

CHALLENGER 11



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Guy H. Lillian III, editor  
P.O. Box 53092  
New Orleans LA 70153-3092  
GHLIII@yahoo.com \* 504/821-2362

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

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Cover by Lynne Taylor



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# EDITORIAL: OUR DAYS IN COURT

"Guy, there's somebody in your car!"

My neighbor Cindy sounded sincere. I was *deshabille* and didn't want to move, but hey, the lady sounded *sincere*. "Guy," she repeated, "there's somebody in your car!"

I slipped hard shoes over my bare feet and pulled on my trenchcoat. I didn't even think about the shotgun I keep unloaded and wrapped in plastic behind a box on a shelf in my closet. I rushed out the door of my rear apartment, down the stairs, up the alley to the street.

"He's still there! *He's still there!*"

Cindy was out on her porch, which overlooks the street, pointing at the Dodge Durango SUV I'd rented while my Geo was in the shop. Specifically, at the lithe tee-shirt-covered back which vaulted out of the driver's side door and hotfooted it hell-for-election down the street.

"Yeah, run, you sack of shit!" I shouted. "All the way home to Timbuktu!" I'm not sure what I meant by that, but it was nothing good.

Cindy ran back inside and called 9-1-1, and I looked over the Durango. The driver's side door was bent out from the base of the window. Inside, there was debris on the seat: the steering column. Cindy had alerted me just in time to avert a theft. In a few minutes, the first cops appeared.

The kid was captured a few blocks away, and Cindy and I were driven over to make an ID. She was certain that the surly black boy of 16 they had in handcuffs was the culprit. I heard later that he had been accused of stealing cars before. A joking tech from the city Crime Lab spread black powder over the Durango and, with scotch tape, lifted several prints he said were quite poor. (Nor would the car drive. The next morning the rental company sent a tow truck to haul it away.)

My insurance company, the rental people, and the district attorney called Cindy within the next few days to get her story. Cindy is a special person, IQ between 75 and 79, bright and cheerful and, with a little assist from Food Stamps and SSI (for her diabetes), self-sufficient, but vulnerable in this abusive world, and wary of its dangers. She worried that the kid's friends and relatives would come get her, but then the praise we heaped on her began to take hold, and by week's end she was proudly boasting that she'd "do it again!" And I was getting used to my new status, that of a victim of Urban Crime.

The break-in took place in October; the trial in January. Cindy and I testified, and the judge had nothing but compliments about how straightforward and honest we were — but the DA put on an incompetent case, and lost.

Rather kindly, the judge blamed the cops, and by implication, the district attorney. The uniformed testimony was clumsy, uncertain, vague, and confused. The DA didn't introduce into evidence the kid's clothes, by which he was described to the cops, and the alleged burglar's tools they did try to submit were excluded. That was the official reason given for why the PD's motion for a directed not guilty was granted. But I knew better.

Cindy had positively identified the defendant, been polite (if a little wordy) on the stand, and the judge took pains to say that he admired and believed her. But her learning disability had been evident. A special person, when testifying, comes equipped with built-in reasonable doubt. Obviously, Cindy's testimony could not convict anyone standing on its own. No responsible fact finder could ever simply take her word without corroboration.

The judge called a few days later to tell me to let Cindy know that the kid had drawn a year in the clink on his *next* case. Cars in this neighborhood will be that much safer for at least that long. The judge also praised her — a good friend, a good neighbor, a good citizen. But again I have to wonder, how do we help people like her? They are so vulnerable. Not even the law can protect them against the *inherent* unreliability of their testimony. What on Earth do we do for them?

}}

I think I'm more proud of **Challenger** #10 than of any other zine I have ever done — with the exception of the family album I constructed when my first nephew was born. **Chall** 10 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my introduction to the fanzining hobby, and was also my first attempt since the early '70s to use a fanzine to make a coherent social and political statement. While I scan my own writing for last issue in a haze of anguish — 45 years at it and I *still* can't write worth *frijoles* — the other work in the zine was impeccable, and if it doesn't sound hyperbolic even for me, the critical response to the pub has justified my decades in fanzine fandom. Many, many thanks.

**Challenger's** current issue returns to the wild variety of earlier numbers, but still features a number of pieces with a common setting: the legal system. I've bent y'all's ears so many times with lawyer's-eye views of trials and whatnot, I thought I'd ask you for your point of view. **Chall** #11 — cover by Lynne Taylor, a Nolacon II contribution — begins with those who supplied the same. The zine also features fannish stuff, a wonderful he said/she said perspective of Y2K from Charlotte and Jerry Proctor and Joe Mayhew's jolly retrospective of his "illustrious" career. Not neglecting the professionals among us, Greg Benford contributes a brilliant critical piece on Southern SF and Mike Resnick tells us about his favorite meals. And there's more, plus lots and lots of LOCs and plenty of zine reviews. I enjoyed assembling a fanzine as focused as #10, but this mess was fun, too.

Now, issue #12 ... I'm already working on a piece for my next edition, and have at least three fine articles on hand which were crowded out of this issue. Nevertheless, a theme has come to mind appropriate to the time. I'm suggesting that contributors to my dozenth issue write about *America*. We are, after all, choosing a new government this November, and so should be thinking about our place in the world, our philosophy of community and government, what our society is like and should be like — what *we* are like as a people. Express your thoughts here! Lloyd Penney's LOC to #10 and comments made by a German friend at Bucconeer have hung in my mind, so I urge my foreign readers to chime in, too. What do y'all think of us? C'mon, let'er rip. Don't worry about hurting our feelings. We're tough.

And it looks like **Challenger** is at least (and at last) *approaching* the Net. Brother Richard Brandt of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance has recovered enough from eye surgery to set up a site for me at <http://www.crosswinds.net/~ghliii>. It isn't together yet — all of my back issues haven't been scanned in — but it *will* happen! My thanks to B'rer Brandt and my salutes to the lady Michelle!

}}

In early January I wrote a letter to *Time* about their "Person" (\*feh\*) of the Year choice, and the issue which immediately preceded it, a special report about Columbine. It was obvious to me that *Time's* editors were unsure whether to name the kids there — the killers and the survivors — as People of the Year, since their story dominated the news in 1999, or go with the cheery electronic entrepreneur they finally chose. It was my intent to chide them for the gutlessness of their eventual choice. *Time's* January 17<sup>th</sup> issue printed ... well, the *gist* of my letter. Behold my original words:

*When your extended story about the aftermath of the Columbine massacre appeared in mid-December, and was followed by your "Person" of the Year tribute to yet another technological entrepreneur, I won a bet with myself: that Time would return to 1999's most disturbing and compelling news story but refuse to give it the century's last notice. You should have, though. Columbine is an evocative and important event because it exposes the heart of the American people as no other happening in 1999. Our complacency, our arrogance, our shallowness, our lust for recognition and our lack of judgment, and our resiliency, our determination, our endless hope for a better world for our children. The children of Columbine belonged on Time's climactic cover of 1999 for what they told us and warned us about ourselves.*

Here's what they published:

*You should have named the events at Columbine High School as 1999's most disturbing and compelling news story. Columbine was an important event because it exposed the heart of the American people. It*



*encompassed our complacency, our arrogance, our shallowness, our lust for recognition, our lack of judgment, our resiliency, our determination, our endless hope for a better world for our children. The youngsters of Columbine belonged on your year-end cover for what they told us about ourselves.*

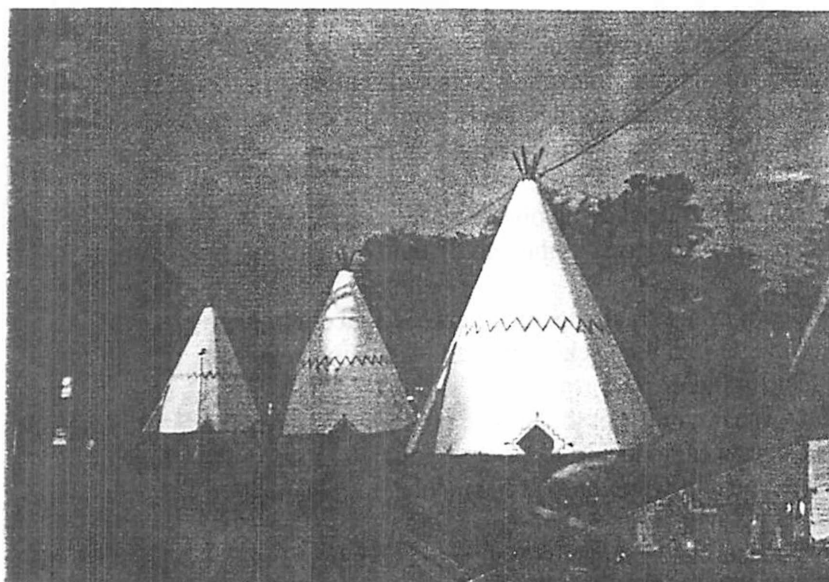
My letter benefitted from the editing, of course, but I resent the rewriting. It makes me feel *old*. I've never used the word "youngsters" in my life! (At 50, maybe I should start.)

}}

So here is **Chall's 11<sup>th</sup>**, in which I hope you will find some good. I doubt I'll publish again before Chicon, but I do promise to see you there — and any of you who find your way to Jekyll Island, Georgia for the DeepSouthCon. Bring your beach togs! The Atlantic may be too cold for swimming, but the beach will be ideal for tanning. And you'll find a great convention too.

Which reminds me ...

## *FOR WORLDCON 2003 — WRITE IN WIG WAM VILLAGE!*



Sunset on the Wigwam  
— as another day fades  
over glamorous Cave  
City, Ky. What other  
worldcon bid offers  
such peaceful, pastoral  
and verdant vistas? And  
teepees, too!

Year-round residents of  
Wigwam Village, two of  
our frontier forbears greet  
the elite in the souvenir  
shop. Make an offer --  
half off for Chicon  
members!



*No more Wimpy Zone! No more Zones, period! But vote for  
Wigwam anyway!*

# MY DAY IN COURT

*E.B. Frohvet*

The first time I was in a court of law, it was a traffic court, and I was about seventeen. I'm not sure if the man in charge was a judge or merely a magistrate; I'll use the short form for convenience. The clerk read the charge: I was charged, not with driving without a license (I had had my license on me), not with driving an unregistered vehicle, but with driving while not having the vehicle's registration in said vehicle. A minor but technical violation.

My father, true to form of doing everything the most backward and roundabout fashion, had not condescended to tell me that he had the habit of carrying the car's registration *in his wallet*. So that everyone other than him who drove the car (a group which also included my mother and my brother) was, strictly speaking, in violation of the law. It just happened to be me who got stopped by the police.

The judge asked, how did I plead? "Guilty with extenuating circumstances, Your Honor," I said. I was not sworn in or asked to testify under oath; the judge just said, "Tell me what happened." I stuck to the truth, my father confirmed it, and the judge dropped the charge. This was an instance of justice being tempered with mercy, since I was, however inadvertently, guilty.

My interaction with jurisprudence over the next fifteen years or so was confined to the occasional traffic or parking tickets — I hasten to add that a total of about two each over fifteen years does not mark me a major scofflaw. Once, returning to my car within no more than two or three minutes after my parking meter ran out, I found a police officer already busily writing a ticket. (It was well known in that neighborhood, I found out later, that he paced up and down the rows of parking meters waiting for one to expire. Click, pop, \$35 ticket.) I asked him, rudely, if he had made his quota for the day — perhaps not the wisest thing to say to a man carrying a handgun. But I paid the ticket anyway.

My next encounter with the legal system again involved a car, and again I was the victim of circumstances beyond my control. I was driving one night at the end of January; stopped at a red light, less than a mile from home.

And a guy in a red Ford, falling-down drunk (I later learned his blood-alcohol level was 0.17, where 0.10 is legally drunk in most states) drove straight into the back of my car at somewhere between 15-20 MPH. And got out, looked at me, got back in his car and drove *away*.

By pure luck, the driver in the next lane not only got the license number of the red Ford, he had a cell phone in his car, and called the police. The cops went to the drunk's home, found him still falling-down drunk, with the front of his car bashed in and the engine still warm despite his incoherent plea that he had been home all night.

I'll skim over the details. The guy's insurance company (State Farm), to their credit, paid to have my car towed to a body shop, and paid to get me a rental. It turned out that not only was the bodywork of my car damaged, the frame was buckled by the force of the impact. The insurance company's assessor and the manager of the body shop agreed it would cost more to fix my car than it was worth. State Farm agreed to settle with me for the blue book value of my car as a one-year-old model. I took their check and used it to buy a new car, which being cheaper than the one that was wrecked, I actually turned a profit of about \$2,000. All this took about two weeks. End of January/early February, remember.

The police told me I would be summoned as a witness.

The whole matter then vanished until July, when I received a summons from District Court.

A brief aside on my place of employment: Being summoned for jury duty is considered a sufficient reason to be granted administrative time off. Being called for National Guard duty, fine. Take the afternoon to donate blood to the Red Cross? Perfectly fine with the company.

There was no precedent for getting administrative time off to be a witness. At least according to my then-manager, with whom I had a mutually hostile relationship. If I "wanted" (his verb) to go to court as a witness, I would have to take a day of my own vacation time. I asked if, in a national company employing

more than 50,000 people, this question had never come up before? Apparently not.

I took my own vacation time. Showed up at court, on time, neatly dressed. Presented my summons to the young woman behind the counter. Tip, tap, bleep on her computer: "This case has been postponed," she said. "Didn't anyone tell you?" No, no one had called me.

"We'll send you another summons," she said.

Okay, these things happen.

The last week in August, there arrives in my mailbox another summons for a date early in September. Not even bothering to argue with my half-witted disloyal idiot of a manager, I simply took vacation time. (By this point we were no longer even pretending to a civil attitude: in fact I took the leave slip into his office, slapped it into his "IN" tray, and walked out without speaking.)

Showed up at court, on time, presentable. Handed in my summons. Tip, tap, bleep: "Oh, this was postponed again. Didn't anyone tell you? No, no one had told me. "Why?" I asked.

Tip, tap, bleep. "Defense counsel is Jewish and asked for a postponement because the scheduled date conflicted with the Jewish holidays."

"Fine," I said, trying not to snarl at the woman — obviously it wasn't her fault. "You tell the Clerk of the Court that I have come down here twice, at considerable personal inconvenience, because no one bothered to inform me. If I come here again and the case is postponed again, the Clerk of the Court can just send the sheriff for me."

The woman at the counter looked surprised, as if seeing me as a person for the first time. "I'll put on the record that you were displeased at not being notified of the postponement," she said.

"At not being notified twice. Yes, you do that. You put that on the record."

By the time the third summons showed up, it was well into October. The guy crashed into me in January, remember?

Blah, blah, showed up. Handed over my summons. Already prepared to do a slow burn. Tip, tap, bleep. "Courtroom 3," she said. "Down that hall to your right."

"You mean this case is going to be tried today?" I asked.

"It's on the docket for today."

So I went to court. It was then 10:45 AM. I had been summoned for 11:00. Nothing much happened until 11:40.

I was not especially bored. A little observation had divided those present into three groups of roughly equal size. The lawyers all had business suits, briefcases, and relaxed just-another-day-at-the-office attitudes. This group was entirely white and overwhelmingly male, though there was one woman. The group comprising the police officers was also entirely white and male. They all wore neat open-collared uniforms and heavy caliber handguns, and flirted with the Clerk, a rather attractive young woman.

The third group was, clearly, the defendants. Their garb ranged from clean working class to downright scruffy. Some had not shaved, and at least a few

*Illustrated by Ian Gunn*



looked hung over. There was also a smattering of non-classifiable types, including me. The lawyers, the bailiff, and I were the only ones wearing neckties.

The bailiff came forward and delivered in a hoarse bellow, a short speech. The only comprehensible words in it were the first two: "All rise." Everyone stood up: some promptly (the cops, most of the lawyers, me), some having to be prodded to their feet by their attorneys. It is, as the old saying goes, a courtesy to the office and what it represents, not to the unremarkable middle-aged man in the black robe himself.

The judge sat down, invited everyone to resume their seats, and gave a short gracious speech along the lines of, "This is *your* court," and that court was open so that not only could justice be done, justice could be seen to be done. I'm not sure how much comfort that thought was to the defendants.

The court then began hearing cases, a mixture of traffic offenses and misdemeanors. As each case was called, the bailiff would walk down the aisle, yelling the names loudly, and even went out into the hall yelling, so no one could claim not to have heard his case called. In spite of this, a substantial percentage — I'd guess close to a third — of those summoned, simply failed to show up. In each instance the judge said to the Clerk, either, "Send another summons," or, "I'll issue a bench warrant." Note the separation of powers: the Clerk of the Court could issue a summons on her own authority, a mere administrative matter; but only the judge could sign a warrant.

One guy was up for petty theft; he shoplifted several shirts from a local department store. Store security got him in the parking lot. His attorney basically threw him on the mercy of the court and asked for "PBJ", probation before judgement: the case to be put on the *nolle prosequi* (inactive) docket, and the charges to be dropped if the man kept out of trouble for the next year. The defendant had had a terrible argument with his girlfriend that morning, the lawyer said, and was upset.

"And you thought shoplifting would improve that?" the judge asked in amazement. The defendant hung his head and wisely kept his mouth shut.

The court considered. Did the man have a prior criminal record? No. Had he apologized to the store? Yes. Had anyone from the store showed up in court eager to press charges? No. The judge gave the defendant a stern lecture — and "probation before judgment".

Another case involved a young woman who had left her toddler alone in a locked car, with the windows rolled up, on a day when the temperature was well above 90°. The police were called by a passerby, jimmied the car open, and testified they had been on the spot with the crying baby at least ten minutes before the woman returned.

Amazingly, on a charge of "reckless endangerment of a minor", the stupid woman showed up in court *without an attorney*.

In the three hours or so that I was present in court, this was the only occasion on which the judge himself showed much emotion. "What were you *thinking*?" he barked at the woman.

She guessed she hadn't been thinking. She hadn't meant to be gone more than five minutes, there was a line, etc.

"Well, you'll have plenty of time to think about it this weekend, because you're going to spend from Friday night to Monday morning in jail!"

The woman protested feebly that she couldn't do that, she couldn't arrange to have the whole weekend off work at such short notice, she couldn't arrange child care, etc.

"You had better arrange it," the judge snapped. "Because if you don't turn yourself in here by 6:00 Friday night, you know what I'm going to do, don't you?"

"You'll send the police after me?" She pronounced it, as many black people do, with a heavy accent on the first syllable: *PO-lease*. The judge agreed that he would indeed, send the police to get her.

Eventually the case in which I was involved was called. Defense counsel introduced himself to the judge. It did not strike me that counsel looked particularly devout, but that was not really my concern.

There was a brief muttered conversation among the assistant district attorney, the defense lawyer, and the bailiff; the latter then marched down the aisle, calling my name loudly. "Here," I said immediately, and stood up. The bailiff seemed a little surprised by this prompt success, but gestured me forward.

The ADA and the defense lawyer both gave me one hard look as I came forward, exchanged a glance, and that was that. The defendant, the guy who ran into me, did not then or ever look at or speak to me. Defense counsel asked briefly if his client's insurance company had settled with me, and that I wasn't planning to sue for personal injury; and then said, "We've decided to go with an agreed statement of the facts, so you don't have to stay."

It took no legal expert to translate that. The defense lawyer had agreed on a plea bargain with the ADA, probably along the lines of: if no witness showed up he would plead guilty to DUI (Driving Under the Influence, a lesser charge); if a witness was there, he would cop a plea to the more serious charge of DWI (Driving While Intoxicated). And there I was, clean, neatly dressed, articulate, and — not to put too fine a point on it — white. It was obvious to both lawyers that I would be a credible witness, and that letting me testify would be more damaging to the defense than a plea bargain.

So defense counsel told me, politely enough, that I wouldn't be required to testify after all. "You can go home now," he said. "I think I'll stay," I said, and could not resist adding, with a little edge to my voice, "To see that justice is done." To his credit, the lawyer didn't wince at that. The assistant district attorney was already sorting papers for the next case. This one was a done deal, just another DWI plea-bargain. Just another day at the office.

The lawyers presented the case to the judge without any help from me. There are two kinds of alcoholics, defense counsel argued: the kind who drink all the time, and the kind who can go long periods without abusing alcohol, but once they start drinking, they can't stop, and will binge-drink to unconsciousness if permitted. His client was the second kind. There had been a party among co-workers after work, counsel explained; and when the party was over, the defendant just kept drinking. The man had now recognized his problem and was attending AA meetings.

So the man who ran into me got a stern lecture, a fine, and a suspended sentence. "I don't enjoy sending people to jail," the judge told him, "but if you come before this court again on a drunk driving charge, I will send you to jail. I want to make sure you understand that clearly." The defendant, looking down, muttered, "Yes, sir." Defense counsel said briskly, "Thank you, Your Honor." End of discussion. Total court time spent on the case, under five minutes. Call the next case. The court has a busy docket.

The defendant left with his attorney. I stayed until the next recess, stood up courteously when the bailiff said, "All rise", and went home. I may not have gone directly home, I may have run a few errands first.

Was justice done? I have no complaint. The guy had a drinking problem. I sincerely hope he got his problem under control and got on with his life, though the odds are against it.

It was a minor case. Just another day in court. I never even got to testify. (I wasn't particularly eager to testify, but I was willing to do so if necessary.) Again, no complaint. I did my part, my legal duty. Cases are plea-bargained every day. My time was not wasted.

