some other place. This was my home town.

Time blurred after that. I had to find my dad and my sister. That was all that I could think about. It took several days, many message boards, e-mails and phone calls to relatives I hadn't talked to in years – but I was finally able to piece together where my family were. Debbie and her family ended up in Montgomery, AL with news that her house was gone. Not ruined or blown to pieces or knocked down. Just plain old gone. Dad ended up being sheltered by a small Baptist church near Winnsboro, north Louisiana. He drove until he couldn't drive any more, saw a sign outside the church welcoming evacuees – and went in.

Amidst all this was the trauma of having to watch what was going on in New Orleans – all those people at the Dome or the Conference centre, the ones on the roof of their houses, the ones wading through the filth. And knowing as I know with every pore in my body what that New Orleans late summer heat and humidity is like – with no reprieve of air conditioning or cool water. No drinking water of any kind.

What was going on? Why was no one helping? I listened to a representative from the UN say that they could have emergency assistance there in a moments notice – but they weren't asked. Same with several European emergency assistance groups who were waiting, wanting to get in there and help. But no. The US didn't ask for help. The US didn't need help. So along with the rest of the world, I sat helpless and in tears of frustration watching as people begged for help of any kind.

I don't need to tell you the rest. Everyone has seen the same images I've seen. I feel blessed that my family are alive.

Once I knew where my dad and sister were I immediately wanted to fly over and just *be* with them, no matter how chaotic and torn up the place must be. The urge to get back there so strong. I physically *need* to see New Orleans. I told someone that this must be what a salmon feels like – where you'd batter yourself to death to get back to your spawning ground. That's what it's like. I have to go back and just touch the city again.

New Orleans is where I grew up. I can point to the very spot where I got married, graduated from school, had my first job, went on my first date, learned to drive. It's where learned how to two-step, caught a Rex doubloon, watched Professor Longhair at Tipitina's, listened to Irma Thomas, drank a cold Dixie. It's where I sucked the heads and squeezed the tails a thousand times and slurped down a ton of raw oysters. It's part of who I am.

I've lived in the UK for 26 years now. Each visit back to New Orleans always brought a "gosh, that didn't use to be there" reaction. Of course I expected things would change; buildings and shops would come and go. But the heart of the city, the feel and atmosphere and attitude were always reassuringly the same. It still felt like Home.

I talk on the phone to my dad and sisters every few days. But I want to see them and hold them and hug them and tell them how much I love them. My flight to New Orleans is now booked and I'm quite anxious. This isn't going to be a holiday or a friendly family visit. It's going to be difficult. But it's a much needed visit in order to reconcile myself with what's taken place.

Joe Green's career at NASA and as an SF writer has been complemented by his career as a host for many of SFdom's titans. Here's one.

OUR FIVE DAYS WITH JOHN W. CAMPBELL

Joseph L. Green

Illos by Rotsler and from Freas

I had spoken with John Campbell only once, briefly, at a convention, but by 1970 I had sold him three science articles, all on the American space program. So I had no hesitation on Monday morning, March 16, when I learned he was coming to Cocoa Beach, in picking up the phone and calling his motel to leave an invitation to dinner.

Except, the desk clerk told me, John had no reservation! Their records indicated a travel agent had called that morning and requested a room for a John W. Campbell, but the huge motel had none available. Nor did any of the other numerous motels and hotels on the Space Coast. Some major space-related events were occurring that week, and there were simply no rooms available. John was due to check in about six. After work I went home long enough to ask wife Nita to prepare a guest room, and drove to Cocoa Beach. I waited a half-hour until John showed up. He looked tired, after a day of travel followed by the hassles of renting a car and finding his way from Orlando to Cocoa Beach. I stopped him before he reached the check-in counter and introduced myself.

"I'm afraid you have some bad news waiting," I said after we shook hands. He gave me a quizzical look. "But talk to the desk clerk, and then I have a solution that may work."

A few minutes later he was following me home in his rental car, after accepting the unhappy fact that when NASA gave a show, everybody came. The Space Coast might never again see the million-plus visitors on hand for Apollo 11, the first moon landing launch; but it didn't take that many to jam up a small county like Brevard, home of both Cape Canaveral and The Kennedy Space Center.

John wasn't happy. He was traveling alone, on his way (according to my highly fallible memory) to meet wife Peg and relative(s) in the U.S. Virgin Islands the next Saturday for a vacation. He had based his travel plans on seeing the launch of a NASA science satellite (more interesting to him, apparently, than manned missions) during a stopover in Florida, but that launch had been delayed. He had five days of leisure time on his hands.

We discussed what to do over a nice dinner, prepared by Nita. Daughter Rosy, just turned fifteen, ate with us; son Merritt (yes, named after that author; and his first name is William, after Hodgson) was long gone from home. I proposed, since he was here and stuck, that I try to get John in to see an Air Force launch, scheduled for Friday night. It was a Delta, carrying the NATO-A (to become NATO 1 in geosynchronous orbit) communications satellite. The spacecraft was of minor interest to John, but I assured him that watching a big rocket launch in person was far different from seeing it on television. He didn't really buy into that concept, but agreed to go. On Tuesday morning I made the necessary calls, and got us on the AF visitors list.

John was not only tired, he didn't look well. I had to work on Tuesday, as usual. We all went to bed fairly early Monday night.

In the morning Rosy of course had to go to school. But I learned later that Nita got into a discussion with John on some esoteric subject after breakfast, and became so fascinated she ran late to work! It was her usual custom to arrive early. While John was here, she ran late almost every morning.

John had a restful day thumbing through our library and reading/relaxing. Tuesday evening, after the usual quick but excellent dinner Nita served up, we had a long bull session, on subjects that ranged far, wide, and often deep. John had recovered both his energy and his ebullience. I occasionally managed to get in a short comment or observation, as did Nita. Rosy mostly sat in silence, as an over-awed teen-age girl should – though she was taking in every word.

One discussion I remember was on my favorite *Analog* stories. I named Tom Godwin's "The Cold Equations" and A. Bertram Chandler's "Giant Killer" as my top choices. But I also explained that while traveling the country since 1955, first as a construction worker and then as a "missile bum" for Boeing – plus writing at nights and on week-ends – I had had no magazine subscriptions, and a minimum of reading time. He nodded benignly, apparently forgiving me for not having every issue of *Astounding* and *Analog* on hand, and limited our discussion to my two choices.

First, John said, "Giant" was a surprising anomaly for Chandler. This novelette of rats mutating within a spaceship's outer wall and then attacking the human crew was unlike anything Chandler had written before; not did he ever write such again. His "Rimworld" stories were good solid SF, but not really that original or outstanding. John had no idea what had inspired this exceptional story, except that Chandler (I learned) was an Australian ship captain, and wrote while at sea. Perhaps he had a rodent problem; most ships do.

Second, I learned how strong the hand of the editor can be in shaping a story. John told me he had three times! sent "Cold Equations" back to Godwin, before he got the version he wanted. In the first two re-writes, Godwin kept coming up with ingenious ways to save the girl! Since the strength of this deservedly classic story lies in the fact the life of one young woman must be sacrificed to save the lives of many, it simply wouldn't have the same impact if she had lived.

John wasn't trying to take credit for having shaped one of the masterpieces in the SF field. His attitude and words clearly indicated he simply felt it was the responsibility of an editor to improve on any given story, where possible – and he had done that.

Another discussion I remember, though I'm not certain it was that same night, was full-time writing as a career. John Campbell said he liked to work with writers who had a reliable outside income. He believed this freed them from the necessity of cranking out so much wordage every month to pay that overdue electric bill. In his view, this left writers free to experiment, be daring, explore brand-new and perhaps controversial ideas. He felt that too much of what he received, and often had to accept, were variations on a theme. He wanted to see more originality.

It was late when we finally went to bed.

John had planned a trip on his own for Wednesday morning, and was coming to KSC that afternoon for a tour. He rose early, skipped breakfast, and was in his rental car before I left for work. When he tried to start it, the engine flooded. Hearing John cranking the engine, I was almost certain I knew what had happened, but he hadn't a clue. His vast scientific and technical knowledge apparently didn't include much on simple car mechanics. I told him to stop trying, raised the hood, removed the breather cap, and found the automatic choke – which was of course fully closed. I held it open manually,



told John to press the accelerator flat on the floorboard and hold it there, and try again. He followed my directions exactly, and after about a minute the excess gas ran through the engine and it started. John raced the engine a little to keep it going, and I replaced the breather cap and lowered the hood. John gave me another of those quizzical looks, but said not a word before he drove away.

The escorted tour of KSC I had arranged for John Wednesday afternoon was a perfectly legitimate courtesy NASA always extended to editors of major magazines. It wasn't so legitimate for me to make certain I was assigned as his escort, but I did that too. I showed him the huge Complex 39 Saturn V pads from as close as the guards would let us get, the immense Crawler-Transporter that carried those 363-foot tall Apollo-Saturn stacks to the pad – the largest tracked vehicle then in existence – and the other giant-scale equipment of the launch system. When we reached the Vehicle Assembly Building, we were denied entrance by a gate guard, despite my badge with the correct access codes and John's visitor badge. I got into it with the security guard, and after a long argument, finally persuaded him that we were entitled to enter the building. It wasn't my first argument with a guard while escorting guests, and it wouldn't be the last. But at least I won that one.

I led John inside, through the usual door on the south side of the low bay, and said, "Now don't look up until I tell you."

John gave me that quizzical glance again, but followed directions. I led him forward along the transfer aisle, an open space that reaches from the south end of the building to the north, past the low bays on both sides where the second and third stages of the Saturn V were checked out, on to the open edge of the high bay. And then I told him to look up.

John raised his gaze, looking up over 500 feet of open space to the roof, then ahead to the four giant bays, two on each side (though one was never actually completed internally), where the three Saturn V stages were assembled, and the Apollo vehicle mounted on top. He said just two words:

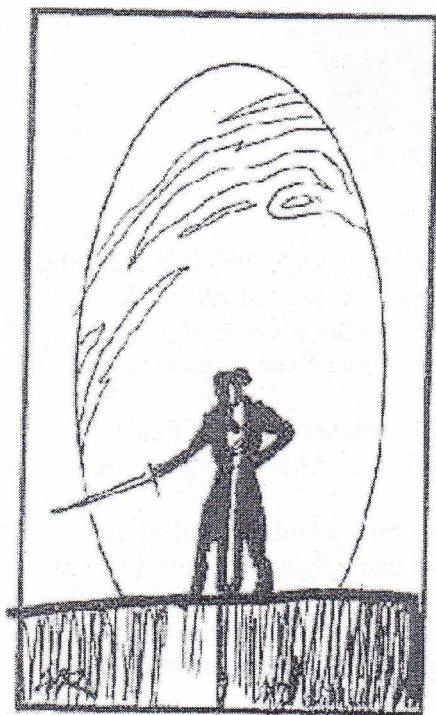
"I'm impressed."

I (or at least NASA) had impressed John W. Campbell.

(I learned later that I had impressed John more than I knew at the time. Word got back to me that he told some friends of his visit to the Cape and KSC, after his return from vacation, and that while here he had met a true "renaissance man," a fellow who was competent at almost anything he tried. He cited starting a balky car when he couldn't, out-talking a KSC security guard to get him into a highly restricted area, and the ability to write both science fact and science fiction. Of course John mentioned nothing of this to me directly – though I received a nice note of thanks later. Nita and Rosy did much better. He sent them each a white Pringle of Scotland cashmere sweater, with crewel design and embroidery done by Margaret Winter Campbell - presumably Peg, John's wife.)

Wednesday night was another long session of talk, of which none of us ever tired. Thursday was a day of work and school for the Green family, and a day at home for John. By Thursday afternoon he was getting a little stir-crazy, and asked if I could invite some local fans over that evening for a good bull session. SF fans were in short supply in Brevard then, but I knew one engineer who read the literature avidly, including *Analog*. When I called him he said he had a friend and fellow engineer who was also an *Analog* reader. The two

came over, and we had a long and pleasant talk. The engineers somehow got into the merits of a particular electronic tube and what it could do, and to my amazement, John was intimately familiar with it. The three started discussing it in detail! About this time Nita and Rosy, with glazed expressions, got up and went to bed. And I was treated to thirty minutes of exotic chatter about a subject on which I knew



absolutely nothing, until they finally wore that one out and we could get on to themes of more general interest.

The Delta launch was scheduled for just before midnight Friday, so we left about eight p.m. for the AF Press Room – in the same huge Cocoa Beach motel where John had intended to stay! We were in my car. As we were approaching the Hertz Car Rental office, still open because of the launch, John suddenly looked over at me and said, "Can we stop at the Hertz place? I need to use the bathroom."

I caught the distress in his voice. John was driving a Hertz rental, but it had come from Orlando. I had no idea how the local Hertz folk would react to someone coming in just to use their restroom. I could see the traffic signal in front of our destination, only a quarter-mile ahead, and the traffic was light. I said, "John, we'll be at the motel in just one minute. Can you wait that long?"

He nodded, stone-faced. I drove as fast as I could to the motel, letting him off at the door before I hunted a parking space. He got out and walked inside, moving slowly and with a noticeable stiffness in his gait. I saw him ignore the temporary AF desk set up in the lobby and head for the bathrooms at the rear.

Once inside, I worked my way to the AF official at the desk, explained that I was a staff member of *Analog* Magazine, and that my editor had a problem and had rushed to the bathroom. Our names were on the list, and all was well. I received my badge; John's was waiting for him.

It was a long time, perhaps half an hour, before John came out of the bathroom. I hurried over when I finally saw him, and said, "Something I forgot to mention; the Air Force doesn't recognize freelance writers, at all. For tonight, I have to be a member of the *Analog* staff."

John gave me that quizzical look again, but said, "Close enough!" He was now walking normally, and apparently feeling much better. He got his badge, and we chatted for a short time before boarding the AF bus that would take us to the launch site on Cape Canaveral.

Sitting together on the bus, John edged into one of those discussions that frayed on my nerve ends, the general subject of slavery. He enjoyed taking the "devil's advocate" position in almost any area, willing to defend even viewpoints with which he disagreed if that led to a livelier debate. (Which also made it difficult to tell when he was sincere, or – on some specific point – just egging others on.) He pointed out that the much-maligned "peculiar institution" of slavery in the American South had in fact provided the blacks brought here with a higher standard of living than they had in Africa. As slaves, most of them lived longer lives than their counterparts at home. John quoted the statistics that indicated very short life-spans for the average African tribesman or woman in the 1700 and 1800s. He talked about the primitiveness of the average African's culture in those centuries, the misery of their daily existence, the perennial shortages of food, and so on. On the facts as stated, he made a good case.

At first blush this sounded like one of those controversial positions John often took, just to get a rise out of his debating audience. But I was very much afraid that in fact he was sincere. I had heard, from comments by Asimov, among others – and some *Analog* editorials I had read – that John held some racist views, at least in regard to blacks. Not wanting to get into that particular discussion, I cut him off with some hard, fast statements to the effect that there was more to human life than food and medical care, that almost anyone would choose a shorter but happier life in their own culture, compared to a longer one of misery and



degradation as a slave in a foreign land. The only thing we managed to agree on was that rapidly increasing farm mechanization after 1850 would have soon rendered slavery obsolete anyway, and it would have been better for the USA to endure it a few more years than suffer the truly horrendous costs of the Civil War.

John saw that I was upset, and moved on to a new topic for the remainder of the ride.

The Air Force had constructed a large, open Observation Platform, about thirty feet high, less than three miles south of the Delta complex on Cape Canaveral. There was a small operations support building near its base. The entire area was well lit, from lights mounted on tall posts. John climbed the steps ahead of me with some difficulty. We stood looking north, to where several large floodlights lit up the vehicle on its pad. That generation of Delta had three stages, with three-strap on solids attached equidistant around the first. These ignited, along with the liquid propellant first stage engine, to get it off the ground. And the spacecraft had its own small rocket attached, for the final maneuvering to get it into geosynchronous orbit.

We had arrived over an hour ahead of liftoff, planned for 11:46 p.m. John was dressed in slacks and a light jacket. After about twenty minutes he told me he was freezing! It was a surprisingly cold March night, with a fairly stiff breeze blowing in off the Atlantic. Despite the fact the stairs were a problem for him, he wanted to find shelter in the small building on the ground. I went with him, and once inside, where there was a heater, he was soon back to normal – though complaining loudly to me that he never expected to come to Florida in March and find that he was freezing his ass off!

John had plenty of company. The badged visitors were mostly men, but there were a few women there as well. Every one of the females was cold, and letting the Air Force know it. The AF and contractor PR people endured the complaints, about conditions over which they had no control, in pained silence.

A few minutes before liftoff I persuaded John it would be worth it to climb those stairs again, and he unwillingly preceded me back up them. We arrived just a few seconds before ignition. Many people had chosen to watch from the ground, and the platform wasn't crowded. Right on time the single engine on the Delta first stage flared to life, growing quickly to a raging flame. After a few seconds the three solids ignited, going almost instantly to full thrust; the hold-down clamps released; and in a huge ball of reddish-blue flame that lit up the darkness, the Delta lifted off.

At less than three miles away, the noise was deafening, the light very bright. The thrust of the three solids, burning alongside the first stage engine, had the Delta clawing for the sky. In just seconds it was high overhead, turning east to climb toward the distant, dark horizon. After one minute we saw the three solids burn out, then separate, falling toward a cold and silent Atlantic. The first stage continued to burn, becoming a swiftly diminishing bluish light, finally lost to sight under some distant cloud cover.

"Now," I said, turning to John. "Do you believe what I said about watching a launch on television not being the same as seeing one in person?"

John grinned, and said, "OK, you were right. It IS much better in person."

We made our way to the bus, back to the motel, and home for a short night's sleep. On Saturday morning John packed his single bag, thanked us all profusely for our hospitality, and left for the airport (I gave him very careful and explicit directions). And so ended five of the more interesting and stimulating days of my life.

One item John wanted to accomplish on his travels was rounding up some science articles, of which he had no backlog at all. He asked me one night, while sitting at the cleared dinner table, if I had any ideas. It took me about two seconds to suggest one on Skylab, the follow-on effort to Apollo NASA already had in work. After I described it in some detail, John slapped his hand on the table and made one of those executive decisions for which noted editors are famous: "Let's make it a two-parter!"

And so I came to write a two-part article on Skylab. It was a lot of work, because NASA and contractor engineers made major configuration changes just before I finished. I had to wait six months for the new data, then start all over again. But it was, eventually, a nice check.

That same evening John gave me my one and only "Campbellian story idea." He pointed out that members of a highly advanced civilization might, while on vacation and enjoying primarily physical activities – hiking, camping, swimming, etc. – be misjudged as primitives by visiting space-farers. When

I asked if he had given this idea to any one else, he looked at me and said, "It doesn't matter. If I gave it to four separate writers, you would all produce stories so different I could run 'em all!"

I wrote that story shortly after he left, and did sell it to John a few months later. "One Man Game" appeared in the February 1972 issue of *Analog*.

John W. Campbell died next year, on July 11, 1971, apparently of a burst blood vessel. He had just turned 61. I have no real understanding of what his physical problems were while here, but it was clear he had serious health issues.

I did get one hint. John told me his doctor had informed him he had two choices: stop smoking, or die. Instead, he did what only a person of idiosyncratic thinking and iron will could: he limited himself to two cigarettes a day. Early in the morning and late in the afternoon, he stepped outside our front door and stood in the carport, leisurely enjoying a single cigarette; always in a very long holder. His doctor had also said that two a day wouldn't do any further harm to his already damaged lungs. The number of people who could maintain such a regimen, with a substance as addictive as nicotine, are few and very far between.

Before we left for the WorldCon in Boston over Labor Day in 1971, I received a call from Kay Tarrant, John's long-time assistant editor. She knew we were stopping in New York on our way, and asked if I could come by the office and write the blurb for the Skylab article, which she was then copy-editing; she didn't feel competent to handle the intro. So I sat in John Campbell's editorial chair, used his typewriter, and wrote the blurb; took all of perhaps five minutes.

I don't think any of John W. Campbell's editorial ability rubbed off on me from that brief physical contact, nor any of his brilliant and highly creative imagination. Certainly none of the personal quirks and foibles that made him a fascinating and highly individual human being. But though Nita, Rosy and I met a lot of fascinating people during the three-day parties we threw for most of the manned Apollo launches – there was not, and will never be, another John W. Campbell.

NOTE: This article is based largely on personal memory, and verified by the recorded facts and dates available. Any errors of fact, feeling or impression are entirely the responsibility of the writer.

SLICK CRACKED GLASS SPECTERS

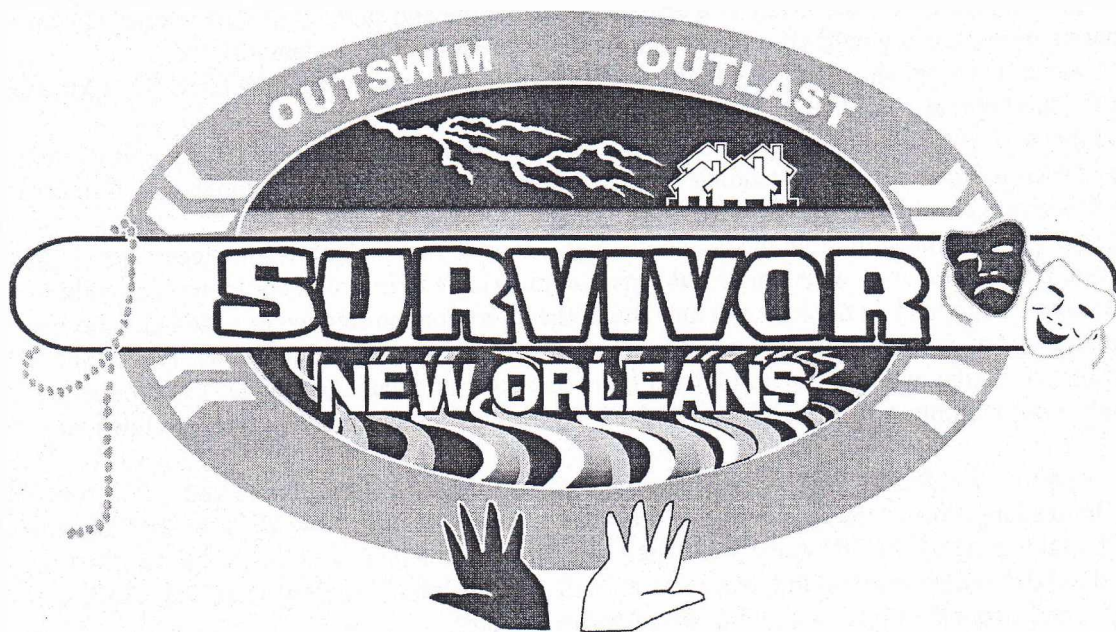
Mike Estabrook

bony specters rose
up from smoldering splintered coffins
made of black ancient wood

specters gray, shimmering with
shrouded faces, misshapen heads,
soundless in the wispy mists

thick dull bleary-edged apparitions
floating listlessly through swirling
spaces in the swelling smoking night

slick cracked glass specters and me
me alone, pressed helpless against
the cold windowpane, staring
confused and needing to know



DENNIS DOLBEAR

Illustrations by CHARLIE WILLIAMS

I. Overture.

The rain lashed your face like a cat-o'-nine tails. The wind was enough to break off large branches and even the smaller trees like they were matchsticks. The combined effect was fury

--and that wasn't the leading lady, only her handmaids. If I had only known at that time -- when the above conditions were occurring -- I'd have had time to be afraid.

II. Ordeal by Water.

Katrina made her entrance in suitably diva fashion. She broke the doors of my house *out of their frames*. The pressure of the water was so great that even though the locks and seals held, the frame couldn't -- and the water poured in in a flood tide.

I grabbed the hand of my mother -- 84, and by no means well -- and led her outside. This wasn't just a matter of fighting the in-rushing water, although that was a problem. The difficulty was something I'd never heard discussed in all the talk of "what to do in a flood": the fact that everything in

your house -- furniture, appliances, tables, bookcases, beds, and even your refrigerator and freezer -- *floats*. And that is a danger, because tall items, like the refrigerators and the china cabinets -- fall over -- perhaps on you, crushing everything beneath. And when the water has risen a little more, it becomes a potentially-deadly maze of floating hulks that shift and bob treacherously with any current -- including the wake of your body wading by.

But there wasn't much time to think of that. We had only minutes -- seconds -- to act. There were only two choices left -- risk the fury of the storm outside or go for the attic.

I over-rode my mother's choice and we went outside, past the crashing ruin of my house, as china cabinets and other furniture upended, spilling their contents of decades of family treasures, decorative objects, and worthless tchotchkes into the water. There was reason -- I'd -- we'd -- been through hurricane Betsy, so long ago, and I'd heard, and had nightmares about, folks drowning, being trapped like rats in the rising water, in the

very attics of their homes. The water was rising so fast – there was no indication it could not go higher than the roof – and so fast that to break out of the attic would have been impossible. We went outside and took our chances.

Our first refuge was under the front porch overhang, reasonably sheltered from the storm, standing on a ladder. That didn't last very long. The water was soon rising about our shoulders, and showed no sign of slowing.

We then took the only refuge left. We went into the water – now over 9 feet high – and clung to the gutters above, in a 125 mile-per-hour wind and swift flood. (My mother is nothing if not tough.) After a short while, I moved to a tree outside, with flexible branches that I could crouch in. From this spot, I could relieve the stress on the gutter – already starting to bend – and be in a position to save my mother if she should let go – which she almost did, several times and did, once – I dived beneath the water and pulled her, with strength I got from who knows where. But she held, and I held, and we endured about two or maybe three hours in the full wrath of Katrina. I will never forget this, not as long as I live, and mere words seem inadequate to describe the storm's power – and how small, how vulnerable it made you feel.

But after a few hours, the wind abated, and – could it be – the water actually started to drop. I checked again, mentally marking the water height against the bricks – yes, yes! it was dropping! We might not die after all! Our danger had passed. Optimist. If only I knew....

After a time, I paddled over from the tree and got my mother-still hanging on for dear life (for once, not a figure of speech) and moved back under the overhang of the porch, where we once again stood on the ladder. The wind – still fierce – nearly froze our wet bodies. After awhile, when I was certain that the flood had really crested, we were actually able to move past the front door, back into our drowned house and ruined possessions, and gain access to the attic. Drowning was no longer our immediate

problem.

It would soon be replaced by others.

III. Ordeal by Heat

Up in the attic, without power, it was dark as the lowest pit of hell and almost as hot. But something else it was: dry, and for that we were grateful. As the afternoon wore on – this was about six – I heard a sound I first greeted as the sweetest in the world: a chopper's whirlybird *whupwhupwhup* ... passing near overhead. Wonderful! We'd be saved! I went outside again, leaving my mother in the attic, making my way through the up-upper chest high water in the house, and made it outside to the ladder. As choppers went by, I waved, but none stopped, although one – at the intersection of the next street, New Castle, seemed to hover for a few minutes. Hopeful sign – surely they'd be back. As night fell – and I could for once, see the stars above the darkened city – I was hopeful. Tomorrow, tomorrow, we'd be airlifted out of this place – or, as the water would surely fall further as they turned on the pumps, walk out.

I climbed into the stifling attic, crawled over to a vacant space on the boards, and fell into a blessed sleep from sheer exhaustion.

IV. Day of Despair

I awoke – who knows how many hours later, time, as we usually reckon it having ceased to exist – with a ray of light coming through the housing of the attic exhaust fan. I dragged myself over to the stairwell opening and gazed down, hoping that there would be only a small amount of water left.

I was wrong. The water hadn't fallen an inch – as verified by the scumline forming on my wallpaper – from last night. That was a very bad sign, for it meant that the pumps were not in operation, and that the drop in the water level from yesterday was simply due to the wind's abatement.

My first task was to get us some water and if possible, food. Food was secondary, I knew you could last for days

without it, but water – clean water, there was too much of the other kind – was a different matter. Fortunately, I located a floating foam ice chest with a bag of ice inside and – joy – some frozen fruit salad I had the idea of taking out the night before. We had water, and food. I got it up the stairs to my mother and proceeded to work my way to the front door...

I moved through the shifting maze of our furniture – the giant TV that was my mother's main entertainment floating tube down like a colossal iceberg – pushing aside stereos, couches, credenzas and who knows what else, moving through scummy, foul water and a house with a subtle, but growing fetid odor, and emerged –

– into a scene of, well, beauty.

The sheet of water stretched out over the neighborhood and was utterly still, undisturbed by even a ripple from the breeze, which was nonexistent. The beautiful southern sun, a fountain of gold, poured through the remaining trees, and the entire surface of the water, like a mirror, reflected the trees, and the sun, and the sky, and the clouds, and the houses....

...the houses? Right, which brought me around – this was the drowned world, eerily quiet as I'd never heard my neighborhood before, without even the distant whoosh of the I-10. Nothing. It was the bizarre, and beautiful, and sinister, calm after the storm...

I felt utterly alone, but I called: "ANYBODY OUT THERE?!" And, thank God, got answers – "Yeah, over here!" "Where?" "Here! I can see you...we're over on Barchester Street!" And another party answered from the house on New Castle that the helicopter had hovered over yesterday. We all called out, confirmed how many – two on Barchester, two on Coventry (us) five on New Castle – and all swore that if rescued, they'd make sure the rescuers knew about us too. It made me feel better they'd have to get somebody now, all we had to do was wait.

And wait, and wait, and yell and wave towels and anything else at the numerous passing helicopters. I knew why so

many passed overhead; our house isn't far from the Lake Front airport, and that is the location of the Louisiana Air National Guard's base – which is where the copters would refuel.

But surely someone would come for us, so, I spent the day on the ladder, trying to attract attention, or moving through the increasingly foul water either to check on my mother – she was holding up fairly well, considering – and scouting as much of the neighborhood as I could. We were surely almost alone, and every house had damage – doors and windows blown in, all flooded, everything ruined.

And so the day progressed, without knowledge of actual time, until – glory be! A helicopter was hovering over New Castle ! Were they – YES! – they were hovering to pickup the family there! We'd soon be saved! *Thank God.* I called to my mother that this was it, be ready to move when I called to her. The rescue was fascinating to watch, as the helicopter hovered and circled and hoisted the New Castle family up, and when they were finished, they...

... roared off and left us. Left us in a silence and a heat and a stench that was in every way more oppressive than before.

.But – oh, joy – they returned about an hour later, surely, they were returning to...

... no. They picked up a family a few streets down. And later, another. And then another. And each time they would circle, and I'd wave and yell and curse and nothing, nothing would happen. And this went on until dark

If we thought it was hot on Monday night, Tuesday night was almost unbearable, because Katrina had at least cooled things off for Monday. Tuesday – the attic was like spending the night in a sauna, bathed in your own sweat, and in the utter darkness, so profound it was equivalent to utter blindness. My mother was still game, still holding up with the defiant courage that has been the hallmark of her life, but there is only so much the willing, but aged and somewhat sick, flesh and spirit can do. And she was reaching that limit rapidly, I could see that. I finally drifted off to sleep, without rest, after

deciding what we would try on the morrow.

IV. Swim for your life

We had to escape this watery hell, this prison where you could either be in the stifling attic, and risk heat prostration, or in the water, which was quite cold, and in which, if you spent most of the day, you would surely risk hypothermia, if not much worse – the water, stagnant, was becoming the toxic soup that was always feared, as the rotting vegetation mixed with an array of chemicals from houses, boats, etc, to float on the top of the murky green water, I quickly acquired a coating of motor oil when I swam through a slick floating in my hallway.

We had to make a run for it, because if we waited, and help did not come today, I feared my mother would be too weak to escape on Thursday. Today had to be the day. We came from our sweat box refuge into a morning of dazzling and eerie beauty like before. I left my mother to stand on the ladder and try to attract the attention of the helicopters – fat chance – while I scouted out a plan of escape.

It was daunting. My street was tough enough, but when I rounded the corner and saw the broad watery expanse of what was New Castle Drive stretching on for blocks, and blocks, I realized that it was going to be tough enough on me – and my mother, even clinging to a board, definitely would not make it. But there had to be something. And as I was going, my eye caught sight of a thing that was to have some importance and so – but, as my mind is wont, it filed it away for future reference.

I tried almost anything I could to get my mother something that she could float on which I could tow her to safety. And nothing worked. One table merely sank, a door floating well enough on its own, sank under even my mother's almost-negligible weight. Nothing. At that point, tired, I told my mother to keep an eye out, and went over to visit the boys on Barchester. I moved through the deep water of the street itself with a foam float in front of me, keeping my face out of the dangerous water, trying to paddle with one arm.

My Barchester neighbor was on his roof, with a large white flag he'd improvised from a sheet and a long broom handle. I greeted him. "Any luck?"

"Nah. They keep passing by."

"Same here...and my mother's sick, I'm getting desperate."

"Well, we tried to launch my neighbor's boat," he commented sourly, gesturing at a hull barely visible beneath the murk. "Sank right off ... must've had a hole in it somewhere."

At that point, the bit of information I referred to earlier – filed away in the subconscious – kicked in.

"I know where there's another boat," I said.

My neighbor looked me right in the eye. "Lead us to it."

And so we started off, me leading on my foam board, my neighbor's brother following in a life jacket, and my neighbor paddling using some giant foam cylinder as support. We didn't have too far to go – just around the corner, and there we found out whatever neighbor owned the boat, he'd neglected to lock the boat itself. So we proceeded to borrow the watercraft, with the aid of one of the brother's clasp knife. He, by the way, is an ex-Marine. As he pointed out to me (not sarcastically, but...) all this wasn't such a big thing when you train in the Carolina swamps.

After a bit we had a boat, but not motor power – the big Evenrude was key-locked. No matter though – we could pole it through the streets, Venetian-style. (I made a point of singing "O Sole Mio".)