It was my day in court.

## COURT TIME

*Lew Wolkoff*

I've had three experiences in court: twice as a juryman and once as a defendant. (This excludes the two custody suits for my daughter and several experiences testifying in government hearings.)

There's an old joke that defines a jury as "twelve people who were either too lazy or too stupid to get out of jury duty." I've told that joke myself once or twice, but I don't particularly like it.

My Dad once said that serving on a jury and voting are the two things we do to make the system work. So, of course, we all try to get out of the first and the second doesn't matter. Then we complain about some stupid jury let a guilty person go free, and we elect— well, fill in your own blank. I figure, if you don't vote you shouldn't get to criticize the outcome.

I enjoy jury duty. First, it's a great break from the daily routine. It's a look into a fascinating world that we all read about (including here in the pages of *Challenger*), but seldom see. And, best of all, when

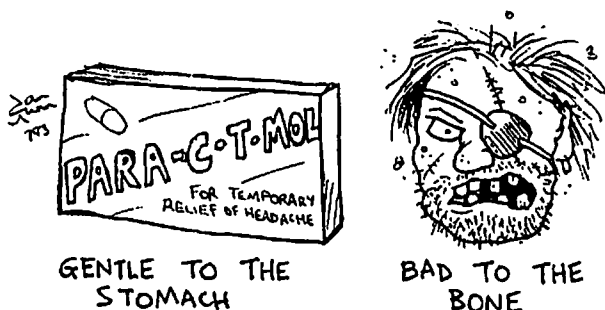


was the last time the government *ordered* you to come in and tell you what you thought about something and then *acted* based on what you told it to do?

Now, this isn't intended a diatribe on why everybody should accept jury duty. Being a government worker myself I feel a certain obligation towards such things. Plus, my office has a special form of "civil" leave. I get full pay while on jury duty. Not everyone does.

No experience is so bad that you can't get at least one good story out of it. So — let me tell you a story from each time on jury duty. My experiences as a defendant in a reckless driving case is deferred for another time. Likewise my times as a government witness.)

*Voir dire* is the process used to select a jury (at least in Pennsylvania). A set of thirty-five persons got questioned by the lawyers on both sides. The lawyers use the responses, instinct, and whatever else to pick the twelve jurors and a couple alternates.



During the *voir dire* for one criminal case, the assistant district attorney told a man sitting near him to stand up. "This is the arresting officer for the case," the D.A. said. "Is there anyone on the panel who knows him?"

One woman raised her hand, then stood. "I know him," she said. "We used to date."

"Would that affect how you would listen to his testimony in this case?"

"Why do you think I stopped dating him?"

The woman was excused. I think the D.A. would have liked to excuse all of us. I wasn't picked for that jury, anyway. The second time, I was picked.

Part of the reason for a jury is to drive home the situation to the defendant. At least, that's what they told us. He or she sees that the case is actually going to trial. That will sometimes make the defendant more willing to negotiate some sort of deal.

We were selected. Then we were sent out of the courtroom while various matters were discussed. We waited, and we waited. Then we waited some more. So much time passed that they took us to a jury room. That way, we could wait sitting down.

We waited. We talked. They came in and took drink orders. A jury can be hung, but it can't be thirsty. We'd gone down for *voir dire* at about 9AM. By now it was almost noon. They came back in. No, the case wasn't ready to start. They didn't know when it would be ready. They came to take our orders for lunch.

We all ordered — nothing fancy, it was from the lunchroom in the basement, after all. About ten minutes later, they came back. The defendant had settled on a plea. There would be no trial. We were to go back to the waiting room with the thanks of the court.

One man summed up the feelings of all of us when he asked, "Does this mean we don't get lunch?"

## TRIAL BY JURY

*Marty Cantor*

On August 9, 1999, I reported for jury duty. Pacific Bell, my employer, paid my regular hourly wage whilst I was performing this civic obligation, an obligation which I had usually shirked in the past because I not in any financial position to do so. After all, when one is living from paycheck to paycheck, the \$5.00 per day paid by the jury system cannot pay the rent or other bills. Besides, during much of my working life, I was running my own small one-person business and I would have had to close my business to go on jury duty.

Several years ago, whilst on salary with U-Haul, I did not abjure when I got the preliminary questionnaire but I requested that the duty be put off from the Summer (our busy season) to the Fall. This was

accepted and I reported for duty later in the year.

During this earlier stint, I was twice called for interviews in courtrooms; however, before I could be questioned, the juries were empaneled in both cases (one of which was a case where a woman was accused of killing her child). After a week of this mostly waiting and reading, those of us not on a panel were excused.

As an aside I would like to mention that I had gotten a job at U-Haul for my brother-in-law some years previously (and he still works there part-time, supplementing his retirement payments from the Los Angeles Unified School District). Unbeknownst to me, he had also gotten a jury questionnaire for the same Summer and had also had the summons put off until the Fall. I found out about this when he showed up at the jury pool room on day one of this duty.

When I got this latest summons I took it to the clerical section to see if there were any problems with the date of appearance. After checking, I was told that I should go ahead and appear at court as there were not too many of our employees going on jury duty at this time. Upon payment of horrendous fines from the California Public Utilities Commission if we do not answer our phones at some ungodly short average time, it is important that there be a rather high minimum number of employees answering the phones at all times. When I got to the jury pool room I discovered that there was another employee from my area (a room which holds almost 200 employees) in the pool. Later on I found out that there were four other employees from Pacific Bell in this pool, two of which were from the section across the hall from my section (and one of whom was an alternate on the jury on which I eventually served). As the head of the clerical section told me, the court system seems to like have employees of Pacific Bell in the jury pool because we are paid for as long as is necessary with there being no time limit for our jury stay and we can be placed on cases that may take a long time. I understand that one of the jurors on the O.J. Simpson case was from the company.

Right after lunch on the first day, I was called to a case in the Municipal Court building. The judge did not get around to questioning me until Tuesday afternoon. This was a DUI case and I was excused from the panel. The other Pacific Bell employee from my section was also a prospective juror for this panel. He said that he was one of the two prospective jurors (of forty plus people originally sent to the courtroom) who were not questioned by the time the jury was empaneled.

On Wednesday, I was called for another panel, this time in the Superior Court building. After the first twelve prospective jurors were questioned, I was called to take the place of the first person excused — he had grown up as a playmate of the son of the prosecutor. This was a spousal abuse case — I was accepted. Very few panelists were excused before we were empaneled as both the prosecutor and the defense seemed to be happy with most of those questioned early in the proceedings. One of the selected jurors was deaf, so there were alternating translators for her during all proceedings including the time we were deliberating (which is the only exception to having non-jurors sit in during our deliberations).

By the time voir dire and related items were concluded it was getting past mid-afternoon and the jury was excused until Thursday.

On Thursday, the prosecutor presented his case, and, there were some fascinating complications here. Right off the bat, the prosecutor had to prove that this case qualified under the law in question because the parties concerned were not married to each other. When he called the victim he asked her questions about how long they had lived together (14 months) and did they have sex with each other (yes).

The simple accusation of spousal abuse (one count) was augmented by "special circumstances" of Great Bodily Injury (which the jury had to decide separately). And this "special circumstances" allegation is probably why this case was prosecuted as the victim changed her story from what she said at the preliminary hearing — she was now saying "the defendant did not do it".

The story, as told by the victim under questioning before us, was that she had argued with the defendant during the morning when this all occurred. After the argument she dropped a bottle of glue she was using to paste on her fingernails. The bottle rolled under the couch; she said, when reaching under the couch for the bottle, she fainted and later woke up with a broken collarbone and marks on her neck, not remembering how she got her broken collarbone. That part of the testimony, not remembering how she had broken her collarbone, was the same as it was at the preliminary hearing. The victim was indicating, though, that she believed that it broke when she fainted whilst reaching for the glue and it broke when she twisted whilst

falling. She said that she and the defendant argued some more during the afternoon. One of the arguments on this day had to do with the defendant complaining about her son (who was visiting his natural father on the weekend when this all came about) eating the last of some cereal; the other argument had to do with his propositioning one of their neighbors. It was this neighbor who convinced the victim to go to the hospital that evening. The victim said that she had been forced to go to a shelter for battered women where she stayed for 3 days after the alleged assault.

The prosecutor tried to impeach what she was saying at this trial and attempted to prove that what she said at the preliminary hearing was what had really happened. At that hearing, she said that the defendant had choked her into unconsciousness. She had previously testified that she did not know how she had broken her collarbone.

The prosecutor showed pictures of her neck (which showed various marks which appeared to be those made by fingers) taken at the hospital. The victim said that these were like marks she always had on her neck. She was told to put back her head so that the jury could get a good view of her neck — we saw no marks. The prosecutor also showed an X-ray of the broken collarbone.

The prosecutor attempted to prove that the victim not only had a history of being in abusive relationships (she had divorced her husband because of his abusive behaviour — and he was paying her \$400 per month child support) but that she depended upon the defendant for most of her financial support, even visiting him in jail to get money (which was sent to her by the defendant's father).

The prosecutor called other witnesses after questioning the victim. He called the neighbour who had convinced the victim to go to hospital. Amongst other things, this witness said that she had heard the arguments in the morning and in the afternoon. She said that in the late afternoon she had been gone for an hour, visiting her boyfriend. She said that, when she drove up to the apartment complex where she lived after the above visit, the defendant rushed past her with some sort of comment about the victim getting what she deserved and also threatening her (the witness). This witness said that the victim, apparently in great pain, went to the witness' apartment after the witness had gotten home, expressing fear of the defendant and saying that she was afraid of staying in her own place. The witness then convinced the victim to go to hospital.

The prosecutor put on the stand various law enforcement personnel who were involved in the case — they testified that the victim was initially hesitant to volunteer information but eventually admitted to what she said at the preliminary hearing. The witnesses included a female volunteer who accompanies police officers on alleged spousal abuse cases, the better to give assistance to female victims. It was this volunteer who took the pictures of the marks on the victim's neck and got the victim to the shelter for battered women.

The prosecutor also called on the attending doctor. The doctor testified that one of the marks on the victim's throat was right over her carotid artery and could have caused almost instantaneous unconsciousness. The doctor said that the broken collarbone would have caused extreme pain. He also said that it would have taken great force to break the collarbone in the way it was. He said that it could not have broken in the way posited by the victim. The doctor pointed out that one of the marks on the victim's neck was over her carotid artery and that this indicated pressure that would have caused unconsciousness almost instantaneously.

The last witness called by the prosecution was the officer who arrested the defendant. He testified that he got to the apartment at 1:30 the next morning, just an hour or so after things had finished at the hospital and the shelter) and found the defendant there. He testified that the defendant asked him what would have happened if he had not been there and was told that a warrant for his arrest would have been issued. The defendant then said words to the effect that he should have stayed away for a day and he would have been able to take his things and leave.

The defendant's lawyer did some cross-examination when it seemed appropriate for him to do so. Mostly, it was of the victim, whom he attempted to portray as a congenital liar prone to exaggeration and irrational behaviour. The defense did not call any witnesses, resting his case on his cross-examinations; and, during his summation, hammering hard on the fact that all of the conflicting (under oath) statements by the victim meant that we should not believe anything that the prosecutor's star witness (the victim) had said.

The prosecutor, in his close, said that the victim had expressed the truth during the preliminary hearing and that the witnesses and evidence proved that. He claimed that the victim lied during her testimony because

she needed the defendant's financial support.

The closing arguments were on the first Monday after the Thursday start. The judge gave us our final instructions and we adjourned to the jury room to elect a foreman and to begin deliberations. We only had time to elect a foreman before we got to 4:00 PM and we went home.

The next morning our start of deliberations was delayed because one of the jurors had called in saying that she would be late. It turns out that the father of this juror had died, so the juror was excused. The judge seated one of the alternates (not the other Pacific Bell employee) and we had to start over again. As all we had done the previous day was to elect a foreman, there was not much to redo.

We all felt that the prosecutor had proven that the case was, indeed, spousal abuse, and the evidence was passed around so that we could all look at the marks on the victim's neck and see the large gap between the two parts of the broken collarbone. This was not a simple fracture — there was a wide gap between the two pieces of the bone.

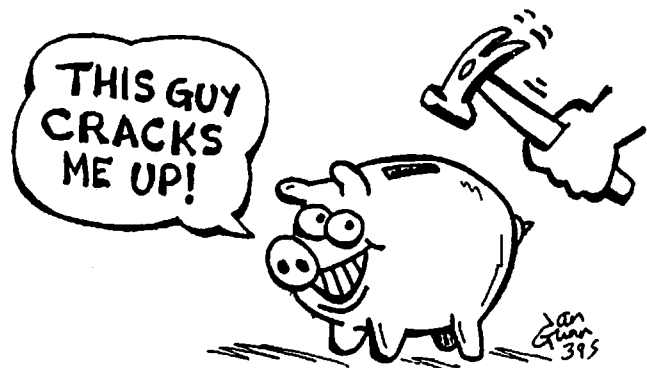
Before we got going, one of the translators for the deaf woman asked that we attempt to try to not talk over each other so that she could better do her translation. For the most part, we complied, and this made for very clear making of points.

The conversation showed that all of us were more or less agreed that spousal abuse had probably occurred. Our talking during this phase concerned whether or not the prosecutor had proven his case without a shadow of doubt, it being necessary for us to find that the prosecutor had proven, by his evidence, that the charge was true — our gut feelings in the matter not *being* evidence. A preliminary vote showed that I was one of a few who were not initially certain. I "knew" that the defendant had done the deed but it took further discussion to prove to me that the conditions of law (the prosecutor proving by his evidence) were met. I was not about to send somebody to jail if the prosecutor had not proven his case; and, after all, even though none of the 4-man, 8-woman jury seemed to be sympathetic to any kind of spousal abuse (and two of the women also had doubts that needed to be gone through at this time), we all seemed very concerned that we do things right. We voted the defendant guilty on this count.

As I initially thought, the Great Bodily Injury circumstances proved a bit thornier than the original count. I was one of those who felt that the GBI was not easy and the preliminary vote showed me one of several who voted against the allegation but was eventually convinced. One of the problems seemed to be the timeline. The testimony during the preliminary hearing was that the GBI had occurred during the morning argument between the victim and the defendant and the doctor had said that this was a very painful injury. I posited the following scenario:

The major argument was in the late afternoon when the defendant lunged at the victim with his finger over the carotid artery causing almost instant unconsciousness, her collapsing on the floor with the defendant falling on top of her because he was holding on to her neck, and possibly his knee or other part of him falling on her collarbone, making it break. (We had been told that the law did not require that the GBI be purposeful but the GBI allegation was a valid crime even if only caused accidentally.) The defendant then ran out of the apartment, passing the witness who was just arriving home. This scenario convinced the last holdout woman who was troubled by a painful injury having been unattended to for a whole day — and we voted "true" on the GBI.

I had earlier voiced the opinion that it was too bad that we could not do something to/about both the defendant and the victim. At the end of the deliberations, I said that we should all be proud of how picky we all were in finding that the prosecutor had proven his case rather than just voting our gut instincts. We all applauded ourselves. We told the court that we had reached a decision just before lunch and adjourned for same. After lunch, we came back and rendered our verdict before the court. The judge thanked us for our service and released us. I feel good about what we did.



# Rocket in the Docket

Gene Stewart

Hemingway said that, if you choose to write novels, you're getting into the ring with Mr. Tolstoy. By extending this we find that writing SF means getting into the ring with Messrs. Asimov, Clarke, or Heinlein, *et alia*. However, boxing seems an outmoded metaphor, so perhaps here's a more useful and enlightening one.

Think of science fiction as a decades-long trial, with fandom the judge, science the prosecutor, and the writers as defense attorneys. The readers are the jury. Editors are bailiffs who try to keep out those who lack proper briefs and credentials, and publishers are the court reporters.

You need to know the trial's history to date in order to jump in effectively. All proper procedures must be upheld and all proper forms observed or your case will not be taken seriously and your testimony, or story, makes no impact. Ideas serve as evidence, and interpreting each idea in a novel way justifies participation. Introducing new evidence is a rare privilege and earns a full partnership in the law firm. Most will be content to present new wrinkles on established evidence or new spin on another's testimony.

Would you walk into court unprepared? If you did, would your case stand a chance?

When writing a science fiction story, one ought to prepare as if for court. Appearance, form, and content all must match the prevailing mindset, and must not echo or conflict with all that has gone before, unless by doing so a new slant is established.

Reading not only the classic SF but as much of the rest as possible is simply common sense. One must know what others have said, and whether one's idea for a story has been covered already and, if so, whether all possible angles have been examined. Further, one must be aware of trends, which ought to be avoided in order to prevent that awful boredom that sets in when a jury has heard the same basic tone and evidence presentation ad morphium. Some fresh approach might wake them up, a new voice might perk the jury's interest.

Another important consideration is avoiding the toes of senior partners. If you step on them, their owners might decide you needn't be offered partnership or even further briefs. It's only sensible to be useful to the senior partners either by tying up their loose ends or by researching areas of the case they might not have considered.

Yes, some neophytes will be eager to count coup on senior partners by shaming them, or attacking their premises, or by out-flanking them and playing to the judge's bigotries. This can work, but is a dangerous set of moves that more often than not leads straight out of court. Bailiffs are protective of the high-priced well-heeled old pros, after all.

Hemingway chose the boxing metaphor precisely for its confrontational aspects. He believed in being either the champ, or merely one of the many contenders. The only way to stand out is to knock the other guy down.

A court and trial metaphor, on the other hand, refines this blatant competitiveness while leaving intact the basic predatory context. Lawyers are often called sharks, for example. They speak of eating each other's lunch and of tearing testimony apart.

Let's examine some reasons for switching to the trial referent.

Science fiction is less a literary genre than a continual debate. In no other genre is Golden Age material kept alive by constant references and citations. In no other genre is comparison and contrast used so ruthlessly to weed the derivative from the original. In no other genre is there such a detailed endless reassessment of the entire body of genre work.

To enter such a rabid, detailed, and diverse debate, a writer must add a new point or spin to the discussion. Those who bring in new topics and themes are lauded as Big Names. Those who merely fill in the gaps left by Big Names who have made their points and have moved on are banished to franchise fiction and work-for-hire media tie-ins.

Originality counts perhaps more than writing skill, and observing the proper forms counts perhaps more



than innovation. Knowing the topics already discussed and the points made about them is vital to keep a new writer from either going over old ground or being adamant with an argument already considered moot or passe. Such derivative moves condemn a writer as hopeless or helpless.

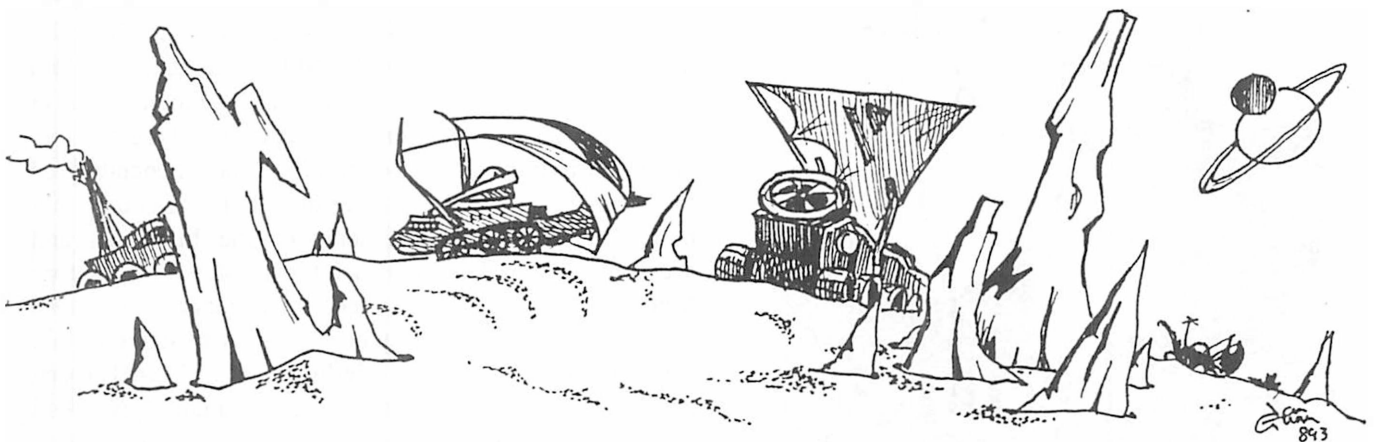
Further, knowing the material already covered and the names of their main proponents lets a new writer find a place to fit in on his own terms, a space to establish his own name. Paying attention to the genre as a whole also helps everyone know what sorts of logic to advance, how to use research, and how to present supporting evidence.

With such layered considerations, the trial metaphor works at a more detailed level than the boxing image, and allows leeway in finding a way to fit in.

Fitting in is the key, especially when there are so few open slots. While science fiction is arguably the healthiest genre, the market has shrunk to include only a precious few magazines for short fiction, and a diminished mid-list for novels. It could well be that the increased competition encourages dirty tricks, grandstanding, and inflated claims or credentials — and we've seen that in recent debuts — but in any cut-throat environment luck favors the prepared and the knowledgeable.

Impatience may be the single factor responsible for most failed science fiction writers. Too many want it all now, and so have not taken the time or made the effort to become informed enough to be taken seriously by the players, the debaters, the people at court.

Think of a SF as a trial, then prepare your case as if your SFnal life depends upon it. Metaphorically speaking, it does.



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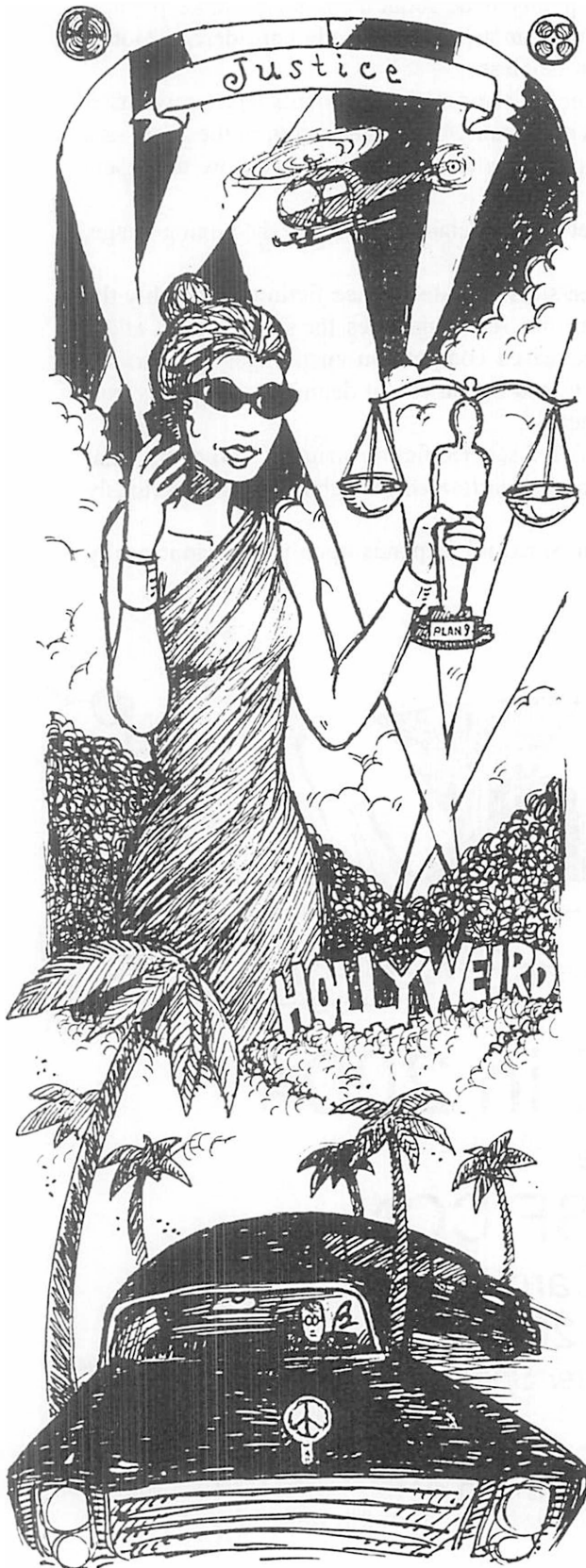
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Lithonia, GA 30038-2941

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Illos by Bryan Norris & Carl Gafford

## SHOOTING “JFK”

*Guy Lillian*

*To describe my favorite day in a courthouse, I must lurch backwards in time by many years, and tell you something unpleasant about myself. It won't surprise you. I'm a celebrity freak.*

On the way to Disneyland in the late '50s my family passed Art Linkletter on the freeway. He was picking his nose. At Disneyland — I think it was a later trip — I got to watch Big Roy the Mooseketeer from *The Mickey Mouse Club* do some drawings. When I was a student at Berkeley I once saw Robert Culp walking at a fast clip towards Telegraph Avenue. Culp was still a hero in many guys' eyes for *I Spy*, in which he and Bill Cosby had redefined American Cool, and I still remembered him from *Trackdown*. It was known that his mother lived in Berkeley, and here was the man himself ... here and *zip*, gone; he was obviously in no mood for fans. I encountered lots of other celebs at the great university, of course, but nobody else cool -- just senators and historians and presidential candidates and such trash. Mere hours before Martin Luther King was killed, for instance, I opened a curtain in Berkeley for Eugene McCarthy to step through. Took a class from Lillian Hellman. Tom Hayden once said hello to me on the street. Friendly guy. And John Henry Faulk — that was something else altogether.

Later on in life I ended up in New York City, where you stepped on famous people every time you left your apartment. I locked eyes with Mel Torme once as he was leaving Tiffany's. (He gave me neither diamonds, hot chestnuts nor a Mountain Dew.) On another occasion Cary Bates and I were en route to lunch on Madison Avenue when he spun around and stared after a skinny old lady in a kerchief. “Greta Garbo!” he gasped. I pointed Robert Vaughn out to a date once, and think the heavyset bearded fella I saw leaving an apartment house on the night *Godfather Part II* premiered was Francis Ford Coppola. (If so, he was shorter at MagiCon.) After a Central Park concert I saw Jacques Yves Cousteau scampering away from the Plaza Hotel, and in the Village once passed Zero Mostel as he was walking his dog. He — Mostel, not the dog — was lighting a cigarette and looked nasty, so I didn't say anything. That's basic celebrity etiquette: unless you

have something extraordinary to say, *you don't talk to these people*. They are famous. They are *them*. You are *not them*. In their world, it is the fundamental distinction life has to offer.

Which is why I *still* cringe in embarrassment remembering the day I was taking Susan Palermo, a lady from the Lunarians, to a movie at the Beekman Theater, and Woody Allen walked past.

My only excuse is that he *startled* me. One second I was looking at empty space and the next there was this familiar white fisherman's hat and heavy Army parka, and eyes meeting mine through two sets of thick glasses. Eyes which squinched in agony and flinched away when I gawped and thrust forward a star-wacky *pointing finger*.

I mean, how totally, completely, repulsively *uncool*. I knew it immediately: I had violated the first rule of life. You should never bother a celebrity. Celebrities are better people than we are. They are above us. They are famous, and there is nothing in this universe better to be. There is absolutely nothing worse in the catalogue of human despair than to be noticed and then rejected by a celebrity. Better you should fall into a blender. And here I had noticed Woody Allen, he knew I'd noticed him, and he had *flinched away*.

I called after him — and the lovely collegiate brunette hugging her arms alongside him, gal by the name of Diane Keaton — and said "Sorry." He didn't turn.

The date was ruined. I was distraught. Oh my God, I thought ... my one chance to meet Woody Allen, and I'd *disgusted* him!

Carl Gafford, my fellow apa member and "Junior Woodchuck" at DC Comics, immortalized the moment in the a cartoon for my NYAPazine. Some time later, when I saw Annie Hall, it was with utter dismay that I watched the scene where Allen is accosted by two drooling fans ... at the *Beekman Theater*. I thought, with horror: That's *me*.

Here in New Orleans a jillion celebs have made appearances on our streets — riding Mardi Gras floats! Perry Como, Henry Winkler, Jackie Gleason, William Shatner (oh, the story I have for *that one*), Wayne Newton, Dolly Parton (I called to her "I love you!"), Charlton Heston ... and try to touch the beads Cheryl Ladd threw directly and specifically to me. *Try*. If that wasn't Jagger and Richard on St. Ann Street it was a couple of giggling druggies who could have made a nice living fooling kidnappers. Hal Linden of *Barney Miller* was friendly and grinned when waved at in the French Quarter. One warm night Bob Hope sauntered past Doug Wirth and me on Bourbon Street, his arm around a honey: *not* Delores. One of these days I'll write about Jimmy Connors and the right to say "shit!" You already know from Dennis Dolbear's piece in *Challenger* #4 how cool Dennis Hopper was when we barged in on him while he was shooting that movie at our courthouse.

Ah. The courthouse. At last we reach the scene of the crime.

I must admit that every time I've seen one of these famous people, and the many others I've run into, I've dug on it. I loved it. It gave me contact with a universe of fame and glamour as alien to my squalid existence as the deepest caves of Pluto. It gave me a *thrill*. I'm a celebrity freak. So sue me.

Sue me? Lawsuits are settled in courthouses, are they not, and we were talking about my favorite day in a courthouse, so let's turn our eyes to that day in 1991 when I went into the Orleans Parish Courthouse at Tulane and Broad, and there encountered the shooting of JFK.

It was a hot July day. Several months before, my special neighbor Cindy had suffered the indignity of having her air conditioner ripped from her window, and the thief had suffered the indignity of being tackled by another of our neighbors and sat on until the police arrived. On this day the perpetrator was facing a judge, and Cindy's presence was required, so I accompanied her to the courthouse.

As was almost commonplace in that time, the south end of the great block-long structure was chock-a-block with equipment devoted to the divine art of movie-making. The far courtroom, in fact, had windows which opened to a lawn where movie lights could be set, pews that could be removed to make room for cameras, and walls which were already wood-paneled and beautiful. (Never mind that the impressive paneling was little more than painted plywood — it *looked good*.)

I'd seen film companies set up there before, not only Hopper's movie but one starring James Spader, a good actor but rather nondescript. Nothing nondescript about the cast of *this* puppy. The whole city of New Orleans, in fact, had been gaga about it for weeks. Or rather, about one member of that cast, the lead, Kevin Costner.

Costner was portraying Jim Garrison, the onetime District Attorney of Orleans Parish. Making Garrison the hero of a film automatically made it controversial, since the local legal community widely considered the former D.A. to be a complete and utter loon. His fame and infamy followed from his fantastic conspiracy theory regarding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. His attempts to prosecute a local businessman named Clay Shaw for that conspiracy had resulted in Shaw's acquittal, but also his financial and emotional ruin ... and Garrison's expulsion from office. He later won election to an appellate court and was still serving there at the time the movie was made. It was said he had a small role, as Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the United States in 1963 and head of the Warren Commission on the Kennedy murder. That offended me. When I'd been a kid at Berkeley I'd met the great Chief Justice — according to the yearbook I consulted, head of the sophomore greeting committee during *his* undergraduate years — and considered him a god.

Anyway, Kevin sightings became a municipal obsession around New Orleans, and accounts that the camera-shy love idol was house-hunting led women city-wide to expel their families into the street and hang out ROOM 4 RENT signs. I hadn't seen him, at least not until then.

Cindy and I stood behind the barriers and watched the film crew and extras, grooving on the involved '60s hairdos and narrow '60s ties. Then ... The Kev appeared.

He came up the stairs of the courthouse, alone, from the trailer where he relaxed between takes. He was taller than I thought he'd be, and better looking — though he retained his funny ears. He wore glasses, like he does off-camera, and as he disappeared into the roped-off area I noticed that my neighbor was beaming. "He's good-lookin'!" Cindy pronounced.

Indeed, my neighbor was most impressed with Costner, and in years since I have often teased her that she checked out Costner's rear end as he walked past. She has adamantly denied it. I don't see why she should. After all, the next celebrity to walk past ...

I heard a sweet Southern voice say, "Scuse me," and I turned, and advancing upon me was this truly ludicrous football helmet of a hairdo, more shellac than anything else, but underneath this tonsorial concoction was a radiant face full of freckles and a delightful turned-up nose — I'm a nose man — and a warm, genuine, *gotcha* smile ...

I lowered my gaze — one does not stare at ladies — and stepped back from her path. Her smile grew for an instant, and she nodded graciously, and Sissy Spacek stepped by me. And yes, she looked *wonderful* walking away.

"Guess she remembers me from the prom," I told Cindy.

When I drove Cindy home that afternoon she was still happy. "*I saw Kevin Costner, I saw Kevin Costner,*" she sing-songed, and I couldn't make fun of her enthusiasm. For "*I saw Sissy Spacek,*" I sang in return.

Oliver Stone has a place in my heart — his breakthrough film, **Platoon**, was a masterpiece, one I credit with actually preventing a war in Nicaragua. I've loved most of the movies he's made since. Some classic stuff: Michael Douglas' "Greed is good" speech and Oscar come from Stone's **Wall Street**, and I could never stand *The Doors* until Stone created his homage to Jim Morrison. I even tolerated **Natural Born Killers** to a point. But he had, at the time of **JFK**, become obsessive — everything, everything in his films, everything that occurred in life, revolved about his personal loss of innocence in Vietnam. It's one of the reasons I found **JFK**, when I saw it in the theatre, to be a cheat and a bore.

At the time, I merely found Stone to be a monstrous dingleberry. The MFer had my *car towed*.

I was driving a 1976 Chevy Malibu Classic, and the morning after Cindy's case I'd parked in front of the courthouse. My lawyering done, I returned to watch the movie people some more. White-haired in

his Clay Shaw makeup, Tommy Lee Jones lounged outside the courtroom. Big guy, and I could swear that I'd seen him (miscast) on Broadway in *Ulysses in Nighttown* with Mostel. I chatted with a couple of extras playing jury members — they told me that the picture had encountered rough going, as Costner was having trouble with his lines (too many names). Indeed, when Costner stomped up the stairs from his trailer, he seemed morose and surly. He was chewing gum. I felt envied by every woman I knew, since *I saw the gum*. Costner saw me, too. And *scoffed*. Well, who could blame him. He was Kevin Costner and I wasn't.

Anyway, the drama came when I left. My car was gone. I turned to a small group standing nearby on the courthouse steps. "Where the hell is my car?"

A swarthy guy with a small smile smiled smally and said, "Mr. Stone had it towed."

"What?!? That son of a bitch! Where is it?"

"Just around the corner. It might show in the shot, and this is supposed to be 1965, and the car was what? A '76? ..."

I ranted and raved. If that paranoid freak damaged so much as a dust mote on my car I'd take it out of his dumbass conspiracy buff skin I'd met *Earl Warren* goddamit (not to mention Robert Culp and Woody Allen) and guess who impressed me more ...!

I stormed off to find my car. Which was undamaged. While behind me Oliver Stone, for it was he, of course, and I knew it, no doubt smiled at my retreating back.

I saw the movie *JFK* when it came out and *loathed* it. What a dishonest, false, phony film it was. As a child of the '60s who lived through the JFK assassination, I resented having the worst public tragedy of my life used so crassly. Every time Stone zoomed in close on the Zapruder frame of that hideous third gunshot I wished I'd kicked him in the balls.

Crass or not, the movie was nominated for the Oscar, but divine grace and excellent taste intervened, and it lost to *Silence of the Lambs*. Thank God, I've *never* met Hannibal Lecter.

There the matter stood for some time. Then I encountered someone who was not famous, but who wanted to be: the lady lawyer I call Valla. Long aside.

In *Challenger* #9 I told the story of a trial Valla and I handled together. She's no longer practicing law, which is a loss, but if you knew this beautiful, multi-faceted young lady, it would figure. Law wasn't her first choice of a career. At first, she wanted to be an *actor*. Her credits included a B.C. Headache Powder commercial in which she portrayed a tired waitress and a local semipro horror film in which she played the killer — and appeared topless. (She was so uneasy and embarrassed by the picture that I did the only thing a Southern gentleman could do. I went to see it. I told her I considered the scene tasteful and artistic.) She also was in *JFK*. Her parents owned the hotel where the crew had stayed, and she had finagled her way into an extra's role.

When I learned this I did something I'd sworn I'd never do. I rented the movie. I fast-forwarded through the paranoid blather to the scenes she claimed, and lo, there she was, smoking a cigarette and looking





thoughtful as Costner/Garrison, harangued his assistants. She was alone on screen, in close-up, for about two seconds, and later shared the screen with Spacek, looking distraught when the jury shot down Garrison/Costner's idiotic case. So what if she had no lines? Girls that beautiful don't *need* dialogue! For her sake, and for Spacek's, I would *not* buy up and burn all prints of JFK should I suddenly attain infinite wealth, but fans of the film are lucky those ladies are there.

From time to time in these pages you'll catch me dropping a famous name and describing my encounter with its owner. Honestly, I won't be trying to borrow their stature to boost my own. Though I wouldn't give up my "personal time" with Connors or Bobby Kennedy or Nixon or Dave Scott for anything, it's because those moments have become part of my understanding of the men and their place in — let's say it — history and culture. Also, my understanding of that history and culture itself, because both of those big words are, after all, only the stories of people and what they have done, believed, been. Or maybe they make some other point, not particularly historical, perhaps, but nonetheless telling ... and I look back at Woody Allen and Kevin Costner and maybe I know what it is.

For I also look back on Paul Winfield.

The first time I encountered Winfield was in the mid-'60s, when he was an actor in residence at Stanford University's Repertory Theater, down the peninsula from San Francisco. Being editor of my high school newspaper brought me free tickets to their performances, and I saw several. After one, Winfield posed for a photo for me and, smoking a cigarette, chatted amiably about his early work on. I saw him miscast as the student in a dreadful production of *The Cherry Orchard* ... and then, years later, saw him on the silver screen. He won an Oscar nomination in *Sounder*, nuked himself with a phaser in *The Wrath of Khan*, caught lead from Ah-nold in *The Terminator*. Between *Sounder* and *Khan* came the day in New York City when he stormed past me on the steps of the Natural History Museum.

He was obviously pissed off at something, and remember what I said about Mostel. But this time I had something real I wanted to say to him, and so I walked up to the steaming actor as he sat rubbing his forehead on the steps outside the great museum. "You're Paul Winfield, aren't you?" I said.

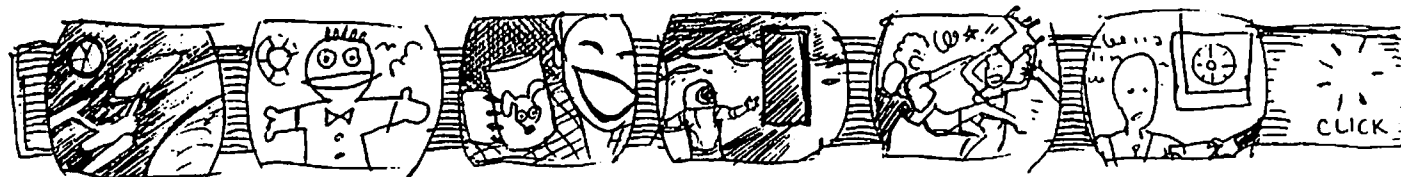
He looked up, irritation struggling with professionalism on his massive face. That guy had funny ears.

"Well," I said, "when I was in high school in California ..." and I recalled to him our meeting. His face softened. "... You were very kind to me when I was young," I said, "and I wanted you to know I appreciate it."

"Thank you," he said softly, nodding, and I swear that a thoughtfulness crossed his face that hadn't been there before. He was no longer angry. I nodded, too, and left him be.

Consider, also, Adrienne Barbeau. The former co-star of *Maude* and *Escape from New York* was being made up in the same trailer as Dennis Hopper when Dolbear and I went to see him. She walked out as we went in, and *sneered*. After all, *she* was Adrienne Barbeau ... and *we* weren't.

Contrast that attitude, if you would, with a sparkly, humor-rich smile, and a gracious, feminine nod ... You know, there really is a difference between a lady and a jerk, and I think I saw that difference in the famous people I admired at our courthouse. The difference is *class*. My ex had a wonderful phrase: "She thinks she's *hot shit in a champagne glass*, but she's really a *cold turd in a Dixie cup*." I've never seen Shakespeare walking down the street, but he couldn't have said it better.



# Babyface Killers

by Clifford L. Linedecker

reviewed by *Tom Feller*

If you just look at the cover, you might think that St. Martin's Press rushed this paperback to print in order to cash in on the public interest in the Columbine High School murders. But when you read it, you realize that the author finished it before those tragic events. The book only mentions them on the back cover and in a preface. Linedecker focuses on the school murders that have occurred in the two years prior to Columbine, especially the Pearl MS, Paducah KY, and Jonesboro AR shootings.

Probably the most useful, and surprising, part of the book is a listing of 31 fatal school attacks by students that goes all the way back to 1979. There is also a listing of 14 fatal school attacks by adults, including one from 1927. Linedecker makes no claim that his list is complete. However, I can't recommend this book as a reference work, because it lacks an index.

He begins with the 1979 shooting in which a 16-year-old California girl fired 40 .22 rifle shots at the students of an elementary school across the street from her house. She killed the school principal and a custodian who attempted to protect the children and wounded a policeman and nine students. This murderer was unusual in that she was female, although not totally unique, and did not actually attend the school nor know any of the students. Her case seems to have more in common with the adult attacks on school children than with Columbine and other murders.

Then Linedecker jumps to 1997 and Luke Woodham of Pearl MS. After the 16-year-old murdered his mother, he brought a .30-.30 rifle to his school where he shot nine of his schoolmates, killing two. One of the murdered students was Woodham's former girlfriend. From here the author discusses Michael Carneal of West Paducah KY, who carried a .22 pistol in his backpack and fired 11 shots into a group of students conducting a prayer meeting. This was two months after the Pearl shootings. His motivation was even more mysterious than Woodham's as he had no reason to hate them beyond the fact that Carneal was an atheist. Less than four months later, 11-year-old Andrew Golden and 13-year-old Mitchell Johnson of Jonesboro AR assembled a collection of rifles and handguns. They skipped school and concealed themselves among some trees less than a hundred yards from an entrance to their middle school. Golden and Johnson fired 27 shots into the crowd, killing four students and one teacher and wounding ten more students and another teacher. One common characteristic of all three shootings was that most of the victims were females.