Even if the boat was a problem – it took considerable force to move such a heavy craft – one thing was important: two life jackets, one of which I fastened on my mother's back. It's hard to describe, but the act gave me great relief, since it greatly decreased her risk of drowning. And soon enough, the Barchester neighbors had retrieved some of their goods, and came poling the boat up our street. The Marine brought the craft almost to the ladder, we transferred my mother to the boat ("Hold tight, mama, I've got you", the Marine said)

and the next thing we were poling/pushing /towing the boat through the water, down New Castle towards the lake and higher ground.

And it was while we were paused, transferring boats and passengers, that one of those random incidents that mean so much occurred: at that point, since it was the intersection of two large streets, we had an unobstructed view to the south. And while we were working, the ex-marine suddenly shouted "Look there!" and pointed directly to the south: a large jet with distinctive blue and white markings was flying low over the city. "That's *Air Force One*!"

Thank God. George Bush, I cursed you before, but now I bless you. The Federal cavalry is here and things will soon be ok.

And then I realized....

The main airport is to the west of us, and the jet is proceeding east. He's not coming here. The sonof a bitch is just flying by....

...and now, George Bush, I curse you again, and if I had known, at the time, that it took a disaster of this magnitude to get you to cut short your vacation by even one day, and while I and my mother, and thousands of my fellow Orleanians were sweating, thirsting, starving, dying, up in our attics, *you were playing guitar*-- a fiddle would have been more appropriate -- on you ranch, I'd have cursed you worse than ever, you loathsome excuse ...

....pardon. But to paraphrase that great American, Micheal Corleone, this isn't business. It's personal.

As I pushed, I saw something curious in the water, and pulled it out -- a pool cue, and expensive, if I am any judge -- and threw it in the boat. Not much, but when your total possessions consist of a pair of eyeglasses, a pair of boxer briefs, a scrub shirt, and a cheap pair of Wal-Mart shoes, the acquisition of that pool cue probably tripled my net worth, maybe.

My mother sat in the bow, impassive, erect, like a Czarina going into exile (simile is not that far-fetched) along with the Barchester dog. A problem was that this boat, too, took on water, and after a while we split

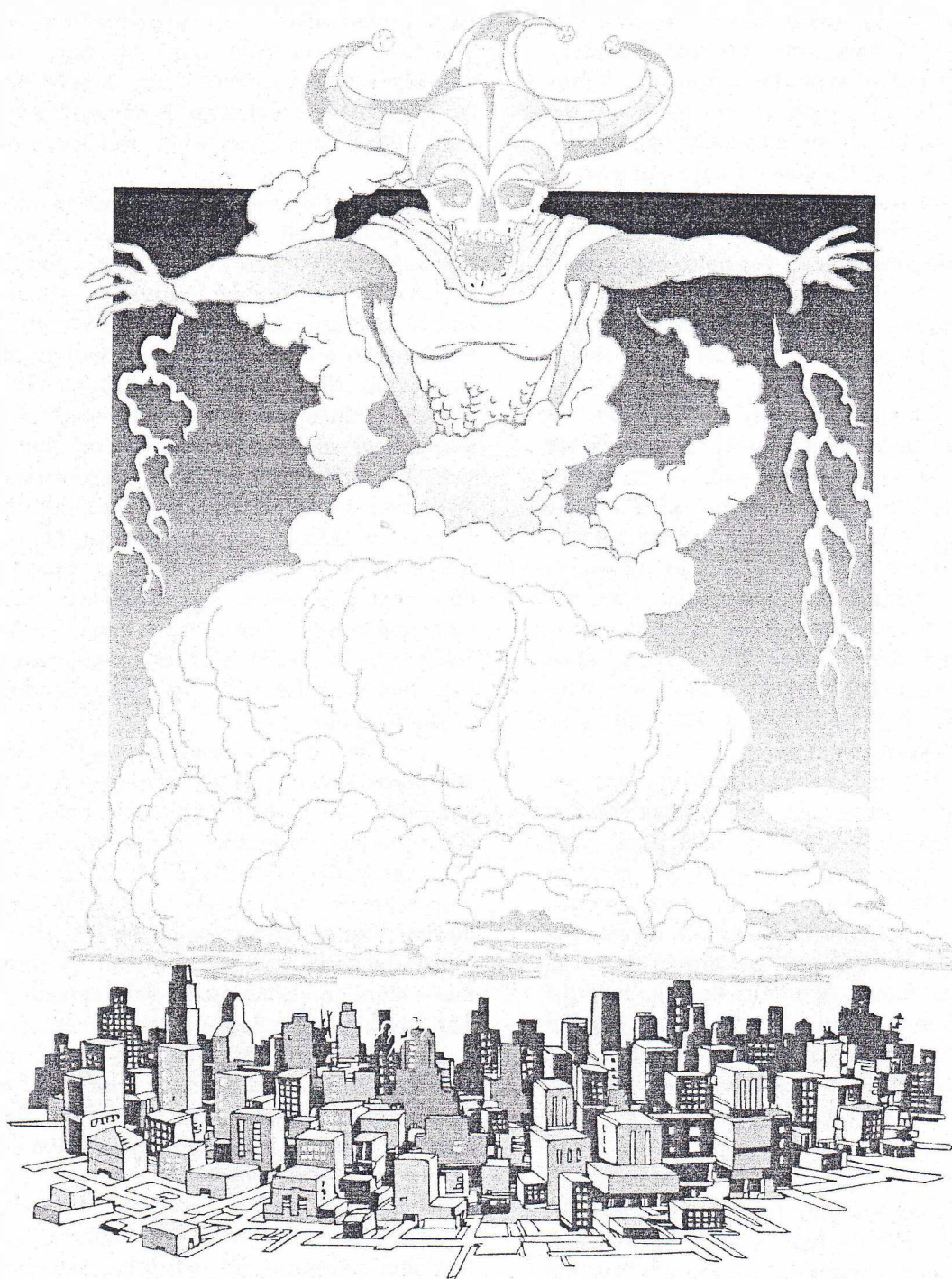
the task three ways: one person pulls on a rope in the water, one pushes from behind, and one bails. And so we made slow, but steady progress. And lo and behold what do we see a few blocks down but -- another boat! And so ensued another lengthy delay -- which we needed, because pulling these things through the water is exhausting work -- we "borrowed" the new boat, transferred our cargo onto the newer, smaller, and lighter craft, and proceeded towards the lake and high ground.

We made it eventually to Wales street, which marks a crest of a sort of ridge -- the ground is much higher there, and the water was shallower, about waist high, and we could walk without much difficulty. At this point our companions took leave to investigate -- you guessed it -- *another* boat. So, I simply looped the rope around my chest in a harness, put my shoulders forwards, and head down, and did my best imitation of a canal boat mule, pulling the skiff, my mother, and Vic the dog.

And arriving at last at Downman and Hayne, where -- glory be, there was dry ground -- well, damp and muddy, but no standing water. And there I saw something that indicated to me the true scope of the problem -- people, walking on the levee -- the same levee Katrina had over topped -- walking out of the flooded neighborhoods, coming, in twos and threes. I thought we were the only abandoned ones -- it seems there were many. We staggered over to the shade of a tree, and collapsed.

And as a sign that our luck -- beginning with the boats -- was keeping strong: someone had left an ice chest with food and drinks -- particularly several "energy drinks" under the tree for other wanderers. We helped ourselves, and never was food or drink so sweet.

But I realized that I couldn't rest long -- this was no place to recover. And I had another obstacle that confronted me: the "pick-up" point, other refugees indicated, was under the Hayne overpass. But to get to it, you had to climb a railroad levee, very steep and coated with sharp stones -- and I'd lost my shoes on the way.



But it had to be done. I didn't want to die here, in the heat and the mud after escaping from our watery prison. And so telling my mother to stay put – she could

never make it up that hill – I attacked it with the determination of Hillary assaulting Everest.

And it was nearly as tough. If I

didn't have the pool cue as support, I'd not have made it. But for every two steps I slid back – cutting open feet, hands, and knees each time, till I was bloody – I made three, and I finally surmounted the trestle, the cue breaking in two with the last effort.. It was only about 50 yards from there to the underpass, but in my exhausted condition – no food and little water for days – it seemed like miles. But I made it at last, and begged the officer there to help my mother. He was a good man; he radioed for help, and a skiff brought her under the trestle and to me, and our reunion was heartfelt – I thought for a while there she'd not be able to make it across.

But her infirmity – age and her recently-healed pelvis – were to work to our aid. Being sick, she and I got prior evacuation, along with some other elderly and sick – to the nearby campus of the University of New Orleans. While we waited for the medical van, we talked with our fellow refugees, and got the same story over and over again: heard the copters, none stopped, decided to make a run for it. Our story, and had we known it at the time, the story of thousands more.

The medivan showed up, and we piled in – one man, wheel-chair ridden, who'd been evacuated by boat after being stuck in his second story apartment for days – was lifted into the van by brute strength. And so the van slowly pulled off, leaving our neighbors behind, and we drove off to an uncertain future. We felt, though, that the worst was over. In a sense it was, but our concurrent sense that we were out of danger, or through with suffering, was utterly incorrect.

V. Evacuee

I kept hoping for some sort of quiet refuge – cots, maybe, cheese sandwiches, some medical attention. Maybe UNO would provide it.

Fat chance. It was all the chaos – and the litter – of the last hours of a Jazz Festival. Hundreds of people baking in the heat, garbage everywhere, and the roar of helicopters taking off and landing. And we

were close to exhaustion.

But once again, our luck held, and we encountered another angel – that is, a person who gives help “unlooked-for” as Tolkien puts it. And this was the most unlikely – a tattooed biker who looked like he would have been more at home in a bar fight than doing rescue work. But looks oft deceive...

...and after I was referred to him, and mentioned my mother was sick, he took particular attention to us, and got us food – Lunchables, but hey, he tried, some shoes – China-made slippers, and most importantly, a reference to a Red Cross nurse handling the evacuation. She quickly triaged my mother and determined she should receive priority evacuation, along with “only one family member” – no problem, that was only me. We wait for the next helicopter, hopefully to take us to safety – no one was saying just where we were going. My mother went on one copter – some panic as we were separated again – but another angel, Bryan Johnson of the Texas Air National Guard. He kept his promise – I was on the next Blackhawk out.

The roar was deafening, but I could still sense the gasps as we lifted over the city and everyone saw, for the first time, the scope of the devastation. Almost the entire city was under water. The whole city was inoperable. It might as well have been hit by a nuclear weapon. What would be left of our lives? But there was no time to worry about that – more immediate issues were at hand.

The Blackhawk landed at a spot I knew well – the intersection of I-10 and Causeway Boulevards, near the house in which I grew up and co-incidentally, the site of my first auto accident, so long ago in that summer before college. But now it wasn't the tidily kept expanse of green – now it was a crowded, seething mass of hungry, hot frustrated humanity, for which the only term appropriate could be

VI. Refugee.

This was out of the third world. No food, little water, no toilet facilities, no sleeping arrangements other than the baking

hot asphalt...but there was medical attention, and my mother's condition allowed us into the critical triage area. There, her various problems – borderline diabetes, her breast cancer, her recently healed pelvis, got her some attention, and it was only then, and only as an afterthought, that I asked them to look at my toe. I had cut it earlier – when, I'm not sure, and it had been down in that cesspool that was New Orleans East for all day. It was somewhat swollen, and was starting to hurt. I showed it to the nurse attending my mother. And when she looked at it, I knew I had a problem.

She called over another assistant. "Infection's spreading fast," she said. "Any more antibiotics?"

"No – out hours ago. None expected until tomorrow," he replied.

She looked at me, and gravely. "This infection's bad – it's spreading past the toe. We have no antibiotics. All we can do is give you this" – she handed me a small plastic pail "and put your foot in a bath of hydrogen peroxide. When you get where you're going, have it looked at immediately. You're probably going to lose that big toe, but maybe they can save the foot."

Oh, *God!* But again, there wasn't time to dwell on stuff like that. We had to get out of here. And again, my mother's appearance – which seems to cause the most unlikely people to want to help her – worked in her, if not our, favor. A doctor, seeing her advanced exhaustion – and some sort of infection that caused pus to leak from her eyes – put her on the next bus, a special medical transport, to Baton Rouge, where the Pete Maravich Center had been converted into a medical facility. The doctor promised that I'd be on the next bus there. As it pulled off, I felt anxiety – separated again – but also some relief. She was going to be taken care of, I could, for a little while, worry about myself and my condition. I went over to a pile of cardboard box lids and sat down, back against a truck, too exhausted either to move or to sleep, but merely watched the maelstrom of activity around me: buses, ambulances, pulling up, loading, departing, trucks, helicopters, roaring in, taking off, and

the seething mass of humanity on the other side of the road, awaiting evacuation as well.

"You look wiped out" a voice from next to me.

African-American dude, rangy, tall. I agreed.

"Had it tough?" Yeah, and I gave a brief rundown. He, too, had to walk from his neighborhood, but the water wasn't so bad there. And then, came a moment I'll always treasure. "Want some cold water?" I nodded, trying to rise when he just said, "you lie still. Watch my pack." He disappeared, and returned a few minutes later with some bottles of very cold spring water, which I accepted with the same eagerness that Ben-Hur accepted the drink of water from Christ at Bethlehem. I think I not so much drank, but actually *inhaled* the first bottle. And one lesson: the best things in life are the simplest. I never enjoyed champagne so much as that drink.

And maybe I got a quarter hour of sleep. But after a few hours some more buses arrived, and, hearing that they were going to the Maravich Center, got in the line, and boarded.

I sat down in my underwear and scrub shirt in the freezing bus, my foot still in the peroxide pail. I tried to make the best of it, and soon a very nice woman sat down next to me. She was a fellow evacuee, who had been at the Superdome. She'd volunteered for the Red Cross, and got priority evacuation when it was – and this was ominous – it was determined that the safety of her and the other Red Cross workers could "no longer be guaranteed," the first inkling I or probably anyone else had of the hell that the Superdome was soon going to become. But that was not yet, and we chatted amiably. We traded stories: of my confinement, and escape, and of her Superdome experiences. The experience she said of panic gripping thirty-thousand sum-odd people when the roof started to strip away was indescribable.

And even she was an angel; she shared her blanket with me on the trip. Warm and dry, I managed to doze off again, if fitfully. I awoke some time later, the bus still rolling on in the dark. "Not in Baton Rouge

yet?" I murmured. She sleepily replied. "Our destination's changed. We're going to the Cajundome in Lafayette. BR is full up."

I snapped suddenly awake. "What!? My mother's in Baton Rouge! She needs me! Stop! I need to get off!" But they told me to sit down, and I reflected for a minute. If buses were available, I could get back to BR, and my mother was surely in good hands. I'd proceed on to Lafayette, and make my next move from there.

We arrived at the USL Cajundome – the basketball arena, now a refugee center – when it was still dark. It was so early in fact, that there were no services available – no blankets, no mats, no food, no nothing. I managed to find a military MRE – vegetarian manicotti – and ate it without the formality of heating. Then, worn out and pretty much at the end of my rope, I collapsed for an hour or so on the cement floor. What the morrow would bring, I had not the energy to care.

VII. Refuge.

The next morning, I arose, stiff as a board from lying on the concrete, filthy, hungry, but – for the moment at least, out of immediate danger. But now to see to my own health.

My high blood pressure got me admitted to see a physician when they arrived at 8 a.m. First, the foot, and the news was very good. There obviously had been infection, but it seemed on the mend; he didn't think I was going to part company with my big toe, much less my foot. The pressure was high, but he was able to provide me with substitutes for my usual meds, thus taking care of that problem.

Now to try to get out of here and back to Baton Rouge. All this would have been avoided I'd brought my driver's license – I could've gone to a Bank One, withdrawn money, and rented a car. But this was going to call for more finesse.

But before that, I met an old acquaintance from New Orleans – Ronny Ricard, ex-bail bondsman and current operator of rehab facilities in NO. Like everyone else, the rich and the poor, he was

now at the mercy of the system.

What was so good about this, was that Ronnie took me under his wing and allowed me to feel human again. He's a natural-born hustler, and that's what you need in this situation. He got me some cosmetics, and I was able – oh, blessed gift – to take a *shower*, thus managing to wash off the accumulated filth/toxins/cooties of the last few days and walk like I was a decent member of society again. I also managed to latch on to some clean boxers, although I still had the same dirty scrub shirt. I went into the main arena of the Cajundome – large, strewn with mattresses and my fellow ex-Orleanians, and strangely quiet because noise was absorbed by the ceiling space. And there, my first hot meal – beef stew – in days. And another angel – who let me use her cell phone to contact close friends, the Lillians, in Shreveport. I tried to arrange for some wired funds. That failed, due to some problem with Western Union, but Guy and Rose said that they'd try to drive down to rescue me tomorrow late. Thank God, I said, the angels are working overtime. But before Guy and Rose could arrive, or even leave, there was to be another intervention.

But first since I'd seen him, Ronnie had been working hard on my behalf. He had gotten pillows, blankets, and finally, the *piece de resistance* – an inflatable mattress. In the Cajundome, this was luxury, and I was actually able to get some real sleep. That air mattress was a pleasure worthy of Sybaris.

VIII. Rescue.

One thing I have to say If you're going to be a refugee, be one in the Cajun country. No cheese sandwiches here. Cajun chili for dinner on Thursday, and turkey-rice dressing, jambalaya, and red beans and rice for lunch on Friday. And it was on Friday that fate took an unexpected turn. I was sitting down, plotting what had to be done if Guy and Rosie came for me – mostly, get to Baton Rouge to find mom, wherever she might be, when Ronnie came running back with a paper, which I still have and will treasure all my days. **DENNIS DOLBEAR**, it read in caps, and had the message: mom

was safe in Baton Rouge, and was trying to find me. Thank God! It even listed phone numbers, but we couldn't get through right away – but this was a solid piece of information, now we had something to go on. Things were really looking up. Ronnie said that he'd just been walking downstairs when he saw a young man holding the sign. He told him that he knew me, was staying with me, and would give me the message. The young man said he had to leave, but would relay my whereabouts to others.

And sure enough, more angels arrived, this in the form of a lovely young woman named Regan Hall and her brother, Pike. I almost asked him if he was related to the famous Pike Hall, justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court. I didn't, thinking the question absurd. (As it turns out, he's his grandson.)

They informed me that they were here to rescue me; I asked if Ronnie could come along – it was a debt of honor – and they, wonderfully, agreed. We piled into their SUV and pulled away from the CajunDome. Saved. *Saved. Saved.*

On the way, Regan filled me in: she was pre-med at LSU, and had been volunteering at the Maravich Center. What she'd seen there definitely tested her resolve to be a doctor, but also toughened her, too: not many pre-meds have a familiarity with the "black tag" room, that repository of definitely terminal patients who have not long for this world. But it appeared she'd handled it well – this young woman is very tough in the fibre. But she'd also convinced her mother – an RN at Our Lady of the Lake – to volunteer, and there they'd met my mother, and taken pity upon her – to the extent of actually *taking her home with them*, and making her welcome as if a member of the family. Of all of our angels, I hold these dearest, with a gratitude that is profound and a debt never really repayable. And on top of that, Mollie, the mother, sent Regan and Pike to Lafayette with orders: don't come back without Dennis. No problem there.

And so a few hours after leaving Lafayette, and two and a half days after laying on the asphalt in misery at I-10 and

Causeway, I was sitting in the lovely Regan home in clean clothes provided by neighbors, familiar suburban setting, kitchen smells, comfortable couch, sunlight slanting through the windows. One of the two seemed a dream – but which one? Did I have a nightmare, or was I dreaming now, and would any moment awake on the asphalt – or worse, in that black, stifling attic?

They were both true, though, and that just adds to the dreamlike, unreal quality of my life since Katrina entered it. In time, we met Mollie, Regan and Pike's lovely mother, and Toni, her mother, a wonderful combination of traditional granny and matriarch. Their open, unforced, simple generosity – and humanity – reduced me to blubbing sentiment. We spent one night there, eating well – pizza – and resting. The next day, we made contact with my mother's younger sister Marilyn, who was visiting my cousin Cindy, in Georgia. They invited us to stay with them – we agreed, and Cindy and her husband Donnie, in another angelic move, drove all night from Georgia to come pick up, and at that point, we must end that tale for present.

My mother and I are safe in their large house in Cartersville, and planning our next move. What that might be, I do not know. But this I know: despite everything: the storm, the nights in the attic, the risky escape, the suffering as a refugee: we were almost insanely lucky. We could have been in the Superdome, or worse, the Convention Center, where just about every horror except cannibalism occurred, or – more likely, simply dead in that attic. For that, we have many people – like the Halls, or that nameless biker, or the two guys from Barchester Street – to thank, but also maybe I gained something, I think. Because if you had described what I did over the last few days, before the hurricane, I'd not have believed it; but under stress, and difficult situations, maybe something I had in me, heretofore unknown, came out. Surely now I feel I have some right to life other than as a gift from my parents. I'm not a hero, far from it. But maybe, after all of this, I'm a little bit more of a man.

New Orleans, fall, 2005 ...

A photo taken down the street from my dentist's office in October, 2005. This was not an unusual scene. By November, most of the drowned cars had been hauled away and some clean-up was underway – but the emptiness of the neighborhoods was still almost complete.



And here's why the houses are all empty. This is an interior room at John Guidry's house, which got about three feet of flooding. The black spots on the wall are toxic mold. Touch not!



Guidry with Justin Winston outside of his home. John's rescuing what he can from his place even as workers have been stripping it down to the foundation.

JOURNEY TO MARS

by Gustavus Pope (1894)

Richard Dengrove

Who was Gustavus Pope? A physician in Washington, D.C. who wrote a book about Shakespeare. He had an even greater achievement however. I am willing to bet his *Journey to Mars* inspired Edgar Rice Burroughs' serial "Under the Moons of Mars" (1911) and the novel adapted from it, *The Princess of Mars* (1917), which was the first in his Barsoom series.

Burroughs never said, so we can never know; but I am willing to bet. Burroughs was nineteen at the time *Journey to Mars* was published. He could easily have read the book.

The evidence is that many rather unique plot elements appear in both Pope and Burroughs. Consider these.

1. In both, Mars' is ruled by nobility and kings.
2. In both, a princess takes a fancy to the Earthling hero. In Pope, it is Princess Suhlamia and, in Burroughs, it is Dejah Thoris.
3. In both there are different colored races that inhabit Mars.
4. In both, life on Mars is threatened with destruction at some point.
5. In both, there is a lot of swordplay.
6. In both, the Earthling heroes are American military officers.
7. In both, the occult enters in.

About the heroes being military officers, in Pope, there is no question: Lieutenant Frederick Hamilton is an officer in the U.S. Navy. In Burroughs, it is a slight bit more farfetched. John Carter had been a captain in the Confederate Army, and the war had ended for many years. Still, everyone referred to him as captain.

In addition to similarities I have included, there are similarities I have not included. For instance, that the villainous king tries to force the princess heroine to marry him, even to the extent of waging war against her country. In Pope, it is Prince Diavojahr. In Burroughs, it is Sab Than.

Also, I have not mentioned that, in both works, the officer hero saves this royal heroine.

The reason I have not included these is that the villain forcing the heroine to marry him was a staple of Victorian melodramas. The same is true of hero saving heroine.

While both Pope and Burroughs are similar in this way, they have written very different novels. Pope is trying to be fashionable while Burroughs is providing the reader with an escape.

Pope would be the equivalent of a jet setter these days. He was a firm believer that people should respect their betters, which he regarded himself as. Among the traits of the jet setter he had wit and a talent for making interesting observations. These traits kept me turning the pages of his novel.

Pope had an even more important jet setter trait, however: he was as fashionable as you could get for the 1890s. He was a vegetarian and had, at least, a feminist attitude. In other ways being fashionable then differs greatly from being fashionable today. For instance, he was up on his classics and erudition.

Pope was less fashionable in his science even though he claimed his novel was to promote science. His scientific views were behind the times even then. It is true the principles behind the Martian spacecraft, the Ethervolt, were in accord with the science of his time. However, his views on the evolution of planets and life were not. He does not even seem to have heard about the Theory of

Evolution and Lord Kelvin's Controversy. In addition, he is less fashionable when it comes to literature. Especially near the end, the tale becomes an action/adventure and a Victorian melodrama. I am sure the literary sophisticates of his time would have laughed him out of court.

For Burroughs' part, he does not care about being upper upper and fashionable; he wants to eat. To do this, he provides his readers with an escape. While he inserts social commentary into his novels, he does not hit you over the head with it. Nor does he take himself seriously.

You can even see the differences between Pope's and Burroughs' novels in their similarities.

1) *In both, Mars is ruled by nobility and kings.* As I said, Pope likes the idea of people being ruled by their betters. He saw the European monarchies and aristocracies as better, preserves of good breeding and virtue.

Many Americans held these views in the 1890s. They extolled the virtue of monarchies and aristocracies of Europe over the corruption of the U.S. government. Monarchies and aristocracy even seem to have been considered progressive by many; albeit, it was a rather authoritarian type of progressivism.

This is the opposite of how Europeans viewed monarchies and aristocracies; there they were considered conservative not progressive.

On Pope's Mars, good rulers insured that their subjects had not only decent homes, food and health; but a combination of videophone and television.

On the other hand, Pope thinks for himself enough to see that there might be a problem with kings and nobles. Kings and nobles actually had to be worthy people for theirs to be a better form of government. I suspect he got the idea of unworthy rulers from the Classics, from Cato or some later writer.

Unworthy rulers, like Prince Diavojahr and his entourage, who were lazy, greedy and vengeful – “who brought high taxes and war” – could make life dreadful. In fact, they could bring down the wrath of God.

Burroughs, by contrast, had a completely different take on the monarchies and aristocracies that rule Mars. They were not the preserves of good breeding they were for Pope. They were the preserve of war and violence, like Pope's Prince Diavojahr. They resemble more closely barbarian and oriental despotism, where it is survival of the slyest and strongest.

That makes it a better setting for action adventure. Nations and people are always fighting one another for supremacy.

3) *Another similarity between the two novels is race.* In both novels, there are different colored races that inhabit Mars. In Pope, there are red, yellow and blue races. However, even the blue races look like Earth humans.

It is no wonder Pope does this. The belief in 1894 was that evolution on all planets would converge in humans, who were the highest beings possible.

Also, there is an odd-man-out race, the descendants of refugees. Its planet had been destroyed 6,000 years before. These are giants, maybe 10 feet tall, with golden skin and purple hair. I have a vague feeling they were supposed to resemble the way Ancient Greek and Roman statues looked before the paint peeled off.

By the way, Pope calls that planet Pluto; a name only later taken by the farthest planet from our Sun.

Burroughs has three races too, but they are those on Earth: White, Black and Yellow. They resemble Earth humans too. There was somewhat less justification in 1911 except to ape the popularity of earlier Mars novels.

The similarity does not stop there. Burroughs also has an odd man out race. A green race, which is very tall and has tusks and two sets of arms. They are exotic indeed.

Despite these similarities, both Pope and Burroughs still differ in their attitude toward their races. Modern critics have complained that Pope is racist. By our standards, yes. I suspect, in the 1890s, he would have been considered fashionably enlightened on the subject of race.

It is very true he makes no bones about some races being superior and some being inferior. The

Yellow are superior on Mars and the Whites on Earth. It is also true he considers the great sin of Mars as race mixing, between the Plutonian race and the other races.

What attenuates this is that, for Pope, all races have their strengths and weaknesses. The telepathist Ascopion is blue. The race most appropriate for taming the giant Venusian leviathans are pure blood Plutonians.

Another reason Pope has been considered racist is his portrayal of the Maori sailor, John. Fate has taken him to Mars with Lieutenant Hamilton. I think critics have been too quick to make that judgment. The basis for it is that John's English verges on Pidgin. Also, he does a lot of clowning.

Otherwise, however, Pope goes out of his way to portray John as a superior man. He even has Lieutenant Hamilton characterize him as intelligent. Also, the clowning may not show John in that bad a light. When John clowns, it is with self-deprecating humor to put people at ease. At one point, he claims he is a head hunter and makes funny comments about people's heads. Everyone is amused.

At another point, John even saves the day. Early on, using common sense, he saves the life of the Lieutenant and everyone on an *ethervolt*, a space vehicle, when they are incapacitated by Pope's idea of zero gravity.

While Pope can be seen as enlightened for his age, Burroughs, as far as we can tell, is enlightened even for our age. He does it in such a way his view promotes the action and the adventure.

The hierarchy was not even as clear as it was with Pope, especially in the all important area of fighting. For instance, the green men are considered primitive herdsmen but they have rifles with radium bullets which make them the equal of more civilized city races.

This again has an action adventure function. When the races fight, you do not necessarily know who is going to win. It increases the suspense. Is there satire in back of this and strongly held views? Given that Burroughs hides his views, we can never know.

4) *In both novels, life on Mars is nearly destroyed at some point.* Pope believes in a variation of the Nebula Hypothesis. Meteors and planetoids come together to form planets. Ultimately, these planets are broken up by meteors, comets, or planetoids.

As I said, Pope's forte is the classics. His science seems to have been behind the times. His catastrophism seems a relic from earlier in the Century. Later in the novel, a comet reeks havoc. It is driving the Moons of Mars closer, and they will ultimately crash into it. This will render Mars unlivable. We never learn whether that in fact happens.

In addition to having a scientific explanation for the destruction of planets, Pope also has a moral/religious explanation. In Pope's view, Planets are threatened with destruction because of the decadence of their inhabitants, like the Prince Diavojahr and his entourage in the empire of Sundora-Luzion. While it was fashionable to attribute the rise and fall of nations to decadence, I do not know about the rise and fall of planets.

Still, the idea of the decadence and destruction of planets comes too close to being Biblical. Could religion ever be *chi chi*? I think, for many in this era, it was. For others, like Mark Twain, irreligion and sin were.

By contrast, Burroughs does not go out of his way to advocate a cosmology and he only occasionally hints at one. When he does, it differs from Pope's. Mars is an old planet that is getting colder and drier. It needs canals. In this, Burroughs, strangely for a fantasy, is more in accord with the scientific thinking of his time than Pope.

Also, old Mars has a problem with producing its own oxygen. This lays the groundwork for its near destruction. The mad scientist who makes the oxygen dies and his plant stops manufacturing it. The Martians are having a harder and harder time breathing.

Rather than using the near destruction of Martian life to preach about moral consequences, like Pope, Burroughs just used it to provide more fodder for John Carter's derring do. Again, what is fashionable in Pope is action adventure in Burroughs. In fact, Burroughs was more interested in titillation than morality. Despite Mars' apparent cold climate, he has the Martians go around naked. While others had been talking about universal nudity at the time, it still would have been a crowd pleaser.

5) *In both novels, there is swordplay.* In Pope, there is not that much, and probably no more than

would have taken place among the nobility of 1894. In fact, it is associated with his love of monarchy and aristocracy, who dueled to defend their honor. Military men like Lieutenant Hamilton did too.

In the novel, he has a sword fight with the evil Prince Diavojahr. However, the evil Prince cheats with a hidden metal vest and an electrified sword. The blackguard! Nonetheless, Hamilton wins.

Burroughs' sword play is different from Pope's. He seems to have sword fights at least once a chapter. They promote the action. Although there are plenty of more advanced weapons on Mars, there is nothing like a sword for making fighting personal.

Of course, swordfighting in Burroughs is very different from Pope: his barbarian, oriental, exotic Martians are not gentlemen and are bound by no rules.

This does not mean the Martians are bound by no rules at all. A promise is written in stone. Sab Than, prince of the city of Zodanga, forces the princess Deja Thoris to promise to marry him. When John Carter arrives, she says, having given her promise, she cannot go back on it.

However, there is a barbarian, exotic solution to this. Carter kills Sab Than. I bet Lieutenant Hamilton would have abhorred that violence.

7) *In both novels, the occult plays a part.* As I said, Pope claims to be spreading the gospel of science among the public. However, his science is out of date. His occult, on the other hand, is up to the minute. Pope says the Martians practice mind over matter and invoke spirits. Both doctrines were fashionable at the time.

The first was fashionable under the names New Thought and Christian Science. Also, there were several groups which had been promoting the invocation of spirits since earlier in the Century. The most famous was flourishing at this time, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

While Pope approves of invoking spirits, he does not seem to know much about it. However, he brings it into the plot. He has a magician of Sundora-Luzion, unimaginatively named Thaumatur, invoke them. Among other things, the spirits allow Thaumatur to predict Lieutenant Hamilton's future.

By contrast, Burroughs believes his readers are not that fashionable. They would not go in for outright occult philosophies. However, they would go in for the occult that sounds scientific, i.e., parapsychological. He has John Carter transport himself from an Arizona cave to Mars by teleportation, a paranormal talent.

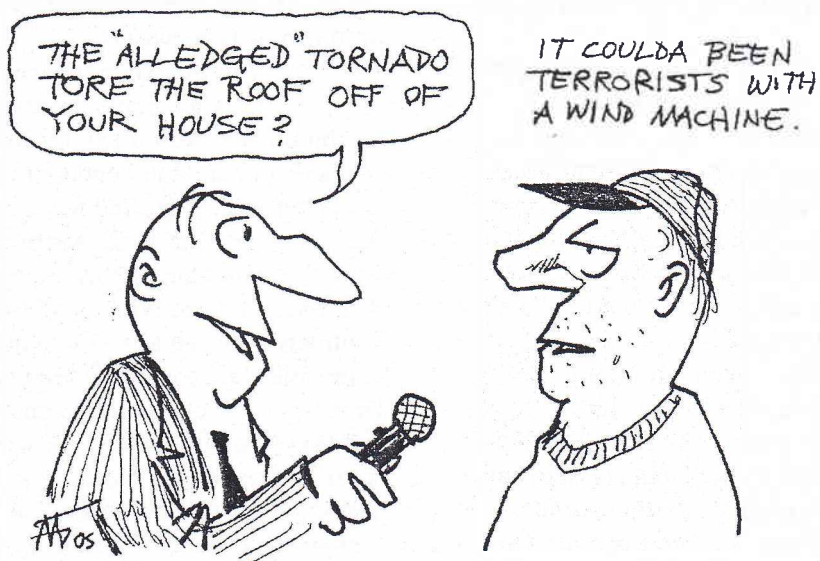
Burroughs only brings the occult into his novel indirectly. He has the Martians get their power from different colored rays. For instance, one powers Martian aircraft. To me, it is credible that a different approach to science could have developed on Mars.