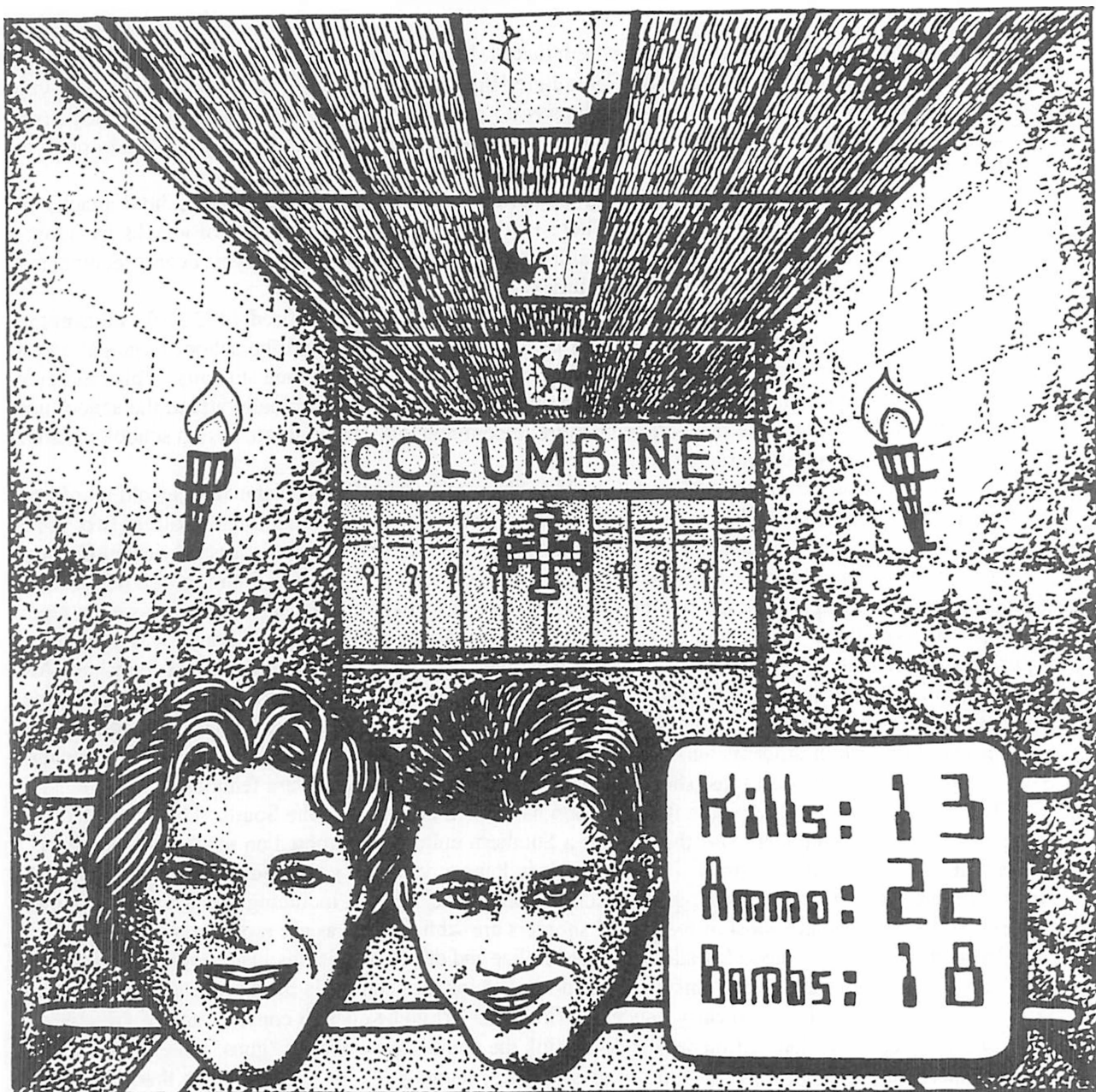
These three shootings occurred within six months of each other and in the South. This prompted the media to assert that "the massacre was the fault of a Southern culture constructed on machismo and guns." However, Linedecker's next case study was a shooting in Pennsylvania only one month after the Jonesboro shooting. He continues with more shootings that occurred across the country, including one where the shooter was black. This was unusual. Most of the school shooters are white males, as are most serial killers.

In the final chapter, Linedecker attempts to generalize and draw conclusions. However, like everyone else, he doesn't have any satisfactory answers. He doesn't think gun control is the answer and even argues in favor of laws allowing citizens to carry concealed firearms. While he doesn't consider any of these items the sole cause of school violence, Linedecker does think the cumulative effect of "guns, violent music with banshee vocals and explicit sexual, Satanic or grisly lyrics, raunchy TV or rotten movies that depend on depictions of rivers of blood and glorify violence toward women" contributes to the current environment.

Linedecker observes that there is one behavior that predicts future violence: cruelty toward animals. Woodham tortured his dog to death, and Carneal claimed to have "tossed a cat into a bonfire." Serial killers Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy exhibited similar behavior as children. Obviously, someone who can torture a puppy will be quite capable of killing a human being.

# Games **HOMICIDAL MANIACS** Play

Milt Stevens



When Guy announced the theme for **Challenger #10** was going to be the Columbine massacre, I was already planning to attend a one-day crime analysis conference at which one of the topics was going to be the computer games played by the Columbine shooters. The conference was too late for **Challenger #10**, but Guy suggested I write it up for this issue.

In the e-mail I initially sent to Guy, I said I absolutely did not believe computer games would cause anyone to run amok. Of course, one's tastes in computer games might indicate a certain bloody-mindedness.

*Illo by Randy Cleary*

However, kids have always been a major market for horror movies, so how do you distinguish normal bloody-mindedness from unusual bloody-mindedness? There have been a number of theories as to why kids seem to like horror movies so much. Some say kids identify with the monsters. *Frankenstein* has been described as a metaphor for adolescence. I can sort of accept that idea. Everybody goes through a phase where they feel like they have been put together with the wrong parts. At the same time, they are experiencing new and powerful feelings. (Not entirely unpleasant, but it certainly does muck up your attention span for a while.) Kids also feel picked on. It certainly would relieve a lot of tension if you could stomp on Tokyo the way *Godzilla* does.

The presentation on the computer games was made by a woman who was a clinical psychologist. (It is general practice in the crime analysis field not to attribute any statements made at meetings to any individual. You can say what was said but not who said it.) The presentation wasn't exactly what I had been expecting. I hadn't been aware that Eric Harris was not only a player of computer games but also *designed* them, and made them available on his website.

The psychologist began with some general comments on computer games. For most people, the violent computer games can be a release. Playing computer games for a couple of hours every day is a harmless activity. Playing them for six or eight hours a day is not such a good sign. Playing several different games indicates at least some flexibility. Getting obsessed with one particular game is another ungood sign.

Personally, I have very little experience with computer games. "Sim City" was the only computer game that ever grabbed me. I played it quite a bit until I succeeded in completing a city to the point that there was nothing further to add. After that, I lost interest in the game. My lack of experience with computer games may cause me to mention things that are common knowledge to many, but were news to me as of this presentation.

The psychologist gave some details on Harris' life. His father was a career Air Force type, and the family had moved ten times in the previous twelve years. His older brother was a star student, star athlete, and generally quite popular. Harris himself had trouble making friends and was pretty much of a perennial outsider. Harris' mother was described as "a complete dippy doodle." (I presume that must be a clinical psychology term.) After being informed of the death of her son, she called the local beauty parlor to reschedule her appointment for that afternoon to the following day.

Appropriately enough, Harris was addicted to a game called "Doom." Apparently, there are many games where you can design and add your own components and scenarios to the game. This is what Harris did, and he had six of his own Doom variant games on his website. The psychologist was an experienced Doom player herself and said Harris' variants weren't all that good. Not knowing how to do that sort of thing myself, they looked rather impressive. There are a subset of Doom variants called death games. In a death game, you can play interactively against someone else. (The thought crossed my mind of creating a game called Fannish Doom. Why bother feuding in print when you can meet for a death game in cyberspace and assault each other with fists, guns, rays, rockets, and chainsaws. The game environment might be a worldcon hotel, and you have to *get* your opponent without wiping out the entire convention in the process. Accidentally snuffing the pro Guest of Honor would lose you a bunch of points. Bagging a few furry fans probably wouldn't lose you any points at all.)

Harris had the logo "Rebel Doom Master" on his website. "The Rebels" was the name used by the Columbine High School athletic teams. The six games on the website were designed between a year and a half and two years before the shooting. What was apparently the earliest game was titled "Bricks." An alternate title of the same game was "Kill Him!" The game environment was a brick courtyard with a maze leading off of it. There are several levels with elevators and stairs connecting them. There are no enemies in this game. It was specifically designed for death games.

At one point in the maze, you encounter a sign which says "E-MAIL ME (e-address) E-MAIL ME!!!" This is the only one of Harris' games which contains a request for e-mail communication. At another point in the maze, a voice comes on stating "STOP IT! (pause) YA FREAKIN' NUT!" Elsewhere in the maze, a voice utters the single word "NIGHTMARE." There are other signs in the maze including "DEATHMATCH" and "PREPARE FOR YOUR NEXT FIGHT."

In many games of this type, one of the objectives is to find the BFG. The psychologist explained this was called the Big Frinkin' Gun if you were telling your mother about it, but probably called something else if you were telling one of your friends about it. In this game, there is a sign over the BFG stating "LOOKIN' FOR ME?" When you are looking at this sign there is a detail in the background which shows a bunch of rockets placed in the shape of a cross. All the other weapons available in Doom are available in this game plus double ammunition, double armor, and double health.

The sign over the exit from the game states "WUSS," The game environment is liberally strewn with body parts. There are at least four bodies which are either hung or impaled alive. The psychologist speculated that at least one of the bodies appears to have been impaled anally.

The second game is titled "Hockey." The environment consists of an empty hockey arena. Who hockey? Who knows? You can wander around the arena and up into the stands. Again there were no enemies, so this was for death games. There are lots of weapons and ammo cached all over the place. In a way, this game may be a little more unsettling than the first one. The first game had a bunch of overtly psycho aspects. This one has the feeling of utter vacuity and emptiness. Without violence, there is absolutely nothing.

The third game is titled "Fight Me." (You might consider that an interesting bit of assonance.) The game environment is a circular steel arena with five tall pillars spaced around it. This one emphasized hand-to-hand combat rather than weapons but includes double health and double armor. For the third time, this is for death games with no enemies.

While on the elevator descending to the arena, there is a belligerent female voice which says "GET DOWN HERE!" It does sound rather parental. Inside the arena, a male voice utters the single word "PSYCHED." Another male voice says "EXCELLENT" when the player is punching the main pillar. This is the first of the game scenarios which has a lot of dark storm clouds overhead.

The fourth game is titled "Killer." The game environment is a walled courtyard with two bunkers. One of the bunkers is bullet-riddled and the other is not. There are enemies in this scenario plus lots of weapons and ammo. At the point in the game when you come upon a chainsaw, the sign over it says "FIND SOME MEAT." The dark storm cloud motif is quite evident with many dead and charred trees and stumps.

The fifth game is titled "Station." For this one, Harris did a title graphic "STATION by ERIC HARRIS." The game environment is a general space station (I bet some of you were wondering how long it would take him to get to science fiction) with a toxic waste room and a transporter back to the opening chamber. Part of the game requires the player to walk across space to retrieve more weapons and ammo. This game scenario has an anti-military twist. The Marine who have been on board this station have been possessed by aliens. So you have to annihilate characters who look like U.S. Marines.

The sixth game is called "UAC Labs." The game environment is a complex layout with several interior areas, several areas of complete darkness, and a major courtyard battle. It was noted that parts of this layout resemble the library at Columbine High School. Harris also created a title graphic for this game which was a drawing of the Ultimate Doom Enemy, a Satanic-looking creature which was supposedly half-man and half-machine. It was apparently widely published in the media after the shooting.

The psychologist explained that in order to survive in this game you must invoke the G-Code. This essentially makes you God, and thus invincible. To show that the G-Code is invoked, the eyes of the player's game persona glow.

The previous games had choices as to the level of difficulty. This game doesn't. There are lots and lots of enemies in this game. The opening courtyard is patrolled by three enemies, but they don't fire unless the player fires first. By the time the player reaches the courtyard battle, there are hordes of enemies attacking endlessly. Players have to rearm themselves with weapons retrieved from downed enemies. There doesn't appear to be any way to win this game. You just keep firing and firing and firing and the results are utter carnage.

"UAC Labs" was completed September 1, 1996. Harris didn't do any further games. If he was trying to release inner tensions, the effort obviously didn't work. He seemed to be equipped with double anxiety and double hostility. Of course, he did do one more game, in a way. His seventh game was the massacre at Columbine High School.



# ALTERNATIVES: the AVP SOLUTION

*Giani Siri*

I've been intimate with murderers. In front of witnesses. I've made grown men cry. In front of witnesses. A room full of witnesses. I regularly spend my weekends in prison, with murderers doing life, for fun. I am an "outside" trainer in a team of facilitators in the Alternatives to Violence Project, or AVP.

I come into a room of 12 to 20 inmates who've signed up for the program. Everyone is a volunteer. I don't get paid and the inmates can't be sentenced or forced to take the workshop. I work with three or four other facilitators who are inmate trainers. The inmate trainers have exactly the same or more training than I do.

Over the course of 20 hours, fit into the next two or three days, we direct a series of exercises, each exercise building on the previous ones. Some of the exercises are directed conversations; some are games. With each step the men can be more relaxed with each other, more willing to risk being open. When you live in prison you're surrounded by bad guys, and you know it. A common survival strategy is not to trust anyone except yourself. Some of these guys haven't had an open real conversation with anyone in years.

I make it sound serious but it's tremendous fun. We get them laughing. We get ourselves laughing. And it seems to make a difference in their lives.

It's very hard to explain all that happens in AVP, even though I've been conducting the workshops for eight years. I can give its history, as a direct descendent of the Marshals' Training in Non-Violence from the civil rights, antiwar, and gay pride movements. But what is AVP? At any given moment there are ten different conversations going on, conversations that may be changing the way the Black Muslim feels about the white guy with the shaved head and the tattoos. The facilitators don't do it. We just get the guys comfortable and talking to each other. But we trainers have to model the trust and honesty we hope the guys will show. For instance, we facilitators take turns leading exercises, and get to a point where our running of the workshop is seamless. I give a direction, I leave something out and another trainer adds that part. I continue, without feeling like I've been corrected.

Each of us got something out of our first workshops as an AVP trainer that, to use Quaker terminology, spoke to our condition. It's an experience that's almost the opposite of the conversion experience, but just as powerful. When I went through AVP I found myself connected with a group, but rather than losing myself, I felt my individuality grow stronger. It was something like my first SF con: a feeling that I could be totally myself — and it was cool.

My parents grew up watching the rise of fascism. My dad taught me that the more people you add to a group the more the IQ of the membership drops. Groups are dangerous. Mobs have no mind. What I found with AVP



*Illo by Joe Mayhew*

was a way to train people to raise the group's IQ, so their ability to face and solve problems, as a group effort, increases with a minimum of strife. (Boy, could I have used AVP on con committees I've worked with over the years.)

What we expect from the participants is to get to a level where we know each others strengths and put aside the personal bullshit that so many of us bring to conflicts. The biggest obstacle in committees I've worked is with the emotional baggage that conflicttees bring to the fight. Sometimes there isn't even a real conflict: someone just came to the meeting looking for an argument. One of the skills honed in AVP is learning to clearly outline a problem and the kind of relief needed.

We don't teach passivity and we don't teach that conflict is bad. On the contrary, we teach that conflict is a *process*, and that almost nothing gets accomplished without it. It's how — or *if* — you solve conflict that matters. Did you win, and the other guy lose? Is he going to come back, and get his own back later? Is there some way for one to yield a little and the other to yield a little without feeling like weenies? Can't we see that most parties in a conflict *need* each other, and if one is open and honest and the problem, and you're willing to listen, and refuse to use force ... eventually everyone will find common ground.

We expect the AVP participants to learn this, and it's what we expect as the *modus operandi* of our trainers. The way a good training team works reminds me of Homo Gestalt in Theodore Sturgeon's *More than Human*. On the team we have a collection of different personality types. For instance: one high-energy emotional motor mouth; one cool, clear, logical slow talker; one serene, highly religious speaker-in-vernacular; and one high-energy *logical* motor mouth (me). Each takes a turn leading exercises. With such a variety of personality types and verbal and emotional styles, the team can reach everyone, and provide a model showing that a diverse group can work together.

It's strange. Over six years I've developed friendships with a set of men who will never meet any of my other friends. Tall Mike. Small Mike. Hal. Sean. Jaleel. Rich. Oyadi. Jamal. Tim. Sebron. Jon. I'm not allowed to call or write and they cannot call or write to me. A co-worker challenged my description of these men as friends.

"No!" I insisted. "I share my problems in my life with them, they share theirs with me. How else can you definite real friendship?"

I've cried in front of these guys. We were teaching an advanced workshop. We'd gotten to a point where we needed to get the guys to risk talking about pain that they had gone through, or pain that they had inflicted for which they needed to ask forgiveness.

In the trainers teams we have these strategy huddles called clinics. Some of the clinics happen in front of the participants. We use the clinics to check in with one another, plan sessions or make changes. Though we work from an agenda and an exercise book, often we'll go with a team member's suggestion based on an intuition he has about what the group needs. During a clinic we all agreed that there was a split between the older guys and the younger guys. The older inmates wanted to help the younger ones. The young guys wanted help but had no idea how to ask for it without losing face. So, in the clinic, we pulled out an exercise where someone role-plays a person in your life you need to apologize to or get an apology from.

I needed an apology from my father. This was something in my life I *really* needed but never got to discuss with my dad before he died. Another trainer, Hal, volunteered to play my father in the exercise.

We explained the exercise to the men and then did it in front of them to demonstrate how it worked. For the good of the workshop, I realized, I could not play-act. I had to risk being completely raw. The emotions I felt — and dumped on Hal — were genuine. Hal *became* my father.

I told how when I was 10 years old I remember Dad railing that kindergarteners were putting on little caps and gowns for a graduation ceremony. Caps and gowns, Dad declared, were the honored uniform for those who'd earned a bachelor's degree!

I grew up and earned a bachelor's degree. I always remembered my father's words, and looked forward to recognition from him on my graduation day. I'd earned my cap and gown.

When I went up the aisle he was in Washington DC for his job. My mother and brother — both of whom got so drunk I had to drive — were inadequate stand-ins. I was hurt deeply.

By the time I was done having my say I was truly hurting and really crying.

Hal, playing my father, apologized to me. And it wasn't a simple "I'm sorry." It was one of those amazing almost magical moments that can happen in AVP, where — by intuition — Hal actually used words my dad might have said.

I felt I got the apology I needed. It was the best I'll ever get until I run into my real dad in another life. It had the desired effect on the workshop as well. Without any more guidance from the trainers, the younger and older men paired up and dealt with their problems.

We AVP trainers are often stuck trying to explain it. There are videos of workshops but they just can't touch the amazing stuff that happens. So much is conversation — and you never can tell where and when one will erupt, so where do you sit the camera? Actually, the visuals would distract the viewer from what's most important: the exchange of ideas. I don't think people who have never been inside a prison can get past the inmate uniforms. In videos they see inmates, criminals, and thus all a viewer would probably hear are the words of inmates, criminals, rather than men struggling to understand something new ... and change.

I read that Susan Faludi's *Stiffed* has interviews with some AVP trainers. AVP is where AA was 40 years ago, so AVP may finally get the press it deserves. I've seen AVP help and heal people — including me. My dream for it is that, eventually, in the same way you can tell a friend who drinks too much to go to AA, someday you'll point your friends who can't cope with their conflicts towards AVP.

## *(Some) CONTRIBUTORS*

**Greg Benford**  
*c/o Challenger*

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

**Sheryl Birkhead**  
23629 Woodfield Rd.  
Gaithersburg MD 20882

**Marty Cantor**  
11825 Gilmore St. #105  
N. Hollywood CA 91606

**Randy Cleary**  
365 Shelton Road #105  
Madison AL 35758

**Tom Feller**  
P.O. Box 68203  
Nashville TN 37206

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

**E.B. Frohvet**  
4725 Dorsey Hall Drive  
Suite A, Box 700  
Ellicott City MD 21042

**Alexis Gilliland**  
4030 8th Street South  
Arlington VA 22204

**Teddy Harvia**  
701 Regency Dr.  
Hurst TX 76054

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

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

**Joe Mayhew WSFA**  
7-S Research Road  
Greenbelt MD 20770-1776

**Bryan Norris**  
1710 Carrollton Apt. W  
NOLa 70118

**Scott Patri**  
Box 1196  
Cumberland BC V0R 1S0  
CANADA

**Charlotte & Jerry Proctor**  
8325 7th Avenue S.  
Birmingham AL 35206

**Mike Resnick**  
*c/o Challenger*

**Schirm**  
1555 Vista Lane  
Pasadena CA 91103

**Ruth M. Shields**  
1410 McDowell Rd.  
Jackson MS 39204-5147

**Giani Siri**  
P.O. Box 11246  
Wilmington DE 19850

**Milt Stevens**  
6325 Keystone St.  
Simi Valley CA 93063

*continued on page 99*

*John Berry served in the British police from 1948 to 1975, the latter 20 years as a Detective Sergeant in the Fingerprint Bureau in Hertfordshire. On retirement he became editor of **Fingerprint Whorld**, the official journal of the Fingerprint Society. He wrote many pieces for the publication, one of which he now shares with the readership of **Challenger**. In 1989 John was awarded a decoration by the Queen for "services to fingerprints." Says John, "As you can imagine, it is most disconcerting facing a decomposing corpse on a mortuary slab, with maggots extruding from eye sockets and nostrils, etc., smelling terribly — I used to ask myself, why, out of the 60,000,000 population of Great Britain, had I been selected to fingerprint this noxious cadaver? I pacified myself by saying that when I returned home I would write a humorous article, and I think this is what pulled me through 37 years of crime investigation."*

## **THE SUBSTITUTE**

*John Berry*

All scenes of crime examiners have, at some time or other, experienced bizarre episodes in their professional careers, and I have several astounding cases which I intend to relate in due course. But I consider pride of place must go to a crime which occurred a few years ago in a county town.

A dress shop was broken into, and the offender had made a meal on the premises, and stolen cash from the till. It was obvious that he had spent the night on the premises, and had slept on a pile of dresses in the store which he had scooped off the rack. I arrived just before lunch time to commence my fingerprint examination. The back door of the shop had been forced, but did not reveal any worthwhile latents. I did find fragmentary marks on the eating and drinking utensils he had used, but I didn't feel too enthusiastic about the marks. Meanwhile, the staff had been checking their stocks, and eventually announced that no property had been removed.

In the afternoon I was instructed to urgently visit a barn in the countryside nearby, where a body had been found concealed in the hay by a farmer. The photographer and I raced to the scene, and met a police car approaching us down the narrow country lane. The policemen were grinning; they said the 'body' was a female tailor's dummy, and they had left it to the farmer to dispose of it. Naturally, I associated it with the burglary at the dress shop, and after complicated car manoeuvres in the lane, we drove into the farmyard. The farmer was walking across the yard with the naked fibre-glass body under his arm, the stiff arms and legs giving a poetic impression of rigor mortis. I retrieved it from him, placed it in the back of our vehicle, and used his telephone to contact the dress shop.

"Yes," they informed me a few moments later, "a model is missing from our stores."

The life-sized model was damp and streaked with mud, but by the time I had perfected fingerprint examinations at several other scenes, and returned to the Fingerprint Office, it had completely dried out.

I was fascinated by the psychological implications of this strange larceny from the dress shop, and impatiently commenced powdering with Bristol Black.

In deference to those members of your readership whom, I understand, are of a sensitive disposition when salacious matters are discussed, I shall refrain from giving the precise details of my diligent powdering, save to reveal that I was delighted to find superb sequences of left and right hands, in that order, complete with flexures and base areas.

On reversing the model, I found magnificent palm imprints in the nether region area, although parts of the marks were plastered with mud.

One further bonus revealed many examples of lip prints, not necessarily in the facial area.

I feverishly searched our fingerprint collections, and was extremely disappointed not to identify the culprit.

Next morning I read in "Crime Information" that a youth was missing from an Approved School in the locality. A nominal index check revealed no trace of him.

In due course he was apprehended and fingerprinted, and my high hopes were realised when I received his finger and palm impressions.

Probably due to the perverse *modus operandi*, he denied knowledge of the crime. I understand that the detective interviewing him described in lurid detail the successful examination carried out by the fingerprint expert confirming *flagrante delicto* which would be presented at this trial.

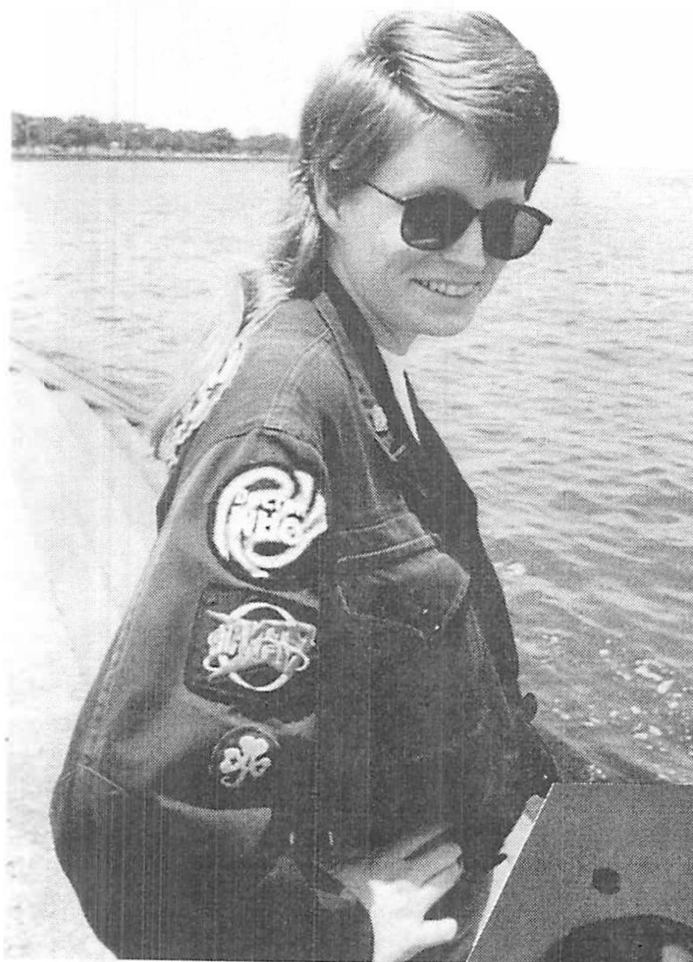
This crime was 'taken into consideration' with other crimes committed by the youth before his apprehension.



## The Challenger Tribute: Robbie Bourget

She was a godsend during Nolacon, and as the Little Snow God (or OE) of LASFAPA, she kept the glorious Los Angeles apa going strong. Now she lives in England, and we miss her on this side of the Pond ... **Robbie Bourget**, the best news to come out of Canada since they scraped the ice off Henry Hudson.

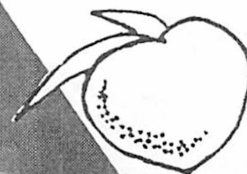
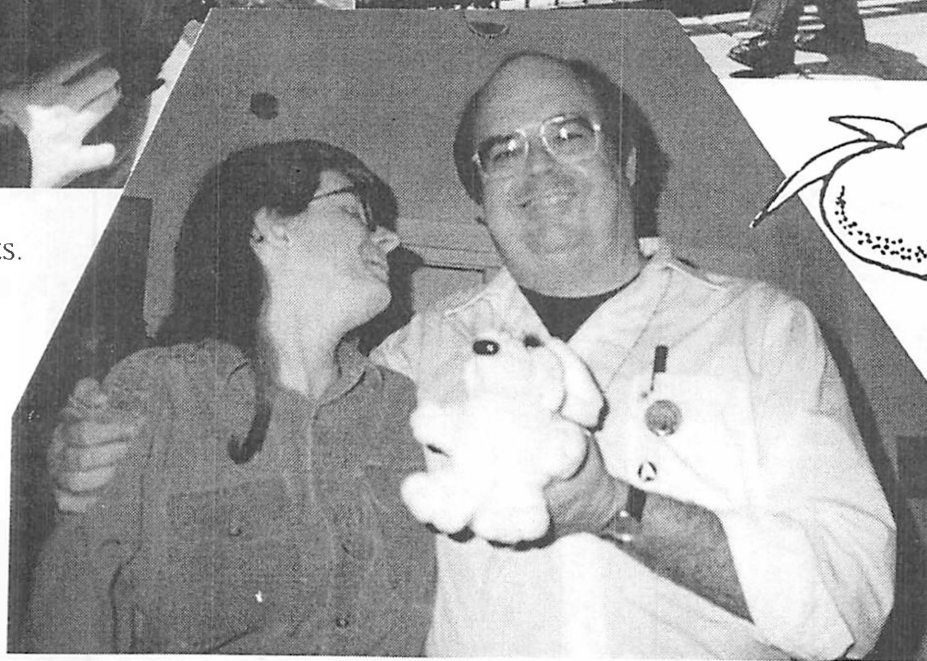
On the seawall of Lake Pontchartrain, 1991.  
...and below, by our fabulous Mardi Gras  
Fountain.



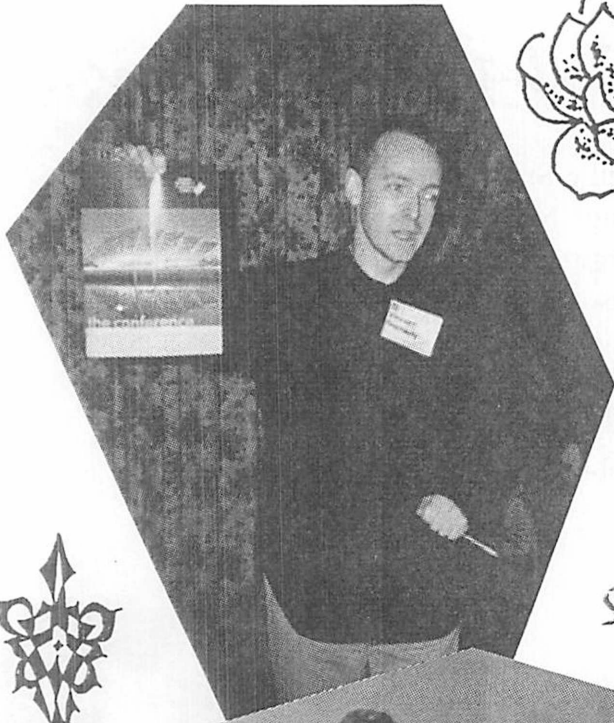
Robbie with a pair of rats.  
You grace us, dear lady!



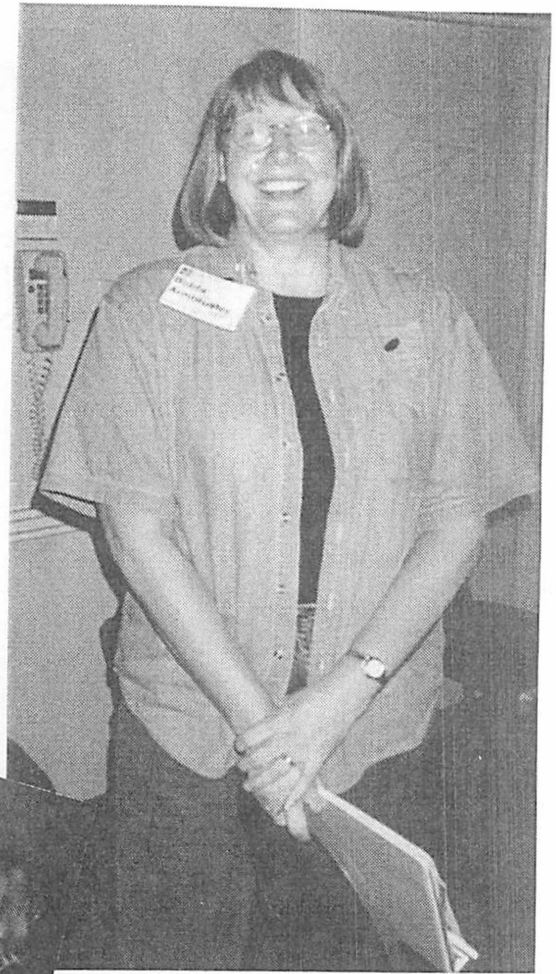
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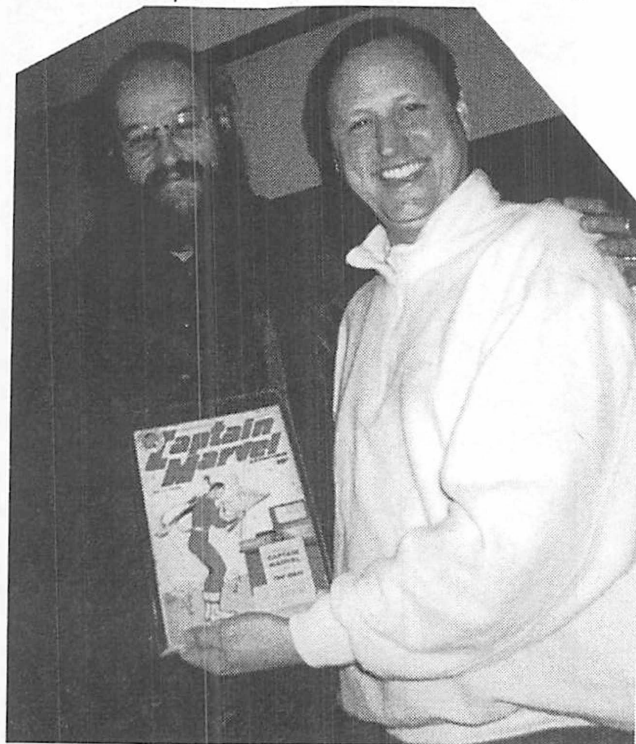
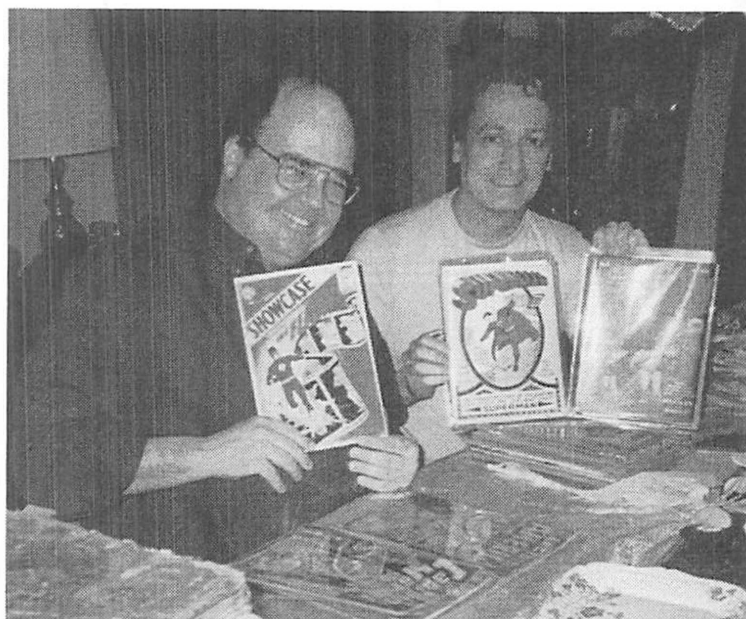
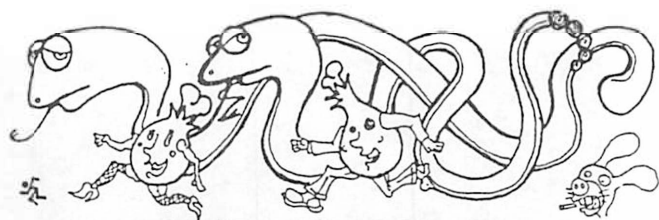




SMDf.com



Fandom's own Captain Marvel **Cliff Amos** returned to New Orleans last fall, and brother **Ken** greeted him — Ken and **Donna** are leaving the Crescent City for Chicago; we'll miss them and their Oscar parties! Below, yhos and **Doug Wirth** with some of Doug's comics treasures. (I cannot tell a lie -- the **Superman** #1 cover is a xerox!)



*Illos by Many*

SMOFcon '99



On the facing page, some of the attendees at SMOFcon, which graced our town last December. Clockwise from lower left ...

DUFF winner and SFPA Sister **Janice Gelb** checks out dinner with **Dennis Dolbear** and **GHLIII**. Sometimes you eat the *cous cous*, sometimes the *cous cous* eats you!

**Mark Olson** kicks back at SMOFcon's Fannish Inquisition, where future worldcon bids are given the secret masters' once-over.

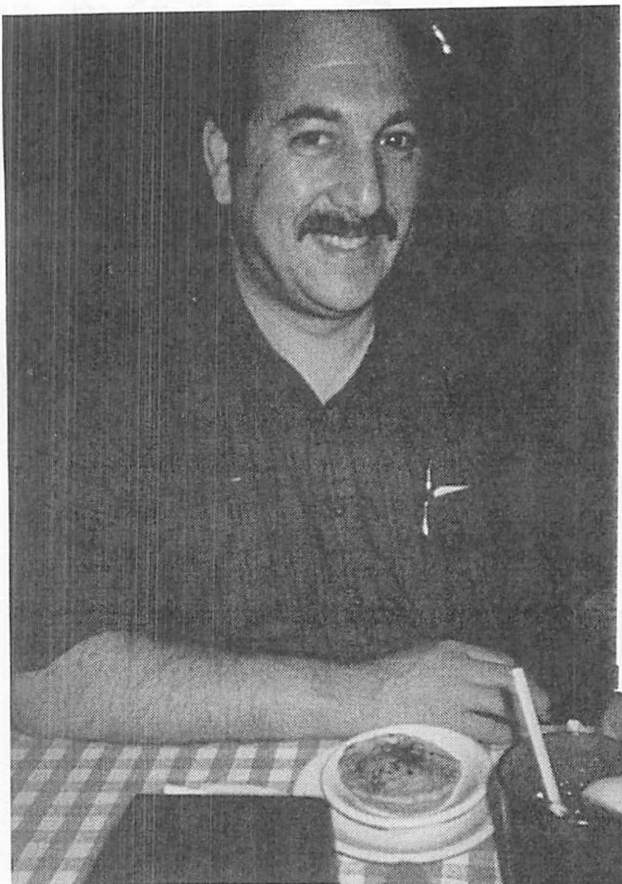
The exact site for **Britain in 2005** has yet to be chosen, says **Vince Docherty**, but wherever it is, **Challenger** pledges to be there!

The divine **Bobbi Armbruster**, and finally ...

**Irvin Koch** of **Charlotte in 2004** girds himself to face the Masters of Fandom!



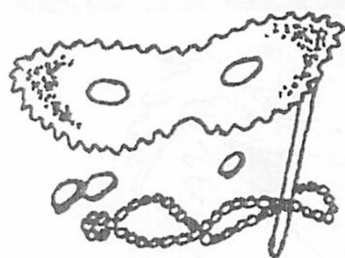




## VISITORS and VIOLATED

*Laissez les bons temps roulez!*

Elst & Carol Weinstein were a month early for **Mardi Gras** when they visited New Orleans in February, but fans create their own Carnival — with help from alligator pie (left) and like-minded locals (below).



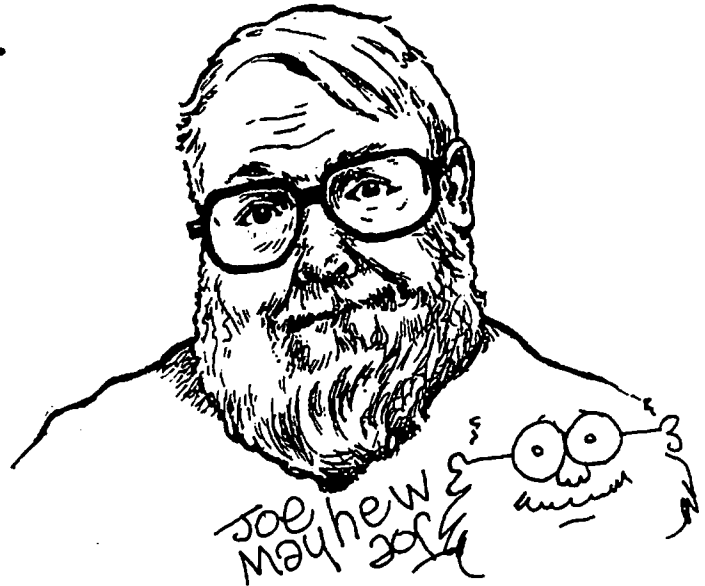
If **Mike Resnick** wins a few more Hugos, he won't need any more chess sets! Mike heroically answered a drunken, panic-stricken call for rescue from GHLIII last January from the Cincinnati airport, when a Buffalo-New Orleans flight turned turbulent. **Challenger** salutes Mike and Carol as its saviors of the issue!

# My Illustrious Career

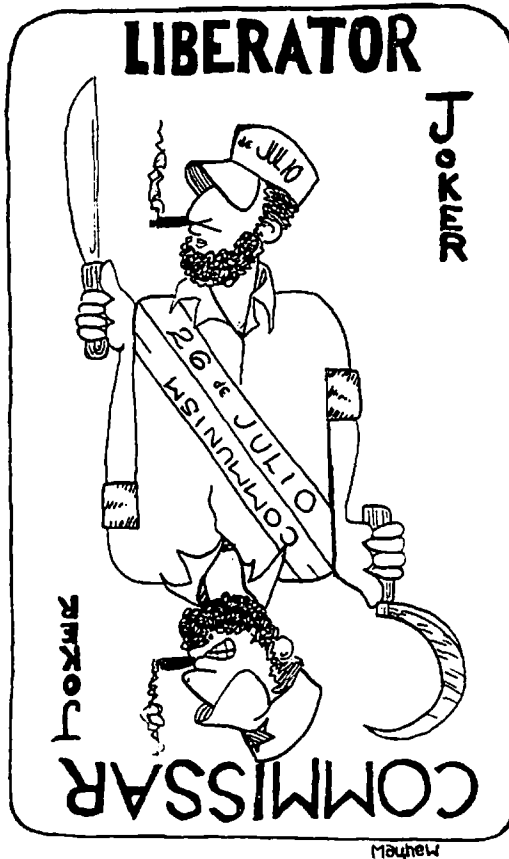
Joe Mayhew

My first published cartoon appeared in the Bladensburg High School student newspaper Scroll in 1959. Even then, it was signed so that it looked upside down either way. As a reverse dominant dyslexic, to whom silly concepts like “left” and “right” were irrelevancies, upside-down and backwards were a snap. I believe this point of view is helpful in dealing with the Muse of Cartooning, Popinjay. To whom I offer the following Paean:

*Popinjay, my muse,  
fled in angry flaps,  
indignant feathers in a huff,  
where I had not demonstrated  
unrequited loyalty before  
she let me fool with her virgin art;  
and so,  
so angered off  
with all my dreams in tow.*



*More hopeful than repentant,  
I cleverly dissemble,  
like a wooden duck,  
or the butler in a whorehouse,  
until she calls me  
late at night,  
or marvelous inconvenient,  
but welcome.*



I have been loyal to her in my fashion, responding to her call on a regular basis. In school, college, grad school and particularly during important meetings at the Library of Congress, she would fill my pen with things that only she and I knew were brilliant. Our little secret, as it were.