However, it is hard for me to believe Burroughs did not borrow the concept from the occult system of Theosophy. That was a very popular movement of the era. According to it, there are seven rays of different colors that permeate the universe. Of course, while the Martians' rays have very material powers, the rays of Theosophy are very spiritual, representing abstract concepts like will, love, intelligence and beauty.

I have to admit, regarding telepathy, the two authors are not that much different. In both novels, mind reading plays a part. This is easily explained because telepathy has sounded both scientific and occult. In Pope, Lieutenant Hamilton and the Maori John learn Martian telepathically through Ascopion, a member of the blue race. Thus, Pope allowed them to skip the time learning Martian and could get on with the plot.

In Burroughs, telepathy appears a lot more often. John Carter finds he can read Martian minds, but only when it is a *deus ex machina*, when the action demands it to save the hero. Other times, he is clueless when the action demands that he fall pray to his enemies.

I think the seven similarities show that Burroughs borrowed elements from Pope. Of course while Pope was more interested in being fashionable, Burroughs was more interested in giving his readers an escape. Ironically, while escapes usually are ephemeral, I am willing to bet that, in Burroughs' case, because his escapes hit so many chords, his novels are still around.



It's a measure of how rotten Katrina was that talking about Iraq is a welcome distraction. Especially if it's Morrie the Critic leading the discussion ...

MORRIE THE CRITIC DISCUSSES THE WAR IN IRAQ

Alexis Gilliland

“What ought the Democrats to do about the war in Iraq?” I asked. “Advocating a pullout ASAP looks like admitting defeat, and we can hardly advocate doing more than Bush is doing to win the damn thing.” We were sitting in a booth overlooking the parking lot beside La Cantina Salvadorenna.

“As the opposition party you guys don’t have to *do* anything,” Morrie declared, resting his elbows on the yellow formica table. “And, in fact, you couldn’t if you were dumb enough to try – the Republicans wouldn’t let you get to square one. What you need to do is oppose, and the best way to do that is to tell the truth with bad intent.”

I took a sip of beer. “What do you mean?”

“Partisan politics, Max. Remember how old Newt went after President Clinton? No suspicion was left unaired, and the Newtser never quit until Clinton was

impeached. After Clinton’s acquittal, *then* he quit. You Democrats, you don’t need suspicions, because you have the public record, all the facts you need in cold [print and hot videotape, but it will still be partisan politics. What you need to do is go on the attack and make political hay out of the fact that this war is Bush’s War, it was his choice, his legacy, his gift to the American people. It was what he wanted to do, and he pulled out all the stops to make it happen. Inconvenient facts that would have aborted the war were ignored, and the people presenting them were fired, like Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki; or discredited, like Joseph Wilson, the husband of Valerie Plame, the CIA agent who was outed by Karl Rove; or ignored, like Tony Blair, who signed on early but was still unable to make himself heard.”

“One thing at a time,” I said, putting down my glass. “Valerie Plame I remember,

but what was the problem with her husband, again?"

Morrie sort of smiled and sat back from the table. "In the run up to the war, Bush gave 23 reasons for invading Iraq, and prominent among them were those alleged WMDs, the Weapons of Mass Destruction which the evil Hussein had stashed around his country. We went in, but we never found them, and the explanation for that was, well, yes, we were mistaken, but it was a reasonable mistake, given our intelligence at the time." He crunched a corn chip. "One of the supporting assertions for those WMDs – a subplot if you will – was that Hussein had tried to buy yellowcake – uranium oxide – from Nigeria, so Joe Wilson was sent over to Nigeria to check out if this had ever happened, and he reported back that no, it had not. At which point the White House, not wishing to hear the message, moved to discredit the messenger. Was this an isolated instance? No. Dick Cheney used to go over to CIA headquarters to badger the mid-level analysts into supporting the official line instead of reality, which goes a long way towards explaining why our intelligence was so crappy."

"Okay, if Cheney and Rove were out massaging the intelligence, they probably weren't the only ones, and a case can be made that Bush was given the intelligence he wanted to see, but General Shinseki wasn't fired," I replied. "He retired after 38 years, a long and distinguished career."

Morrie refilled his plastic glass from the plastic pitcher. "Testifying on the impending Iraq war, the general told Congress that the occupation and pacification of Iraq would take several hundred thousand troops, when the plan called for only 100,000. The Pentagon sent in their heavy hitters, Paul Wolfowitz (who had been advocating the overthrow of Saddam Hussein for years) and Donald Rumsfeld, to rebut and refute him. You could look it up, but I think that was when Dick Cheney, the man who lent gravitas to the ticket, declared we would be welcomed with open arms as liberators and the occupation would be a piece of cake.

There is all sorts of evidence that this optimism was pervasive."

"What sort of evidence?"

"Early on, some fool went on record saying the war would pay for itself because of Iraq's oil, and the Pentagon was talking about cutting the ground forces to 50,000 by the end of the first year. More tangibly, there were the spoils the victors expected to disburse; all those billions of dollars of contracts awarded to well-connected companies that were unable to honor them because of the continuing – and unexpected – fighting. Congress voted the money, yes, but most of it never got spent. Anyway, after all that vigorous rebuttal, came the announcement that Shinseki would be retiring in November. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said he had put in for retirement, but Shinseki said he was forced to retire when he was on the short list to head the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Why? Because if Congress had believed him, if they were going to act on his highly professional advice, Bush would have needed a bigger army to invade Iraq than he had available, and therefore the invasion would have had to be deferred if not cancelled."

"How big is our army, anyway?"

"Umm, you could look it up – about 500,000 regular Army and 700,000 reservists, I think. Given our world-wide commitments, those guys are stretched real thin with the 130,000 troops presently committed to Iraq. So a deployment of 3 or 400,000 would have been out of the question, unless you built up the size of the army first."

I ate a corn chip. "Could that have even been done?"

"As a volunteer army? Maybe."

Morrie considered the question. "Only it would have taken time. Figure that after 9/11 Bush had a window of opportunity when he could have said we needed to increase the size of our army by maybe a third, back up to the size it had been before Clinton balanced the budget by cutting back on defense spending. Because the public felt we were at war, it wouldn't have taken a big push to get it done, and Bush could have shown he was serious by raising taxes to pay for it. It

would have involved the public with the so-called war on terror, and by the time we had taken Afghanistan, you would have had all these warm bodies in the pipeline. The raw recruits would have been available to replace the fully trained soldiers going to the front while they continued their own training in the rear."

"Play differently, lose differently," I agreed. "Bush wasn't going to raise taxes, he never asked the public to make sacrifices, and Rumsfeld said you got to go to war with the army you have. Anyway, over at the State Department, all the fuss they made about policing post-invasion Iraq was ignored for the same reason they fired Shinseki?"

"It was ignored, certainly. The Army didn't want to do it because it was hard, and the Bushies were too caught up in the fun of invading Iraq to worry about the aftermath. After taking Afghanistan, Iraq was overreaching, because Bush didn't have the manpower to police Iraq after successfully invading it. But he ignored the experts at State, just like he ignored Shinseki, because he was hell bent to invade Iraq."

"And when Tony Blair tried to tell him the same thing, Bush had already decided he wasn't going to hear anything that meant he couldn't invade? That makes sense. But why did Bush want to invade so badly?"

A long sigh. "One of my editors in New York, a very intelligent lady, even if she is a New York liberal, suggested penis envy, that Bush wanted to show that he had a bigger cock than his father, who had had the righteous opportunity to invade Iraq and shamefully failed to take advantage of it."

"That's ridiculous," I laughed.

"Well, yes. And I said the same thing, only at somewhat greater length," Morrie replied, taking a sip of beer. "To which her rebuttal was that I was defending the male sex in general, but not Bush in particular, and I had to concede that she was right about my argument, even though I still disagreed with her. So then she asked me if I had a better explanation to offer, and I couldn't think of anything at the time. Nor

later, neither, as it happens. See, the problem is that if good old Dubya had been rationally motivated he wouldn't have rejected the rational argument that America didn't have a big enough army to occupy and pacify the post-invasion Iraq – a necessary condition for making a successful invasion. Which means that rationally he shouldn't have gone to war. From which it logically follows that he went to war for an irrational – a crazy reason, only for some other crazy reason than what my editor gave."

"You don't think it could have been euphoria induced by the prospect of fighting an easily won war against a hated enemy?"

Morrie shook his head. "Probably not, no. We should assume that the euphoria inducing optimism induced by Bush's inner circle was the effect rather than the cause for his decision to go to war."

"Going to war is a very emotional business," I conceded. "Nobody goes to war thinking they are going to lose, and once the die is cast hoping for the best is natural."

"So it is, Max, so it is. When Bush went prancing around on that aircraft carrier in front of the 'Mission Accomplished' sign the White House had sent along, he thought it had been, because that was as far as he'd bothered thinking," he continued. "Anyway, Bush did what he wanted to do, even if it turned out that his war wasn't going to be over until the enemy said it was over."

"So now he has to go around the country making speeches trying to drum up support for a war – his war – when support for the war is way down." He mopped some spilled beer off the formica tabletop with a couple of napkins, and set his glass on a dry napkin. "Like about 60 percent are opposed, and only 22 percent think we should stay in Iraq for as long as it takes. The people can see the war is going nowhere because that's what it's been doing since the first month or so. Speeches to friendly audiences may comfort those audiences, but do not necessarily persuade them, let alone move the rest of the country."

"Has Bush said what his objective there was? What we had to get done before we could go home?"

"Ah, Max. What the paper said was that he would never settle for 'less than total victory over the terrorists and their hateful ideology'," Morrie replied at last. "To me it looks like he is as disconnected with reality coming out of Iraq as he was going in. How can we even know when that thing happens? He also cited the number of our war dead, and compared them with the heroic dead of World War II."

I smiled and took a sip of beer. "But not to the poor bastards that got themselves killed in Vietnam, eh?"

He spread his hands and shrugged. "Well, now, in their hearts even the Republicans know Iraq isn't going to have a happy ending, and GOP Senator Chuck Hagel, a Nam veteran, has come out and said that Iraq is starting to look an awful lot like Vietnam. So maybe Bush can ignore the Vietnam analogy when the Democrats make it, but he can't ignore it when Hagel does."

"Fine fellow that Hagel is, the White House disagrees with his analysis. 'I washed a corn chip down with a swallow of beer. 'Hagel is from Nebraska, which is about as red a state as you can find. But he looks to be going with the numbers, and I expect he has a lot of support in the GOP for that reason.'"

Morrie nodded. "The GOP has good reason to be antsy, because the Democrats can hardly avoid making the 2006 election a referendum on Bush's War, and maybe Bush doesn't have to sweat re-election, but the GOP has to worry about losing a few seats here and there."

"Maybe more than a few, but what would we Democrats do if we took control of the Senate and/or the House?"

He sat back and laughed. "Rejoice of course. But that's putting the cart before the horse. First you need to oppose. You were worried that an ASAP pullout would make the US look bad? We already look bad, and acting belatedly sensible wouldn't make us look worse. Anyway, the main argument against a pullout is inertia, that we have to stay in Iraq because we're already there. Or maybe you think a pullout would be admitting defeat?" I put down my empty

glass and nodded. "No. What we would be declaring is that our beloved President, inside that bubble of his, where was heard a discouraging word, he made a boo-boo. Bush gave the army a job to do, but he never gave them the resources they needed to do it."

"We already discussed resources," I said. "At this point, it isn't possible to lay hold of them. Not with a volunteer army, anyway, and Bush has already ruled out the draft. The problem is that any pullout, whether ASAP or to some close-in deadline would damage US interests."

"For the sake of argument I will concede that point," he replied coolly, "although the US has many interests, and some of them would clearly benefit from a withdrawal. The rebuttal is that remaining in place *also* damages US interests. So you have to weigh the net losses from pulling out against the losses from staying. My sense is that the losses from pulling out are pretty much fixed, while the losses from staying will get bigger as time goes by, like that half trillion dollars the war has cost so far."

"Bush has made a career combining heroic tax cuts with incontinent spending, Morrie," I told him. "So far it seems to have worked just fine."

I got his reluctant nod of agreement. "There is also the rising death toll, currently above 2,000."

"That death toll is demographically insignificant, right?"

"Oy gevalt! You sound like a Republican, Maxele. The death toll is not insignificant to the people doing the dying, the soldiers who volunteered for the damn duty. Right?"

Puzzled, I looked at him. "And your point is?"

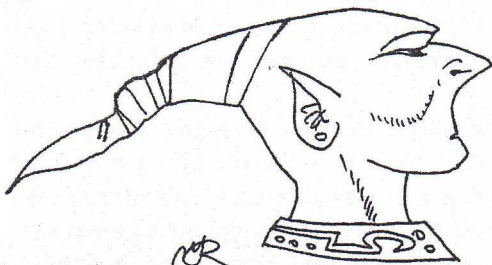
"It has to do with morale, with esprit de corps. Retired General Barry McCaffey came back from a fact-finding tour with a warning the Army Reserve is in danger of a meltdown within two years time." Morrie finished his glass of beer. "Why? Abuse is why, abuse and overuse. Some reserve units have been sent to Iraq on 48 hours notice instead of the 30 days they were supposed to

pulling. And it isn't just the reserves. In the regular army the noncoms, the sergeants and corporals who keep things running, when they finally have a chance to get out after all those repeated stop loss orders that were keeping them in after their enlistments had expired, maybe ninety percent of them are not re-enlisting, and they aren't joining the reserves, either."

"Well, they've been overworked, maybe, but it's only temporary."

"Do you think so? Try keeping that army in place until we get the total victory over terrorists that Bush says he wants, and you won't have an army. At least you won't have a volunteer army, because the soldiers, eventually they won't put up with it. Well hell, they already aren't putting up with it. As Kipling wrote, 'We had a kettle, we let it leak, our not repairing it made it worse. We haven't had any tea for a week, the bottom is out of the Universe.' Our army is leaking volunteers faster than replacements can be recruited, and if we let things go on the numbers will go down so far that the US will have to pull out of Iraq because we won't have enough warm bodies to stay in place." He caught the waitress' eye and gestured for the check. "Actually, I don't think the generals are going to let that happen, Max. Bush told them to go in, and they went in, but when they tell him the US has to pull out of Iraq for the good of the army, Bush is going to declare victory and pull us the hell out."

I left a dollar for the tip and stood up. "At which point telling the truth with bad intent would be seriously unpatriotic, but we're probably going to do it anyway."



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The co-founder of the Hugu Awards knows something about hoaxes...

SOYLENT CORP

and You

Elliot "Elst" Weinstein

Art by Randy Cleary

It is quite rare these days for any Fortune 500 company making several widely distributed food products in numerous domestic and international markets to be as absent from the public spotlight as the Soy lent Corporation has been in recent years. But with the controversial leader in the synthetic food field, no news is good news.

When the company first was founded in the early 1970's, then CEO Asmodeus Johannes (A.J.) Garner launched his company with the first synthetic food manufactured from soy and lentil by-products. He named this innovative substance Soy lent Red, which had modest but encouraging sales. A year later, Garner's researchers developed both Soy lent Yellow and Soy lent Blue. These products were introduced quietly after uneven test marketing. Although there were brief and occasionally violent protests aimed against the Blue variety, Garner was not discouraged and promoted all three varieties with equal fervor.

With the three products in place and sales at a reasonably high level, A.J. Garner convinced his financial backers to go to a much higher level. In 1973, The Soy lent Corporation embarked on a bold public relations and advertising experiment. Garner had found a copy of a little known science fiction novel by Harry Harrison that briefly mentioned synthetic foods. Playing on generally circulating fears of overpopulation and "final solutions," Soy lent Corp financed a large budget science fiction thriller loosely based on the novel and starring big name actors Charlton Heston and Edward G. Robinson. Originally, the movie carried the working title *Make Room*, but in a brilliant example of ultimate product placement, Soy lent Corp paid the producers to have the name of the film changed to *Soy lent Green*. The motion picture's popularity and easily quotable lines brought mass recognition of the entire product line. Garner's gamble paid off almost immediately. Soon sales for all Soy lent products went through the roof, but particularly the Green.

Within months, small children everywhere were heard at supermarkets screaming enthusiastically with their whining voices, "but Mommy, I want Soy lent Green, It's People! Mommy, It's People!" It flew off the shelves and into their shopping carts. In less than two months, the first imitators appeared on the shelves. This included such obvious copies as, Soynut Green, Soymix Red, Soy lac Blue, and Screaming Yellow Zonkers. During this entire period, Soy lent Corp remained a privately owned company with Garner owning 78%. Times were good for Soy lent and revenues exceeded all expectations. Unfortunately, this was not something that was going to last.

In the 1980's, health consciousness awoke the nation and all synthetic foods were considered bad news. "All Natural" and Organic were the catchwords in the food industry. Sales plummeted rapidly and Soy lent products were forced into a tiny niche market, and placed into hidden recesses of the supermarket shelf next to Tang and freeze-dried ice cream. Garner was distraught and tried any means to re-build sales. He hired some street performers, had them painted the color of Soy lent Blue and placed them in many venues to promote his company's Blue brand. This Blue man group eventually gained a perverted popularity nearly a decade later,



but did little to re-ignite the fervor that once existed for the Soygent products. Like the breweries were forced to do during Prohibition, selling yeast and malt products just to get by, Soygent Corp had to sell its patented colors to food and other manufacturers. Soygent Red triumphed incognito as Big Red Gum, Red Hot Cheetos, and Red Pop. Soygent color Green was found to possess unexpected but remarkable cleansing properties and was marketed as the popular cleaning formula Simple Green, commonly used in homes to this day. The Soygent Blue color became widely distributed in many blue-colored raspberry drinks and candies and it was also about this time that Mars Candy Company replaced the light brown M&Ms with a bright (and suddenly inexpensive) Blue. Could it truly be just an innocent coincidence that the four colors of candy promoted in their commercials were the same as the four colors of Soygent products? Despite the fact that the sales of colors kept Soygent solvent, it was not enough to save Garner's position as CEO.

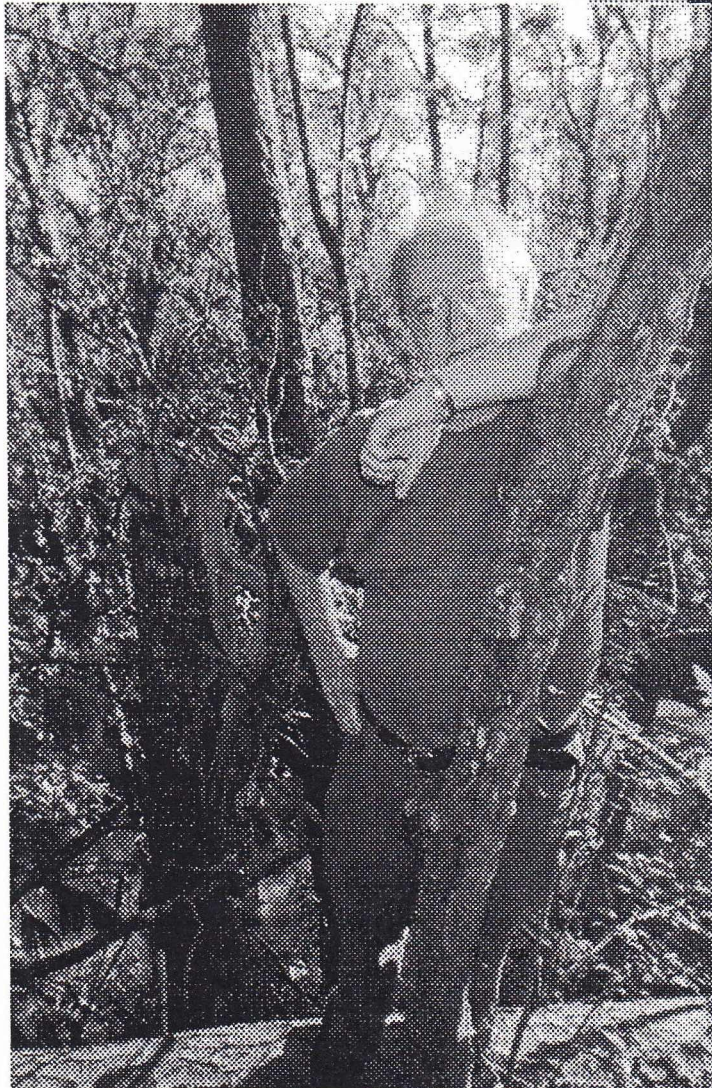
By the early-1990's, Garner was facing an angry board of directors ready to revolt and reluctantly stepped down. His replacement, the youthful yet very experienced Frank LePort, inexplicably was brought in not from the food industry, but rather from the software giant NIXtSUN in Silicon Valley. Bringing in expertise from the computer field might have seemed a bit odd for a food industry giant, but as Board Member Calvin Hastings noted, "If Apple Computer can hire a guy from some soft drink company, then we can hire a guy from a software company."

Although this move by Soygent did nothing to help sales initially, it did bring some fresh and original thinking to the company. Soygent introduced its first new product in twenty-two years, with Soygent Orange. This was followed up with the flesh tone series, Brown, Black and White. As LePort grew into the CEO position, he realized that Soygent would have to go public to raise the capital needed for expansion. He also knew that there was a vast, untapped market out there through Internet sales. The IPO for Soygent (NYSE symbol SOYL) started at \$1.50 went up to \$31 in the first three days, but dropped to a more realistic \$7.50 after that. The Soygent Corp went on to add dozens of new colors, including Beige, Purple, Gray, Mauve, Tan, Coffee, Teal, Pink and (believe it or not) Clear. In fact, the Soygent line now boasts the following new colors, Violet, Indigo, Chocolate, Cream, Scarlet, Vermilion, Lilac, Maroon, Gold, Silver, Lime-green, Magenta, Rust, Almond, Salmon, Jade, Aqua, Baby Blue, Taupe, Goldenrod, Puce, Sepia and the mysterious, Color. As usual, the Soygent Corp still refuses to give out the exact source or key ingredients of the flavorsome crackers, but there have been surreptitious leaks made to the press about some of the more exotic colors. The company spokesperson notes that any of these colors can be purchased online through the Soygent website, www.soygentcorp.com, although only the top sellers are available in stores.

So what has Soygent Corp done for you lately? It has brought to the marketplace a whole new generation of designer color synthetic foods that can complement any home or decorator scheme. In addition, it continues to utilize high-tech marketing techniques. Its tie-in with Google has been the most successful of these attempts. Just enter Soygent followed by any color mentioned above and one or more references will instantly appear for you to check out. In fact, Soygent Green is mentioned on over 127,000 pages, and even Soygent Pink is found on over 99 pages. This is amazing considering many popular children's cereals barely rate 150 pages. The company also sponsors the famous Wine and Soygent festival held in New York City each March, which draws tens of thousands of established fans and new patrons eager to sample the latest colors. Many of the award winning recipes from previous festivals that feature the product are available on the website listed above. Soygent products were featured prominently on the Food Channel last August and the company will be releasing a cookbook with tempting recipes contributed by celebrity chefs. I got to try the Soygent Salmon with Soygent Almond, Merlot and Ginger-Wasabi sauce prepared by famous Iron Chef Morimoto and it was absolutely fantastic. As CEO LePort quipped recently, "Soygent – it's not just people anymore!"

JOHN GUIDRY'S PHOTO ALBUMS

John Guidry is *the* great New Orleans fan. Among the founders of the New Orleans Science Fiction Association and the Southern Fandom Confederation, winner of the Rebel Award, founder of ERB-APA,



chairman of Nolacon II, John is also among the city's preeminent movie fans and SF collectors – friend to all, and devout chronicler of the fannish experience in the Crescent City. When Katrina came and the levee broke, he escaped – but his books, his apas, his tapes, his photos did not.

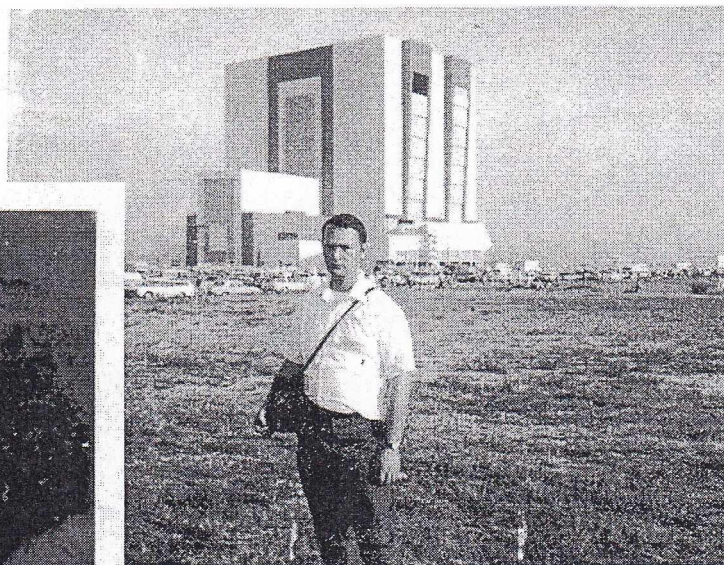
But the waters and mold that wreaked havoc on John's house did not destroy all that lay within. When John returned to his once-beautiful home, he found mold shoulder high on the walls and much that was gone. He also found much that survived – his Burroughs collection, his Sabatinis ... and three precious albums of photographs from his career in science fiction fandom.

Some of the pictures made it. Some did not. John has asked us to save his photos to disc – and given us permission to publish a few of the best. From his current, temporary home north of Lake Pontchartrain, John says, *Welcome to my world.*



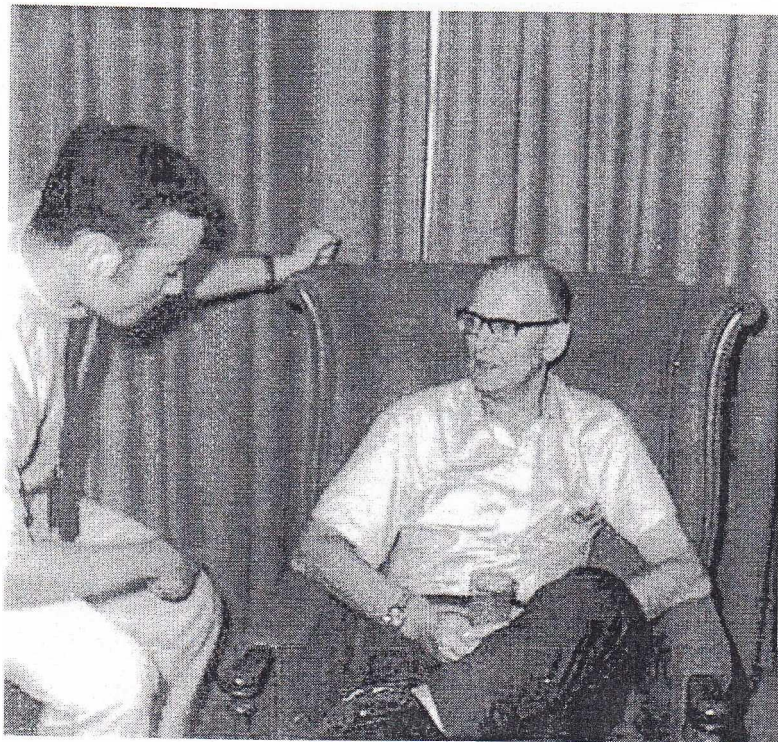
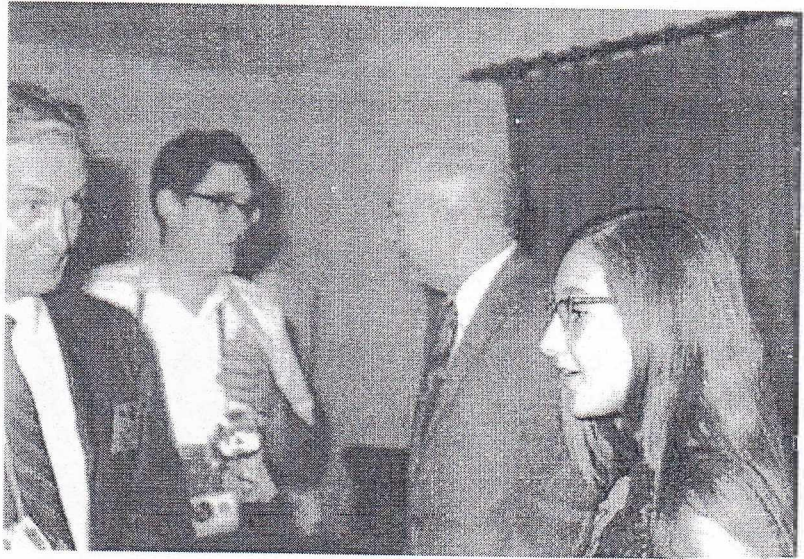
In 1968, John attended the first of many New Orleans DeepSouth-Cons. Here he's flanked by NOSFA members **Norman Elfer** and **Pete Bezbak**. The con's 68 members included Guest of Honor **Dan Galouye** and NASA pro **Joseph Green** and his 13-year-old daughter, **Rose-Marie**. *I tried to attend ... a week late.*

1968-69



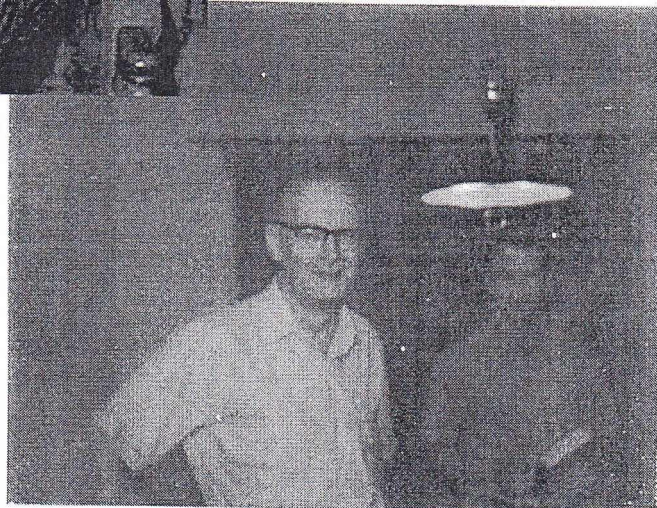
A year later, Joe Green returned the favor – inviting John and other New Orleans fans to a legendary party at his home on Merritt Island, Florida. The occasion was the launch of **Apollo 11** – and other party guests included **Arthur C. Clarke**, shown with John and **Dany Frolich**, left.

That was some soiree!
Dave Kyle was there, and
 Louisiana's **Rick
 Norwood**, as well as Rose-
 Marie's pal **Frankie
 McDonald**. Also there,
Robert A. Heinlein, who
 knew a thing or two about
Destination: Moon. Below,
 the soon-to-be-Sir Arthur
 with New Orleans' **Don
 Walsh**.



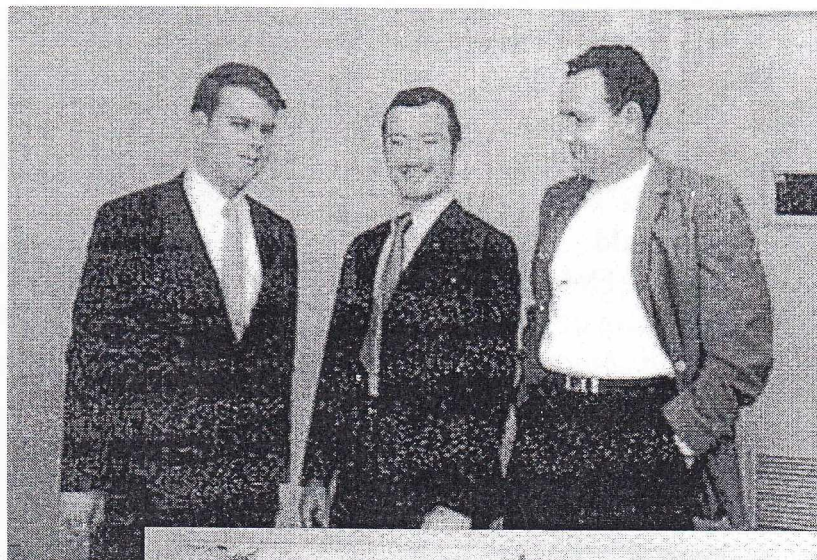
At least two classic photos
 from the Greens' party are
 missing from John's
 albums. One shows the
 good Mr. Heinlein with our
 hero Guidry, whose
 expression is priceless – but
 you can find that shot in the
 Nolacon II souvenir book.
 The other shows the 14-
 year-old princess of the
 household, and to my
 recollection, was the first
 picture I ever saw of *la
 belle* Rose-Marie.

Right, the patient
 (and photogenic)
 Arthur Clarke.



In 1970, Don Walsh hosted a Nebula banquet in the Crescent City. Here he is with Atlanta fan **Glen Brock** and the turtlenecked **Joe Green**.

It was quite a splendid affair, even if all the “Nubble-Bubbles” were presented on the west coast ...



1970

Right: from that very event, a photo that came frighteningly close to falling victim to Katrina’s toxic gumbo ... NOLA fan **Jan Lewis** (holding *Nolazine*, the club genzine), **Rick Norwood**, and the girl of my dreams ... **Rose-Marie Green**, aged 15.