Until I was caught.

Dr. Matosian approached me after class and said, “I noticed you were cartooning during my lecture.”

A logjam of excuses left me speechless, but she waved her hand pleasantly, and went on. “As you participate in class and do well on exams, I presume you’re like me, a ‘motor-learner.’ You have to keep your hands busy to learn, but can’t take notes. I never could.”

“Exactly! I’m a type of dyslectic. I have to think about how to make each letter, and that distracts me from the subject matter, but if I draw a picture, I get rather good recall of what was said, even if I don’t keep the picture. It ties it together for me.”

We became great friends. Usually I had caught hell, and in one case, got a bad grade for not turning in my notes. Back in elementary school I used to draw all manner of things in the space unlined space at the top of my notebook paper, feeling that, as my name went there, the space was mine. One

teacher gave me extra credit for it, but most deducted points for slovenliness.

My dad was an artist disguised as a master machinist. Actually, I thought that everyone's dad sat at their metal kitchen table carving caricatures, painting landscapes, or doing portraits in pastels. He had done cartoons for the B&O Railroad, and some war art for the Naval Gun Factory. Actually, my sister had been staff cartoonist for the *Scroll* before me. So, I approached the school newspaper's faculty advisor, asking if they would let me be their cartoonist.

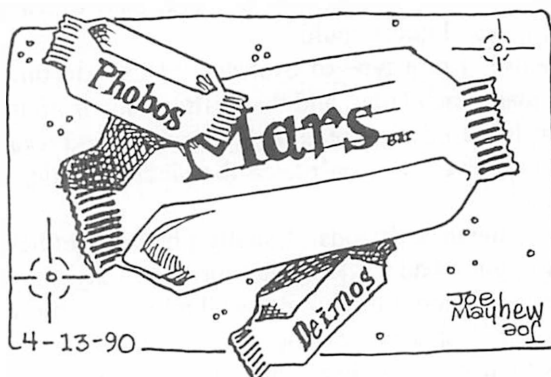


Miss Olsen listened and said she'd get back to me. When she did, she told me, "You'd have to take Journalism. It's an academic course. You'd have to switch to academic."

Now, my dad had put me into the commercial-vocational track, as my school marks had been poor and, hadn't I repeated the 9<sup>th</sup> grade? (However, I had done a lot better the second time around thanks to my first pair of glasses.) Until then, I had always known my place was in the failure track. I was a great hulking "vocational" thug but Miss Olsen had discussed me with two of my teachers and had decided to take a chance with me. So, in order to draw a few cartoons for the *Scroll*, I started to take college-bound courses, and after ten grades of C's and D's (and worse) I went to mostly A's and a few B's in my last two years of high school. Therese Ann Olsen was my fairy godmother. Every cartoonist needs one.

The first time one of my cartoons appeared in a fanzine I didn't actually draw it. Well, that is, I drew a cartoon, and what was common in those days, someone else re-drew it onto a mimeo stencil. With the advent of electric stencils, at last, my stuff began to appear in such a way that its gawkiness was entirely my own.

What really got me involved in fanzines was **Fanny Hill**, the photo-offset center-stitched spiffy zine produced by Somtow Papianian Sucharitkul and Dan Joy, which, among other efforts, published my first Count Dreck strips (years later, Dreck rose from the dead to appear in **Pirate Writings**, thanks to small donations from the neck of its editor, Ed McFadden), as well as some writings which one editor compared to "Popeil commercials ('it slices, dices, catches bass, picks up sweater lint, and glows in the dark')."



For a while, in the 1980's, I had my own fanzine: **Fantagony: the Orphanage for Loathsome Little Ideas**. Years later, Gardner Dozois bought one of my cartoons from **Fantagony** for *Asimov's*, proving that my zine's circulation wasn't exactly universal. Actually, he saw it in the Philcon souvenir booklet — along with several others he bought. One, this Mars-Phobos/Deimos candy bars illo, had already been published in the worldcon booklet and a couple of fanzines.

I did a "cartoon-in" at a Boskone in which the ordinary non-cartoonists who came were all made panelists and given paper to draw on. I supplied the theme, "Let the Hugo Fit the Crime." Everyone was challenged to design an appropriate award for certain authors, categories and causes. I got a couple of good ideas which I stole for its publication in *The Proper Boskonian*. Which may have contributed to my first nomination for the Fan Artist Hugo, in 1990.

Mike Nelson used so much of my work in Buccaneer bid ads and publications, that I was nominated again in 1996, and for the next three years. I actually won in 1998, and that was great, but the big kick for me was getting nominated.



There are some really neat cartoonists still working in fanzines who have never been nominated: Sheryl Birkhead, Kurt Erichsen, and Charlie Williams, just to name a few. It would be an honor to be on the ballot with any of them. Hanging out in print with cartoonists Teddy Harvia, Brad Foster, Steve Fox, Peggy Ranson and Sherlock is one of the rewards of fan cartooning. But it has a cost.

To date, my stuff has appeared in the USA, Canada, The Netherlands, Australia, Germany, The Republic of South Africa, England, Scotland, in fan and prozines. This is a pretty darn good hobby. Gets you friends all around the world. Now and then it also breaks your heart.

I began to notice the work of an Australian cartoonist in *Thyme*, Ian Gunn. His work was wry, unfailingly funny, and easy on the eye. We began to communicate via e-mail and became good friends (despite the fact that we'd never seen or heard each other). Soon, we would be on the ballot together, but too soon he became a victim of the hell-crab. As my own health is a bit touch-and-go, the news I got the afternoon before the Buccaneer Hugo ceremony, that his cancer was not in remission, was like a kick in the face. If only he had been given his Hugo when he was still alive!

Rich and Nicki Lynch have published my illos for articles in *Mimosa* for several years. Some of the jobs were a bit of a challenge. Recently, they sent me an article about Vincent Clark by Ron Bennett. Moreover, they sent me two photos of Vinc to work from. In one, there were two people, and I presumed the other was Ron Bennett, whom I have never seen. So, I did two very nice line reductions for the title illo. One of Vinc and one of Rob Pickersgill, the other fan in the photo, whom I also had never met. It was good enough that the Lynchi immediately noticed and told me of my flub. I managed to find a tiny, vague picture of Ron in the Warner's history of fandom in the '60s and hopefully did something like what he might have looked like if you squinted and believed in pixies. By the way, that is usually what you get (if anything) if you're asked to do a likeness — if they *had* one they'd have used the photo itself. In any case, does anyone need a nice little portrait of Pickersgill?



# The END OF THE WORLD as we know it

*By Charlotte Proctor*

*All* our married life, whenever my husband Jerry and any of his friends got together they played 'end of the world' games. Sometimes the game carried over into real life, as during the Cuban missile crisis when Jerry dug a hole in the basement so we would have a place to cower behind earthen walls until the shock waves were over. Then, of course, we planned to hose down the roof, to wash the radioactive dust away. Over the years, other variations of this game were played. In one, we planned to take a bolt-cutter to the armory down the road so we could steal heavy duty all terrain vehicles and flee to the hills with our loved ones and supplies. Twenty-five or thirty years ago, Hank Reinhardt started putting in his two cent's worth, and the plans became even more elaborate. It didn't matter what scenario was posited: nuclear war, total social and economic collapse, riots, civil strife, plague, famine--every possibility was covered. Hank only hoped that when the balloon went up, he would not be too old to participate.

Now, I don't want you to think these people in my living room were loonies like you read about who take to the woods, act out their fantasies and call themselves "survivalists." No, they just talked about it. On Sundays, they went target shooting. When Julie Wall was learning to shoot, one of the practical tests was to hit a man-sized target from the window of a moving VW. She did pretty well, but Jerry complained he could never hit anything when Julie drove—she's always been a speed demon. I had rather read about how people coped with the end of the world, in books like *The Postman* and *The Stand*, and stories like "Nightfall" and "Inconstant Moon".

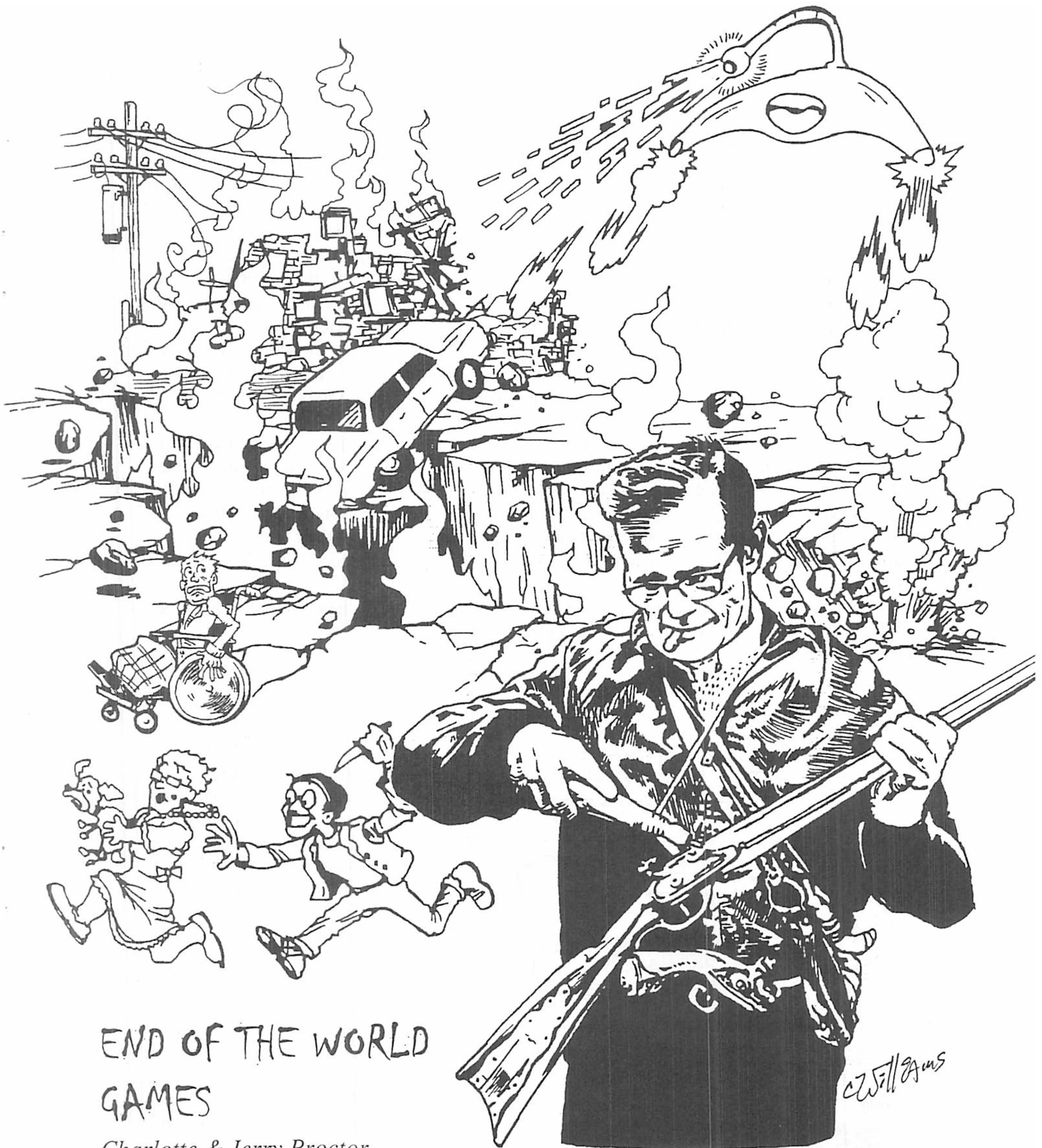
So you can imagine Jerry's delight when he found out about Y2K. Here was an actual threat to prepare for! Having just recently retired from The Birmingham News he had time on his hands, anyway. First, the basement had to be cleared of all the accumulated VW parts — fenders, transmissions, tires, carburetors, etc., etc., etc. From my point of view, this was a definite plus — we hadn't owned a VW for years. In the process, a lot of other junk disappeared and shelves we had not seen in decades reappeared.

A word about our basement: It fits Jerry. The rest of us who are not vertically challenged must either stoop, or scuttle hunched over like Quasimodo, until we can find a place between studs to stand without endangering our noggins. Jerry has always liked his basement to retire (retreat?) to. I recall when our youngest was 3 or so, I was making sure he knew where he lived and who lived with him. He named himself, and me, and his three sibs, but left out his father. "What about Dad?" I asked him. "Oh, he lives in the basement," Forrest replied.

After the basement was cleaned out, painted, more light fixtures installed, and made home to discarded furniture and rugs, it became almost habitable. In case of gasoline shortage, a bicycle is at hand, and if things get really nasty there is a goodly supply of ammo. It was time to provision! While I was not as concerned about Y2K as Jerry, I didn't discourage his new hobby. I had never had a pantry before. Too, it kept him off the streets, and I knew where he was and what he was doing. But he did require a little direction.

His first purchases were these huge, institution-sized cans of pears, tomato sauce, and the like. No, no, Jerry! There is no way we can use this much food without it going bad. And that defeats the purpose. He countered with the proposal that we invite 'everybody' over to eat it up when we open big cans. I didn't like that idea either as I am supposed to be retired, too. Feeding and cleaning up after "everybody" is not my idea of retirement.

*Illos by Charlie Williams*



## END OF THE WORLD GAMES

*Charlotte & Jerry Proctor*



Canned goods in six-packs from Sam's satisfied both of us. Next came dry goods: sugar, flour, beans, rice, pasta and oats. Oats! He bought a *hundred-pound* bag of oats. We sat down and had a little talk about rodents. We talked about Rubbermaid containers, and freezer bags to hold smaller portions in the large containers. (This is the man who bought a Rubbermaid *shed* for the side yard — he should *know* about Rubbermaid containers.) Speaking of freezer bags, that reminds me. Another purchase was a freezer for the basement. A small chest-type freezer sitting under the old floor furnace also served to keep one from killing ones-self on the sharp corner of the furnace, now air return and filter portion of the a/c system.

Jerry's next foray was to look for plastic containers. "Do you *know* how much those things cost?" he exclaimed. Next stop, Thrift Store. Not only did he find large plastic containers with lids for a little bit of nothing, but somewhere he came up with a *huge* round, tall, tank-like container for water, which supplements the countless gallon jugs of water already stored. Lack of water will not be a problem during Spring flooding, as the low spot in the basement fills up in no time and has to be pumped out daily. He has an electric pump, but if the power goes he can always siphon it. A propane lantern is standing by. The spare gasoline and propane tanks and bottles are stored in the Rubbermaid shed — which will melt, but it will not rust!

Hank's influence is still felt in his hand-me-down toys that Jerry inherited. They include three Roman siege machines: trebuchet, catapult, and springal. When I protested these would not be useful in a Y2K crisis, Jerry said, "Not unless I use them as models to build larger machines..."

Over time, the Y2K crisis lost its feeling of urgency, and the pantry (as the basement food storage system is now called) took on a life of its own. The news stories assured us that Alabama Power is Y2K compliant, so it was safe to stock the freezer. The shelves are almost full. I can rustle up supper for six on a moment's notice. We've read stories saying that Mormons have always been counseled to have emergency supplies for their family, so now we are feeling proud that we, too, can feed our nearest and dearest for a good while, if worse comes to worse.

But if it doesn't, the first thing I'm going to do is take those huge cans of pork and beans to the Path Center for Women and Children. (And I did.)

## POSTSCRIPT



After the dust settled, and Y2K was a bust, we took inventory.

On the plus side: we took three Volvo wagon loads of rice, beans, flour, sugar, oats and institutional-size canned goods to the PATH shelter for women and children.

I have a pantry for the first time in my married life, albeit one in the basement. If we are snowed in for a week as we were in the Storm of the Century — March of 1993 — we won't go hungry and neither will



our family, friends and neighbors.

On the minus side: using up excess. Necessities (toilet paper) and luxuries (Pepsi) are used up quickly enough but the problem is getting rid of the survival food. Our son Justin has agreed to take two bags of oats, but we detect a certain lack of enthusiasm.

Salmon, I've found, isn't as tasty as when my mother served it. Salmon croquets are pretty and all but they still smell fishy. The only one to eat them with any gusto is Baby Kate, but then she eats everything with gusto.

# END OF THE WORLD GAMES

*by Jerry Proctor*

**Why** do I like to play end-of-the-world games?

I hail from a different world and time from those of most SF fans, those born after 1960 and 1970, those who know nothing but the finest and richest era in all of human history. Oh, they read about my world in history books composed by youngish scholars who weren't there either and who – when puzzled by the past – invent reasons for seemingly unreasonable events. Our current president is representative of that generation which, when faced with inconvenient facts, invent new “facts” more to their liking.

I've seen civilization come unraveled many times since I arrived on this planet in the month of Augustus in the year 1929, a truly landmark period. It ushered in the Great Depression and the rise of the modern totalitarian states of Europe, along with their despotic counterparts in Asia, led by mad dictators out to rule the world. The floods of 1936 interrupted first grade in my East Arkansas hometown when nature added deep misery to the woes of economics. For weeks our churches and schools were crammed with refugees who were fed by merchants, including my grocer father. The Depression fostered a comradeship of misery. It did foster in me the central philosophy of Boy Scouting: Be Prepared.

Then came the wars, but you have probably seen them on the History Channel a.k.a. the Adolf Hitler Channel. So when Y2K loomed, compared with what had gone before, it did not seem such a much. I had lived a good portion of my life without either computers or television. Y2K was more like an annoying speed bump in a shopping center parking lot: one could neither avoid nor ignore it. It probably wouldn't wreck the car but it might jangle one's kidneys.

Thus I began preparations for Y2K Armageddon and soon learned that one cannot be just a little bit prepared for the end of the world. You must go whole hog, all the while being whipped by the hellfire-and-damnation prophets and soothed by happy-talking bureaucrats. As necessary preparation one must reread the scenarios of every end-of-the-world science fiction thriller and prepare for each and every eventuality including invasion by goggle-eyed Antareans and sexual molestation by lustful UFO medical personnel. (I could never understand why alien doctors found it necessary to use a rectal thermometer the size of a fire hose on Christopher Walken – or why Walken seemed to enjoy it.)

Charlotte has made much of my stockpiling 100 pounds of oats. But I say “He who is without oats, let him throw the first corncob.” (This is an old Arkansas aphorism that seems to fit every occasion.) I just can't imagine enduring the anarchy of *Nightfall* with only 50 pounds of horse chow. Who knows? Lustful alien UFO personnel may have evolved from equines.

Assuming the doom and damnation crowd was correct I first turned my attention to amassing a large cache of arms and ammunition. This wasn't difficult since I already had a goodly supply on hand, so I could now tackle:

Food: After cornering the oat market I attended an event misnamed the "Y2K Gun Show." There one found about a dozen guns for sale and the rest of the premises devoted to victuals so primitive and devices so clever they would have satisfied both a Custer scalping party and a band of rabid environmentalists. There were bushels of wheat, packages of pemmican and beef jerky, water purifiers which would make sweet the contents of an average sewer and containers of dried milk, all at prices which would have shivered the timbers of an ordinary Wall Street banker. They wanted \$36 for a can of dried milk that could be bought at the nearest Bruno's supermarket for \$15 and at Sam's Club for \$7.88. 'Jerry,' I thought, 'you have wandered into the Great Year 2000 Scam. Besides, you don't eat crap like this. You worship canned chow mein, pink salmon, steaks, stuffed crab, spaghetti, and potato soup!'

That's how I came to stock my Y2K pantry from the gourmet shelves of area groceries which led to purchase of a freezer to preserve fresh meats, breads, pies – in short, anything that can be frozen. Some acquisitions were controversial. When I mentioned to Charlotte that I had purchased both bread flour and corn meal she snorted: "How many times in our married life have you seen me make corn bread?" I could recall a few precedents --- Kennedy's assassination, first moon landing, arrival of Julie Wall for a hen party. "Immaterial," said I loftily. "I had envisioned things getting really bad and you hammering out tortillas on a flat rock." Sometimes these things sound better when left unsaid.

Next on the list (assuming Asimov had got it right in *Nightfall*) was light and heat. Alabama Power has been notoriously reliable in the past and Alabama Gas even more dependable. Both said they were prepared for anything computer chips could throw their way. But caution counseled one shouldn't lean too heavily on the establishment. Just in case, I stashed away plenty of propane, gasoline and a Coleman lantern.

Water was a different story. The Birmingham Water Works is not the sort of institution to foment confidence among the unwashed public. In recent memory its board of directors barely escaped jail for handing out public money to anyone who dropped by and asked for it. It is rumored they believe Y2K is a new rap group. In such a serious matter I consulted a super survivalist, Jimmy Fikes of Jasper, Ala. who has drilled a water well in his backyard. As we were chewing on the problem the old light bulb went off in my head. "Jimmy," said I, "I am an idiot. I live just six blocks from East Lake which holds tens of millions of gallons of rain water. I'll just drive down and scoop it up."