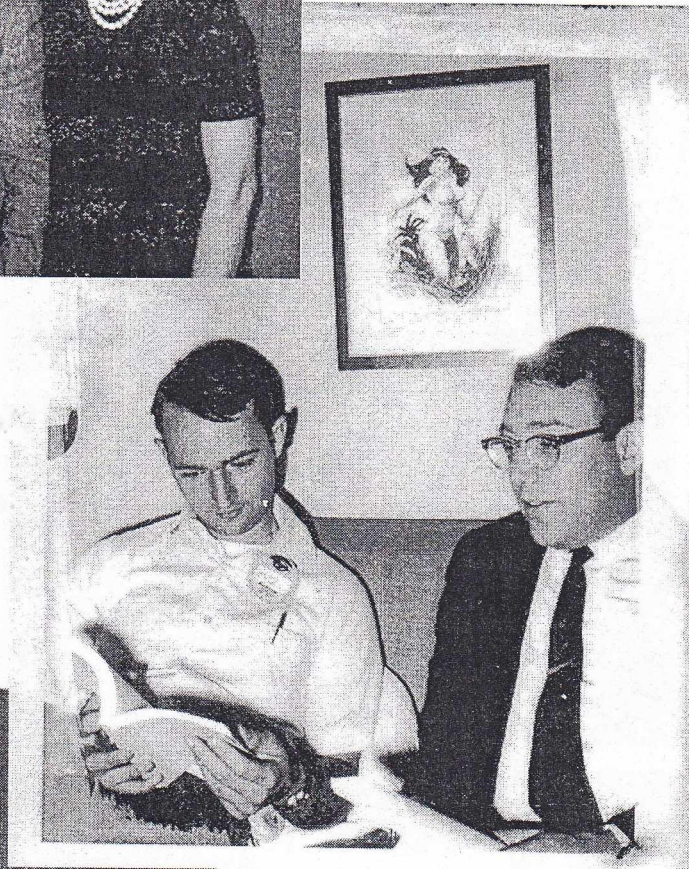


New Orleans fandom could not have been luckier in its mentor – **Dan Galouye**, author of *Dark Universe* and *Simulacron-3* – who attended with his beautiful wife **Carmel**. What wonderful, patient hosts and friends they were to NOSFAns – class acts all the way. We lost Dan in 1975, but Carmel shines on ...

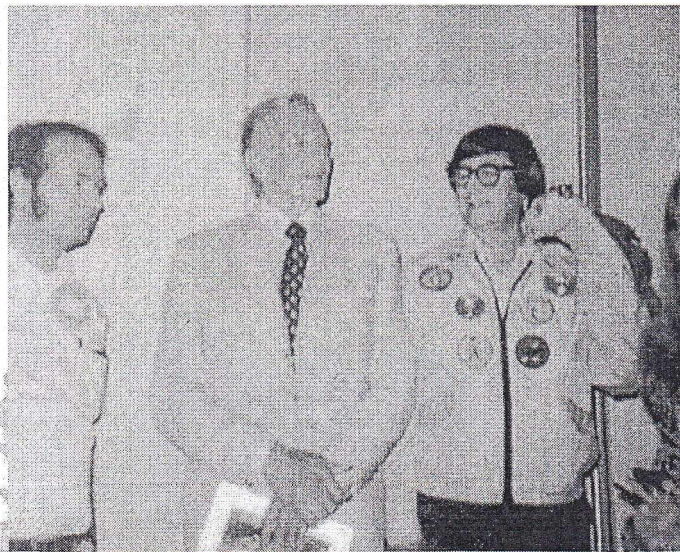


Over the years John formed friendships with some of the field's true greats. Here he is with **Edmond Hamilton** and **Leigh Brackett**.

Right, Guidry with his (and our, and your) great friend **Mike Resnick**. Note the matted Frazetta – and the discoloration from the flood.



A tremendous Edgar Rice Burroughs fan – he founded ERB-apa – John got a royal boost out of meeting the most famous movie Tarzan, **Johnny Weissmuller**.



Weissmuller may have been the most famous Tarzan, but John always preferred **Bruce Bennett's** Lord Greystoke. With them is **Bob Clampett** and **Cecil the Sea-Sick Sea Serpent**.



To demonstrate the potency of the toxic brew that attacked John's photo albums, check out **Hal Foster** – post-inundation.



Mere days before Katrina, John posed at the final **CrescentCityCon** with his contemporaries in NOLa fandom – **Norman Elfer, Anne Winston, Dennis Dolbear, JoAnn Montalbano,** and yhos. It's a different world now, but we're all still here, we're all still friends, and if John Guidry has anything to say about it, that will *never* change.

Here's a memory of New Orleans from one of the great ones ...

Morning Call

Earl Kemp

One of the first real jobs I ever had, in Chicago in the early 1950s, was working for The Pullman Company. I was a bottom rung office clerk and was working for peanuts. However, in those days, real jobs had lots of real fringe benefits and working for the railroad carried one of the most desirable, free travel almost any time and anywhere the trains ranged to.

Because I was so underpaid, I figured out a way to enhance my salary somewhat by doing an inordinate amount of that free traveling. I took a number of hesitant, exploratory trips here and there. My very first ever science fiction convention was made possible by that free travel, and the kindness of a number of BNFs who persuaded me to attend that 1952 Midwestcon in Bellefontaine, Ohio. The train only went as far as Lima, but Dr. C.L. Barrett picked me up from there and opened the door to paradise for me.

At times I would take the train to New York and visit (read annoy and bother) every significant science fiction person I could get close to, becoming friends with some of them that lasted for decades or death. Hannes Bok, John Campbell, Marty Greenberg, Doc Lowndes, hero after hero, and all the while me feeling like I was on the top of the world.

Like having a private train limo, almost: Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Detroit...the entire Midwest was luxuriously open to me.

Those bennies were almost always extended for me in a number of other ways. The Pullman Conductor on the train, depending on space available, would almost always upgrade me to a compartment or a drawing room. The railroad carrier itself would pick up my dining and bar car tabs.

While I was traveling, I was living a lifestyle far in excess of the rest of my life, enjoying accommodations and services normally beyond my reach.

And New Orleans became my most favorite of all mythical towns to imprint upon my memory up until that time. I have to confess that, over time, New Orleans became eclipsed by many other real-world mythical cities. I can even recall thinking of New Orleans as being a deeply discounted, cut-rate version of Rio de Janeiro, but that was decades afterward.

For me, New Orleans was a non-stop, weekend-long, uninterrupted party that required a lot of preparation, penny saving, and illegal subterfuge. The usual trip went something like this:

I would make application for a weekend pass to New Orleans leaving Chicago on Friday afternoon and arriving back on Monday morning. By far the best such schedule was the one on the crack Panama Limited that was an extra-fare, luxury "superflyer." It left Chicago around 5:30 in the afternoon and arrived in New Orleans at 7:30 the following morning and returning to Chicago on a reverse schedule. That would leave me making a mad dash and showing up at the office just fashionably late and sporting a hangover that was almost unnoticeable.

The only problem was, the Panama Limited didn't accept travel passes unless they were accompanied by a written request from the passholder's department supervisor. That was no problem because his secretary, who made out all the passes to begin with, could sign his signature better than he could. She did it every time I wanted to go to New Orleans and he never knew a thing about it, or that I was even out of town for that matter.

And I went to New Orleans as frequently as I could in those glorious, segregated, free white and not quite yet twenty one years. Almost everything I could think of wanting was right there, just waiting for me. I would get a room in the Monteleon Hotel right in the middle of the Quarters, insisting upon being located in the "old" section, and relax in unaccustomed luxury, the room being the single most expensive item for the whole weekend. From there, all of the French Quarter opened up just for me and I played it to the hilt on many occasions.

For some reason I feel compelled to accentuate the segregated part of the 1950s because it was very real at the time. Everywhere you turned in New Orleans, in those days, you encountered story-book cliché type costumed Aunt Jemimas and Uncle Toms, shufflefooting around their "betters" and performing every trick known to man, woman, inbetweens, and a number of domesticated animals.

And there I am:

Wandering up and down Bourbon Street from bar to bar, taking drinks along—in Hurricane glasses—out into the street as if I did that every day of my life but never did except while there. In and out of joint after joint catching musical numbers here and bits of others there: Al Hirt's, Pat O'Brien's, Antoine's...and Morning Call...

Daylight hours prowling voodoo shops and mysterious looking, smelling, and sounding weird occult hustles and pralines and scented candles and chocolate flavored high-yellow hookers and....

Taking the ferry out to Algiers just for the hell of it. Driving the causeway—thrilling experience—out into Pontchartrain ... lazying about on the lily-white beaches and getting sunburned from exposing all that Chicago skin to so much Cajun sunshine.

Daniel F. Galouye was one of the main reasons I went to New Orleans in the first place. He was a science fiction writer and I was pretending to be a science fiction fan so it worked out well for both of us for a bunch of years from within the 1950s all the way into the '60s. I even managed to get him

to come to the Chicago Worldcon in 1962, but that's another story.

Dan worked for the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* when he wasn't writing science fiction short stories for *Imagination* and other magazines and novels for Bantam Books. I liked him quite a bit and it was always a pleasure to be with him. He showed me some very good Cajun eating places within easy reach, even walking distance, of the French Quarter.

Among them was Morning Call, a place that specializes in morning-after coffee with a special kick. Being there so impressed me that, years later, in 1960 in *Who Killed Science Fiction?*, I wrote the following:

"There is, in the Vieux Carre of New Orleans, a quaint restaurant named Morning Call. Here there can be purchased coffee with chicory only, and some obscure pastry twists from a deep-fry vat that are referred to as "doughnuts." One goes to Morning Call in the morning naturally, after a night on the town, after carnival is dwindling to an end, as the early rays of sunshine bounce off the Mississippi and glitter across the Quarters.

"Here one relives the experiences of the night, the delight of Al Hirt's trumpet at Dan's Pier 600, the pleasant song-fests at Pat O'Brien's and last but by no means least, the moment of truth that comes for you and the dark-haired beauty in the little apartment over Rampart Street.

"And one gags on the syrupy chicory-coffee and sprinkles confectioner's sugar from a shaker onto the grease-soaked doughnuts."

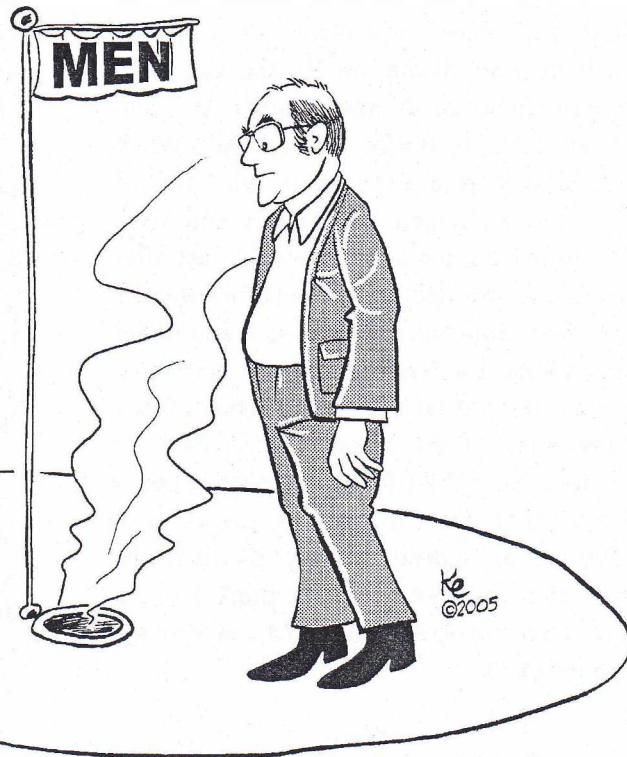
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For a good decade, New Orleans was my favorite city. My memories are filled with it and the good times I've experienced while being there.

I eagerly await New Orleans' rebirth and my next occasion to experience her eternal delights.

• • •

Mike Resnick Bathrooms I Have Known



Back in the days when Carol and I were breeding and exhibiting collies -- for the record, we had 23 champions, most of them named after science fiction stories and characters -- we encountered some unusual bathrooms.

At the Springfield, Missouri Fair Grounds, the men's room consisted of a small building with a concrete floor. No matter where you stood, it sloped to a drain in the very center of the building. And that was it, in its entirety.

At the Wheaton, Illinois Kennel Club, the only way for 3,000 exhibitors to get from the parking lot was through -- not around, not next to, but *through* -- the women's bathroom.

There were a *lot* of bathrooms like that on the show circuit. We used to joke about them.

Then we started traveling around the world, and realized just how good we had it

in Springfield, Wheaton, and the other show sites. One day, just for the hell of it, I put our experiences in a Toastmaster speech at Midwestcon, and it was so popular that I was flown to a number of other cons expressly to talk about bathrooms. Guy Lillian heard it at some con or other, and has prevailed upon me to resurrect the memories one last time.



The Matthews Range, Kenya. This is a mountain range in Northern Kenya that was only recently opened for tourism, and we were among the first to show up there. The tented camp's notion of a bathroom was a "long drop" (a toilet over a 30-foot-deep hole, common on the safari trail), and a shower consisting of a 5-gallon canvas bag that would be filled with hot water by what

our guide liked to call "dusky handmaidens".

There were no car tracks in the Matthews Range -- it was too newly opened for them -- so all our sightseeing had to be done on foot. In the mountains. At 7,500 feet altitude. In the heat of the day. When we got back from a four-hour trek I was so exhausted I skipped the shower and went right to my cot for a nap. I awoke just after sunset and decided to bathe before dinner. So I duly removed my clothes, stood under the canvas bag, and pulled the cord that opened it -- and let out such a scream that I scared away all the leopards they'd laid out bait for. Seems I'd forgotten what happens to hot water when it's left out for hours at 7,500 feet at nightfall -- except that it wasn't hot water any more. I don't think I could have been any colder if you'd covered me with ice cubes.



Jedibe Island, Botswana. It's not generally known, but hippos kill more tourists than any other animal in Africa. The reason's simple enough. Hippos have incredibly sensitive skin, so they protect it by staying in the water all day -- but they don't eat in the water. After dark they climb ashore and forage for up to two miles to down their daily ration of 300 pounds of choice vegetation.

When they're in the water, all you can usually see are their eye sockets, their ears, and their nostrils, so naturally the tourist much prefers to photograph them on land, and the best time to do it is when they're coming back from a night's feeding.

Only one problem. Get between a hippo and water, and he panics. Every instinct tells him the water is safe, and he'll take the shortest route to it -- which means he'll go *through* you, not around you.

So one day we're on Jedibe Island in the middle of the Okavango Swamp (I know, I know, I'm supposed to call it a Delta, but what it is is a swamp). Now, the more sophisticated tented camps usually supply a private bathroom, no matter how primitive, attached to each tent. Jedibe did not possess one of the more sophisticated tented camps. What it had was an ablution block, an area perhaps 30 feet on a side, surrounded by a 6-foot-high reed fence. Inside the block was a toilet (the long drop variety, of course) and a shower (the canvas bag variety, natch.)

At midnight I decide to use the facilities, so I wander over to the ablution block, maybe 40 yards from our tent -- we were the only people in the camp that night, other than the couple who ran it -- and in the fullness of time I prepare to unlatch the ablution block's door and return to my tent.

But just then a 3-ton hippo who'd been grazing in the area got an itch, and decided to scratch it by rubbing against the reed fence. And he rubbed, and he rubbed, and he rubbed, and that damned itch just wouldn't go away, and I knew how he felt, because I was being eaten alive by insects.

So I got to thinking, and I figured: Jedibe is a small island, maybe 300 yards in circumference, so if he sees me and he's got normal intelligence, he'll realize that all he has to do is turn around and trot off to the safety of the water.

Then I think a little more, and I figure: if, on the other hand, he's an exceptionally stupid hippo, wherever I stand he'll decide I'm between him and the water and will just lower his head and charge.

The scratching didn't sound very intelligent, and I decided not to chance it. Three hours later he satisfied his itch, grunted a few times, and went off for a swim. I got to the tent just in time to catch an hour of sleep before the sun came up and

we were off to watch the very animal I'd been avoiding all night long.



Mana Pools, Zimbabwe. Another tented camp, this one on the Zambezi River. We arrived in late morning, were shown to our tent, and were left alone to unpack. Carol saw a movement overhead, looked up, and found that we were sharing the tent with a 5-foot long spotted bush snake. Of course, we didn't know what the hell kind of snake it was, so I sought out the camp manager, who explained that it was harmless to people, but would hold the tent's lizard and insect population down to zero.

I didn't think any more of it until we came in all hot and dusty from the afternoon game run. Carol decided to take a shower before dinner. It turns out that the snake had the same idea and got there first. She took a look at the snake. The snake took a look at her. She screamed in surprise. The snake hissed in terror. She took off to the east. The snake took off to the west.

Eventually Carol came back. The snake, poor distraught fellow, never did.



The Osiris. The Osiris is a ship, owned by the Hilton hotel chain, that travels the Nile from Cairo to Aswan and back again. We were visiting Egypt with Pat and Roger Sims, my father, and my agent, Eleanor Wood, and her kids.

Since I was the African expert, I did the booking. I chose the Ramses Hilton, because it was the only 5-star hotel in Cairo that had never had a reported case of botulism. I booked the tour company, which had enough clout to make a plane turn around and come back for us when we were late getting to the airport. And I booked the

Osiris, supposedly the most luxurious ship on the Nile.

Well, two out of three ain't bad.

Pat and Roger had the room right above us. Every time Roger took a shower we had a driving rain in our cabin.

And Roger likes to shower.

I never saw a desert in Egypt, but I saw a *lot* of rain. All of it inside.



Malindi, Kenya. Malindi is a charming little town on the Kenya coast, halfway between Mombasa and Lamu. After touring the Gedi ruins, we checked in at the Sindbad Hotel, which looked exactly like something out of *Road to Morocco*, with its arched doorways and enclosed gardens and such. We had a nice dinner, watched some vigorous native dancers, and went to bed.

We awoke at six in the morning to find that our toilet, which had worked the previous day, was not functioning. We went down to the desk to complain, and the manager explained that there was nothing wrong with the toilet. To conserve water, he turned the toilets off at midnight and reactivated them at nine in the morning.

"But the shower and the sink worked," I said. "I tried them, just to see if the water had been shut off."

"Of course they work."

"Then why shut off the toilet?" I demanded.

He smiled. "Who takes a shower at four in the morning?" he responded.

Kenya may belong to the Third World. The Sindbad Hotel belonged to a world all its own.



The Sheraton Skyline Hotel, London. I'm including this just so you'll know that not all

our bathroom experiences took place in Africa.

Carol suffers from jet lag, so we usually spend a day in London on our way to and from Africa, to give her system a chance to adjust. And the hotel we usually stay at by Heathrow Airport is the Skyline Sheraton.

So we land, and check in at the Skyline, and while I'm unpacking Carol walks into the bathroom. And a minute later I hear her calling me.

"What is it?" I ask.

"There's no knob or handle on this side of the door," she says. "Could you open it, please?"

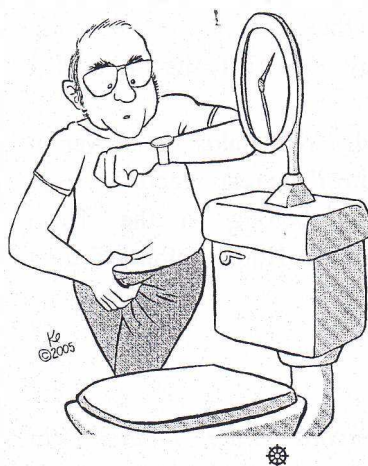
I reach for the knob, and realize there's no knob or handle on *my* side of the door either. The entire mechanism is missing.

So I phone down to the desk, they send up a mechanic, he uses some tool or other to let her out, and admits that he has no idea what happened to the missing knobs.

Before we move our stuff to a new room, I look inside the bathroom.

No windows. No phone.

If Carol had been traveling alone, she'd have been stuck there for maybe 22 hours until the maid came to clean the room the next morning.



The
toilet's on
Kenya time,
but my
bladder's on
Eastern
Daylight!

Maralal, Kenya. The Maralal Lodge is a convenient halfway point between the Samburu/Buffalo Springs reserves and the lakes of the Rift Valley. (It's also where Jomo Kenyatta was imprisoned for 7 long years.)

The lodge has the most beautiful flower gardens. They're an odd sight in the middle of the arid Northern Frontier District.

It's a little less odd when you see the signs outside every cabin and in every bathroom, urging you not to drain the bathtub when you're through with it. With water at such a premium, they send a couple of attendants around every morning and afternoon. They fill buckets with dirty water from the tubs and empty them on the flower gardens.



The Mount Soche Hotel, Malawi. The best hotel in Blantyre, the former capitol of Malawi back when it was Nyasaland, is the Mount Soche Hotel, so that's where we stayed. The elevators semi-worked, which is to say they went up and down, but they never once stopped at our floor. That's a really trivial problem for African accommodations, so we paid it no attention.

While we were in Blantyre we went to the local museum, where the college-educated curator tried to convince us that witchcraft was a valid science, and we drove and climbed Mount Mulanje, which at 9,000 feet isn't much of a mountain, but it's the tallest one they've got.

And then we went back to the hotel. And I blew my nose, and tossed the tissue in the toilet, and forgot about it. And as Carol passed by, she saw it and decided to flush it away. And couldn't find the flushing mechanism. Finally she saw a little button on the wall, and realized that was it. And she pushed. And it didn't budge.

She pushed again. Nothing happened. Finally she braced her feet, threw her whole weight into it, and flushed the toilet just before her thumb was due to break.

Her comment: "I've walked maybe 20 miles yesterday, and today I climbed the tallest mountain in the country. And flushing that damned toilet is the most exercise I've had since we've been here."



The Maasai Mara, Kenya. So we're staying in a tented camp in the Mara, and after dinner we watch some dancing, and finally it's about ten o'clock, and it's time to go to bed, since we'll be getting up at six to go on a game run. (I'd much prefer to get up at a civilized hour, but in Africa the animals lay up in the heat of the day, and you tend to take your game runs from 6:00 to 9:00 AM, and again from 3:30 to 6:00 PM. In between, everyone sleeps.

Anyway, we get to our tent, and sure enough, the toilet in the attached bathroom isn't working. I report it to the camp manager, he sends a fellow over to repair it, and five minutes later it's working.

He announces that he's going to walk home now. I offer to hunt up the manager and get him a ride.

"I am a Maasai," he says with proper arrogance. "I have lived here all my life. I have no fear of animals."

Twenty minutes later a helicopter is rushing him to the Nairobi hospital a couple of hundred miles away. It seems he ran into an equally arrogant elephant who had lived there all her life and had no fear of Maasai.



Linyati Camp, Botswana. So we're in the Linyati area of Botswana, and it's another camp with an ablution block. And just

before I turn off my reading lamp to go to sleep, I decide to pay the ablution block a visit.

I get out of the tent and take two steps toward the block.

"Hi, Mike," say three hyenas, who are posted halfway to the block. "We're so glad you came out to play with us."

They grin to show me how happy they are.

I go back into the tent.



Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania. If you could spend only one day in Africa, you'd be well-advised to spend it in the Crater, a caldera (collapsed volcano) about 10 miles in diameter, with an enormous concentration of large mammals – and the walls are so steep and high that they have almost no poachers.

What they do have on the floor of the Crater is a lovely little lake where our party – Pat and Roger Sims, Carol and myself, and my father – all stopped to enjoy a box lunch. And about thirty yards away was an old-fashioned outhouse with an honest-to-ghod half-moon carved on the door.

My father announced his intention to pay it a visit. Moro, our native guide, recommended against it. My father decided he couldn't wait, so off to the outhouse he went.

"He is a very brave man, your father," said Moro.

"How brave do you have to be to enter an outhouse?" I said, assuming he had warned us off because it was filthy.

"Very," he said. "A black mamba" – the most poisonous snake in Africa – "lives beneath the little hole you sit on."

I had raced halfway to the outhouse to pull my father out of there when he emerged, looking much relieved and totally unbitten.



There are so many others. There was Island Camp on Lake Baringo, which seemed to have established an ant farm in our shower stall. There was another tented camp in the Rift Valley where we shared our bathroom with a pet waterbuck who came running every time he heard the shower going. There was a hotel in Nancy, France where every time you flushed the toilet the bidet shot water up to the ceiling.

But I'm going to close by telling you about the most memorable bathroom of all. The wild part is that I couldn't find it again if you paid me.



Maasai Mara, Kenya. It's 1986, our first trip to Kenya, and we're in the Mara, which is overflowing with animals and looks exactly like Hollywood's idea of Africa. We've been driving around watching them for a few hours, and Perry, our guide, and I decide

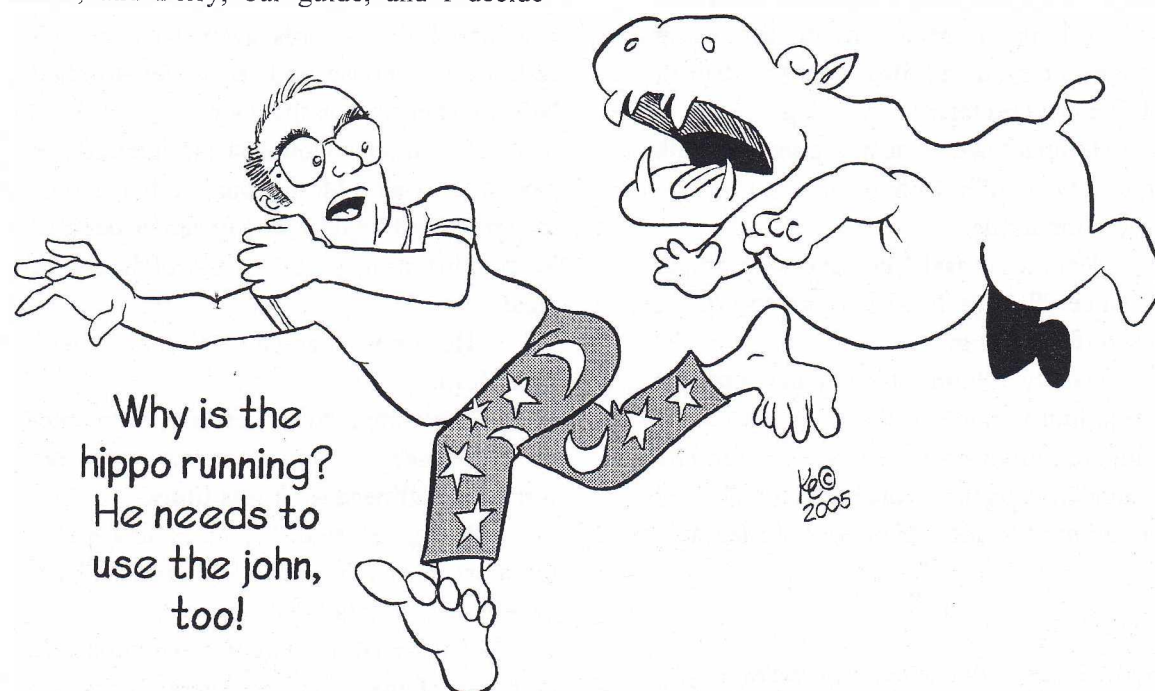
that we have to answer a call of Nature. Carol, who has a bladder of steel, waits in the Land Rover while Perry and I go behind a likely bush.

And as we are doing what comes naturally, I look over, and there, about 20 yards away, is a 2,000-pound Cape buffalo doing exactly the same thing, and glaring at me as if I, and I alone, am responsible for his prostate problems.

So I alert Perry to our situation and ask him what to do.

His logical answer: "Finish before he does and run like hell."

We finished about ten seconds ahead of him, and beat him to the car by about three feet. The car proudly sported its scar from the buffalo's horns on our next two trips to Kenya, until it was replaced by a new Land Cruiser that soon displayed the gouge from a rhino's horn, which is an interesting story but has nothing to do with bathrooms, so I'll save it for another time and place.



THE NEW ATLANTIS

Joseph T Major

Mr. Blaylock, the choir director at First Baptist Church, must have been really convincing. Why else did the youth choir get to go to Panama City, to New York, to the Miracle Strip? But we went, and sang at a few churches along the way.

In 'seventy, though, we went south. It was summer, with all that entails in the south. We were used to it then. The bus took us through Tennessee and Alabama and Mississippi, and then across the great Lake Pontchartrain bridge.

There was a church there for us to sing, too. That wasn't the biggest thing we did. The boys were four to a room — girls, too, I suppose. It didn't matter, we were young and full of life and joy. The Holiday Inn was crowded but we didn't care.

One afternoon we actually got to go to the French Quarter. The notorious places were off limits, of course. I've never seen pullers at strip joints elsewhere. There were enough "acceptable" places for us to ramble along and enjoy ourselves. (The one place that stuck in my historian's mind was Le Petit Soldier Shop, a place full of books and tin soldiers and all that militaria. I wanted to go back.)

It was fun, walking along and seeing the signs of history, the street signs in French and Spanish, the mossy walls, the old brick streets. In a world where the past is *BANG* *BOOM* parking lot, seeing something older than myself that was still used, still living, was reassuring. Or standing on the bank of the river and looking across a great flowing inland sea. Even then I couldn't enjoy the food, unfortunately. But I wanted to go back someday.

I read about the place from time to time. John Dillman's true crime stories (the best one is *Unholy Matrimony* (1988) about a woman who was dying to get married or was it the other way round?) brought back a little of that. There were the stories of NoLafandom, from the Elder Days in Room 770 to the regular doses of now in *Challenger*.

Sometime, I figured, we'd go back. I had actually hoped to go by on the way to (or back from) LoneStarCon, back in 1997, but things happened. It'd still be there.

I have to wonder. An entire city has been dispersed, with all that means; communities broken up, homes washed out, neighborhoods scattered. Such broken things seem beyond our power to put back together, with so many other demand. Even if some of them do come back, if the water gets pumped out, if the dead are buried, will it be enough?

What will we have? A world without the exotic flavor of Creole, the mystical vodun; without the glorious excess of Mardi Gras, the glitter and wonder of the French Quarter. The history of Jackson Square and of Jean Lafitte, the blockade runners and the autocracy of Ben Butler. This can never be gone, but it can be destroyed; there can be facts without a place to keep them. Where will the memories go, when there is no one and no place to keep them?

If there is a new New Orleans ... will it be a mere port, a place for pumping oil into barges, with a tacky town for the workers tacked on behind? Or will they finally give up the ghost, let the Mississippi pour down the Atchafalaya as it's been trying to do for most of a century?

What will happen if the workers and the livelihood go away? Will this exodus leave the remnant to become a "NewOrleansLand"? A tourist attraction where paid employees go through the motions of being the lively place that was?

If I were fifteen and vigorous again ...

Don Markstein's www.toonopedia.com deals with characters from the comics, and is one of the net's fannish glories. A New Orleans native, his thoughts on Katrina are anything *but* comic.

"ROE VS. WADE?"

a guest editorial

Don Markstein

Q: Where does Bush stand on Roe vs. Wade?

A: He doesn't care what hurricane victims do.

I got that from Larry Epke.

I'd planned to start with something completely unexpected – kind words about George W. Bush. But on September 2, 2005, he blew my kind words right out of the water, if you don't mind an allusion to what has become the worst enemy of the city I love most.

And what did he do to derail my uncharacteristically positive attitude towards him? He decided flying over New Orleans wasn't enough. He had to visit on the ground. And what, do you suppose, did he expect to accomplish by that, other than posture in front of a camera about how awful it is (which we already know)? The only possible effect would be to get in the way of people with real work to do. And in fact, he went even farther in that direction than he had to, by grabbing trained rescue workers to stand behind him and form a backdrop, so he'd look better on TV.

Even one rubbernecking disaster tourist is too many. But a U.S. president, with an entourage that would embarrass most emperors, is a hell of a lot more than just one. So many, the last leg of the trip had to be done in a *flotilla* of helicopters.

I wonder how many rooftop dwellers those helicopters could have been ferrying to safety if they hadn't been pressed into the service of a pompous, smirking powermonger. I wonder how many died because the helicopters weren't there.

Think he got his damned feet wet?

This has nothing to do with my personal feelings about Bush. Even a

politician I like, if there were such a thing, would have gotten the same response. New Orleans simply isn't a legitimate destination right now for useless people like politicians.

We hear a lot about Bush glomming the budget for levee maintenance, and that's certainly a valid reason (among many) to loathe him. Of course, Bill Clinton slashed levee maintenance too, and he's pretty loathsome as well, but at least Clinton did it less, and didn't funnel the money into anything quite so patently evil. But a lot of the blame should go to the locals, who for the better part of a century have been delighted to foist off the burden of levee maintenance to the federal government.

But there's plenty of blame available for the guy who stated, right in front of a camera, that there was no way anyone could have known the levee was going to break. (And there was no way of knowing Osama bin Laden was up to something before 9/11, unless he read the August 6 memo that had been addressed to Bush.) Is he that stupid, or does he just lie by reflex?

Then there's that incredible fool he put in charge of FEMA. If you'd told me, Wednesday after the storm, that there could possibly exist even a single person, anywhere in the world, who wasn't aware of all the people trapped in the Convention Center, chanting "We Want Help" at any of the many reporters willing to point a camera at them, I'd have thought it was a ridiculous fantasy. But here was the guy running FEMA, who one would *think* would at least *know* what's

going on, expressing surprise as late as Thursday, that any such thing could be.

Hey, George – I know about your affinity for people who, like you, have failed at everything they’ve ever tried; and I know it’s a time-honored tradition to appoint your political pals to lucrative do-nothing jobs. But there’s plenty of pork for guys like that – director of the Bureau of Weights and Measures, ambassador to Djibouti, deputy under-secretary of whatever ... Only a moron, and I’m not saying you aren’t, would put someone like him where it matters when he screws up.

This is how our highly trusted federal security folks, who are real good at making us take off our shoes before boarding airplanes, would deal with the aftermath of a real breach in security. Provided, of course, those breaching it gave five days notice. Too bad if the terrorists are impolite enough to strike without warning.

I see Congress just gave FEMA another \$60+ billion. Isn’t that *just* like government? The worse it fails, the more money they give it. And when that amazingly incompetent jackass finally resigned, he was replaced by the idiot whose idea of terrorist protection is duct tape. No word on where the money will come from, but history tells us we can rule out tax increases and cutting expenses elsewhere.

Not that the feds deserve all the blame – the governor and the mayor didn’t exactly cover themselves with glory either. In fact, I can’t think of anyone in government who did.

If you’re among those inclined to despise people for whining to government before looking to private organizations, preferably local or regional, for help – all I can do is suggest you join the rest of us here in the real world. How do you propose getting rid of the federal monopolization of disaster management? It’s been growing for decades, and had a huge spurt right after 9/11. Nowadays, you can’t even bring in three truckloads of drinking water, as WalMart, that most despised of corporations, tried to do, without being turned away by armed men.

Surely FEMA didn’t *really* think that letting that stuff in would *hurt*! Does private help threaten their hegemony or something? This gives credence to those who suspect FEMA, which has the power to ignore any law and suspend any liberty (and which was never authorized by a legislative body, being the product of an “executive order” – which I don’t believe is mentioned in the Constitution – on the part of John F. Kennedy), is being groomed to take over when they’re ready to take the final steps in turning America into a police state. The obvious fact that they put so much effort into establishing control over the remaining population – breaking into houses and seizing legal weapons in violation of the 2nd Amendment (just as an example) – days before making any, and I do mean any, attempt to help them survive, is another clue. People trying to get out of that hellhole at the Superdome (which, for the record, I was against building) before FEMA was finally ready to ship them god-knows-where, were held in at gunpoint!

So both “ends” of the pathetically short political spectrum segment that supposedly represents us in Washington are clamoring for FEMA to get *even more* money. What, exactly, are they hoping for it to accomplish with it? Deny access to twice as many trucks full of drinking water?

So where were the citizen soldiers of the National Guard, who should have been the first responders? Iraq. Where were the helicopters that should have gone out within minutes of the levees breaking, and started dropping sandbags into the gaps? Iraq. Where was the money that was needed to shore up the levees in the first place? Iraq.

God *damn* George W. Bush for turning *my home town* into another piece of collateral damage from his deadly hubris.

Time to talk about dat ol’ debbil, racism. Unlike many others condemned as Liberals by the Liberal Media (i.e., anyone who thinks maybe it’s not a good idea to level Iraqi cities in an attempt to win their hearts and minds), I don’t think the fact that most of New Orleans is black is why the feds were so anti-helpful.

That's just the feds being feds – it only shows more here than it usually does.

I do, however, see a lot of racism in the news coverage, and I'm not talking about that famous incident where black people "looted: necessary supplies while white people "found" them. I saw that almost as a red herring, drawing attention away from the more subtle racism I was already seeing in the news.

In any disaster, there are going to be lots of heroes helping their neighbors survive, alongside a few who give in to their baser instincts. Since I'm convinced that most people are basically good despite the fact that we all have baser instincts, I know very well there are always more heroes than looters.

And we usually see that in hurricane coverage, e.g., what came out of Florida last year. But they have a more balanced racial mix. In New Orleans, with few exceptions, what we saw was the "looting" – word in quotes because, as in the loot/find dichotomy, it seems to have consisted mostly of ordinary folks trying to survive however they could. We also hear a lot about gang violence on the streets (a necessary propaganda prelude to rounding up all the guns).

Here

(<http://www.femmenoire.net/LisaMoore.htm>) is another point of view about this alleged violence. You'll find a clickable link at <http://www.uncadonald.com/sfpa.html>.

Maybe the reason this struck me is that for once, it's my people, i.e. Orleanians of whatever skin color, on the short end of it.

So now what?

The people who say "we" shouldn't rebuild a city that "they" were foolish enough to build below sea level are, of course, just ignorant dorks. There's a good reason for the fact that you'll find a city near the mouth of every navigable river in the world.

And the ones who decided on the exact location of this one weren't idiots – they went far enough upstream (100 miles from the Gulf) to put it on solid ground. That's why the oldest parts of the city were

only lightly, if at all flooded, despite the natural sinking of coastal areas following centuries of short-sighted flood control. It was urban sprawl (which we think of as a 20th Century phenomenon though it got well started in the 19th) that made it necessary to drain a lot of swampland so people would have places to live. There's no use insulting anyone's intelligence for that.

New Orleans will come back, with or without a dime of federal subsidy, simply because it's a good location for a city. This is a wonderful opportunity for someone with a lot of money to buy up soon-to-be-valuable-again property. But it's likely to come back a pathetic parody of its former self.

Tourism has long been the tail that wags the Port of New Orleans dog. One of the things driving it is an abundance of fine restaurants, serving a unique cuisine with influences from all over the world. Many of those restaurants have been in the same family since before any of us, or our grandparents, were born, and it's the collective traditions of those families that make up what we think of as the New Orleans style of food.

I suppose most of the remaining family-owned ones are about to fall into the hands of multi-national corporations, which will then resume serving "New Orleans style food," supplemented with the Cajun style that's become conflated with it in the perception of semi-literate Yankees. The kind of New Orleans style you can find anywhere, right between the Chinese style and the Mexican style.

As the ordinary people whose families have lived there a century or more, who gave New Orleans more character than tourists will ever know (I assume you've read *A Confederacy of Dunces*), are scattered, the city is likely to become practically a theme park. That's been the trend for many years, at least in the touristy areas, and this can only accelerate it.

It breaks my heart. I love that city, and now it's gone.





DELL HARRIS (a sketch for the title page, Nolacon II program book)

Science Fiction, Graphics, and their impact on my life

By Dick Jenssen

Being an SF fan

I am a science fiction fan, as opposed to merely a reader or viewer, because I find great joy in the stories, films, and discussions of this genre. And that pleasure is the result of the interaction between what is read or seen and my personality. In other words, I am a fan simply because it is my nature to be so. It is not an active choice on my part. Indeed, to misquote Theodore Sturgeon very slightly, "*Why must we love where the lightning strikes, and not where we choose? But I'm glad it's you, science fiction, I'm glad it's you*". As I hope this suggests, I believe an SF fan is someone who lives slightly askew from those who inhabit the drab everyday world, someone who sees things from a modified perspective. Someone who can perceive the *extraordinary* in the *ordinary*, the *ultra-mundane* in the *mundane*, and the *wonder* which resides in the *ubiquity of the commonplace*. But there's even more to a fan.

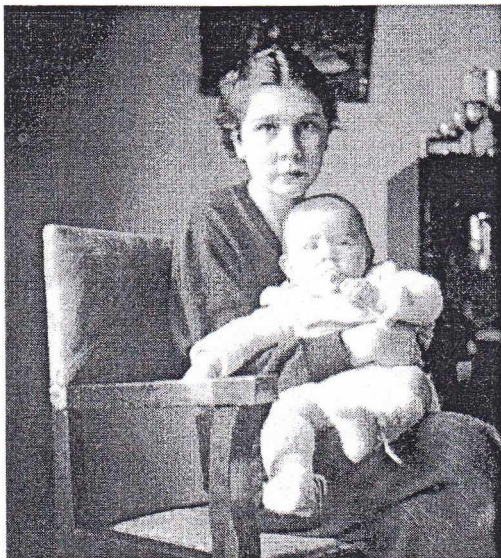
Abraham Merritt expressed the combination of beauty of emotion and logic masterfully in *The Metal Monster*:

In this great crucible of life we call the world - in the vaster one we call the universe - the mysteries lie close packed, uncountable as grains of sand on ocean's shores. They thread, gigantic, the star-flung spaces; they creep, atomic, beneath the microscope's peering eye. They walk beside us, unseen and unheard, calling out to us, asking why we are deaf to their crying, blind to their wonder. Sometimes the veil drops from a man's eyes, and he sees - and speaks of his vision.

And those who hear are the SF fans...

Life before Science Fiction

I was born, on July 6, 1935, in Shanghai, China, of a British father - Tia Jenssen - and a Russian mother - Gail, nee Bredihina. Mother, father and child were moved to Sydney in 1941 by Tia's employer - the Shell Oil Company. Gail and I left first, and Tia was lucky enough to be on the last ship out of Shanghai before the Japanese moved in. The rest of the family, apart from two of Gail's sisters, were interned during the war. British aunts, uncles, cousins, Russian aunts and cousins, Norwegian grandfather, Polish/Jewish grandmother all sat out the war in camps. All



Gail Jenssen and Baby Dick

Tia Jenssen

survived, but the family never really got back together - split amongst the US, Canada, England and Singapore...

That name Ditmar

I was christened Martin James Ditmar Jenssen, and, as usual, my father did not remember the correct form of my naming, because for many years he thought, and told the world in every official document he signed on my behalf (school legal papers, for example), that I was Ditmar James Martin Jenssen. It was only when I had to use my birth certificate to obtain a passport and immigrant visa to the U.S. in 1963 that the correct ordering of my Christian names was discovered. There is more to say concerning 'Ditmar' below, but for now it must be pointed out that my father's family was one in which the individuals were known by names quite other than those given them. Dad was Matthew Albert, but answered only to 'Tia'; my uncle was George William, but was 'Dede' at home; my aunts were 'Tommy' and 'Lala' - names which would never have been given them. And so, I was never 'Ditmar', nor 'Martin' nor 'James', but always 'Dick'. Why I do not know. My poor mother apparently had no say in the matter - she once confided to me that she would have preferred me to have been a 'Donald Alan'.

A first glimpse of Science Fiction Art

For as long as I can remember, I have been an SF fan. I have always responded to SF in words and images, even though until I was about fifteen, I didn't know that what I liked should be called "*Science Fiction*". Unfortunately, growing up in Australia in the 1940's and 50's meant that what was available was almost only comics and movie serials, and in turn that meant that SF was inevitably described as "that Buck Rogers stuff" - a description which had intensely derogatory overtones when used by those who spoke from a position of ignorance, bias and prejudice.

But two events, both when I was about eight years old, and both in the same classroom, made me realize just how wrong, and how stupid, such a negative view was.

The first was when one of the boys brought a large picture-book of astronomical paintings into class - he had either just returned from America, or had just been sent the book. Now, he was seated on the opposite side of the room to me, and was about forty-five degrees toward the front of the class, but I still could see the book with extreme clarity, and so beheld a view of Saturn from just outside its rings, in breathtaking colour. I mean breathtaking quite literally. I can remember gasping at the beauty of the painting which may, or may not, have been by Chesley Bonestell. Now I could never have imagined this for myself at the time, because any depiction of Saturn I had encountered was either a bad sketch in a comic, or a poor special effect in a serial, and in black and white. But having seen the painting, I could now not only imagine it, but could visualize variations of it, could change the colors, the viewpoint, add details or hardware - in short, that one painting suddenly opened up a world I never knew, expanded my imagination, and threw off some of the shackles which constrained it.

The other was a reading by our teacher of a story. What the story's title was, or who wrote it, I can not remember (it might even have been a Professor Branestawm yarn by Norman Hunter), but it dealt with a professor who had invented a time machine and who, accompanied by his nephew and niece, had used it to travel back into the Triassic age. Perhaps the teacher was a great reader, perhaps the story was so well told, perhaps it was my thus-stimulated imagination, or a combination of all three, but I **saw** the dinosaurs, the huge trees, the great ferns, **heard** the sounds, and **moved** with the small party of three through a new landscape. Again, I could never have imagined this for myself, but, once exposed to the ideas, could now embellish them.

Real Science Fiction

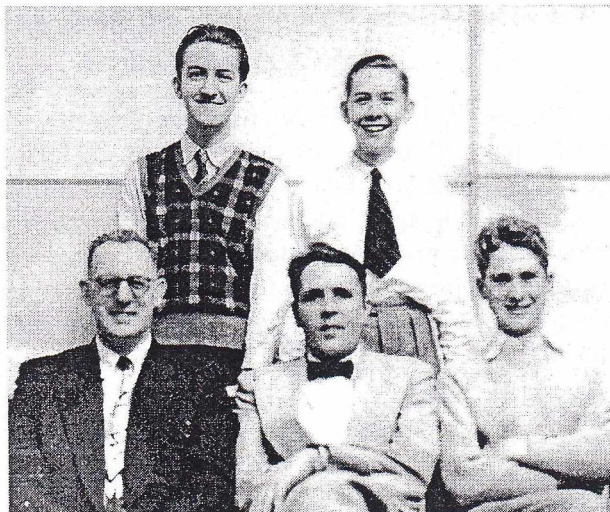
Some seven years later, my school friend Race Mathews further enriched my life and influenced it forever by giving me a digest sized magazine, dated October 1950 and which bore on its cover, in blocky letters, the words "*Science Fiction*". Above these words, and in a different and smaller typeface - which meant it was not as significant - was "*Astounding*". I read every word, and discovered that what I had responded to in the past was called *Science Fiction*, that this magazine was for adults, that many people took it seriously (the letter column was a mixture of enthusiasm and vaguely comprehensible science), and that there were *ideas* in the stories which made me think. And think deeply. SF was not only wonder, a goad to the imagination, but it also offered *intellectual pleasures*.

Race also let me know that the school library had a copy of Groff Conklin's *The Best of Science Fiction* (the first hard cover anthology of SF ever published), and told me where I could buy a copy of Healy & McComas's *Adventures in Time and Space* (the second hard cover anthology, and still one of the best ever). Many of the stories - those which involved time travel paradoxes in particular - forced me to think very hard indeed in order to resolve the seeming inconsistencies. They forced me to apply logic and rigor when I thought about the stories - they made me exercise not only my imagination but my intellect. Such as it was. Other stories had a mathematical bent - how to imagine a fourth space dimension, how a one-sided, one-edged, surface could exist...

And it was Race, yet again, who gave me what remains after fifty-six years my most read and second favorite novel - Abraham Merritt's *The Ship of Ishtar*. (The top *favorite* is Marcel's Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, which is also - by far - the *best* novel I have read. The third favorite is Henry Kuttner's *Fury*...).

The early Melbourne Science Fiction Club

Race was fifteen at this time, very mature, of a strong personality, and possessed of what appeared to be unlimited energy - which he still has. So it was not surprising that he discovered other SF fans in Melbourne, and arranged meetings where we all could get together - I was included because of the accident of knowing Race. Initially, we met in each others' houses, but the group soon grew so large that less confined spaces had to be found. The first meeting place was a coffee lounge called *Val's* in Swanston Street between Little Collins and Bourke Streets. It was at a Val's meeting that we decided to call ourselves a Group, but without any formal rules or brief, or office-bearers - and so, again simply by the serendipitous fact of being in the right place at the right time, I found myself a founding member of the Group which later transformed into the Club.



Founders of the Melbourne Science Fiction Group - later the Club

Standing: Mervyn Binns
Dick Jenssen
Seated: Bob McCubbin
A. Bertram Chandler
Race Mathews

Photograph (c. 1952) by:
Lee Harding

SF, I have said, brought me wonder, goaded and stimulated both my imagination and intellectual capabilities, and introduced me to new scientific and mathematical concepts - all the while entertaining me royally. Even though - if I listened to those who weren't "dreamers" and who didn't need such "escapism" - what I read was supposedly barely literate. Though it was J. R. R. Tolkien who pointed out that the people most frightened of escape are the jailers of this world - those who believe in the power and necessity of shackles. *Dreamers*, say the warders, are also those who live in ivory towers, quite forgetting the fact that from the top of such a tower one can see further and much more clearly than can the grunting hogs at its base, who eye only the mire and ordure through which they snuffle their lives away.

The members of the Club seemed to be neither illiterate nor intellectually challenged. They had imagination (which is necessary for dreams) and they questioned the world around them (because the view from the tower exposed more to their intellect). They may have viewed the universe aslant, but they seemed to me to be freer because of it.

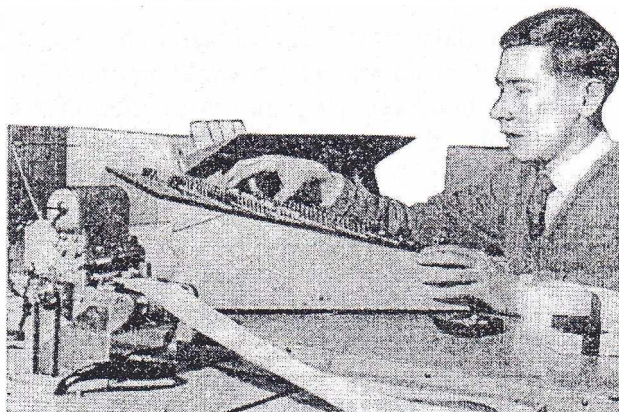
A choice of career

If SF had done no more than affect my life as I have just sketchily outlined, it would have been a powerful shaper of my days and thoughts. But it helped mould my career. It seems likely that I would have chosen Science in any event, but the decision was inevitable given the pleasure SF had bestowed on me. And with the heavy emphasis in SF at that time on the mathematical sciences, I had to major in Physics.

Very early in my vocation as a science fiction fan, I had read F. G. Rayer's novel *Tomorrow Sometimes Comes* - a book which was to have a great influence on me. Not for the prose, since, at sixteen, I could not distinguish good from bad, nor Vargo Statten from John Wyndham, but for the ideas and the amazingly prophetic depiction of an invention which was to change the world, though few realised it at the time. The plot combined many disparate themes, Armageddon, the Sleeper awakes, the Redemption and Restitution of the world, and Time travel. What brought these together was that the Destroyer who unleashes Armageddon, is the Sleeper who wakes, who then becomes the Savior of the world by becoming the Time traveler. The invention which has changed *our* world was the computer: in the novel it was the *Mens Magna* (which sounds so much more intimidating than *Giant Brain*), occupying a huge building - probably larger than a city block - and which controlled all aspects of the city, and the inhabitants' lives. It also waged a war against the "barbarian" hordes outside the gates. The *Mens* was capable of conducting many hundreds (if not thousands) of interviews at once, while simultaneously running all other control programs, repairing itself, and adjusting and amending its own programs. It communicated by keyboard, visual screens, and voice - both understanding human speech, and responding vocally. It was massively redundant with many "control units". All newcomers to the city were required to be interviewed by the *Mens*, which attempted to elicit hidden information by asking apparently disconnected questions in the nature of non sequiturs. The computer was thus self-programming, self-aware, multi-tasking, redundant, communicated in a highly sophisticated manner, and seemingly possessed of intelligence. (Remember, this was written in 1950). If the above description sounds familiar, that may be because the *Alpha 60* computer in Jean-Luc Godard's 1965 film *Alphaville* shared all these traits. Rayer was not, of course, credited.

Five years after the Club was formed, I had just completed my B.Sc, and was so in love with the academic life that the thought of facing the whole wide, cruel, world was terrifying. But my third year results were so spotty and inconsistent - honors and bare passes - and my

experimental abilities so non-existent (I think I must have been one of the very few who ever failed Practical Work), that a Master's in Physics was out of the question. But - as so often has happened in my life - luck stepped in, and a friend of mine in the third year class told me that Meteorology was looking for a Master's candidate. Which seemed about as interesting as the physics and chemistry of doughnuts, but I went to see them anyway. Again, the fickle finger waved approvingly and I found that the research topic was *The Barotropic Model* - a simplified set of equations governing the behavior of the atmosphere and which allowed a prediction to be made of the weather *using an electronic digital computer*. Australian scientists at CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research - later to become CSIRO) had built what I believe is the world's third computer which had its programs, and data, stored internally in its memory. CSIRAC, as the computer was acronymed, had just been installed within the Physics Department.



Dick at the controls of CSIRAC (1957)
CSIRAC functional
Unknown SUN Newspaper photographer



Dick at the controls (2003)
CSIRAC inoperative
Photo by Peter Thorne

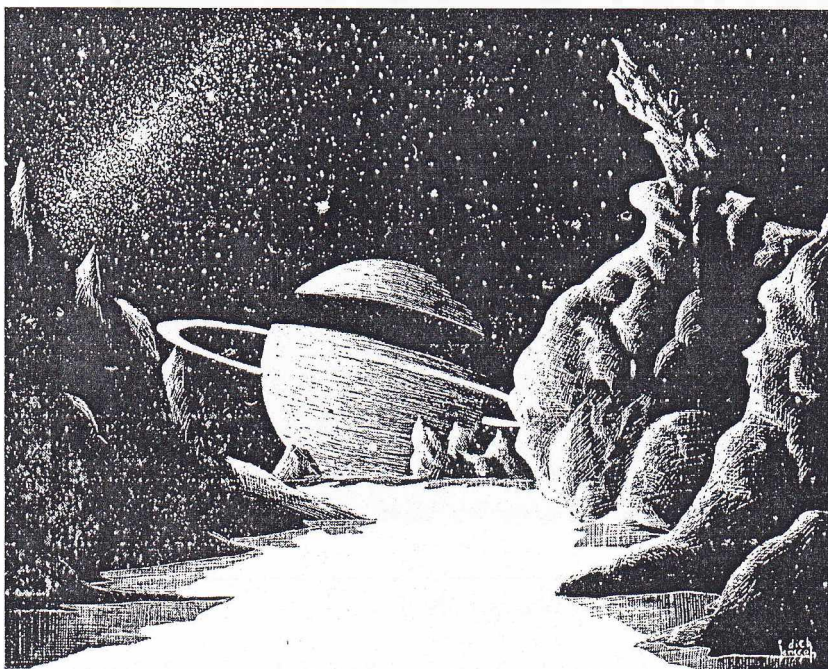
So the planned M.Sc project was going to be, as far as I was concerned, like *living an SF story*. Resistance was futile, even if it had crossed my mind. *Were it not for SF and Rayer*, (and a very scrappy undergraduate record, and the desperation of the Meteorology Department) *I would have had a very different professional career*. I would have missed out a job which, for the most part, was enjoyable and rewarding, and I would never have known just how much I liked teaching. Programming and lecturing slowly usurped the place SF had occupied in my life, a place to which I only returned after my retirement, and then not nearly as passionately as in the early years.

The highlights of my career include moving, after taking my Ph.D., to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1963 as an Assistant Professor in the Meteorology Department. In 1966 I returned to Australia and to Melbourne University, where I spent most of my professional life in the Meteorology Department, of which I have been Chairman. I've authored some 30 papers (mainly in the field of computer modeling of large ice masses such as Antarctica), co-edited a book (*"Climatic Change and Variability. A Southern Perspective"*, Cambridge University Press), been a council member and Secretary of the Royal Meteorological Society (Australian Branch) and the Australian Meteorological Society, and editor of the *Australian Meteorological Magazine*. My main professional successes were performing the first computer weather forecast in the Southern Hemisphere, and pioneering the use of computer modeling of glacial dynamics and thermodynamics. I have been a Research Associate at The Scott Polar Institute, the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, and at CIRES at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Graphics

Very early in my life as a *real* SF fan, I found myself wanting to express my devotion to the genre and to do so in a way which I would find rewarding. There was writing, and I tried this, but it was always a chore: sitting down to put words on paper, even if what I wanted to say was clear in my mind and had been written *there*, at least in principle, was not a satisfying experience. And I was not - it was *very, very* clear, *very, very* soon - a competent scribbler. What gave me the greatest satisfaction was pen on paper, graphically. I was, as I've said, a great fan of *Buck Rogers*, and so drawing comics, from the age of 7 or so, was inevitable. I remember at that time telling a friend of mine that when I reached legal maturity - twenty-one, that is - I was going to change my name, by deed poll, to Buck Rogers. It seemed perfectly sane at the time, and Ken Hayward, to whom I confessed this ambition, regarded it also as nothing unusual. I never did, of course, effect the change, but with time I transformed my primitive comics into drawings for fanzines.

There were essentially three of these: *Bacchanalia* from Race Mathews, *Perhaps* from Lee Harding, Merv Binns and myself, and *Etherline* from Harding, Ian Crozier and myself. I did covers and interior illustrations for all three. *Etherline* was a Roneo-ed, digest-sized publication typed onto waxed master sheets: these were then placed on a drum containing ink, a handle was cranked (Merv was always co-opted for this task as he seemed to spray the least amount of ink on the surrounds) and paper fed through under the drum. Drawing on these waxed sheets was done using a metal stylus - which had the unfortunate effect of all too readily tearing the surface apart. It was always a challenge.



Cover for Perhaps 3

January 1954

Now, my memory is faulty - it always has been: I seem to have a facility to remember trivia; useless facts about words (for example that *abstemious* and *caesious* are words which contain the vowels a, e, i, o and u once and once only in their correct order, or that *duoliteral* and *prunoidean* contain all the vowels once only but in reverse order); or numbers; or film credits - but important facts, and names, and faces keep evaporating. So when I say that I remember a digest-

sized American fanzine in the 50s titled *Science Fiction Advertiser*, I'm almost certainly wrong. I also remember that some of its covers were done by a Morris Scott Dollens - but that, too, is likely a figment of my mismemory. These covers, whoever they were by, and wherever they appeared, were in black and white - stunning space and planetary scenes (perhaps they were photographed models?) in rich chiaroscuro. They inspired me to try to create some of my own, and when I went to the downtown artists' supplier - *Dean's* - and asked how I could go about such a program, it was suggested to me that I try scraperboard. This was a thin plaster, or something akin to it, such as cohesive chalk, bonded to a cardboard base. The white surface could be painted (usually black), then scraped away with a scalpel to reveal the white underlay: it was a method of drawing in negative. I used this method for covers for *Bacchanalia* and *Perhaps*. Interior graphics were standard pen and black ink on paper (I liked an onion paper for these).

When I went to the U.S. in 1963, I found myself not only away from my circle of SF fans, but so heavily involved in work - which was enjoyable, satisfying and rewarding - that I had no time to pursue my graphics. The work became even more demanding (and enriching) as I moved up the academic ladder and had to add administrative duties to my work day, so that, even though I was now back in Melbourne, I drifted away from the SF scene. Only when I took early retirement at the end of 1992, did I segue back into the field and renew my friendships with Race Mathews (fifty-eight years of it), Lee Harding and Merv Binns (both fifty-one years), Bill Wright (fifty years), Bruce Gillespie (forty years)... Science fiction friendships have a quality, it would seem, of long-term sustainability.



A few members of the Melbourne Science Fiction Group (2000)

Standing: Merv Binns and Dick Jenssen

Seated: Bruce Gillespie, Bill Wright and Race Mathews. (Bob and Bertram had been gathered)

Photo by Elaine Cochrane

My career had been intimately connected with computers, starting with my M.Sc. work in 1957, and then in climate and glaciological modelling research, so that when I found myself away

from work, the best way I could think of filling in the time as I slid down the razor-blade of life into total senescence, was to explore my discarded interest in graphics. There were no conscious influences at work here, no artists which I could truly say were my guides or exemplars, because I knew that what little facility I possessed, if I truly had any, was of an exquisitely minor nature. Perhaps, however, my graphics have been shaped inadvertently by those artists whom I admire: Botticelli, Tiepolo, Redon, Tapes, Alma-Tadema, Leighton, Dali, Puvis de Chavannes, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Lautrec...the list goes on. And of course, Virgil Finlay, Hannes Bok, Maxfield Parrish and Winsor McKay. But I cannot, no matter how hard I try, see their influences on my work.

Since I always had trouble when using pen, or brush, to transfer, what I vaguely had in mind, on to paper (and the initial image was indeed vague), and since I usually always wanted to redo what I had created, in order to reorganize the compositional elements, and/or the coloring, and/or the elements themselves, it seemed that graphic packages would be ideal. Software which would allow me to generate three-dimensional objects in a virtual world, to organize their spatial distribution and relations, to color them as I wished, to manipulate them in unreal ways, to... The problem was that, as a retiree, I had limited funds to play with, and so what I bought would not only need to be powerful but inexpensive. I settled on *Metatools' Bryce 2*.

I rejoined the SF scene partly by accident, and once again it was Race Mathews who was responsible. He gathered together some old-time fans - Lee Harding, Bruce Gillespie, John Foyster, myself - for dinner at his place, and we discovered that even though we all still read SF, but for most of us in a rather desultory manner, we all were confirmed cinema buffs. Race suggested that we get together on a monthly basis to watch films. Which we did. With the SF contingent strong at these evenings, and since we were later joined by Bill Wright who like me had moved back into the SF fold and was resurrecting his Apazine *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*, it seemed inevitable that I would proffer my graphics to fanzine editors - Bill and Bruce in particular. Bill, especially, has been most generous in his use of my efforts, inasmuch as except for the first, coverless, *IRS* reissue (December 1996), and that for December 2004, he has used my work on every subsequent cover. Bruce Gillespie also has had my work on his 'zines *brg*, *Metaphysical Review*, *SF Commentary*, and *Cosmic Donut of Life*. His wife, Elaine Cochrane, had used some illustrations of mine in her gardening 'zine *Weeders' Digest*. Other places where people have been fearless enough to use Ditmar work have been *Thyme* (Alan Stewart), and 'zines by U.S. fans Bill Bowers (*Outworlds 70*), Michael Waite and Tim Marion. Even Earl Kemp has been bold enough to not only use some images of mine, but has 'published' on his eZine a *Ditmar Portfolio* - a collection of some recent efforts of mine.

I said that I initially used *Bryce 2*, and as it went through successive metamorphoses, I moved with it: to *Bryce 3*, then *4*, then *5*. Corel had taken the software over by then, and for two years just sat on it. They then discontinued supporting it for the MAC, and it seemed to me that its days were numbered. But, by one of those Jungian synchronistic events, I received an email from *Eon software* to tell me that, as a legitimate and registered user of *Poser*, I was entitled to a massive discount on *Eon's Vue d'Esprit 4* - an alternative to *Bryce*. So I moved to *Vue*, which was quite an improvement from *Bryce* in many respects. Then came - a few months apart - *Vue 4 Professional*, *Vue Esprit 5*, and now *Vue Infinite*. As each incarnation was a good step beyond the last, the latest (*Infinite*) is well beyond *Bryce*. *DAZ* has now taken over *Bryce* and the latest is version 5.5, which is still well behind *Vue*.

Ditmar and the Ditmar

For most of my life I have been lucky - I knew Race Mathews at school and so was part of the group he organized and which eventually became the Melbourne Science Fiction Club: in fact,

because of this coincidence I became a Founding Member. At work, when I was a Ph. D. student, we had in the department a Visiting Fellow for a year, and we two played chess at morning and afternoon coffee breaks. When Schwerdtfeger left, the game score was 50-all, and I take this as the reason that I was invited to Wisconsin as an Assistant Professor at the end of my studies: that is, so we could continue our matches. And so it was that when I was part of an organizing committee for a Convention to be held in Melbourne in 1969, there came another serendipitous occurrence. It was at this convention that the first Australian Science Fiction Awards were to be given. The committee met on a particularly stifling summer's day in the clubroom's oppressively hot confines. There came the usual (for anyone who is used to the way committees work, which is certainly slowly and very mysteriously) protracted and meandering discussion trying to fix on a popular name for the awards - *Constellation*, *Southern Cross*, *DownUnders*... Finally, thirst overwhelmed me, and my frivolous nature erupted, with the result that I facetiously suggested that they be called 'Ditmars'. To my surprise, this found favor; with Merv Binns being the most vociferous in support. Many years later Merv claimed that he did not know that 'Ditmar' was my Christian name - a claim of which I have trouble acknowledging the veracity. However, if anyone **had** asked for an explanation of why the Australian Science Fiction Awards should be colloquially called Ditmars, I was ready to say that I was intending to analyze the statistics of the voting forms on a Melbourne University computer known as a Digital Integrating and Tabulating Mechanism for the Advancement of Research. But no one ever inquired.



Ditmar receives a Ditmar

Smirking and displaying his Ditmar, Dick Jenssen has returned to the audience. Life has been good to him. And so have the voters...

Photo by Cath Ortleib

Things of which I am proud

If I look back at my life and career, there are things which I think I might be proud of, but which, on reflection, are not quite so. For example, there are those in the 'highlights of my career' paragraph above. **But** these 'accomplishments' fell into my lap, so to speak, because of my luck -

and even if they were my efforts, they were not *uniquely* mine, in the sense that anyone could have accomplished them. If it had not been me, then someone else would have done so. They are mine because I was in the right place at the right time.

Only four things belong in the category of 'what I would not want my life to have been without' - and even if these, too, were freaks of fortune, of stochastic serendipity, and due to circumstances beyond my control, they are mine alone, and could *not* belong to another's life. The major one is finding the love of my life and having that love returned and multiplied many times over. As Dowson says:

They are not long, these days of wine and roses:

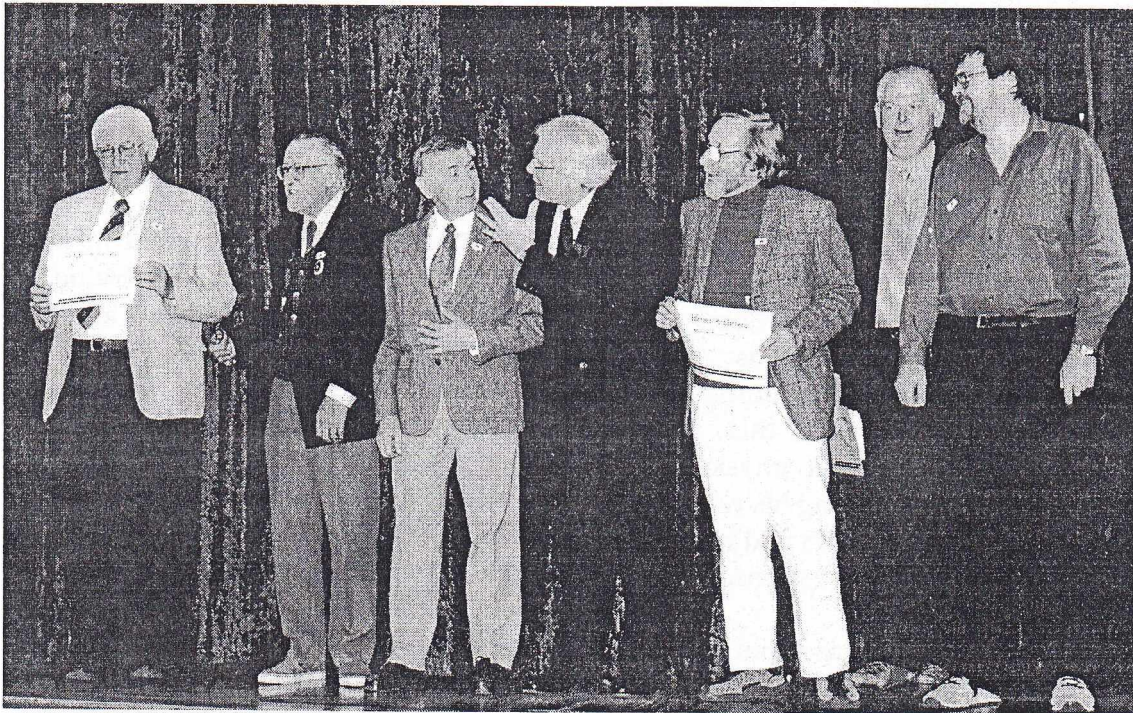
Out of a misty dream

Our path emerges for a while, then closes

Within a dream.