Ever the pessimist, Jimmy objected: "What if you get there and find several dead bodies floating in the water?"

"Not to worry," I said. "I'll just fish them out, give them a proper burial, then fill my water barrel." Later I had an even better idea. My basement fills with water every January anyway. I just wouldn't pump it out as usual. Then to add a bit of insurance I bought a 50-gallon tank, filled it from the tap, then added a cup of bleach to annoy the bacteria.

Getting ready for the end of the world is a lot like Lewis' shopping list when he was planning the Lewis and Clark expedition. You have to foresee every emergency even those you couldn't imagine in your wildest fantasies. But Lewis did have one smashing advantage. The government forked over \$38,000 to grubstake him. You have to make do with what you've got, which means cutting corners and using the materials you have in hand to do more than one job. For example, you can probably skip gifts for the Indians; you can get by on only one barrel of gunpowder and use the spare boat sail as a sleeping bag. In modern terms it means using your gallon of bleach for what it was intended: killing germs, purifying water, and treating athlete's foot.

Medicines are a special sore point. The American Medical Association, that great therapeutic nanny, has made it all but impossible to stock really effective remedies. For a time survivalists

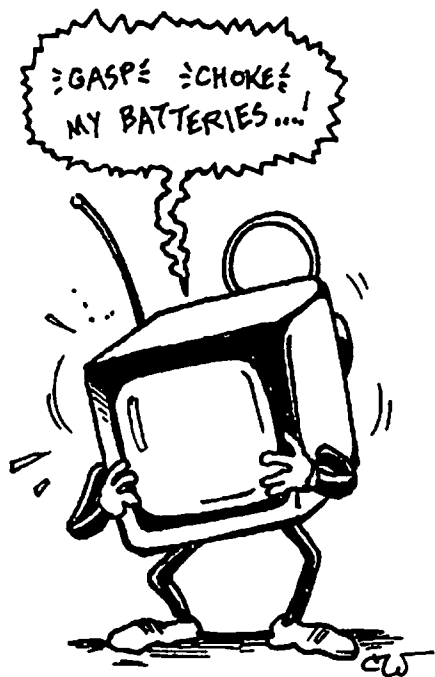
bought non-prescription antibiotics from veterinarians for extreme emergencies. Now the pill pushers and their mental equals in Congress have closed that loophole. They would rather you die than swallow the wrong dose. Consider what one might need if he had to perform an emergency amateur appendectomy during Armageddon. A good painkiller would be a start, but the AMA and drug-chasing politicians have long ago outlawed anything much above the level of aspirin. Second on the list would be an effective internal germicide. But nowadays you can't even buy sulfa drugs without the doc's okay. You would be forced to do the deed with 18<sup>th</sup> century tools and a bottle of alcohol. Personally, my plan was to load up my FN FAL, trot down to the pharmacy and take what I want – the medical establishment can just kiss the hem of my tartan. Our pharmacist does pack a .38 but I would outgun him by miles.

One exasperating thing about survivalism is that every survivalist wants to survive in his own fashion. A friend advised me to flee to his farm. "Not practical," I told him. "I have a large extended family in Birmingham. I'll have to fight it out on this line." Another wanted to turn his house into a fortress and open fire on the hordes of starving peasants when they come to filch his food. "Be light on the trigger," I advised him. "When the smoke clears you'll have 20 or 30 bodies in your front yard and in three days you'll be the commander of Fort Smelly." Still another collected canned goods, then ate their contents before the end of the year. A fourth forgot about food entirely and collected gadgets like windup radios, cranked flashlights and walkie-talkies. A fifth – who lives in the woods around Atlanta – hatched a brilliancy: "I'll buy a short wave set and you buy one and we'll be able to communicate even if the phones go out." Recalling that he had no food stocks I decided the only purpose of his radio would be to contact me and complain that he was starving. I didn't want to hear that. And a female friend confessed she was planning a Y2K commando raid – she would hit an Eckard's drug store for diapers, Tampax and other hygiene products. Since she packs an automatic one can only conclude she would get most of the items on her shopping list.

As the days of 1999 dwindled down we Y2k prophets watched for signs of the coming Great Disaster: A driver's license bureau computer in Maine issued permits for "horseless carriages"; a utility in Iowa dated its water bills "January 3, 1900." With each new omen we smiled knowingly at each other and condescendingly at the unaware and doomed dunces around us. Our president took to the airways to assure us the federal government was fully prepared for Y2K. We cackled and slapped our knees: Clinton had never told the truth before. Why should he start now? Was this not the same concupiscent woodenhead who, in an attempt to kill a lone Arab terrorist, dropped missiles on a herd of goats in the middle of Afghanistan? The State of Alabama -- two weeks before Jan. 1 -- suddenly awoke and confessed it was only 79% ready. Our new governor, in the true Clintonian manner, blamed it all on his predecessor. Birmingham placed its policemen and firemen on call for Jan. 1. Alabama did the same with its National Guard. Rumors and news reports abounded that some federal agencies had canceled turn of the century vacations. Further rumors held that this or that high electric utility executive had bought a generator for his home and stocked it with 10,000 gallons of diesel fuel.

On a more factual level I learned *sub rosa* that a local millionaire had stocked his condominium with enough food, arms and ammunition to last out the siege of Leningrad. I learned this from one of his gate guards in whom the rich man had unwisely confided. "I'm just a dumb ol' guard," he grinned "but if it really hits the fan I know where to go and who to take it away from."

Birmingham's zoo is located on the fringe of Mountain Brook, a veddy, veddy rich little city where my friend, the guard, does his guarding. "Very few people know anything about basic survival," he lectured me one day. "Zoo animals, some of them, would make good eating, like the buffalo. But you have to know your business. If you tried to eat a mandrill, well, he might eat you first. It might be a good idea to skip the predators -- and also the chimpanzees. They're meat eaters



and their mental equals in Congress have closed that loophole. They would rather you die than swallow the wrong dose. Consider what one might need if he had to perform an emergency amateur appendectomy during Armageddon. A good painkiller would be a start, but the AMA and drug-chasing politicians have long ago outlawed anything much above the level of aspirin. Second on the list would be an effective internal germicide. But nowadays you can't even buy sulfa drugs without the doc's okay. You would be forced to do the deed with 18<sup>th</sup> century tools and a bottle of alcohol. Personally, my plan was to load up my FN FAL, trot down to the pharmacy and take what I want – the medical establishment can just kiss the hem of my tartan. Our pharmacist does pack a .38 but I would outgun him by miles.

One exasperating thing about survivalism is that every survivalist wants to survive in his own fashion. A friend advised me to flee to his farm. "Not practical," I told him. "I have a large extended family in Birmingham. I'll have to fight it out on this line." Another wanted to turn his house into a fortress and open fire on the hordes of starving peasants when they come to filch his food. "Be light on the

trigger," I advised him. "When the smoke clears you'll have 20 or 30 bodies in your front yard and in three days you'll be the commander of Fort Smelly." Still another collected canned goods, then ate their contents before the end of the year. A fourth forgot about food entirely and collected gadgets like windup radios, cranked flashlights and walkie-talkies. A fifth – who lives in the woods around Atlanta – hatched a brilliancy: "I'll buy a short wave set and you buy one and we'll be able to communicate even if the phones go out." Recalling that he had no food stocks I decided the only purpose of his radio would be to contact me and complain that he was starving. I didn't want to hear that. And a female friend confessed she was planning a Y2K commando raid – she would hit an Eckard's drug store for diapers, Tampax and other hygiene products. Since she packs an automatic one can only conclude she would get most of the items on her shopping list.

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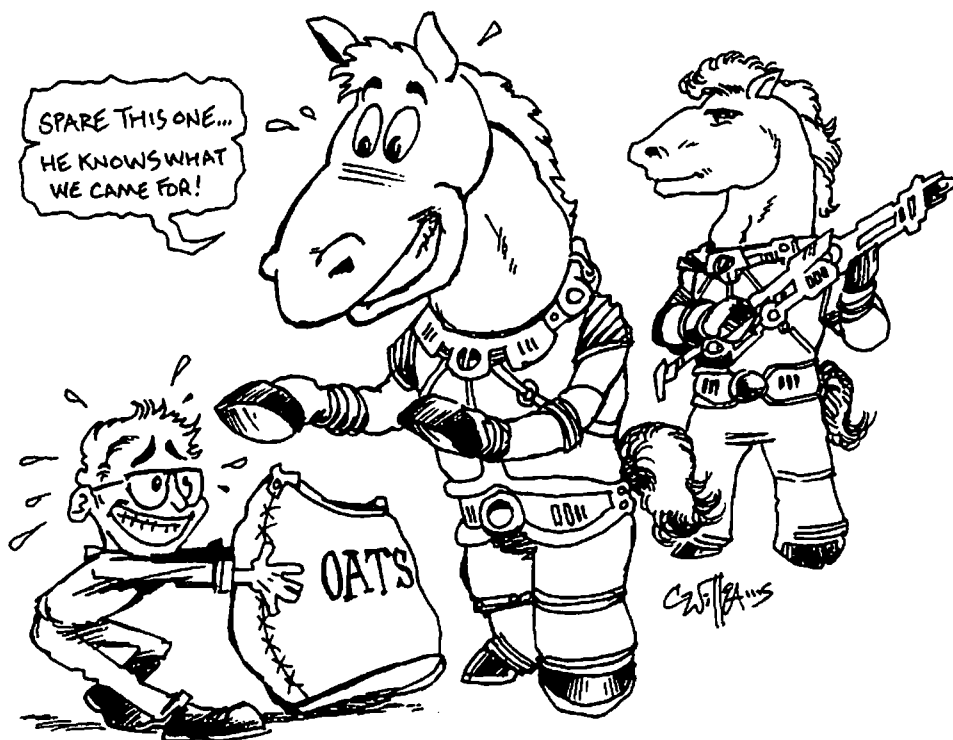
As December waned, more folks discovered we might be headed for Glitchville and rushed to buy food. Bruno's supermarket adopted a hard sell with big placards: "Are you ready for Y2K?" More banks and businesses plastered their premises with yellow stickers announcing their readiness. The omens increased. Down the road in Bessemer the water utility issued its December bills dated "Jan. 4, 1900." Two days before the cataclysm a sudden electric power surge killed one of our VCRs.

On the day before New Year's Eve I dropped by the second hand bread store to pick up a load. "Please have some small bills," said the lady behind the counter. "Everybody is going to the bank to draw their money out and they all have twenties today. I handed her a wad of ones and asked: "Are they afraid of Y2K?" "Very afraid," she said. Since she was an older woman I mentioned the Depression. "Yes, you and I can get by," she said, "but my children couldn't cook without a microwave." This evoked the image of stunned, hungry and shivering kids huddled around their dead and dying TVs. VCRs, microwaves, cell phones, battery toys, computers and ham radios. I headed straight for the bank and withdrew an extra \$300.

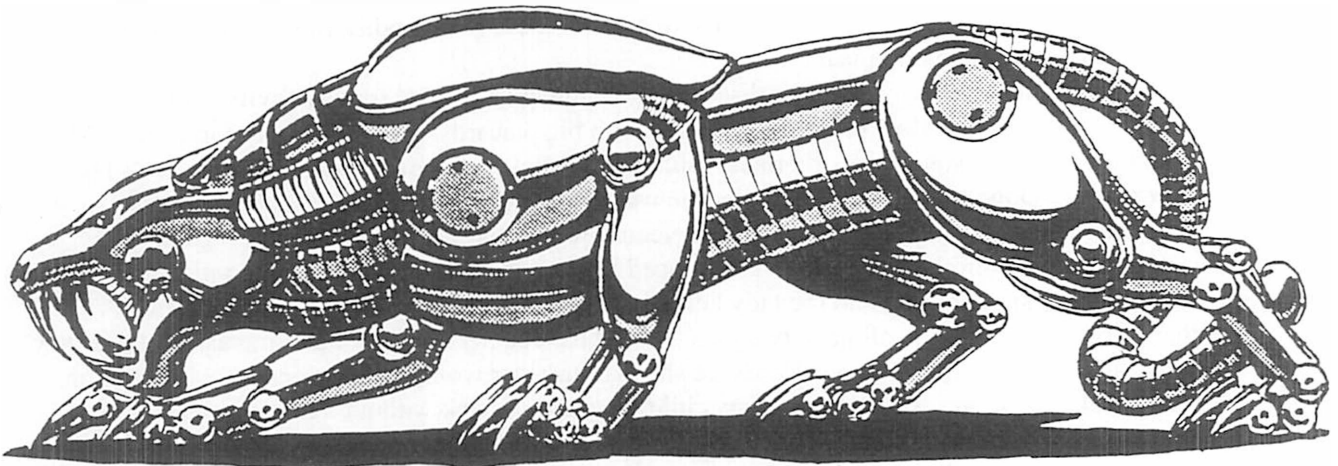
It's now New Year's Eve. Local radio shock jocks are having a big time with Y2K. One shock jerk has a talk contest going: "If you had only 12 hours to live, how would you spend them?" On-call policemen were advised, if called, to report with two clean changes of uniform. ... First reports from foreign nations around the world began pouring in. Y2K arrived in Sydney, Australia to cheering crowds and no problems. It passed on westward through Tokyo to Moscow. Surely if there were problems they would crop up first in Russia; but no, even their nuclear power plant turned over without a glitch. If the world were coming to an end this was a strange beginning. Even the much-maligned Russian missiles were behaving themselves. Birmingham's mayor retired to his command center in city hall. First alert went out to the Alabama National Guard. The governor seemed to be missing --- perhaps he was cowering in a bombproof shelter somewhere. About 7 p.m. he reappeared and announced Alabama was ready.

As Y2K swept around the world from Moscow to Paris to London, leaving cheering crowds, fireworks and no problems in its wake, it became apparent the millennium bug was the biggest bust since comet Kahoutek. I said to heck with it and departed with Charlotte to a New Year's Eve party where I consumed enough wine to get pleasantly smashed. Back home again, as the clock registered midnight, I didn't feel like celebrating.

All I could feel was a vast relief. I had lived through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



# EPISTLES



*Shortly after **Challenger 10** went forth to fandom, Bill Bowers (Bill@Outworlds.net) posted the following on the Net.*

A while back, I hatched this scheme of posting to MemoryHole (and a few others) on, say, a weekly basis, a listing of the \*print\* fanzines I receive in the snail mail. No so much “reviews”, but simply an inadequate acknowledgment of the pleasure I still receive at being able to hold tangible fanac. As with many (most?) of my Projects, so far this has come to naught, but one never knows.

But the arrival, Saturday, of Guy Lillian’s **Challenger 10** deserves some mention, methinks.

I haven’t read it all — there’s 104 pages, after all — (and, with all the eulogies and reminiscences, it could be accused of being an outsized **Trap Door**) — but there are three items in particular that I’d like to thank Guy for giving me the opportunity to read.

Wm. Breiding’s anguished recounting of “Home Sickness”. Selfishly I wish Wm. wrote only for me, but by the same token, I’m somewhat proud that he is receiving wider exposure these days.

Mike Resnick’s reminiscence of Cincinnati’s Lou Tabakow. Lou was an integral part of my early years here, and his too-early death still seems totally unfair.

And Jodie Offutt’s “Mrs. Jayne Died of Oldness”. For nearly 30 years — since I told Andy that \*she\* was The Writer in the family (and he agreed) — Jodie has been consistently one of fandom’s best writers. Read this, and you’ll know why I said that.

I would have loved the opportunity to have published any of those three; the highest compliment I can pay to another faned.

A lot more. One of the most extensive fanzine review/listings columns extant, and some great art.

I really hate to mention the “H” word, but, had I a Chicon membership, **Challenger** would be on my nominating ballot (along with **Opuntia**, **Banana Wings**, and ...)

Opening an envelope — even if too rarely — containing something like this gives me renewed faith that we shouldn’t write that eulogy for the print fanzine just yet.

Thanks, Guy.

*Thank you, Bill.*

*First, a LOC which should have been published last issue.*

**Murray Moore**  
2118 Russett Road  
Mississauga ON L4T 1C1  
Canada

While I admire the mastery of technique Diana Sharples displays in her cover to **Challenger** 9, the lute (?) player and the tamborinist are a bit too elfy-welfy for my taste.

*"Elfy-welfy"?*

Steve Stiles' illustration, which you picked for your editorial, causes me to think of EC Comics. They were before my time — I was born in 1951 — but I have read enough original issues, and reprints, to know the styles.

*"Stiles' styles"?* HAHAHAA

**Challenger** is well-illustrated, from its cover to its illos and fillos. Still, the art which most impresses me are the reprinted covers of Terry Jeeves' **Erg** 42 and 44. The written nore at the bottom of the cover of **Erg** 42 explains, "Runoff of hand-cut stencil." My experience with stencil-cutting tools is meager, but enough for me to recognize art from stencil as in these examples as the product of hundreds of hours of practice with crude, clumsy tools. The results are remarkable, when you consider the limited potential for creativity.

*I was always amazed at the quality fans achieved in tracing art on mimeograph stencil — now a defunct art form. Jeeves' work was indeed astonishing; the only other fan I've seen do as well or better was*

*SFPA's Don Markstein.*

You protest that both you and your 386 are too slow for the net, and that "I barely understand pencils." Nice one, Guy. But you show up on the Trufen mailing list! Oh no, I subvocalized. Is this the end of **Challenger**? Myself, I am skeptical about on-line fandom. At its worst, mailing lists and newsgroups are little different from party-line telephone lines and CB radio. On-line fandom is the crack cocaine of fandom. You can immerse yourself in e-fandom, stare at the monitor until mail arrives and then pound out a response. Be careful, Guy. Be very careful.

*I tried the on-line talk group called Trufen, but didn't last long. The discussions were lively and, when fannish history was the topic, fascinating. I also overheard some excellent commentary about Columbine which inspired me last issue. But it was literally impossible to handle 125 e-messages a day, especially when most were one-line responses to yet other one-line responses to yet other one-line questions, and three or four other such conversations were going on at once. It was like being in a crowded*

*room where everyone was shouting at once — or, to be Sfnal about it, like wandering into a psi party from The Demolished Man. To keep up with the Net, it seems, you have to live there. Later, gator.*

**Poul Anderson**  
3 Las Palomas  
Orinda CA 94563

Thank you for **Challenger** 10 and the kind words therein. It's a very interesting publication. I especially enjoyed Joy Moreau's essay on gorillas. Karen and I met Koko once, and found her to be quite a sweet person.

There's much else to comment on, but time being in short supply around here right now, I'll just respond to your remarks about Hitler being absolute evil incarnate. He was, of course, or as close to it as anybody can get, but why have we in the West been so preoccupied with him and his Naziism? Lenin killed about as many people and ruined about as many lives. Stalin and Mao bettered this by an order of magnitude or more. And, while they weren't quite so blatant about it, each of them gave certain chosen ethnic groups an especially hard time.

I think there are two reasons for our feeling a unique horror of Naziism and its works. First, this was mostly a German thing. Subconsciously, at least, we may well always have expected cruelty from Russia and the Orient. But if the people of Bach and Goethe could do these deeds, then anybody could. No nation, no culture is morally immune. That was a deep and abiding shock.

Second, let's face it, Naziism is sexy. Hitler was a wonderful showman. Those dashing uniforms, those torchlight parades, those invocations of the archaic and the macho, appealed to something inborn. They still do to many, especially the misfits among us. Most of us, luckily, can repress or even subliminate the urge, as we do urges toward rape and murder. But





there the embodiment was, and thanks to photography still is, right before us. Our instincts won't let us dismiss and forget it.

By comparison, Communism has looked rather drab. Also, most of its slogans have appealed to our better rather than our worse selves. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" is, in fact, the basis of every healthy family. Extending it much further doesn't work, and the outcome has been totalitarianism. George Orwell, who'd been there, got it right. Tragically for the world, too many Western intellectuals didn't see past the slogans to the reality. Mostly, they didn't want to. Quite a few did and then lied about it; never mind those wretched kulaks or whatever, shovel them under and deny it all, we mustn't upset the applecart bearing those beautiful slogans.

Actually, Nazism — National Socialism, remember? — was a perverse offshoot of Communism, and the two parties cooperated quite often in the Weimar Republic. I've seen a poster from that era, showing the heroic brown-shirted storm trooper with his swastika armband and the heroic overalled worker with his hammer and sickle armband shaking hands, each with a boot on the head of the International Jew. Or, as I've written elsewhere, Nazism was the lunatic fringe of the totalitarian movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Communism was the hard core of it.

Well, this letter has gone on longer than expected, but since your magazine shows such a strong interest in the nature and manifestations of evil, and how to deal with it, maybe you'll consider it as an attempt to describe a case in point.

There are much cheerier topics. Your review remarks stirred pleasant memories. However, the Little Men didn't meet at Spenger's — not Spengler's; the decline of the West hasn't gone that far! — but Brennan's across from it on the other side of the overpass.