But short as my life with my love was - a tad less than fifteen years - it was a dream from which "...when I waked I cried to dream again...". But now I am descending into the maudlin, and into that state of too much unnecessary information...

The three other never-to-be-lost events are having the *Ditmars* bear my name - no matter how undeserved that may be - winning a *Ditmar* myself in 2002 in the category of *Best Fan Artist*, and being made a Life Member of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club in April, 2005.



Investiture of the Life Members of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, April 2005

Left to right: Bill Wright, Merv Binns, Dick Jenssen, Jack Dann (Master of Ceremonies), Lee Harding, Bruce Gillespie and Alan Stewart

Photo by Helena Binns

Martin James Ditmar (Dick) Jenssen

Chiming in with more of his unique perspective of the field is a consistent Chall pal ... with his "Wombmate" along this time!

WHY DOES A SCIENTIST WRITE SCIENCE FICTION ?

A speech by

Gregory Benford

at the UC San Diego class reunion of 1985, bringing together the first years of the physics students who attended the University when it was a graduate school.

INTRODUCTION by

James Benford

Beam and Plasma Research, Physics International, San Leandro, California

JIM: I've certainly known Greg longer than anyone else, since I was born ten minutes before him. He has been late to most things since. [laughter] He was also the first of our class to get his doctorate — four years; what was he running from? Or toward?

I will quickly try to tell you some things about what he has done since he was here, and perhaps some of the things he was doing clandestinely while he was here. Greg has run two careers of roughly equal magnitude — same order — and so I'll try to give this talk in terms of those useful things in physics, the dimensionless ratios, considering his two careers — theoretical plasma physics and the writing of science fiction, and some science fact.

He began writing when he was about twelve years old. He wrote short stories. I am probably the only person who has ever read them. They were really terrible! — and he wrote a lot of amateur things through high school, etc. He sold his first short story in 1966, when he was here, a graduate student. He won a prize in a contest. Then he began to write other very short stories. His natural medium in that time was the post card, I think. [laughter]

You know being taciturn and brief has its advantages when you are trying to get something across. It is helpful in physics papers. I wish more people would follow that. When he graduated from UCSD, he went to Livermore. On the physics side he turned out a lot of work on different subjects, and then escaped from there to UC Irvine, where he has been for thirteen years and is full professor now. He has a bunch of graduate students and runs experiments as well as theory. His specialty in physics is radiation processes, primarily of astrophysical origin, galactic jet phenomena and collective interactions, beam plasma interactions for radiation processes.

Now, while he was doing all this, of course, he was running his writing career as well. When he moved up north, he produced his first novel, and I want to show you some of his work. Here is the cover of his first potboiler novel, *Deeper Than the Darkness*, which is a novelization of a novelette which was really rather good, but I must say the novel really wasn't very good. But, what the hell, it was a start! In those days, you got \$1500 for a novel. The standard advance for novels has gone up since that time

somewhere between one and two orders of magnitude — at least for Greg, which is very helpful to him, living on only a UC professor's salary. He continued and wrote a series of books that I'll try to describe very quickly.

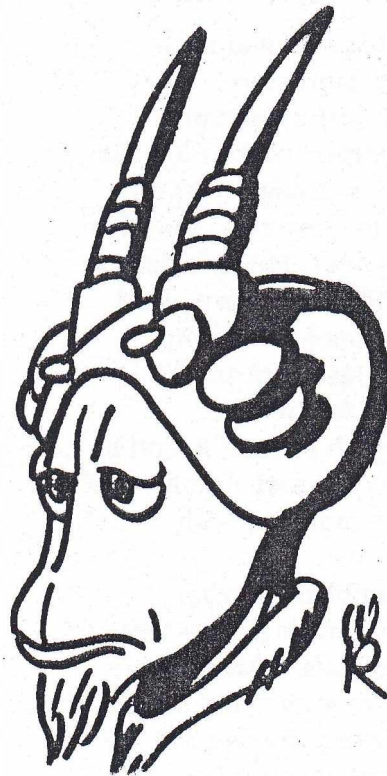
He wrote one juvenile — now called young adult novels — *Jupiter Project* — which, for those of you who know science fiction, integrated with Heinlein's future history series and dovetailed with some of those characters and situations. These books are mainly texts that educate people about technology and the process of growing up. He is very interested in that, and some day he'll make it! [laughter] He continued to write novels. He wrote a very successful novelette with Gordon Eklund which they expanded into a novel, *If the Stars Are Gods* — the story of a visit to the solar system of a race of beings that consider stars to be gods and that something lives inside stars. And it contains some very interesting depictions of alien psychology. Greg is very interested in alien psychology, and he has a book of his short stories coming out next year called, *In Alien Flesh*, which sounds a little risqué. [laughter]

He has also been very interested in his own past. Some of you may know that we were born on the coast of Alabama; our origins are there and a lot of our conditioning, I suppose. We were only six years old when we left, but we have gone there often and he has written a novel which springs from those southern origins. It is actually set on Ganymede, called *Against Infinity*. This is his Faulkner novel and you can read a lot of Faulknerian things in it: concern about community and the evolution of the person in a southern type community.

Now I said I was going to introduce some dimensionless variables, to get some idea of what the ratio is between his accomplishments in both fields. If you take, for a rough order of magnitude estimate, the ratio of scientific papers to short stories, for

example, the ratio is about one. There are about 50 of each, which is a lot of writing. Another ratio would be the number of novels divided by the number of thesis students. That again is about one, each number being about ten. So you can see that these fields are in some kind of rough ratio to one another.

He has written a great deal: ten novels with another one on the way. The most recent one, that very few people here have read yet — it has only been out a few months but selling very well in hardback — is *Artifact*, which is not a science fiction novel, but in fact a novel about archaeology. It's about the discovery of a very interesting artifact in a Mycenaean tomb and it has a very, very interesting piece of physics in it about what that artifact really is. It harkens back and eventually is elaborated in terms of the most ancient legends in western civilization. I think it is a very good book for physicists because it has a very interesting physics question in it, and a lot of political commentary about Greece. Finally, I want to mention the book that everybody knows



about, *Timescape*. I'll show you the cover in the English edition, which, if you can get it, is the best one to read because it is much better printed. *Timescape* has been a very successful novel. Its origin was a paper in *Physical Review* [*Physical Review D* 2, 263, 1970], "The Tachyonic Antitelephone," concerning the causality violation which follows from the assumed existence of tachyons. They had a tough time getting it published because it basically said that all the theory being done on tachyons was worthless. They had to get Edward Teller to intervene with the *Physical Review* editor to get it published.



Following that, the novel had its conceptual origins in a short story, "Cambridge, 1:58 AM," which actually quoted a substantial portion of the *Phys. Rev.* paper. Conservation of wordage! The idea kept working around in Greg's head until he finally approached my wife, Hilary Foister Benford, and suggested they write a novel together, considering time travel as an attempt to modify the past from an ecologically destructive future. She wrote some of the English parts of it, and he wrote the UCSD parts of it, and after a years and a lot of work, they came out with *Timescape*.

It has since been published in six languages, four editions in English — one English, American, Canadian, Australian — it's a big language! — six more languages and about somewhere between 250 and 300 thousand copies in print; it continues to sell

very well. I think that it is, as this cover says, "the most convincing portrayal of working scientists" that I have ever seen. Perhaps it convinces me because it is set in the early 1960s at UCSD, but also because it contains all those sociological intrigues that are never referred to in the journals, but which determine the trajectory of many scientific careers. I found it a wonderful book, although both Greg and I are portrayed negatively in it. I thought that was funny. And a lot of people here in this room are mentioned there.

So, Greg is going to talk today about, "Why Does a Scientist Write Science Fiction?" and I suspect the answer is basically, why not?

GREG: Thanks, Jim. My favorite wombmate, yes. [laughter]

I remember very well the days when I was first here at UCSD as a graduate student. What struck me so strongly was how much communication there was among the graduate students and, even better, between the faculty and the graduate students. Somebody remarked that the principal job hazard of being a student at San Diego was getting sun burned tongue — because everyone talked so much. I found it such a fascinating place that it stuck in my mind, and I eventually wrote a whole damn novel about it. It had struck me, in fact, that La Jolla was a unique place. It seemed to be invested heavily in the future — using, of course, as we all do, the taxpayer's dollars. Also, La Jolla was about the future as vision more than any place I had ever been — particularly if you come from Alabama, which is fundamentally about the past..

Another place basically about the past is Cambridge, England. The reason I chose the strategy in *Timescape* — based half in UCSD in 1962 and 1963, and the other half set in Cambridge in the late 1990's — was to talk about the difference between the two societies. The novel is based on the

experience I had in Cambridge when I was there in 1976, on sabbatical leave. One evening I went to dinner at King's College -- the whole high table ritual, with the cracked walnuts and the port wine and the obsequious behavior. Someone told me a story I have never forgotten. They had gotten a large bequest to the College and were trying to decide how to invest it. The bursar said, "Certainly we ought to invest it in property, real property. That has stood the college very well for the last thousand years." But the oldest senior fellow in the room shook his head and said, "Well, that is true enough. But the last thousand years have been atypical." [laughter]

Well, I feel the same way. It has been atypical, this last millennium, and one thing I am sure of is that the next thousand years are as sure as hell going to be atypical, too. Fundamentally, that is the message science fiction has to say in literature.

To my mind, most literature is focused very much upon the immediate past and acute personal experience, without realizing what is going on in society as a whole, over the long run. So I was drawn to write science fiction (although I don't write only science fiction) because it tries to talk about the impact of everything on society, not just the individual experience. But, of course, fiction has to be about individuals. The trick, you see, is that science fiction talks about science. You might even guess that from the name, although you wouldn't guess that necessarily from reading a lot of it. You know these statements at the beginning of books where they say, these characters bear no resemblance to any person living or dead? Well, that is the problem with them, usually. [laughter] There is no semblance of real human beings, and that is the trouble with science fiction novels frequently. One of the things that I have tried to do is counter that all-too-frequent fact.

And indeed, scientists are like ordinary people, only worse.

Science is the mainspring in this century. Historians will call this the century of science, more than any other century, because this is where it became obvious that the big driving term in the equation of society is science. In the past, for example, it may have been whatever crank religion was on the scene, or something like that -- lately, millineal politics, a la Marxism, Fascism and other faiths. Science has really started to drive human society right into the nonlinear phase -- one I spend a lot of time with in plasma physics -- for plasmas are pesky and nonlinear as hell.. Now society is clearly in that regime, also. And coming at us fast.

As a scientist the first thing you have to counter is the cult view of us; this lab smock image. You see, we have become the emblem of truth. If you don't doubt it, just look at commercials. If they really want to say something is undeniable, they say it is scientifically proved -- which means they took a poll, they asked six people. And the opposite of that, of course, is lies. Another synonym for lies is, as we know, fiction. So, how can you construct a thing that is called science fiction? What does it mean? Fiction is nice, it is pretty, it is poetic, exciting, informing, maybe even enduring, but fundamentally it is lies. So what is science fiction? Is it lies about the truth, or is it the truth about lies? Either way you choose, it looks like a mug's game.

The right answer to this is none of the above. Science fiction is supposed to be literature that tells us what the hell science is doing in society. One of the things that bothers me about SF is that it doesn't seem to be able to talk concretely about scientists themselves very frequently. Instead, it is about people like star ship captains and other riffraff who will land on alien planets. or world dictators who pretend to see the future, and other figures apparently close to our hearts.

I should answer the question in my title. When Brian Maple — my classmate so clearly bound for better things, even then — called me, he said, we want you to talk. We are having people discuss history and research and so on. Oh, I said great, Brian — you want me to talk about relativistic jets from galaxies? He of course said, “No.” And I asked, you want me to talk about plasma physics? He said, “No, uh...” I said, you want me to talk about surfing, don’t you, Brian? He said, “No, no.” So it’s going to be the old SF talk again, right?”

So, to give the same old answer: The basic reason I write SF is that it is fun. I don’t think you should write anything unless it is fun. So why do people have so much trouble writing scientific papers? [laughter] The doing of science is fun. Writing it up, though particularly this Germanic way we have evolved — then the scientific paper is not fun. I did a parody once called, “How to Write a Scientific Paper”., published in *Omni*. It was supposed to be a paper written the way scientists actually read them. So it opened with the references. [laughter] Yes, you see, you all understand! [laughter] That’s our tribe, writ true. Then there came the acknowledgment. [laughter] Then the title, then some figures. That is where the paper ended! [laughter]

You see, if you put that in a book, no nonscientist would understand it unless you explained — and then you would kill it. That is one purpose of art. Alas, art is often the embalming of what was once lively.

That is largely what I tried to do in *Timescape* — particularly, in the UCSD portions, to write about *our* experience. What it is like to come to this blissfully beautiful place, full of gigantic minds, many quite distracted and irritable — sorry! — and with similarly sized egos — ah, the atmosphere as it was then! Because, as you have probably noticed, it ain’t that way now. It is a big, calcified University with an apparatus in place, and reputations to protect. It is not the

same experience we had. I thought that was such a wonderful time, I decided to write about it.

I also wrote a fair amount of the stuff set in England. My sister-in-law, Hilary, wrote the point of view of the English housewife, which I felt unqualified to talk about. I wrote about physicists in the English environment and tried to talk of what I think is going to happen to England — and some other places, like the United States, too, if we don’t change.

A lot of things happen when you are trying to write about science. Of course, I know you find our profession absolutely fascinating. Seen from the outside, stylistically, watching scientists work is essentially on the same par with watching paint dry [laughter] But, at not quite the same pace. And in the SF media, of course, we have things like *Star Wars* and high camp SF. That doesn’t have anything to do with science. What does sometimes have to do with science are films like *2001* on a higher plane. *Timescape* was the first major novel in which I really tried to just talk about scientists. This new one, *Artifact*, is another such novel, although written with a much faster pace about other kinds of scientists. I got bored with physicists after a while and did a lot of work on archeology. *Artifact* is mostly about how archeologists work, and the fact that it intersects politics a great deal. As many of you have noticed, in *Timescape* I went around, and, as every novelist does, copied a lot from real life. There is a person in this room, I stole this gesture from. [laughter] [Leans back, puts a foot flat against the wall.] Laurie Littenberg! I noticed that when I ran into Laurie here the other night, within three minutes he repeated this gesture. It was heart warming. I stole a whole lot of things from a whole lot of people. There is the character that everybody always asks me about, Gordon Bernstein, who is not a copy of Herb Bernstein, although I took some stuff from Herb Bernstein. And, you know, until I

finished the novel I did not realize at all — at least did not realize consciously — that the life profile of Gordon Bernstein is exactly that of — is anybody recording this? — Shelly Schultz. Shelly is not here is he? Good. In the story, Gordon Bernstein is having an affair with a woman of another faith — there is a word for that [laughter] and there are a lot of things in there that are not true of Shelly, I think. [laughter] But many things are.

He went to Columbia University, he is Jewish, he was an Assistant Professor, he was coming here to try to get some papers out so he would get tenure. We remember that, don't we? Ah, youth! But the rest was invented entirely. I stole bits of stuff from diverse people like Bud Bridges. Roger Isaacson appears in somewhat transmuted form in the book, and for a small sum I can tell you who that is. [laughter] Maybe not a small sum! And there are a lot of real walk-on people. People like Herb York, for example, is mentioned in passing. In the Department. And often that was what he was doing, passing through on his way to the Test Ban Treaty or Camelot or someplace. And lots of people are in there who were on the faculty. It was not their fault, they just happened to be faculty and so I used their names. Gordon Bernstein, the character falls asleep in a Colloquium given by, yes, by Norman Rostoker. That's right. Can't figure why I said that.

But I took from a paper on Norman Rostoker's wall a list of the evolution of the laser fusion program. I used that as a parody of what happens to scientific programs. You can find it in the book; I can't repeat it off hand. I took lots of things from graduate students — most of them unsuspecting. There was only one person whom I really felt that I had to take material from, and use as a foreground character and assign lines of dialog. I had a very clear memory of what this person had said, but nonetheless I wanted to OK it. Freeman Dyson read it, thought it was great and said fine, go ahead

and use it. I xeroxed that and sent it to the publisher because he was worried about people taking the wrong idea about themselves being presented in novels. I wasn't worried about it — scientists don't have the time to sue anybody.

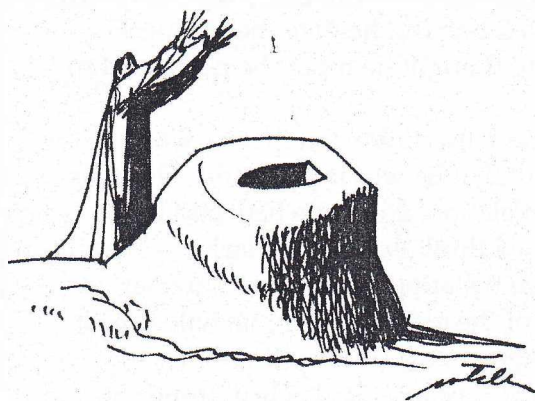
The person whom I did decide to disguise quite well was a person who is called in the book Saul Schriffer. Now the real life stand-in for Saul Schriffer was not on the faculty here. He occasionally passed through, like many of the self-luminous objects in our universe, giving off a lot of radiation. I was giving an invited talk at the AAAS about three years ago. I sat in the preparation room with this guy and he said, "You know, I just read *Timescape* because I have just sold a contract for a 2 million dollar novel with Simon and Schuster, and I was trying to figure out how to write it." [laughter] We had a discussion, over an hour long, about how you present scientists, what you do about covering up your tracks, how you decide to portray people in just the right way so you get the essence of them without all the messy details — a technical discussion, how you cut scenes, all this kind of detailed stuff. He had not thought about many of these things before; you don't, in nonfiction. (note that we don't have a term for all writing that's supposedly true — it's just no-fiction.). He discussed the book in detail — this aspect and that, characterization, plot. Nowhere in this conversation did he give the slightest hint that he thought he might be portrayed in the book.

And I am convinced that he was not at all aware that he was in the book. This was to me a revelation. Someone had said to me long ago — I think Arthur C. Clarke — that if you change the appearance of a character from that of the actual person, he will almost never recognize him or herself. I think it is actually true, because Saul Schriffer has no physical resemblance to Carl — what's his name? [laughter] I learned a great deal from that. So if you are ever thinking about writing

a book about UCSD you can go ahead and just do anything — simply change the color of the eyes or something, and you're on safe ground.

One thing I particularly liked about writing *Timescape* was that it put me back in touch with a lot of people who were here at that era. So many of the people who figured — sometimes only indirectly — in the book are here this weekend. It is quite possible that somebody else could write another novel about UCSD in that era, but it ain't going to be easy — because there is a limited market for these things you know. [laughter]

I don't think I'll ever write anything about UCSD again. It was a unique era. *Timescape* talks about time and the fact that our physical theories are not complete. There are many hidden assumptions in physics which, as Einstein showed, have to be reinvestigated. So I think scientists should try to write fiction — to convey that science is not what most of those people out there think — that is, a set of received opinions, a set of frozen data.. Science fiction is also about the future, seen through the changing lens of science. Just having a perspective above the flow of the daily news helps to fathom that future. For example, we're here in the middle of the Reagan years, and those will pass, but the larger landscape is visible. I spent a lot of time thinking about the Soviet Union these



last few years, spent three chilly weeks there last year, 1984 — and I don't mean the

temperature. What's next? Clearly, the Soviet Union is doomed. This will surprise some; we tend to think big institutions last. After it falls, we'll see a sudden world realization that freedom and free markets work — big shock, for some. Technology will open doors for us — computers and the internet particularly. But then new enemies of reason and science will arise, and we'll have to fend them off — by making the experience and wonder of science dwell in people's minds, not as spectacle (which too often science fiction is, merely), but as insight.

Science is a giant slugfest of always provisional ideas. What they don't get out there, is science as partial, provisional knowledge. Often they want to turn it into a faith. That is why there is the Jonas Salk lab smock image. We have become the emblem of certainty to them. "Scientifically true! Scientifically proven!" And they don't get it when we say, "Hey, but that can be changed at any moment." One new fact can destroy the oldest theory on earth. They don't understand that. And yet that is the most simple thing about science.

I feel that we have an obligation as scientists to continually remind people that we are not the mandarins of some Byzantine, complex, non-understandable, great set of facts. Instead, we are explorers trying to find out what is going on. Often in the physical sciences, as you know, it is like trying to take a drink out of a fire hose. It is often trying to find a fact which will reveal something, against the blizzard of facts that roars through your life all the time.

There is so much complexity in science. They can't understand the difference between that surface complexity and the simplicity underlying it.. Simplicity is the only way we are going to reach people. Complexity just makes them think it is another faith. They just think the physical world is a big, complicated machine with no hope of them ever understanding it. How

many people do you know who are afraid to get on airplanes and have no understanding of how they work? They know nothing of Bernoulli's Law, fluids, forces. They can't understand what holds it up, so they are afraid it will fall down. That is a simple example, but it expresses what many feel about science in our society. Anything we can do to contradict that, to undermine that, to falsify that as their view of science — is a very good idea. So I would urge all of you to communicate — in whatever ways you want. Writing articles for high paying magazines

like Scientific American-or appearing at the Rotarians and preaching a "faith." — anything you can do to tell people about science as she really is, is a good idea. All these tax dollars supporting the expansion of our knowledge do have to come from someone. If they don't get the spirit of science, ultimately we are not communicating and they are not going to fund us. That is the bottom line. So I would say you all ought to be communicators of science, because the alternative to popular science is unpopular science! — and we don't want that, do we?

Hotel Vampires

Mike Estabrook

I hate hotel bathrooms because
it never fails that they bristle with
a combination of mirrors enabling you, nay,
encouraging you,
to view, and always suddenly
and unprepared, which is to say not on purpose,
the top or back of your innocent head.
And the top of my head is not a pleasant sight.
Residing thereupon right in the middle is one
of those scruffy bare patches, surrounded
by hair, a bald island in a sea
of dirty brown and gray. The problem is
I forget it is there, forget it presents
such an ugly landscape.
I can never see it, of course, unless someone
takes a picture of me from behind
or I'm in a fucking hotel bathroom and happen
to look over and wham!!! there it is,
clear and bright as a supernova, sprung
on me again, surprise!!! look
at me and how old and unattractive
I have become. Fucking hotel bathrooms!
Next time I'm going to pretend
I'm a vampire and cover up all
the evil mirrors waiting to ambush me
and make me cringe.

The author is the Hugo-winning fan artist from New Orleans, Laura is Laura Resnick, and the heartbreak is universal.

E-LETTER TO LAURA

From: "Peggy Ranson" <pranson@timespicayune.com>

Reply-To: <pranson@timespicayune.com>

Date: Mon, 31 Oct 2005 10:55:49 -0600

Laura,

I've got a little down time at work so I'm going to start this mega email to you now. The paper put it pretty succinctly today by saying "...we're going thru a collective grief process mourning the loss of the city as we knew it." and that pretty much sums it up.

It just **feels** different. Besides the obvious destruction and debris you look at the vegetation and all of it in the flooded areas is dead or dying. All our beautiful oaks look like they're having a bad hair day. Huge gaps in their canopies. They look like the scary forest in a horror movie. little foliage and twisted gnarly limbs — of the limbs that are left. You see all the spray painted codes left on homes. If there's a zero that's a good thing as any numbers mean bodies found. If the remains were animal they say "cat" or "dog" and how many. I was a bit disconcerted when on my way to work just 2 blocks from my house they had spray painted "2 looters shot." I didn't realize that was happening in my neighborhood.

I'll start at the beginning. When I left work that Friday nite someone mentioned that Katrina looked like it may be a threat. We were all going, naaaahhh. Cat 1 and going south. Still, I topped off the gas tank and went to the store. It wasn't even crowded. Woke up on Saturday morning and was horrified to see what was happening. I started calling local hotels hoping to get a room that would take pets. Thank God that didn't happen in hind sight. I called and left a message with my brother in Memphis that I **may** be coming his way with 2 cats. Spent the rest of the day washing clothes and cleaning out the fridge — the fridge, NOT the freezer. Big mistake, again hind sight. By Saturday evening I went to bed thinking it was going to change course and go to Florida.

Sunday morning my brother's phone call woke me up. Get your butt up here NOW. I had organized all my papers early in the summer cos having hurricanes so early in the season made me think this season might be different. So I started dumping by drawers into trash bags. I would deal with all of it later. I dumped all the cleaned clothes into suitcases and emptied all my underwear into one. Cleaned out a litter box and loaded it with papers and finally loaded the cats into carriers. I packed water and fruit and set out. Whine-O, my FIV (aids) cat started crying from the get go. I took the back way to get onto the Causeway, passing people rioting at gas stations. After that I saw no one on the

street. It was pretty eerie. When I got onto Causeway there was no one. YES! I thot. Smooth sailing. I passed over the interstate to see all those poor suckers stuck in traffic. I hit the Causeway at the lake to begin the crossing over and hit the worst nightmare in traffic I have ever seen. It took me 4 hours to go 22 miles. Stubbie, my other cat wasn't happy but he chilled out. Whine-O started having diarrhea, hunched over panting and drooling, crying everytime I hit the brakes, which was every other second when you're not even going 5mph. He stayed that way for the next 14 hours. It didn't help that his poop was stinky and that he was wallowing in it, but what could I do? He kept dumping his water bowl. Neither cat would drink. At least I was going slow enough to be able to safely pour new water in. I didn't think Whine-O would make it.

I eventually made it to I-55 to Memphis. The contra flow was working and such a sight to see! in all directions on both sides of the interstate was the most massive exodus of cars I have ever seen. Bumper to bumper as far as the eye could see. I had totally shut down emotionally until I hit this point. It was then that I realized I was in the middle of a HUGE event. How big, though, had not happened yet. Behind you could see the farthest most feeder bands of the hurricane already starting to come through. Cars were breaking down everywhere. people were in caravans of family cars. People were charging their cars over the dividing grounds thinking the traffic was going faster or smoother on the other side (not so I might add). It was when we were coming into Brookhaven Mississippi, where the traffic bottlenecked once again becous the contra flow was ending, that I finally just broke down in tears. In the small communities they had overpasses where all those country folks had gathered with banners and signs. The gist of these signs were "We love you New Orleans. May God keep you safe." It was the biggest thing these people had ever seen. Thank God we were only going 5mph cos I just broke down and cried — along with Whine-O.

Most of the traffic got off in Jackson, Mississippi. The sun was going down and I had been on the road a little over 9 hours. I was starting to panic at this point. I'm a lousy driver at night, I couldn't feel my legs, I needed gas, could I find a room anywhere??? In Canton, Mississippi I couldn't put off getting gas any longer. My legs almost went out from under me they were so bad. I don't do cell phones so I bought a phone card to call my brother knowing he'd be worried. Welcome to the cell phone age. Not a pay phone to be found. nor a room. Louisiana cars were everywhere in the same boat as me. This totally creepy couple came up to me and asked if I needed a place to stay. I was so exhausted I asked if they knew where a motel was. Ohhhhhh nooooooooooooo, you won't find any thing *here*. We'd like for you to come stay with us. Man, Laura, the hackles went up on my neck and the alarm bells were screaming. I started muttering about my poopy cats and they said that was ok, too. It was then that I made up my mind to push on for Memphis. I had no desire to end up in someone's stew pot or being force fed the bible all night long.

I made Memphis in record time from Jackson. What was normally a 6 hour trip took 14. There was almost no traffic which wasn't good for me. My hands were cramped from the steering wheel cos I'm such a wuss about night driving on the interstate. I did find cars to tail tho, most of the way. I pulled into Memphis at 1 o'clock Monday morning. They were waiting for me. We got the cats out asap and cleaned poor Whine-O up, whose nose was a livid purple from the beating it took everytime I braked the car and his

ass was covered in liquid shit. After emptying the car and downing a glass of wine I fell into bed. And woke up to a nightmare.

The rest of the evacuation was the same as all my other compadres in Memphis and elsewhere — 24/7 cnn. Crying, in shock, desperate to find out about our homes. Finding as many friends and co-workers as possible. Weeping for the poor betrayed pets left behind and the horrors of those people left behind with no help, no shelter, no food, no water, and almost as bad, no dignity. The anger!!!!!! I'm gonna tell you right now that when Mayor Nagin lost it in that interview I had never been as proud of him as then. Forget the blame game. We had less than 48 hours warning. He got a MILLION people out. Fully half those who stayed DID have cars. They could have left. Then the levees broke. and everything changed. We thought we had dodged the bullet. It was the worst thing that could have happened to this city. I have friends who did stay and their stories are so dramatic, so terrifying. Those would take a book.

Back in Memphis we're trying to figure out FEMA (jeez), wondering if we should apply for unemployment, finding the newspaper on NOLA.com. Going to the Red Cross and eventually, after about the first 2 weeks rage and grief, regaining a sense of humor. We decided we were the nicest po white trash on welfare & food stamps the world has ever seen. I spent 5 weeks in my brother's house in Memphis. AND the newspaper continued to pay us the entire time. (What they went thru is another story and they'll probably get a Pulitzer out of this. I'll see if I can att. the video of their fleeing the city in the delivery trucks. Pretty dramatic.) I was everyone's very own personal Katrina refugee. But I knew I was going to start smelling after a few weeks...

The Memphis days are a blur. I was certainly in a much more comfortable situation than most. I grew up there and caught up with old friends. I was paid. The



weather was good except for the Tuesday following Katrina which roared thru Memphis still at tropical storm strength. I slept thru it. It wasn't till I took a deep breath and decided to go home cos Nagin said I could that it started all over again.

This time I loaded as much in the way of water and groceries that I could. I bought an ice chest and tons of cleaning supplies with visions of toxic mold in my head. The cats, however had loved their new home and made it very clear they weren't going without a fight. My brother managed to get a little dramamine into Whine-O but Stubbie got in touch with his feral self and went wild on us. Lots of blood later they were back in their carriers. The car was maxed out. I could barely see out. In the first 15 minutes on the road Whine-O pooped again. ***sigh*** this time, at least, it wasn't diarrhea. THEN, he projectile vomited across the dash board. ewwwwwwwwww. I had to pull over to clean up that one. Eventually the dramamine kicked in on him and he went comatose. Stubbie went insane. for the next 6 hours he did everything he could to get out of that cage. I was never so glad to get home. I stopped for nothing but gas.

When you go across the Bonne Carre you know you're coming home. I started checking for hurricane damage. Since that's all swamp I can't really say I saw too much except for some roof damage on some camps. The traffic wasn't as heavy as I thot it would be either. As you come into Kenner you start seeing the "blue roofs", the tarps they put on homes roofs that have damage. okkkkkk, still doesn't seem too bad. Then Metairie. I see the landmark office bldg., The Galleria, with most of its windows blown out like the downtown Hyatt. You see the 17th street canal but that's where the interstate splits so you couldn't really see anything. Round the next bend and you see the downtown skyline dominated by the Superdome. Wow..... just wow. And then it sinks in that the traffic heading OUT OF TOWN is bumper to bumper 8(

I took the St. Charles exit cos I wanted to get a feel for the damage. Huge trees down and limbs everywhere. Almost all power lines down. Street lamps snapped like twigs. Some side streets utterly impassable. The streetcar tracks can not even be seen for the debris. Hummers everywhere with the national guard. Foot patrols in the neighborhood. Siding, shingles, collapsed porches, blown off roofs yet to be blue tarped, the occasional collapsed home, and this is the least damaged part of the city.

Magazine Street was pretty much the same but becos it didn't have as many massive oaks there was less of that kind of damage. Just the looting. I pull up to my house and the first thing I notice is really heavy broken glass around. It wasn't window glass so a mystery. I opened the house prepared to heave cos the fridge had been off for 5 weeks with rotting meat inside. Glory be there was no odor!!! It re-froze. Horrible ooze under it but no odor. That was the big hurdle so I immediately began to unload the car saving the cats for last. My neighbors across the street were on their porch. They're leaving. They said if I had come in 3 weeks earlier I would have lost it. What I was seeing was "cleaned up". As the days go on I realize I'm the only one *living* in my house on my block. Everyone else is coming in for the day and leaving at night and not too many of those, either. I spent the next few days driving around. It was a fucking ghost town. Except for the military, the black hawk & chinook choppers, the humvees.

I'm going to insert some emails here made to Guy and other friends:

it won't be the New Orleans we remember. But those of us uptown will do our best. It's a real ghost town and kinda scary. The good news is my little hispanic "contractor" came today at the same time as the guys to clean the fridge did. On top of that (everyone was hispanic btw) The Salvation Army came by with hot meals of beef stew, water & Nestle

Krunch bars. We all grabbed them even me who has food. Why? cos it was so NICE of them to do it.

Elaine, the biggest problem is CARPET BAGGERS!!!! the peeps coming back are begging for work and the work is being farmed out to outsiders! these peeps need work and the outsiders are bringing their own workers who are being housed and fed, very comfortably I might add, at government expense. I was thrilled to give the local guys the work today. But if there's no work they won't move back. We are losing at least 25 to 40% of our population!

Our own little yard guy called today to say he was coming and I told him I would prepay him for 2 months if he needed it. Jeez, these little guys were in shelters and they worried about US!!!!?????? You cannot beleive the generosity of spirit this city has for it's own. Sure there is some negative bs on the net and we're old news now. This is when we all need the help the most!

Mary Sirkis came by yesterday and we've been looking out for each other from day one. She went to Memphis also. We were hugging in the street and this little old lady came by in her car and said "Welcome back." I cannot tell you how surreal it is.

Nancy, Mary and I made a promise to go out to dinner this weekend. I called an expensive restuarant to make reservations for Saturday night and left a message on their answer phone. (I heard via nola.com that they were open) They called back THRILLED that I wanted a reservation and thrilled to hear that I heard they were open via nola.com. (Laura, there were maybe a grand total of 5/6 restaurants open for limited hours at this time. Most didn't let it be known they were open becos their menus were - and still are - so limited.)

this to Guy:

>> I've been back for 2 weeks. TV does NOT prepare you for it. I've taken in some peeps from work who lost everything. Midcity, Lakeview, Bayou St. John, Lakefront (there is no more Sid-Mar's , Brunings or any of those restaurants, They were flattened and flooded. There's nothing there-literally) all were flooded and in most cases to the roofs. Gentilly and the Ninth Ward - drove all thru there. Only thing they can do is bulldoze it and start over. It's beyond recovery. I suppose the same is true of New Orleans east and most of Arabi and St. Bernard. All the vegetation in those areas are dying for the most part. Oaks throughout the city have lost a good deal of their canopies and will be a few years in growing back. City Park and Audubon Park are not the shady soothing places they used to be. I can't remember which oak it is, water oak or live oak, but they will not survive at all. most have been marked with red Xs for removal before they can fall and do more damage. We lost the one remaining survivor of the Dueling Oaks in City Park so that's just a memory as so many other things in this city are.

>>

>> Guy it takes your breath away. We have the Quarter, Garden District, and Uptown. Parts of Carrollton, parts of Midcity that sustained some wind damage but are otherwise

ok. So many of my co-workers have lost EVERYTHING. Literally everything but their lives & in some cases their cars. The insurance companies are complete asses. One State Farm adjuster has already been shot and killed here. The frustration is really starting to mount up. Just unbelievable.....

As to my notes: more damage to the house found then when I wrote these emails. My water pipes have burst underground due to the city pressure coming back on. It's gonna be thousands to fix and I'm praying it doesn't hurt the foundation. You just hear the constant swooshing of water thru the pipes.. 8(The chlorine smell from the water gets stronger everyday. The mysterious glass I saw was from my utility meter - it exploded.

The newspaper let go/fired anyone who did not return when asked or neglected to contact their supervisor within the designated 24 hours. I saw people leaving the building in tears. There were no exceptions and if the paper's advertising doesn't improve by Thanksgiving there will be lay offs.

They may have downplayed the violence that happened here but happen it did. Charmaine Neville was raped on the roof of her shelter. Later stole a bus and took as many away from that shelter as she could. A N.O. Saint who lived in the east personally saw a man shot in the head for his car. and those special ops forces were brought in just to deal with the gangs. They had one order - exterminate. And they did. 2 gangs had joined forces and were so well organized they had walkie talkies and a complete blue print of the areas they were going to hit. The special forces got to them first and not one person who knows about this regrets it or feels sorry for them.

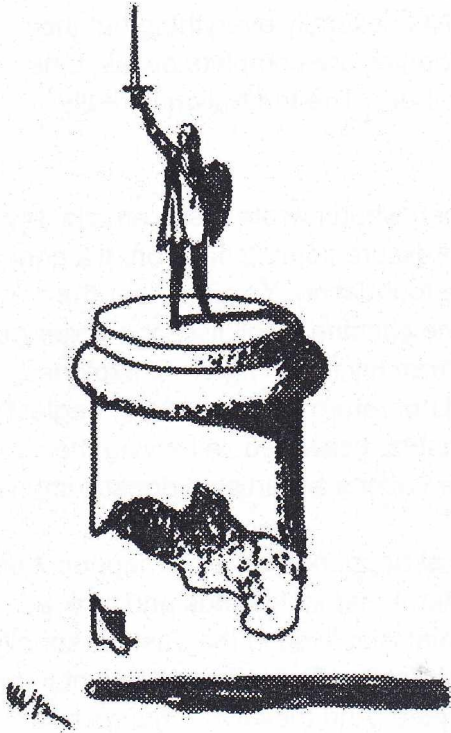
Well, that's about it from me. Once you cross St. Charles Avenue heading to the Lake it just gets worse and worse. It's my daily route to work now and even 63 days later (today is halloween) it's in chaos with debris. 63 days. Tho they do say it's probably the safest city in America now crime-wise. Up by me it almost looks clean and there's traffic. Of course there are those semi tractor trailer trucks parked on the neutral grounds along with the occasional abandoned boat and the traffic lights still don't work, but hey! You can't have everything...

Being a drama queen I had always felt I would go thru something like this - you know, the "end times" scenario. Growing up with the *bomb* and all that. But it's not as Mad Max as you would think. In fact it's pretty mundane. It still boils down to your job, car, house, pets, getting gas, having water and electric, and groceries. Getting garbage bags and cleaning your street. Hoping for a mail delivery sometime soon. (mail, hah!) and steady garbage pickup, another Hah!. 2 people on our block have put their homes up for sale and are leaving for good. That story is being repeated everywhere. The people who want to come back and repair their homes have no place to stay. What little livable property is around is priced so high no one can afford it.

Everytime I think I'm done writing I think of something else I forgot to mention. But the story is just so damn big. It's just plain biblical. What can I say? Wait for the movie.

Peg

Illo by the author - her first fan art.



THE CHORUS LINES

WAHF (regarding this zine and *The Zine Dump* #9): Randall Fleming, Bruce Gillespie, Irwin Hirsch, Ben Indick, Terry Jeeves, Irvin Koch, Tim Marion, Cheryl Morgan, Curt Phillips, Jayne Rogers, Janeen Schouten, Steven Silver, Sally Syrjala, Charlie Williams

Mike Resnick
c/o *Challenger*

I read with some interest Gene Stewart's guest editorial in #22, and it has prompted me to write one of my very few Letters to the Editor.

Now, since we have a Republican President, a Republican House of Representatives, a Republican Senate, a mildly conservative Supreme Court, and a

majority of the governorships and state legislatures are under Republican control, it's obvious that Mr. Stewart isn't preaching to the converted. A majority of Americans clearly disagree with him, so I assume his polemic was intended to win at least some of them over.

How does he start? Well, very early on he claims that the United States has gone fascist, which is undeniably a unique way to convince the other side to listen with open minds. I have numerous relatives who suffered under Hitler in Nazi Germany, and I am sure those few who survived would be more than happy to explain to Mr. Stewart, who has never been within hailing distance of a fascist state, exactly how one differs from the America he so clearly fears and detests.

A little later on he speaks contemptuously of "the Nazi Pope". Now there's a creative approach to winning the hearts and minds of 60 million American Catholics. And of course the new Pope isn't a Nazi at all; he was a member of the Hitler Youth back when not being one was often the equivalent of a death sentence for the parents. I'm not a Catholic, but it seems to me that Mr. Stewart has a little more problem with Popes than most people. Earlier he implies that only wrong-headed people of faith (and not just the Catholic faith) refuse to forgive Sinead O'Connor for publicly destroying a picture of Pope John-Paul II, the revered spiritual leader of more than a billion people.

The first fact he states – as opposed to naive beliefs that he presents as accepted truths – is that the Church persecuted Copernicus. That didn't sound right to me, so I thought I'd look it up to see how thoroughly Mr. Stewart researches his material. The answer – found in less than a minute on the internet – is that far from persecuting Copernicus, the Pope asked him to help update the calendar in 1514, he represented the Bishop of Ermland at the peace talks in Braunsberg in 1519, he was a canon (one step below a priest) in the Church, and he possessed a Doctorate in Canon Law. So much for careful research.

A little later he takes a cheap shot at Ann Coulter. This works if he's speaking only to people who agree with him – but as I pointed out, a majority of Americans demonstrably do not agree with him. Ann Coulter is an abrasive woman – but I'm not aware that anyone's ever caught her in a major misstatement of fact. Liberals use Newt and Coulter the way conservatives use Teddy and Hillary – and in all cases, it's absolutely meaningless without facts to back up the contemptuous comparisons.

Mr. Stewart claims that the 2000 election was stolen. Okay, he's not the only one. But of course he gives no facts to back it up, merely states it as a matter of (dare I use the word?) faith. I wonder what he would have said if the Supreme Court had ruled for Gore, and the Republicans had claimed that the election had been stolen while offering no more proof than he himself presents.

He finds it either contradictory or hypocritical that President Bush gave a speech stating that we must lessen our dependence on foreign oil a few hours after hosting a Saudi prince at his Crawford ranch. Of course, the alternative would be to toss the Saudis out on their ears and make do without any replacement for Saudi oil until Anwar comes on line somewhere around 2015. It'll raise the price of gas and heating oil up past \$10.00 a gallon for the next decade, but he'll sure feel moral about it. Give me hypocrisy every time – but I think in this case I'll call it pragmatism. Or better still, common sense.

He claims that science fiction, as we currently know it, is due to be “expunged, forbidden, or far worse, co-opted and controlled” by the evil ogres who currently hold the reins of power (by majority vote, not revolution or executive fiat, I must continue to point out). This, of course, is utter rubbish. I have sold to every major magazine in the field over the past three decades, and to all but one mass market book publisher – and no one (repeat: no one) has ever told me what I could or couldn't write, what subjects or words were verboten or likely to get me in trouble. I have written a novel in which the Messiah and God are the villains. I have

given God speaking lines half a dozen times. I have written a 4-book series set on an orbiting whorehouse. I have had so many minority protagonists that the Baltimore Sun and the University of Pittsburgh have both stated that I was black, and a West Coast newspaper told its readers that I was Hispanic. (I'm neither.) The thought that anyone is going to tell me – or any other science fiction writer – what we can and can't write is absolutely ludicrous, and tends to negate those (very few) points that he hadn't already demolished by his unsubstantiated overstatements.

Throughout his editorial, Mr. Stewart makes no bones of the fact that he holds “True Believers” – i.e., religious Americans – in contempt, and views them as the enemy. It's a curious conclusion when you consider that just about every man who signed the Declaration of Independence and worked on the Constitution – the documents he is certain are under serious threat from religious Americans – was a devout believer in God. Whereas I myself am an atheist, and I disagree with almost everything he says.

I'm sure there will be a tendency on Mr. Stewart's part to write me off as a knee-jerk right-winger, which is his privilege, and is certainly easier than substantiating all his claims. But this is a right-winger who voted for John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, even George McGovern and Jimmy Carter, and who actually was once a very minor Democratic office holder in Libertyville, Illinois. It is true that I am no longer a Democrat, but I would have no trouble voting for a ticket topped by, say, Bill Richardson and Joe Lieberman. I believe there are valid arguments to be made for the causes and positions with which I disagree. In fact, their greatest weakness is that they are represented by an abundance of spokesmen like Mr. Stewart.

Those interested in intelligent opinion/commentary on the theft of the 2000 election can find the same in Paul Krugman's August, 2005 op-editorials in The New York Times and the book he cites, Steal This Vote by Andrew Gumball. Those

*interested in the consequences of that theft
can simply look around them.*

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On the Canadian sports channel, TSN, I have has the opportunity to watch some Australian rules football. A minimum of padding and protection, and a maximum of pounding. I've heard games described as an orchestrated war.

Orchestrated by Spike Jones, maybe. I watched from the stands, hundreds of yards from the action, and still felt lucky to get out alive! Now—I can't wait till the next time!

Go Tigers!

I think Alex Slate is right. The war in Iraq was based on lies and nonsense. But then, the first Gulf War was also launched on lies and a skilful PR campaign. The real reason American goes to war is to bolster its economy, especially when it looks like it's slipping. Either the Bushes saw a reason where there was none, or billions of dollars have been spent, and nearly 2000 US troops, and countless Iraqis, have been killed, simply to make each Bush look good and strong and patriotic in the American public's eyes, and to sink more money into Halliburton's treasury. I don't think Jeb Bush is going to run for President, but if he ever does, run away quickly, and vote Anyone But Bush. It also looks like that before Afghanistan and Iraq are finished up, Iran and its nuclear capabilities may be the next target. Please vote for sanity, and vote for someone we all

can like and endure without America further making itself a voice for tyranny in the name of freedom and liberty.

All through this issue ... good fan art, especially Charlie Williams' industrial 500-lb. can of Tang.

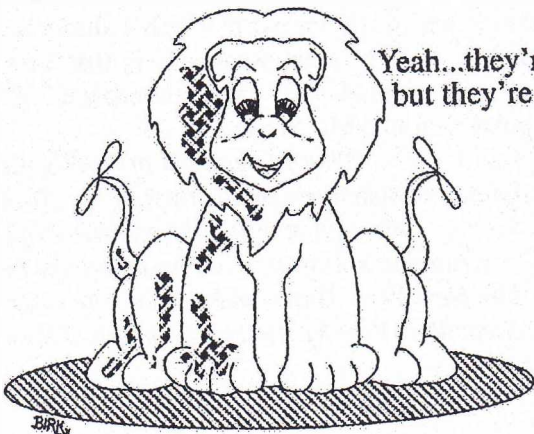
The variety in Charlie's work ranges from deeply serious to wildly comic. The man is amazing.

I look forward to that James Hogan book ... should be a good read when it arrives. The New Orleans Symphony Book Fair also sounds like some fun. I wish something like that could happen here. Actually, there is an event called Word on the Street, comes along every September, and after many years of making it a day-long street fair, it is occupying the grounds of Queen's Park, which is where the Ontario provincial parliament buildings are. It is supposed to be a festival of literacy, but has turned into a clearance sale for stationery and giftware that some large publishing companies have accumulated over the year. If it was good stuff they were selling, it would be fine, but one gets the feeling they are clearing out the trash. I didn't go to this fair last year, and I might go to it this year, either. I think I'd rather have the quiet adventure of scoping out some good quality used book stores.

I certainly agree with Greg Benford about media coverage of the space programme. With the current problems, and the successful return of the Discovery, so many newspapers and radio and television stations have complained that the shuttle programme has cost us too much money and too many lives, and it's time to get rid of our decades-past sci-fi

dream of going to the stars, and deal with reality on this planet. The greatest shame is that many of these editorial rants against the shuttle programme, and about space exploration in general, comes from publications aimed at our youth. They say it's too expensive to dream; in this

*Yeah...they're not much for lift,
but they're ghreat at cons!*



era of killer video games and personality cult, we must dream to escape the fate of sinking into our own navels. We must look outwards in order to learn, dream in order to grow.

I think many Americans who do have friends from outside the US know not to confuse Americans with American governments or American foreign policy. I know not to blame my American friends for the action of its government. The catchphrase is government for the people by the people, and we all know that it is a catchphrase, and not much more. The government, once elected, will do as it pleases, and it knows that memories are often short. To all Americans who are embarrassed and ashamed by the actions of your government, all I can say is the best thing you can do is get out and vote next presidential election day, and it can't come soon enough.

*But what happens if Rudolph Giuliani runs, maintains
W's honky base, and wins? Within six
months we'd be reminiscing about those
golden Bush years.*

The fans in Melbourne are a group I'd really like to meet. I've been getting *Ethel* since issue 22, when Ian Gunn was the editor, and I've read about generations of Australian fans coming and going. I'd like to join them at the church for a get together some time, but there's simply too much geography in the way.

Plan now for 2010!

Spam hunting? Is this anything like the annual spaghetti harvest in Italy? One of the newest hunting grounds for spam is Nigeria, where it has found new grounds in which to grow. It's extremely plentiful there, although some of it says it's from there, but is from elsewhere in reality. It's not edible, unfortunately, and is mostly a pest to be eradicated.

I've never had the chance to spend much time with the Lynches, and never had the chance to talk with Nicki, which is definitely my loss. My best time with the Lynches has to be in the Winnipeg Worldcon fanzine lounge, which was in an old

abandoned cocktail lounge in the Winnipeg Convention Centre. The Lynches has their Hugo, I had my Aurora, Andy Porter had his Hugo at his table on the other side of the room, and the atmosphere was good fun and frolic, good times and companionship. I sincerely hope that kind of day will return, but in the meantime, that time together will have to suffice as one of the better times I've had at Worldcon.

Tim Marion echoes the old line that it's warm only two to three months a year in Canada. Winter can last about three solid months, more if you're in the northern territories, and less if you live in a place like Vancouver. Springs are nice here, falls are pleasant, and so far, this summer has been one of the hottest on record in Toronto.

The summer '05 heat in Shreveport was brutal – close to 100, with 100% humidity, almost every day. But until August 29th I imagined the savage heat was beneficial: I thought the high pressure kept the hurricanes offshore. Ha.

Do we need a new name for science fiction? For fantasy, perhaps? Science fiction brings up *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* for many people, and fantasy means kink, or daydreaming. If there is anything that allows your imagination to take flight, the public attaches a negative spin to it. Speculative fiction? Futuristic fiction?

Another article about the fascism and tyranny inherent in the activities of the Bush regime. Do I see a trend here?

Familiar Taral art, and lots of familiar names, including Barry Kent MacKay, who is still around as a naturalist, and not involved in fanart at all. I've always liked Taral's gamins, and it's the first time I've seen Calvin stealing Saara Mar's bra top.

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Welcome: Yes, she is, very welcome. In an age of fronts that span from the Brass Bra'ed Babe of *Planet Stories* to the Baen

Battle Babe, that cover sticks out — *STANDS* out.

A Symphony of Books: "My ear was sore." If speakerphones had been as cheap then as they are now (I just bought a speakerphone/caller ID phone for \$9.99) John and Pat Adkins might never have quit talking.

Earlier this year, on the last day of the Friends of the Library Book Sale, they were having the clear-out sale; two dollars per box. We packed them as tightly as possible, and I still think that Modesty Blaise book fell out when the one box burst. (Quote appropriate psalm here.)

An entire box of Sabatinis for 10¢ each? "He was born with a gift of laughter and a sense that the world was mad."

Are you talking about Scaramouche or John Guidry, who found those gems? By the way, John reports that his Sabatini collection came through Katrina and the flood untouched.

Almost Half a Century: "It was on December 10, 1954 ..." When I start feeling old I get some reminders like this. That day was two weeks before I was born. (Insert obligatory remark about kids who don't understand How It Usta Be.)

And then insert obligatory remark about poor kids born the day before Christmas. I was smart: came down the chute in July. Presents twice a year.

The Easter Bilby: And now you know why the Australians have such ambiguous feelings about Warner Brothers' Tasmanian Devil cartoons. If he actually managed to eat Bugs Bunny, now . . .

Spam Are Plentiful This Year: Spam are adventitious fauna, even more plentiful in their original homeland of Nigeria, where it is estimated that there are 419 different types, many named after famous politicians.

The Chorus Lines: Rich Zellich: Lisa wanted to go to Cooperstown, but we couldn't make Goshen, Saratoga Springs, and Cooperstown all in the pre-Boston portion of the trip. Now she's doing baseball even more, unfortunately the most-local team (the Reds) is in the cellar of its division.

Charlie Williams: I remember the six-ounce Coca-Cola, too. When I could drink soft drinks with sugar in them. Try Kosher for Passover Coca-Cola, which has sugar. Corn syrup — "high-fructose corn sweetener" — ferments and so is treife for Pesach.

Grant Kruger: Well, Guy may forgive the author of *The Dispossessed* anything, but Minik probably wouldn't. Read *Give Me My Father's Body* by Kenn Harper for the story of Minik the Inuit and what the museum people, including Alfred Kroeber, father of Ursula, did to Minik's father's body.

I used to visit Kroeber Hall, the anthropology school at Berkeley. Beautiful museum — and it was a hoot to know the daughter of the man it was named after.

Monster's Brawl: Remember that Randall Garrett's "The Napoli Express" was written as a refutation of the "Murder on the Orient Express" theory of impromptu conspiracies.

The End of the World: I was reading the novel of *Vampire Hunter D*, which is better known as an animé. The Yokohama '07 people had been passing out booklets of the first chapter to prove that hey, they did have written stuff too. So I got the entire novel. The catastrophic nuclear war which bred the creatures in the book took place in — 1999. Were you too busy to notice, too?

Last Words: Personally, the hero of the Red River Campaign was the general who marched his cavalry brigade unmolested across what was proclaimed as Union territory — General James Patrick Major, my fifth cousin twice removed. We are part of history.

Gregory Benford
c/o Challenger

Another fine issue. I especially liked the Resnick piece on his departed friend.

Joseph Nicholas is as usual insightful in the LOC column. He's right on about oil reserves — the easily gotten is getting more scarce. New technologies will expand the reserve, but at some cost. We could make petrol from oil shale or even coal if we like,

but at prices above \$100/barrel. I think we'll do so, being energy gluttons, but the greenhouse problem will hem us in. It's a global form of the tragedy of the commons.

I recall Joseph's letter an issue back downplaying the chances for a manned exploration of the solar system. All seemingly plausible, until one notes that over 20 billion dollars goes into space programs already, the majority of it for manned. We're playing the price, just not – with our Shuttle and Space Station that yield nothing – getting the goods. Space tourism will loosen this further within about 5 years. So there is hope.

Jerry Page's insightful reminiscence on Jerry Burge took me back to that sole meeting of ASFO I attended as a snot-nosed 13-year-old. I think it was Jerry P's first meeting, too, and I was awed by the fmz and sophisticated talk. I stayed so late the buses stopped running and I had to take a cab home. A few weeks later we moved to Germany, Jim & I determined to start a fmz, *Void*. Jerry Burge and Ian Macauley (where he?) really turned me onto S.F. fandom, and ASFO was a crucial influence in US fandom, especially with their hardbound of Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm*. I took it as the Old Testament, later deciding that Walt Willis was the Jesus sent to save us from error. Not far wrong! And Islam is...?

James N. Dawson

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Thanks for the notice [that *Challenger* #22 was on-line].

I clicked on www.challzine.net and it came up. When I tried to click on 2 of the first items in the table of contents, they each came of "this page cannot be displayed" (PCNBD).

I managed to bring up the 3rd one, but when I called up Print Preview so I could see how many pages it was to decided whether I wanted to actually print it out, it got stuck on page one and I couldn't even scroll down with it to go to the next page.

This morning I thought I'd try it again, called up challzine, and I got another PCNBD.



Yes, I could haul out a manual or try to wade through some on-line "Help" page or pages, but that's a tiresome and time consuming chore and completely negates, for me, the whole concept of reading a zine, and that's to relax. With a paper zine I just pick it up and with my thumb and forefingers (functionally, in my opinion, so much easier and more efficient than a "mouse") and start reading – preferably in a relaxing, reclining position. No wrestling with glitches and struggling to decipher cryptic, technicalese "error messages", just to "turn the page".

Okay, I'm not trying to complain or be down on you – I appreciate your notice and maybe I'll get to *Challenger* if and when I have the time and determination – but I just wanted to try to explain, at least partly, why some of us "still do (and much prefer) paper zines."

No need to explain that to me. I infinitely prefer paperzines myself. In fact, if I had my way I'd be cranking this thing out on mimeotone and sending it to every faned, SF club, BNF, cute girl, and fan-friendly pro in the English-speaking world. Not to mention running it through SFPA.

But I can't have my way – I work for poor people and simply earn too little to commercially print sufficient paper copies of Challenger. With this issue I'm trying an experiment – publishing on our laser printer. It's cheaper, but extremely time-consuming. Let's see how it works out. Better than that I cannot do.



Yeah...I'm just here to fill up some space....

Richard Dengrove
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Alexandria, VA 22306

Should I say anything about the cover of *Challenger 22*? Better not. Better comment on other things in your zine.

I can say something about the war in Iraq. I am going to be different too. It is always treated as all plus or a all minus. In fact, I believe the Bushies had convinced themselves, egged on by a cabal of Neocons, that it would be all plus, the panacea for all our ills in the Middle East. Anyone who suggested otherwise was not a team player, like those who suggested postwar planning.

On the other hand, the Iraqi War turns out to be both a minus and a plus. The big plus is of course is that an awful tyrant was deposed and there is a good chance for a democracy of sorts.

Alongside that are big minuses. One big minus is since our victory favored the Shiites and the Kurds, we have soured our relationship with most of our allies in the Middle East, who are Sunnis.

Another big minus is that, for now, we have provided a sanctuary for al Qaeda – Iraq. Enough Iraqis are pissed off or convinced our invasion is the vanguard for a new Crusade. Why else can terrorists blow

up Americans and our friends, and then fade into the population?

The Iraqi invasion is not the only two edged sword in *Challenger*: James Hogan's "Decontamination Squad" is two edged too. If you change the extraterrestrial's terminology, and make him an exterminator or developer, the object of the satire would change from left to right. You could do it even better if you had the extraterrestrial working for what sounded like a corporation.

A change in terminology does not change everything, though. I know Australian football is hyped as a family sport. However, your description and Dr. Hilton's of a real Australian "Footie" game makes it sound more like rowdy European soccer than a family sport. I notice the ladies went shopping while you guys watched.

Some things go farther and are based totally on hype. I get that impression of Y2K. I mean no offense to Jerry Proctor, but I have never known a computer that stopped no matter what happened to its clock.

When, in the early '90s, I was being warned that if the clock went the computer went, I received ample proof this didn't happen. The clock went on all my early computers, but the computer itself never went.

After I told the scaremongers this, they said that it happened on earlier machines. In short, the belief was starting to resemble an urban legend. I guess ultimately it ballooned into the Y2K scare.

The opposite happens too: some things believed fiction are fact. Mike Resnick doubted that Captain Nemo could be an India Indian like he was in the movie *League of Extraordinary Men*. I tried to make it into fact, but I did not go far enough. I said I thought he was in an unpublished draft of *20,000 Leagues*. I would like to thank Joe Major for pointing out that Captain Nemo as an Indian Indian was in a published novel. He was Prince Dakkar of Bundelkund in *Mysterious Island*.

Of course we do not always care if something is factual or not. Greg Benford's novel *Beyond Infinity*, for instance. At least, the title can't be. Still, with a title like that, I

wouldn't even care if it took place at 13 o'clock on February 30th!

Sometimes, I require even less. Just showing up is sufficient. I would like to thank Joe Major and Robert Kennedy merely for commenting on my Moon Hoax essay. This does not mean that Joe's comment wasn't great and I didn't also love Robert's compliment.

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I have another child-care workers case for you where innocent people were convicted and sent to prison. It's Fells Acres in Malden, Massachusetts. It was very similar to the McMartin Preschool case here in California. As I said in a comment in my previous LOC, Joe Major is much better versed on these subjects (child-care, satanic ritual, false memory) than am I. (That comment somehow didn't make it into print. Perhaps the Bavarian Illuminati have struck me again.) Anyway, maybe Joe could be prevailed upon to write one or more articles on the subject.

Joe, heed your public!

Also, the following somehow didn't make it into print of my previous LOC: "That leads me to the Michael Jackson child molestation case. The prosecution's case appears a bit shaky. Michael Jackson is obviously a first class, number one wacko. But, that doesn't mean he did it. He also has the best lawyers money can buy. I would not be surprised at a Not Guilty verdict or a hung jury." If the newspaper's report of the Mother's actions during her testimony was accurate, I could just see the prosecution cringing and saying to themselves "we just lost the case."

How about this? Martha Stewart goes to prison for lying while not under oath. Sandy Burger steals and destroys secret documents and gets a slap on the wrist. Does anyone else see something wrong here?

"End of the World Games" by Jerry Proctor—The reason Y2K did not result in a

disaster was that a fortune (\$) was spent to see that it was *not* a disaster.

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The J.K. Potter cover on #21 fooled me – I would have placed a wager that it was by Al ... but I think you can finish off the name – total surprise!

"Al" – as in Alan White – did this issue's cover. Jeff Potter tells me that the mirrored man on #21 was a reveler he originally photographed at Mardi Gras, and combined with the scene of Boston harbor.

A question about *Emerald City* – I see that it is a nominee for the Fanzine Hugo – okay, fair enough. Then, I see that *EC* is also a nominee in the website category. Hmm. I am assuming that being one does not preclude the other? I would tend to think that this is two shots at the same target – yes/no?

EC is clearly a fanzine under Worldcon rules, and it appears on the web, so ... why not?

Bob Sabella – I am very glad that I heard, early on, that *I, Robot* was not *I, Robot*, if you know what I mean, that it drew from Asimov, but was not the book. Knowing that ahead of time helped soften the realization when I saw it.

I also went in knowing that the Will Smith vehicle had next to nothing to do with the Asimov collection, but was still bored with the movie and disgusted with its portrayal of Susan Calvin – one of SF's greatest characters reduced to eye candy.

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Your article on Aussie Rules football in *Chall 22* is spot on as far as it goes but it doesn't deal with the annual finals series, which is at the pointy end of the rapture and excitement of the game.

The winter season consists of sixteen clubs from five of Australia's six

Capital Cities playing 22 weekly home & away games. The eight winning clubs in each round earn 4 premiership points (or 2 premiership points in the rare, but not uncommon, event of a draw). During the season, clubs are ranked in a premiership table according to points earned to date. Top team at the end of 22 rounds wins what is called the Minor Premiership. Then follows a four-week finals series of matches.



Finalists are the top eight of the sixteen clubs in the premiership table at the end of the home & away season. Yes, that's right, half the teams. In the first week of the finals series, all eight teams play one another according to their rankings in the minor premiership table. The games are 1st v 4th, 2nd v 3rd, 5th v 8th and 6th v 7th. The top four sides on the ladder after the home and away season are guaranteed a double chance after the first week of the finals while sides finishing 5th to 8th need to win every game to win the premiership. The winners of the games 1st v 4th, and 2nd v 3rd proceed straight to the preliminary final in week 3. The losers of those games receive the double chance and play in the semi-finals in week 2. The games 5th v 8th and 6th v 7th are cut-throat qualifying finals with the losers being eliminated and the winners proceeding to the semi-finals.

The remaining three weeks of the finals are cut-throat. The winners of the semi-final in week 2 proceed to the

preliminary final, while the losers are eliminated. There are two preliminary finals in week 3, with the winners both proceeding to the AFL Grand Final. The losers are eliminated.

The above describes only the Main Game. There are many lesser leagues, including their analogues in fandom. Here is a group photograph of stars of the Great Fannish Football Game held under the auspices of the late John Foyster at Ponderosa Farm near the Victorian regional city of Kyneton in September 1973. Also included is a less flattering photograph of the writer being ordered off the field by Foyster, who refereed the match.

In my last segment of comments on *Chall 22* I refer to Australia's six Capital Cities. I didn't include the National Capital, Canberra, or the Capital of the Northern Territory (bigger than Texas), Darwin. So that should be eight Capital Cities. Sorry for the error.

Thanks for straightening that out.

James P Hogan is to be congratulated for his sensible and timely parable outlining the decontamination of Earth. Unquestionably, the piece serves as a powerful testament to the doctrine of Intelligent Design that hammers on the intellectual bastions of fandom. Those who are dismayed by Chaos must rely on Faith and blessed are those whose genius gives us reason to Believe.

The idea of a Great Architect overseeing the micro workings out of macrocosmic affairs is not new. What is fresh and exciting is the concept of carbon-based life as akin to a slime mould retarding the progress of a superior electro-mechanical species. Consideration of the virtues of purity and cleanliness makes it patently obvious that machines are at the apex of creation. So, logically, unbelievers who find (or fabricate) evidence to the contrary, including the laughable suggestion that mere men created machines, must be mistaken.

Humans are an untidy froth of nerve endings whose insane activities have polluted the planet. The sooner they are done

away with to make way for a benign symbiosis of virus and machine (a corruption of which already exists on the Internet) the better. The Prophet James P Hogan discerns the hand of the Great Architect in the process. 'Twere blasphemy to deny it.

I read with interest the views of your guest editorialist, Alexander R Slate, on the whys and wherefores of the invasion of Iraq. The main Blair-Bush justification for going to war, although subsequently shown to be false, was compelling at the time to the extent that many initial skeptics were reluctantly convinced of the necessity. Some of us, including Mr Slate, warned of consequences either way - ie. of invading or not invading. What has become evident after the event is that invading Iraq without moral or adequate ethical justification exacerbated predictable consequences.

Unlike the situation in earlier conflicts such as Vietnam, America cannot simply withdraw. This time the power interests of the United States are fully in play. The Coalition of the Willing must win this one decisively and that means unwavering commitment to massive recurrent haemorrhages of blood and treasure over the next ten to fifteen years. Should there be a failure of political will to see out this conflict, America might be left with nothing but a short-term advantage in deployment of weapons of mass destruction. Certainly America's credit would be exhausted, leaving it in the same bankrupt state as Great Britain found herself after being shafted with the initial burden of World War II. The choice would be between abject capitulation and global catastrophe unless, of course, India and China were to take the nations of the West into their very expensive nursing homes. Thankfully, before that happens I shall be safely and cosily dead.

Mr Slate's Black Plague analogy is apposite, but he doesn't take it far enough. Yes, the Black Plague meant a tremendous decrease in population pressures in Europe but it also immunised the survivors and their descendants against future outbreaks of the disease, which is a Good Thing. Perhaps the workings out of the Iraq experience will

imbue our leaders with a sense of history and so immunise them against impulsive aggression. One can only hope.

Alexis Gilliland
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A couple of days ago *Challenger* #22 blew in, if you will excuse the expression, and I figured your mailing had gone out just ahead of the powerful Katrina. After expressing concern to Lee, I looked on a map to find Shreveport tucked away in the northwestern corner of Louisiana, pretty much out of harm's way, while she went on the net to check out the satellite pictures of your neighborhood, pretty much confirming what the map had suggested. We hope that this is in fact the case.

Katrina missed us completely; all we felt here in Shrivelpport was a breeze – and depthless heartache.

Locally, there were some tornados touching down in suburban Maryland as Katrina blew past, and spectacular cloud formations, but the news coming out of the Gulf Coast is simply appalling. Because of subsidence, New Orleans sits in a levee-enclosed bowl that is 80 percent below sea level, and when the levees broke the day after the storm, N.O. was 80 percent under water. Sigh. The mayor had ordered the evacuation of his city of 485,000, but a lot of people stayed because they had no money, no car, and no place to go. Now they are collecting the survivors (a headline guesses "thousands" dead) and moving them out, too, but it will be a long time – if ever – before those people can return home.

Why? New Orleans is, or used to be, two cities, one rich and mostly white, the other poor and mostly black, and it is dead certain that the rich white city will be rebuilt before the poor black one. Given N.O.'s site below sea level, a case could be made for not rebuilding the white city, either, as suggested by Dennis Hastert, GOP Speaker of the House – who has been doing some serious backpedaling.

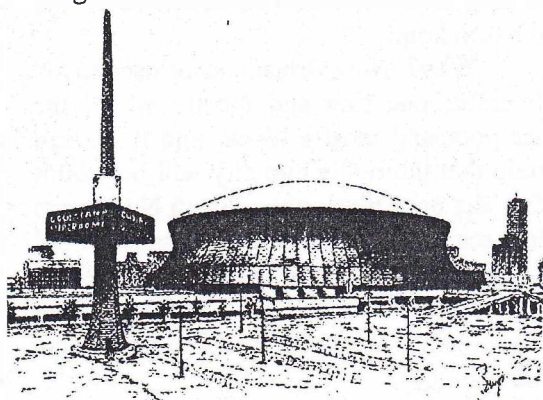
The "whitest" section of New Orleans, the Garden District, survived Katrina and the

flood without much damage, as did the French Quarter. On the other hand, some "white" neighborhoods caught hell (see "Survivor", earlier). All a matter of which levees broke, where. Of course New Orleans must reopen; as Don Markstein says in his Guest Editorial, it's a natural site for a port. But will it be the city we knew, or something soulless, yuppified, artificial? Check back in a hundred years.

The cover art [to *Chall* #22] was striking, though I would have done the font and placing of the title differently. As it is, it looks almost like an afterthought.

Charlotte and Jerry Proctor are entertaining on end of the world games. When I was at the Bureau of Standards in the late '60s, I took a course in radiochemistry from Dr. Charles Schwab, the Bureau's radiation health officer. In those days, building fallout shelters and stocking them for four weeks, as urged by the Administration, was all the rage. Since the class had all been cleared for Secret or better, Dr. Schwab gave us the official data on fallout, and had the class calculate how long it would take before one would have a 50-50 chance of surviving upon leaving the shelter. The class average was four months, not four weeks, so the Proctors weren't the only ones playing end of the world games.

Your own "Monster's Brawl" was excellent, probably my favorite piece in the issue, though your "Symphony of Books" was well written. Alas, I am not enough of a bibliophile to find the discovery of first editions in a yard sale or huckster room to be a thing of drama.



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Your article "A Symphony of Books" brought back memories of my own days as a mad dog completist collector. When I first visited Forry Ackerman in 1959 I actually intended to one day have a collection as large as his. Aside from that, I showed relatively few signs of mental aberration. If they had only cooperated and stopped publishing SF in 1959, I might actually have managed it. As it was, I eventually crossed the collectorish divide. When you are first collecting space seems infinite and your desires are even bigger than that. One day, you wake up and realize you don't have any more vacant walls in your house, and buying the house next door to further your collection isn't a practical option. You've long known that much SF isn't worth the powder to blow it to Hell, but that didn't stop you from collecting it anyway. Now you have to accept that maybe you don't need to own absolutely everything. Owning a whole bunch of stuff will do.

Speaking of owning a whole bunch of stuff, the title of Greg Benford's proposed novel, *Beyond Infinity*, rang a bell. I prowled a couple of bookshelves and located my copy of *Beyond Infinity*. It was a single author collection of four stories by Robert Spencer Carr and appeared as a Dell paperback in 1951. From what I recall of this volume, Greg's novel will be far more in keeping with the title.

Jerry Page's article on Jerry Burge brought back some different memories. *Coven 13* was one of the few prozines ever published in Los Angeles, and it was being published when I got out of the Navy in 1969. I tried for a job. As a demo, I proofread their last issue to show I could improve their proofreading to a major degree. I don't think they expected to be in business long, so they weren't interested in proofreading. I hadn't thought about Bill Crawford's involvement in the change from *Coven 13* to *Witchcraft and Sorcery* in many years. Crawford's publishing efforts were always garage industry. When I first encountered issues of

Fantasy Book and *Spaceway* I had no idea that SF publishing could operate on such a slender shoestring.

Having an Easter Bandicoot sounds like a totally silly idea. However, having an Easter Bunny is a totally silly idea too. What sort of a free thinker plot led to a bunny becoming the symbol of what started out as a major religious festival. Especially a bunny that may lay extremely peculiar eggs. If a chicken laid eggs that looked like that, it would be a very sick chicken.

Charlotte Proctor mentions her son once believed that his father lived in the basement. When I was a very young child my father didn't live in the basement, but he did sleep there most of the time. He was a police officer and worked mostly at night. He had built himself a bedroom in the basement, so he wouldn't be disturbed during the day. I didn't think much about it at the time. I suppose I might have got some funny looks if I had told people that my father spent his days sleeping in the basement, but he usually got up around sunset.

A note from "Denise"

What a lovely tribute to Spence [by Mike Resnick]. I am glad you enjoyed his novels. I have just started reading them. When they were first published, they were too young for my eyes. I have read *The Missing Bishop* so far, and you are right his writing is very humorous. Believe it or not I am one of granddaughters of Spence's wife Shirley. My mother is Spence's stepdaughter. I don't think I have a picture of him without a cigar.

Cheryl Morgan
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Many thanks once again for the kind words [in *The Zine Dump* #10]. Just one small niggle. The way you wrote the review makes it sound like I'm making money for me. In the short and medium terms that's certainly not the case. The first priority has been to cover costs, which I think I've done. After that I'll be paying top quality people to write feature articles (I have Gary Wolfe and Jeff Vandermeer lined up). And after that I'll be

paying my reviewers. Only if all of those are achieved will I pay myself.

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IRVIN KOCH

Irvin Koch was a member of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance when I joined in January 1971, and we met at the '72 DeepSouthCon. To be honest, I always thought his zines were pretty terrible, but I always enjoyed his company and got a kick out of what somebody has called his grandiose ambition.

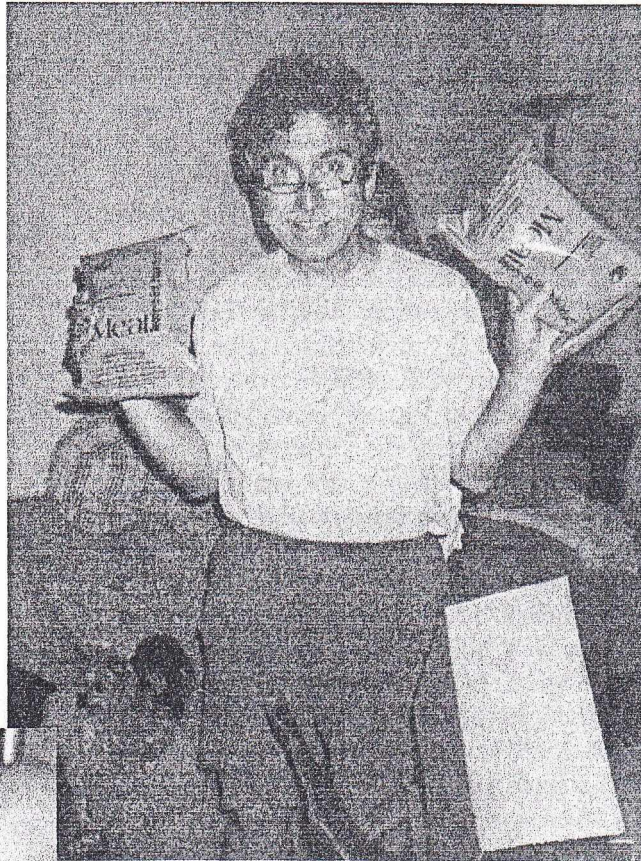
Irvin's reach always exceeded his grasp. He ran a worldcon bid that didn't have a chance, he put forward DSC bids for transient hotels, he claimed to have founded Southern fandom – silliness, indeed, but many are the fine fans who credit Irvin with getting them involved in our collective foolishness. So what if he harbored high hopes for glory? I never heard him say a negative word about another human being. There's many a BNF who has said nothing else.

I also have personal reasons for thinking well of Irvin – he chaired the DSC where I won my Rebel Award, one of the great moments fandom's held for me. So, as we mark his frighteningly premature passing, from a heart attack at 58, I salute a true original, devoted to fandom, first and last one of us. Rest in peace, Irvin.

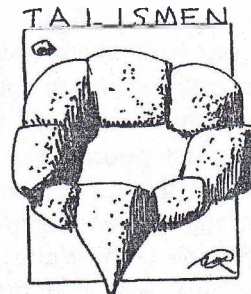


VISITORS

of recent to our humble abode have included **Justin & Annie Winston**, in flight from Hurricane Katrina, who came bearing MREs ... which weren't bad! (Jesse, lower left, had no opinion on the subject.).



... and **Brad Foster**, who, along with his wife, **Cindy**, stayed with us during Shreveport's delightful River Revel. During the fest, local residents **Jenny and Jeff Potter** came by Brad's booth to check out his sketchbook. It was the first meeting between the two award-winning artists. Look for a Foster on the cover to *Challenger* the next.





Two four-letter words

(No, not “bull” and “sh-t” ... “POLI” and “TICS”!)

GHLIII

The Mongolian Cluster Bang that is the George W. Bush administration stands revealed in the wake of Katrina. It’s the only positive thing about the entire obscene disaster. Not even the most devoted Bush apologist can whitewash its incompetence, cronyism, lassitude, indecisiveness, corporate favoritism and corruption – all right out there for the world to behold.

With domestic disaster compounding W’s bollix of foreign matters, and more and more Americans catching on to the folly of the last five years, we liberals have the chance to reassert our point of view into public policy. To do so, we need to present a clear alternative to conservatism’s failed philosophy – create a platform based on resonant and easily understood ideas.

This is tough for us. The problem with Democrats is that their – our – concept of good government and decent life is inclusive and complex – not easily reducible to simply stated ideas. But it’s a sad fact of life that “simply stated ideas” – slogans, if you want – *sell*. Liberalism’s best chance to reassume a preeminent public role, therefore, is to speak bluntly and plainly – to articulate clear and easily understandable principles.

So what do we say? Given dominion over the Democrats, what principles would *I* articulate? What do *I* believe is the best course for the republic? What are *my* hopes for a decent government? How would *I* win the people to our point of view?

First things first. We liberals have to learn to fight. Our opponents are creatures of certitude who attack without scruple. We need conviction of our own, and the will to argue forcefully. For decades we’ve been cowed by winger nastiness. Enough: we must fight back. Anyone who calls us unpatriotic or anti-God because we don’t agree with their agenda must be

made to defend their accusations. The most underworked phrase in English may well be “That’s a lie!” We must not be afraid to use it.

Tough talk aside, let’s remember that this is *politics* we’re talking about. Our aim is not to antagonize but to persuade, to convert the electorate from W’s politics of fear to politics of sanity and hope. Remember what the Bishop advised the feminist in Phil Dick’s *Transmigration of Timothy Archer*: “If you would conquer us, show us love and not scorn.” Republican slanders should be met with open contempt. We must not, however, extend that contempt to those who believe those lies. Our job is to convince those people of the truth.

Can they be convinced? Oh yeah. The last election had me doubting the *vox populi* as never before. But the people speak with many voices. It wasn’t just people like Al Gore – who chartered a jet to take sick Orleanians to treatment in Nashville – who acted well after the hurricane. Ordinary Americans behaved splendidly, to; the catastrophe of Katrina was met with astonishing generosity by the people, for the people, from the people. I am left pleasantly abashed.

If we assume that decency is typical, then *everything is okay*, because the reactions of common Americans to 9/11 and Katrina prove that the common American is a giving and courageous soul. Such a person will believe the truth and adhere to sanity – if the truth and sanity are presented with conviction, clarity, and force. The alternative belief – that the ordinary American is a frightened and bigoted doofus who countenances torture and can be manipulated into dictatorship – is unthinkable.

Okay. So what beliefs do we should put forward? What should a government *do*?

Respect suffering. Compassion is the noblest impulse in the human experience. Understanding, empathy, unselfishness and uncynical caring – *good will towards men* – should not only be our nation’s political philosophy, but should govern the personal conduct of each of us as human beings. *Other people matter.*

Probably the most revolting thing I read after Katrina dealt with the alleged ingratitude of evacuees towards those who gave them succor – obvious winger propaganda designed to divert onto the victims outrage at government’s spastic response to the tragedy. Decent human beings will not begrudge people who have lost everything a taste of public bread – or understanding if such victims express frustration with their fate. Our commitment as liberals is to reclaim these victims of nature, and restore them to society – because principal among the prime duties of American government, as for human individuals, is to

Care for the uncared for ... what one of my judges once called “the lost of this world.” The underbelly of society is not solely populated by those who choose to be there. It teems with the mentally ill or limited, the drug-addicted, and the poor, whose suffering is not simply “evolution in action” but human agony no decent society should tolerate. Poverty requires both short-term solutions and long-term solutions. Adequate sustenance and health care must be available to every human being within the province of the American government. Crime – which hurts the poor and the “lost” worst of all – must be met by smart, efficient, fair policing, well-financed, impeccably trained and strictly supervised. Our aim is not to control these lost, not to restrain them, not to ghettoize them, but to help them lift their lives.

Adhere to the Bill of Rights. More than any other country in the history of the world, America is its *ideas* – ideas articulated in the documents of its foundation. Principal among these are the Bill of Rights and the XIVth Amendment, among the clearest statements of the natural rights of man ever put to paper. We should trumpet them as the foundation of our politics.

This means that we support civil rights and due process of law for *everyone, everywhere*, in *every* circumstance – no short cuts; no manipulation; no rationalizations. *Every* man gets his fair trial, *everyone* plays under the same rules, punishment should always fit the crime, and

torture is unacceptable. (As are cynical technicalities like *rendering*, passing prisoners along to allies who have no laws forbidding torture.) Our government acts legitimately or it does not act at all. This is a policy that does not weaken us as a society; it *sustains* us.

What I like best about the Bill of Rights is what it *assumes* as *self-evident*. (Thanks to the late Don MacIntosh of Ygnacio Valley High School for pointing this out to me some 40 years ago). The Russian constitution read: "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics guarantees free speech to all its citizens." Our 1st Amendment reads, "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech." See the difference? In the USSR, freedom was a gift that the government could withdraw at any time. In the US, we recognize that freedoms such as speech exist above and beyond the reach of government, because liberty is the natural state of man. Our politics should begin and end with this proposition.

Mind our own business. Liberals believe that government has no place telling people how to live their private lives. Moral questions are best left up to the people who have to live with them. Reproductive decisions are *private*. Marital decisions are *private*. Government, in short, should keep its nose to itself.

The key issue here is Trust. By standing for freedom of speech, religion, and the unstated but understood Right to Be Left Alone, Americans express faith that our fellow citizens will not, when left to themselves, conduct themselves in a harmful manner. Therefore, let people read what they will and watch what they will, and don't try to lay moral filters over what they can read or watch, think or do. The obvious exceptions apply, of course -- but they are extremely limited and apply only where physical or mental harm to others comes into play.

Forget political correctness. The left has wasted its energy in recent times seeking to propound courtesy, tolerance and sensitivity through social and legal pressure: political correctness. Foolishness. Americans have an historic allergy to being told what they can or can't think or say. Political correctness goes against that grain; it's self-indulgent, celebrates power over persuasion, and is counterproductive, because it alienates those it should be instructing. If we assert trust in the people to think what they will without causing harm to the body politic, we have to mean it.

Besides, P.C. is a foredoomed proposition. It assumes that those with authority to dictate right thinking and correct speech will always have that power. Not so. Power can *and will* change hands. When it does, the side using their authority to pursue arbitrary agendas will pay for it -- a price the left is paying now, and a price the right will pay come the turning of the wheel.

Rebuild the infrastructure. This year's natural disasters have demonstrated conclusively that the infrastructure of this nation -- its buildings, roads, levees -- is aging, in some cases to dilapidation. Government's job is to keep the common turf of this country in repair. It's not doing it. New Orleans paid catastrophically for government's neglect of its antiquated levee system -- as will the rest of America. It isn't simply leftist hyperbole to declare that the cities and regions and states of this country are interdependent, and share a common fate. It is an economic truth. The national government must guide the never-ending, on-going and literal reconstruction of America, and it must do so by

Develop[ing] fiscal sense. I don't know if it's possible to abandon pork barrel politics, but America is so broke and so burdened with sickening debt that such a sacrifice has become necessary. Legislatures need to learn discipline -- and the people need to learn to live without pork. (I know the impossibility of what I'm saying. This isn't a science fiction fanzine for nothing.) Connected to this: government is dominated in this Republican era by the insane idea that wealth should not be taxed. In the decay of society's infrastructure we see the result of that sort of favoritism. Liberalism's belief is that benefits bestowed by government should resonate upwards, not trickle down. Literally, we cannot afford to act differently.

Pragmatic environmentalism. Al Gore is my favorite for the presidency – not that he’s interested any more – so I should mention his personal crusade. (Watch for his documentary, opening RSN at an art cinema near you.) Environmentalism means much more than preserving the beauties of nature. It even means more than the basic mantra of “Clean air, clean water.” It means acknowledging man’s effect on the world – and the importance of that effect. Did global warming play any role in the resurgence in hurricane activity this year – or the ferocity of Katrina and Rita? We need answers and action without agendas. In that same vein ...

Support science – without phony moral filters. The scientific method and its results have run into resistance in this winger era, call it creationism or “intelligent design” or faith-based or what have you. Here’s where rational progressives must be unafraid to shout “bullshit!” because nothing less than the quality of our kids’ education is threatened – as well as the true power of science to explore and explain the physical universe, and the true value of faith.

One of my favorite Bible verses goes something like “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” Faith has its value in the conduct of men’s lives, in how we relate to other people. Its tenets are essential to a decent life in a decent society, and are beyond question. Science always doubts – always questions – never settles for dogma. The twain coexist in any rational mind and culture.

America must increase its support of all the sciences. I speak, specifically, of stem-cell research, frustrated in this era by W’s wacky religious posturing. My mother is ten years dying of Alzheimer’s Disease, which makes me fear I may be develop it myself. To forestall the potential for cures for this and other horrid diseases because of extreme, politically-motivated ethical arguments is fatuous, and fundamentally inhumane. The hopes of living, suffering human beings are more important than the alleged “rights” of a few cells. Liberals need to be unafraid to say so.

We also need to be more demanding of our kids – and bring further emphasis to educating them in the sciences. Being an “innumerate” (as opposed to an “illiterate”) dunce, I admit to unalloyed hypocrisy on this subject – but I also admit that ignorance of the laws of the natural world is going to put our progeny in dreadful disadvantage in the world to come. *Poets need to learn engineering.*

(Superb elucidations of this issue: Nicholas Kristof’s op-ed article, *The New York Times*, 12-6-05; “Greetings from Idiot America” and “Intelligent Design” in the November, 2005 *Esquire*. Yes, I still read *Esquire*.)

Rekindle conversation on race relations. Radical conservatism’s contemptuous policy of benign neglect towards the poor has failed, completely and unarguably. Race relations and poverty must once more be addressed. Since the Reagan years America has stopped talking about race and poverty, the conjoined twins of America’s fundamental social disorder. Our underclass has been left to fester, and as a result the racial divide has become even more of a class schism. We have seen in the aftermath of Katrina the results of that division, that inequality and injustice are still facts of life in America – and America stands disgraced.

I’d like to see original and critical thinking turned to the problem. I’d like to know how much has changed since the days of Jim Crow and the civil rights movement which overcame it. I’d like to hear honest truth without regard to political pressure. I’d like to see challenges exchanged – to the underclass, for its self-crippling criminality, familial breakdown and drug use; to the power structure, for its neglect, its miserliness, its unwillingness to listen. Huzzahing the courage of Rosa Parks is all well and good, but it is empty rhetoric without acknowledgment that the problem is never-ending and must still be addressed.

Katrina has forced America to acknowledge, for the first time in a generation, that our society has a problem with race. Now we must try to solve it. To do otherwise in the face of the disaster, and the rotten schism in our culture it has revealed, would be unthinkable.

Honest and Intelligent War. Talk about oxymorons! Nevertheless, in the Iraqi debacle we can read vital lessons to be applied to the future. In the splendid phrase of Thomas Friedman, whose *The World is Flat* should be open before every eye, America invaded Iraq thinking that it would be easy. We completely misunderstood the enemy, we had no rational objective, we had no strategy aside from brute force, and we have no idea of what to do now. The subterfuge behind Iraq became public record with the Downing Street Memo. America was fed a war based on “intelligence and facts ... fixed around [a] policy” decided by W’s administration with no regard for the truth. The “Outing” of Valerie Plame as a CIA operative, meant to discredit and punish her husband for publically disagreeing with the administration’s deluded rationale for war, shows how desperately, and irresponsibly, W’s operatives seek to mask his mistakes. Enough – and never again. War, the most serious act of any nation, must never again be undertaken again in such an atmosphere of falsehood, recrimination, and duplicity. War must be entered into as a last resort, and only based on a true threat.

Anxious to rationalize the sacrifice of their sons and daughters, Americans are reluctant to believe that their children ever die in a flawed cause. Nevertheless, in recent decades Americans have died in any number of flawed causes, and we must have the moral courage to admit our mistakes and learn from them. Saving American life & treasure is good enough reason, but if we need another ...

“A decent respect for the opinions of mankind”. America is part of this world, not its master. America is not alone on this planet. We need the good will of our neighbors. Bullying, browbeating, and badmouthing variant points of view will ill serve our country in times to come, as such actions ill serve our repute with the rest of humanity, now. In the W era we have lost that understanding. When Amnesty International condemns our treatment of Arabic prisoners at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, and the obscene hypocrisy of “rendering,” that isn’t the mere hand-wringing of leftist furriners, as wingers maintain. It’s the sane and humane judgment of mankind. We ignore it at peril of our national rectitude, our stature with other countries, and our future as an avatar of democracy.

Our arrogance since the beginning of the Iraq War has squandered the world sympathy we enjoyed after 9/11, and turned it into world contempt – an unprecedented example of diplomatic ineptitude. We need to learn, once again, that influence is not merely a matter of military might. Remember the Lincoln-Douglas debates: will America be the *hope* of the world or settle for being the *terror* of the world? We must opt for the former. The world has known terrors before – and it has always torn them down. Mankind’s hopes, however, have endured throughout recorded time.

America can choose which it will be. So – which will it be?

It’s been said that we’re at our best when things are at their worst – and Katrina, like 9/11, proves it. The care which Americans bestowed on the victims of the hurricane was wonderful to behold – a great antidote to the bitterness Bush’s presidency leaves in its wake. Iraq and Abu Ghraib notwithstanding, decency is not dead in the American spirit, only dormant – the response to Katrina by private individuals tells us that.

If we liberals speak to that decency, we *will* be heard.

I love to quote lines from movies. Here’s one from *Platoon*, addressed to all those who believe as I do. I’ve had my problems with Oliver Stone, but he hit this pitch out of the park and into the river. Remember it:

“Keep your shit tight -- and your powder dry – and *the worm will turn.*”



THE CHALLENGER TRIBUTE:

CYNTHIA MARIE SNOWDEN

Cindy Snowden never wrote a book, published a fanzine, or organized a club or a convention. She was simply the best neighbor I ever had.

When they were kids her brothers and sisters called her “Pepper.” But from shortly after she became my neighbor, to me she was always “Boo.” She was a severe diabetic, with a learning disability, who wanted nothing more than to be a friend and have friends. *I* was her friend, for 17 years.

It was a *job*. Cindy couldn’t drive, so *I* took her on errands, drove her to movies, moved her stuff, and generally kept an eye on her. Missing meals or any excessive excitement could push her over the line. I lost count of the times I dialed 9-1-1 because of her hypoglycemic fits and diabetic comas. Being Cindy’s friend also meant you had to take

special care with your words. One time, in a thoughtless fugue, I remembered *Judgment at Nuremberg* and asked her to make a sentence out of “hare,” “hunter” and “field.” She couldn’t. “You’re not makin’ fun of me, are you?” she asked, reducing me to an inch in height.

But there were happy moments, too. Despite the limitations on her life, Boo did her best to enjoy herself. She loved movies – *Lord of the Rings* was a big hit, and after a member of her church gave her a child’s book on the *Titanic*, she sat me down and read me the whole thing. One time I took her to the Orleans courthouse and showed her the stars of *JFK*, which was being filmed there. She hugged Sissy Spacek and sneakily checked out Kevin Costner’s rear. (Boo denied that – with a laugh: “I don’t care nothin’ about his *booty*!”) When Geri Sullivan came to town to work on the N4 program book, Cindy asked her for her address so she could send her a Christmas card. Kindly, Geri said sure. That was typical; whenever Cindy met anyone, she was that person’s friend.

She liked to help me collate *Challenger*, and for my birthday bought me the heavy-duty stapler with which many issues have been bound. “Put that in your fanzine,” she’d tell me when something struck her as cool – like the time she read a verse in church, or the day a fellow attorney took us sailing, and Cindy joyfully took the tiller and “drove the boat,” or the night she roused me from death’s door – I had the flu – to drive her across town to see her father for the first time in 25 years. Hearing her say, “Daddy? I’m Cynthia!” was a moment I’ll keep forever.

And there was the night – without a thought for herself – she chased off a thief trying to steal my car. Later, she testified at his trial. The judge praised her as “a good friend, a good neighbor, and a good citizen.” That was just like her. Boo repaid friendship with friendship. She stood up for her friends.

Twice, to flee oncoming hurricanes, I threw Cindy into my car and fled to high ground. This time, 340 miles distant, and with only a day’s notice, I couldn’t save her from Katrina. But

she didn't *want* to be saved. As a girl in the Ninth Ward, one of the poorest areas of New Orleans, she'd survived the monster hurricanes Betsy and Camille in her grandfather's flimsy house. Now she lived in Raphael Manor, a solid brick three-story facility for the disabled, where she felt safe. More to the point, she had friends among the old folks there, friends she trusted – friends she felt *needed her*. She would never have left them. She told me, "We'll see this through together!"

After Katrina, Rosy and I were quickly able to locate most of our people. John Guidry, Dennis Dolbear and Joey Grillot were all safe in Atlanta. JoAnn Montalbano prospered across Pontchartrain in Fulton. Justin and Annie Winston even spent a weekend with us in Shreveport, visiting Jeff and Jenny Potter with us and sharing their store of MREs.

But it took us quite some time to find out about Boo. I'd spoken to her right after the hurricane, before the levee gave way. She sounded chipper, and said that the National Guard had told the residents at Raphael to sit tight, as they still had running water. The levee broke later that day. Calls to her number brought only busy signals, then beeps, then endless unanswered rings.

Days passed with no word. If Cindy had been evacuated, why hadn't she called? Twice Rosy and I made plans to go to New Orleans and wade through the "Toxic Gumbo" of floodwaters to Raphael Manor. Twice we were talked out of it. We called FEMA, we called the police, we e-mailed politicians and newspapers, I sent flyers to every evacuee shelter for which I could find an address. The sheriff of Ascension Parish sent deputies to investigate Raphael Manor. They entered the flooded first floor, called, heard no response. There was a sign which said that the building had been evacuated. I felt relieved. But where *was* old Boo?

That very evening, we knew.

A lady named Carol called Cynthia's stepmother, Jackie, who then called me. She claimed she had lived in Raphael Manor. She was vague and disoriented; since leaving Raphael she'd been on a boat, a helicopter, a plane and a bus, and didn't even know what city she was in. But her recollections were too detailed to be discounted.

Miss Carol told Jackie that Cindy came up to the building's second floor after the flood hit. She gave her hot dogs for dinner, but Cindy kept eating candy – not the best diet for a severe diabetic. Finally, Cindy put down blankets and a pillow near the elevator, laid down and went to sleep. Her coma was probably already upon her. During the night, in her sleep, she stopped breathing. When the policemen finally came to Raphael Manor, Miss Carol told them about Cindy, but they said, "We haven't time for that now." It was two weeks before they came back.

I cannot know what Boo thought as she laid down that night. I'm sure she knew that she was among friends – friends whom she cared for, friends who would stand by her – not just the residents of Raphael Manor but me and Rosy and all the rest who loved her and cared for her. The last thing I'd told her was that the beautiful Czech academic Martina Klicperova Baker, whom she practically worshiped, had asked about her from California. Cindy had been surprised and moved. Perhaps she thought of that as she closed her eyes to Katrina and the world.

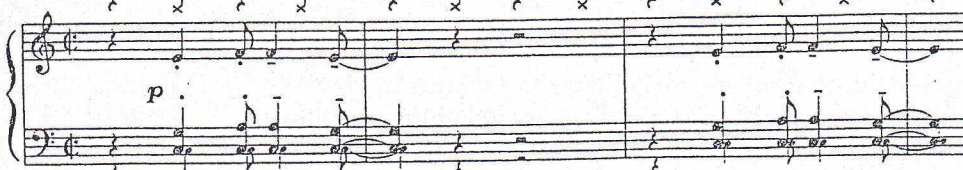

It would be a blessing if she dreamed, then, and not of the hurricane and its miseries. It would be a blessing if she dreamed of the friends she'd made over the years, of the daughter she'd put up for adoption and whose life she'd followed through letters from the adoptive mom, or of that Christmas Rosy and I spent with her, when she cried because she never thought she'd have friends who wanted to be with her on such a day. If I were so constituted, I'd *pray* that she dreamed of her Aunt Betty, the gentle widow who cared for her for many years, and of her grandfather, who gave her patience and hope and love in a world which has so little patience and hope and love for a special person.

If there is a God, and He regrets the obscenities like Katrina He visits upon this world, then He has mercy, and at the end of her dreams Cindy's grandfather and Aunt Betty came to her, touched her and woke her and carried her away into peace and happiness and beauty and light. Where we will see her again, when we rest with Christ in Paradise.

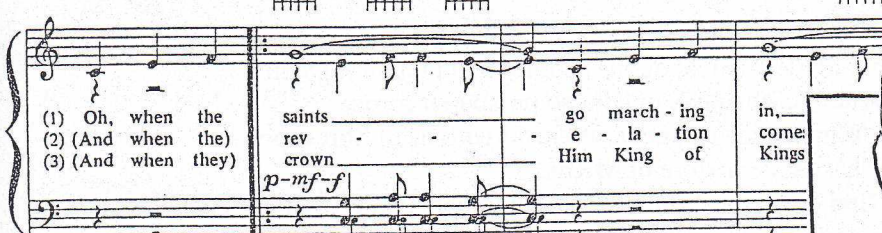
Moderately, with a beat

Handclaps throughout ad lib.

Handclaps throughout ad lib.



Chord diagrams: C, F/Cbass, C, F/Cbass



(1) Oh, when the saints go march - ing in, —
(2) (And when the) rev e - la - tion come
(3) (And when they) crown Him King of Kings

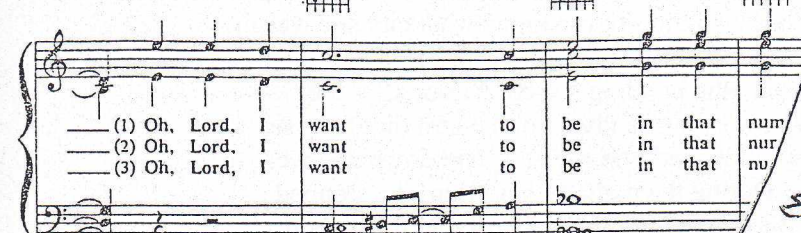
p-mf-f

Chord diagram: G



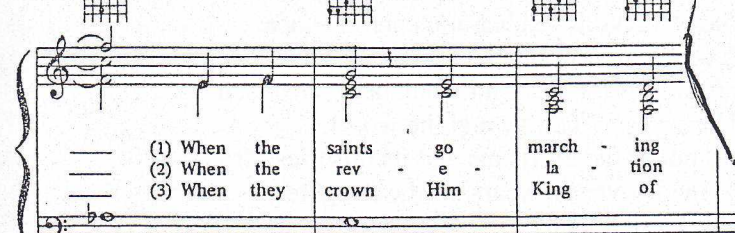
— (1) Oh, when the saints go march - ing in, —
— (2) Oh, when the rev e - la - tion come
— (3) Oh, when they crown Him King of Kings.

Chord diagrams: G, G, G



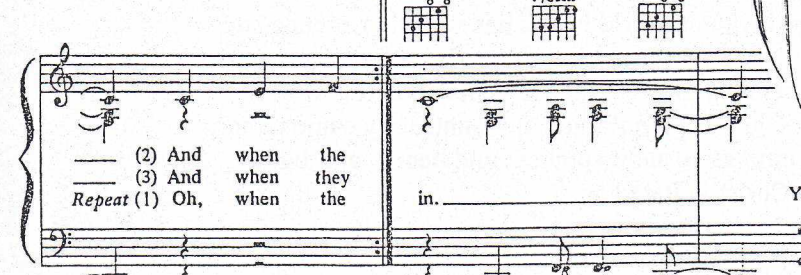
— (1) Oh, Lord, I want to be in that num
— (2) Oh, Lord, I want to be in that nur
— (3) Oh, Lord, I want to be in that nu

Chord diagrams: Fm, C/Gbass, F/Cbass, G7



— (1) When the saints go march - ing
— (2) When the rev e - la - tion
— (3) When they crown Him King of

Chord diagrams: C, F/Cbass, C



— (2) And when the
— (3) And when they
Repeat (1) Oh, when the in. — Ye



Jeany
Collins