*Wonderful memories of warm, fascinating people,  
inhumanly patient with an arrogant college kid.  
Bless you all.*

*As for why Hitler has been demonized more than Stalin or other Reds, I think the answer is obvious: we Americans watched him rise to power with trepidation, having fought a brutal war against his country a very few years before. We then fought an overt and all-but-ultimate shooting war against him. Relatives of our own immigrant population suffered under his boot. We liberated his concentration camps and buried his victims with our own hands. We experienced his evil up close and personal. His ideology was clear, his actions obvious, his evil palpable. The Korean and Vietnam conflicts never engaged our sense of moral outrage against our antagonists with anywhere near*

*the clarity and strength as did World War II.*

**Darrell Schweitzer**  
113 Deepdale Rd.  
Stratford PA 19087

One quick comment before I actually settle down to read issue #10. The black novelist at Gettysburg lacked compassion and perspective. He is the equivalent of a Jew making tactless remarks at a World War II German cemetery. I can understand how he felt but he was unable to see (or imagine, or care) how Southerners feel. The tragedy of the Southerners is that good and honorable men, believing sincerely in what they were doing, made the ultimate sacrifice for an evil cause. I think the real healing will have occurred when the Southerners are ashamed of the Confederacy, when the Stars & Bars is put away with the Swastika (the two are now very much linked by racist groups). It was an evil cause. They were fighting for the breakup of the United States and, for all the euphemisms about "states' rights" (i.e., the states' rights to decide if they can hold slaves), they were fighting for human slavery. If successful, this would have created an abomination, with the "peculiar institution" enshrined as a sacred institution for which the boys fought and died.

*The Confederates believed they were fighting for independence from an oppressive government. So had the Texans who had revolted against Mexico 24 years before, at the Alamo and San Jacinto. One of the rights the Texans claimed was the right to own slaves. Was their struggle also evil?*

It would have been necessary to smother [the Confederacy] eventually, probably in the First World War, when a vengeful and still powerful United States (which had most of the population and all of the industry) would doubtless have entered on Germany's side and seized the opportunity to crush the South with considerably more brutality than it actually did.

With the considerable American navy fighting with the German U-boats rather than against them, and no American supplies going to Britain, I think the United States would have also crushed Canada and ended up dominating North America as an angry colossus which learned its international good manners from the Kaiser.

It would have been all around a darker world.

Now honestly I don't think the Southerners are ever going to repent their sins. I think that eventually our mobile population and the growth of industry in places like Atlanta will shift things around that in another couple of generations we will all be United States yuppies together. We are governed by a Southern President who may well be succeeded by another one.

The Union forever, hurrah, boys, hurrah ...  
*You realize that the wild fantasy universe you  
envision — with the Germans triumphant in World  
War I — would have been a world without Hitler,  
Nazis, or Auschwitz ... what historical price would  
you pay for that?*

Sally A. Syrjala  
P.O. Box 149  
Centerville MA 02632

*"He who is unable to live in society, or who has no  
need because he is sufficient for himself, must be  
either a beast or a god." Aristotle, Politics*

In a way the above quote can serve as a  
summation of **Challenger 10**.

There are those who tasted of persecution and  
felt their difference by reaching out to make things  
better. This group includes such as Martin Luther King  
Jr. and Gandhi. They were different and often their  
philosophy of nonviolence was in conflict with those  
about them. Yet they were able to channel their own  
pain into a desire to keep others from harm.

I doubt that many truly understood themselves,  
much less have a company of companions who are able  
to feel their deepest despair or greatest hopes. Each and  
every one of us to some extent is different and alone. It  
is at the heart of being human.

My own memories of childhood are of the little  
girl standing out in the cold peering into the window  
that shielded a happy family sitting by the warmth of a  
fire smiling and laughing with each other. That fantasy  
was the opposite of its reality.

My eldest sister was married before I was born.  
My mother told me of how she had done such things for  
my siblings as hiding Easter candy for them to find. It  
was further explained she was too tired to do such a  
thing for me.

My father had an unhappy childhood and often  
drank heavily. Many times he became abusive. This  
meant leaving the house until he went to bed. Getting  
back in could mean climbing through a window as he

had locked the doors. Pets were killed. Friends could  
not be invited over as moods could never be predicted.

When young I read fairy tales of the young  
princess left in bad situations to test her mettle before  
having her "real" parents come and set her free. I  
wondered when someone would come for me and what  
lesson I needed to learn before they would materialize.

As a teen even phone calls could not be  
enjoyed as someone might hear the shouting in the  
background. I remember huddling in a corner trying to  
shield the mouthpiece so the noise wouldn't get  
through. I remember Papa getting in the car in an  
attempt to find us and of flattening myself against a  
darkened wall so the headlights wouldn't reveal me.

You learned to hide reality from the world.  
The noise was the television and so on

Everything was downplayed. When I was  
overcome by carbon monoxide my mother wrote a note  
saying I missed school because of a headache.

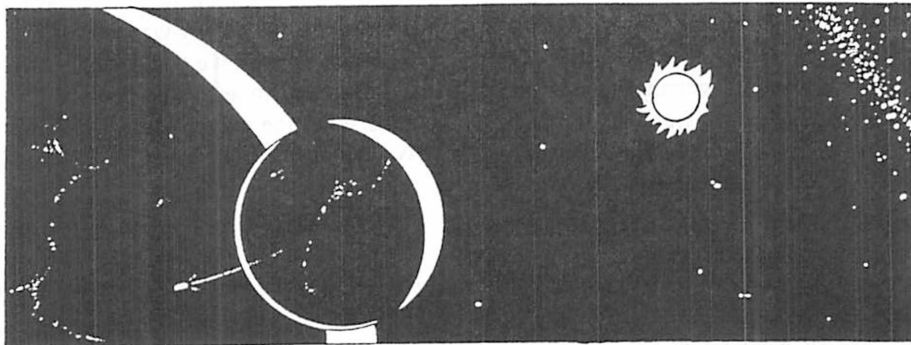
No one really knows the truth behind the smile  
and how much pain each of us bears.

Yet this pain can be a source of growth. We  
don't have to pick to spread the pain and make things  
worse, but can opt to try to ease the pain of others.  
Being able to know and feel pain can allow us to sense  
the suffering of others and cause us to reach out to help  
ease it.

Being different can help you know yourself and  
your ideals better. It can give you a strength of  
character that might not otherwise have been possible.

Too many today are too quick to take slight  
where none was intended. We each must come to terms  
with our lives and our mortality. We reach out trying to  
communicate some of the understanding we have  
attained, but also to see if anyone else has deciphered  
the code behind it all.

Life is a challenge, but challenges can cause  
growth. There are no easy answers to the violence, but  
I do believe that too many look the other way. Our  
society needs to say the violence must stop. Sexual  
assault needs to be seen as the act of anger and control  
it is and not be excused as being "provoked" by the



*Kerrin '96*

woman. Domestic violence needs to be recognized as the act of power and control and cost to society it is, not as some say "a private matter" to be swept under the rug. When these acts of violence are accepted, the message sent is violence is okay.

Violence is *never* okay. There are other ways to handle disagreements other than physical, emotional or verbal abuse. This concept of peaceful conflict resolution is what is needed to be taught.

Force needs to be replaced by love and understanding. Yet we live in a world of caustic talk show hosts who put down any idea at odds with their own. We objectify people so that only "we" matter and cut people off in traffic and think the road should be ours alone. We trample each other to be first at a bargain. We just don't stop to consider others.

Maybe it's as simple and difficult as that — consideration of others and treating them as we would like to be treated.

Thank you for including me in **Challenger's** circle.



Kay McCutcheon  
2041 "N" St.  
Eureka CA 95501

There seems to be a recurring theme [in **Challenger** 10] of "I'm different and because of that I had a crappy (insert appropriate word) until I changed (whatever).: I know this sounds vague, but I've heard this song and dance so long that I'm tired of it. Yes, as a fan, most of us have found a home together because we *are* different. All of us have to learn to find our niche, and finding our way is painful. Life is what you make it, and you have to accept that the "normal"

people in the world will pick on the outsiders.

I'm not unsympathetic, quite the contrary. Having lived outside of the norm all my life, I can relate. But when I see Allie Copeland writing her painful feelings down about Columbine High, I can't help but see myself at that age, and know that in a few years she'll have incorporated this terrible event into her personality. It truly is a blessing that her parents have accepted her difference and love her and provide her with stability. This is not true of a lot of teens these days, and it is very difficult for me to stand by and watch it happen.

I read with great interest Janet Larson's general comments on life. This seems to be a recurring theme, also, that the world is in a state of moral decline because of X number of things. I cannot emphasize enough that I think this is a lot of bull pucky. My parents and grandparents used to say the same thing, and the world hasn't come to an end yet. The only moral decline I've seen is in our thinking that rigidity will solve our problems instead of negotiation and accountability. If you shoot someone, you go to jail. If you drive a car and are chemically altered, the accident is your fault and you pay the price by losing your license.

My parents raised me to be responsible for my actions. Why can't we continue to do the same with our children? It's not as if they don't know that shooting someone is wrong — I watched my share of violent cartoons while growing up, and I didn't become a serial killer. Elmer Fudd used to shoot at Bugs and Daffy all the time, but we knew that wasn't reality. What has happened to our world that children think that video violence is OK? It's not that I don't understand the estrangement our kids feel from their parents. I certainly felt that way about mine. It's the actions that are taken because of those feelings.

David [Schlosser, Kay's husband] and I are considered rather odd about our child-rearing arrangements. We decided that we wouldn't depend on outside day care until it was absolutely necessary. I work part time, he works full time on a different shift, and the kid is home with us most of the time. We decided that the money wasn't worth it, that this isn't a puppy or a kitten we could shut in the bathroom when we weren't home. (Let me add right here that I understand the need for other parents to use daycare. We are fortunate enough to be able to sacrifice some job time because we make enough money to do so.) I honestly don't think that everyone should do this, and I know plenty of kids that are just fine without the benefits of their parents being around as much. The times are changing for all of us, and we simply haven't had time to catch up on what works for kids, now.

I, too, lament the decline of the arts in school. In an ideal world, here are a few things I would do as a parent and concerned citizen. First, I believe there should be some way for our kids to be mentored into the community with after school activities. Some schools are doing this now by visiting care homes and going to businesses on a field trip basis. Let's do more of this, and do it every day. Everyone needs to feel connected to their community so that they care about each other. This can be voluntary, so that parents that want it can enjoy the idea their kids are someplace supervised but not too structured.

Second, de-emphasize sports. I'm totally sick of all this structured playtime. I know of parents that dash from one activity to another, and have no time for unstructured play. When do our kids have time to just sit and think, or to diffuse from the day? I remember spending hours playing with one or two friends on the playground after school and during summer vacations. We had close friendships that I don't see happening today with children. Does anyone else see this happening?

Three, I like the idea of children tutoring each other. Make the curriculum challenging, and have the ones excelling help the less able. It never hurts to engender helping others at a young age. It makes you feel your own self worth and gives confidence. And if we don't teach our kids to teach, who's going to want to go into that profession when they get older? Something familiar is much easier to accept.

Eve Ackerman  
3530 NW 30 Pl  
Gainesville FL 32605  
Eackerman@compuserve.com

Wow. Joe Mayhew's article "Painting Mrs. Porter's Casket" and Joy Moreau's tale of "Gargy" have raised *Challenger* up to new heights. Everything in this issue was thoughtful, personal and intense but the quality of writing sets *Challenger* apart from other zines.

Um, I don't want to get into interesting details here, but Harry Warner Jr. remarks that he worked with a female reporter who took a day off for her period, usually a Monday or Friday each month. While it looks like Harry is doubting the veracity of her claim, and I have no way of judging her experience, I can tell him that some women are like clockwork and will have their periods strike on the same day of the week every 28 days. This is especially true if they're on the Pill. You can even make it happen on a Friday or a Monday if you use the Pill in a certain fashion. But that's probably more about female bodily functions than either you or your readers want to know.

Mike Resnick's article on Lou Tabakow was a treat, especially reading about how Lou loved conventions and would do his best to make sure people could attend, even if it meant walking their dogs. I mention this because I won't be seeing you folks at worldcon this year. My husband, a lovely man who's running for the Florida State House, reminded me gently that the primary election is the day after Labor Day.

"I was going to vote absentee!"

But this apparently isn't uxorious enough and without resorting to reminding me that he *did* keep the homefires burning for four weeks so I could run off to Aussiecon 3, he said it would be really, really nice if his wife was alongside him during the last days of the campaign, stroking his fevered brow and offering support. So that's my excuse for not being in Chicago on Labor Day.

*I don't know if I'd call Howard "lovely" but he is a solid citizen, a "real" lawyer, and a fine guy. I wish him luck this November.*

I can't think of a more fitting tribute to a fine teacher like Mary Alice Jayne than having library books purchased in her memory. Thank you, Jodie Offutt, for reminding us of why some people are born to teach.

Ben Indick  
428 Sagamore Avenue  
Teaneck NJ 07666-2626

Chall 10 was a fine issue, and touched upon genuine, if painful matters. Characteristically, you sought to understand, and not to mitigate the asocial and murderous actions and I do not fault you. Indeed, I praise you, although personally I shall be happy to help provide my portion of the annual room and board in jail for Thomas Trantino, Ms. Van Houten, and the many other murderers and rapists as long as they live. Still, we do want to know why it all happened. I suppose we never can, but your issue was generous and understanding and the essays you printed were fine. I especially liked Joe Mayhew's because it was about such a luminary.

Sue Jones  
Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street  
Shrewsbury SY1 2BQ U.K.  
sue.tortoise@talk21.com

Finally I get around to starting that overdue LOC to *Challenger* ...

And it's not that easy to know where to start. The first impulse is to shout, "Yeah, me too!" I was the kid who was different and didn't fit. And school was full of girls who got on well with each other but only tolerated me. They tolerated me best when I was being funny, someone to laugh at, and I played along with

the role as a way of being, for a brief moment, human. But it didn't bring me closer to them. Their interests didn't attract me, their conversation didn't inspire me.

I dreaded growing up, because grown-ups were even less imaginative and inventive than the children in class. And then there was God, who was a whole other problem and wanted a lot of things done that didn't make much sense. And Gran Jones, my father's mother, who was rather similar and was more trouble because she would pass on our misdemeanors to Mum and Dad, while God didn't actually tell anyone as far as I knew.

I didn't get violent, didn't hit out at the world. I turned inside out, instead. Hid my real life in my interior and presented the people around me with a fake me, a character who was what I thought they wanted me to be. Eventually it got hard to know who I was, I was trying to be so many things at once, few of them born of my real self.

I passed my "eleven plus" and went to secondary school. It was no better than junior school except there were more, and different, girls to torment me and the lessons were much harder. But then, when I was 13, I met some girls on the playground who talked about things in a manner unlike the conversation of anyone else I'd met at school. They had fun imagining and what-iffing and fooling around with crazy ideas. They were all a year older than me, but I recognized them as my sort of people just from overhearing them talk. I pushed into their conversations, got rejected, pushed back again next day, got thrown in a nettle bed, still came back for more — and was grudgingly accepted. One of them, very much the leader of the gang, invited me into her house, sat me down on her parents' sofa and pushed a magazine in front of me. The magazine was a battered copy of *Analog*. It kind of started something ...

SF fandom is definitely the sort of place that accepts the "misfit" and "odd-one-out" but it is too tempting to think that if the boys who shot their schoolfellows had been introduced to our hobby they would have found it to their taste. It might have happened that way, certainly, but more than likely they would not have found fandom sufficiently exciting, sufficiently violent, at their age. We are very quiet sorts



of oddball, on the whole: very tolerant and non-invasive of other's space. That's not a way of being that attracts many people. Misfit-misfits, if you like. Being misfits, we feel we understand those troubled youngsters. But expecting them to be able to fit in with our ways is a feeling born of that very human desire to make terrible events "unhappen" by finding a way they could have been avoided. *If only they'd ... if only someone had ... if only we'd ...*

The other common human response is to try and find someone to blame. It's an easier response than the first one — requires less thought, thrives on prejudice and hardened opinions.

Truth tends to lie in a messy grey area. Events are not often a simple "A" causes "B" causes "C", but part of a tangled interlacing of chance and cause, of circumstance and temperament, of what was planned and what was just to hand. In some cases things virtually "just happen" but that is a very hard thing to swallow. We want to do something. Kiss it better, Mummy. Make it go away.

To learn lessons and work toward improving the lot of the misfit child in the education system is a Good Thing. To assume that such improvements will prevent such tragedies from occurring again is wishful thinking. If not in one way they will happen in another. There's no magic formula that will solve the problem of violence, because although you can set up barriers against a specific sort of attack, that will only stop copycat events. And as a result, we are liable to turn classrooms into fortresses, and increase fear of the outside world.

I think the mature response is to encourage children to see others, adult and children, as humans like themselves, and to value "difference" as much as conformity. (That's a tough task, especially when the advertisers like people to be like other people and all respond the same way at the push of a button.) Obviously there is a need for teachers to keep an eye out for trouble, to try to spot potential weak spots in the school security system. But also we should resist the urge to remove all risk, to make life too safe. "An acceptable level of risk" is a difficult thing to quantify, but it keeps people alert, and teaches them to be responsible for their own actions.

**Sheryl Birkhead**  
23629 Woodfield Road  
Gaithersburg MD 20882

**Chall** continues to evolve. When Columbine happened, I was saddened and wondered what changes had taken place since I was teaching 15 years ago. But, I didn't look back. When I was 9 we moved out to "the country" to a closed community in which everyone

was/is related to everyone else and outsiders were, essentially, shunned. I was an outsider then and it always remained that way. I ran into a classmate about ten years ago when I took my mother to the ophthalmologist. After I had signed her in, my mom mentioned that Sandy had been talking about being in my class — and why didn't I go say hi. Why? All she had ever done is pointedly ignore me and I saw no reason to be friends "now." College was a repeat performance — graduate school wasn't far behind. By the time I went back to veterinary school I was *there* to learn everything I could — period — and all social aspects had dwindled to inconsequential. Pariah — perhaps; loner — most certainly.

**Joe Mayhew**  
**7-S Research Road**  
**Greenbelt MD 20770**

**Challenger 10** is certainly a contender. Nice cover by Charlie Williams, not to mention his other fine work. Sad, however, that the Steve Fox stuff is dated long ago and far away. His work is energetic, baroque, organic and entirely unique. I saw him at Philcon, hanging stuff in the art show. All of it was old.

Your lawyering stories show that the dewy-eyed lad of 16 (page 7) lives on inside GHLIII's bare pate. Who'd have thunk the Lafferty-prone editor of *Alack* [in 1969] would go on to become a lawyer? Oh, well, as they say, "It's the 95% of them that give the rest a bad name." That famous judge who said, "There, but for the Grace of God, go I" perhaps should have said, "There, but for money and connections ..."

*That 16-year-old boy already had lawyerly ambitions. The dream was born when I was 12, and saw **To Kill a Mockingbird**.*

R.A. Lafferty is science fiction's James Joyce. Last I heard he was still barely alive and profoundly senile. Much of his short fiction has been collected and published by United Mythologies Press, and other small fan presses. The big publishers say he just isn't commercial. Good. That's why he's such a pleasure to read.

*Some enterprising publisher should reprint Ray's masterworks **Space Chantey** and **Past Master** in permanent hardback editions. They are treasures.*

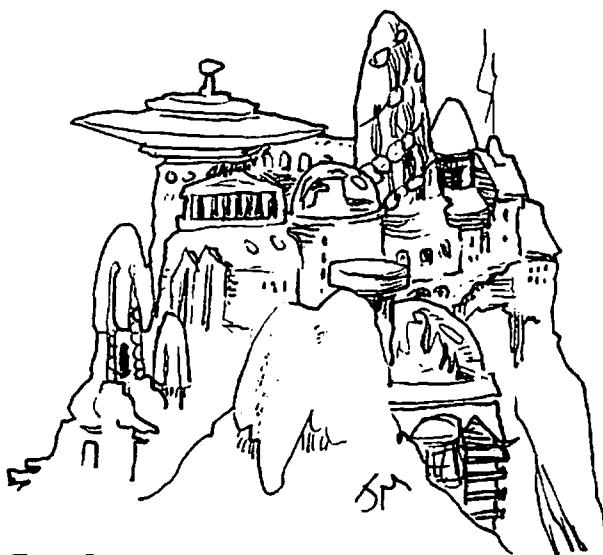
Darrell Schweitzer's notion of how Civil War vets would be offended by re-enactments of their battles (page 51) is surprising from someone as interested in history as he is. Until the last of them died, there were encampments of the Grand Army of the Republic, and of the Confederate vets (sometimes jointly held). They marched in parades, visited battlefields and did mock engagements. As they got older, it got more verbal and sentimental, but there is something about veterans of

awful wars that Darrell hasn't taken into consideration. One way of coming to terms with cruel absurdities is to romanticize them. Touching history through re-enactment beats the hell out of doing it the Balkan way, by repeating it.

*When I was a kid the syndicated show **You Asked for***

*It featured a phone conversation between the last living Civil War veterans, a rebel and a yankee. By the time it aired, both had heard the last bugle call. There's a statue of the Union soldier at Gettysburg.*

*As for reunions becoming more and more sentimental, Justin Winston owns an utterly horrid short film called **The Rebel Yell**. Shot in the early '30s, it featured old Confederates disgracing themselves giving the yell. One poor old duffer lost his uppers!*



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

Once again I have to thank you for a hefty issue of **Challenger** — 102 pages no less. The articles on the high school shootings make saddening reading, so does the piece on the rapist. But I'm afraid you misunderstood my LOC query about guilt. I fully understand and agree with the concept that a person on trial is innocent until proven guilty. My query was, how do you feel defending (for acquittal, not a reduced, *not* a reduced sentence) for a defendant who you know is guilty and who admits to it? I realise you have to defend him as if he were innocent, but how do you *feel* about it?

*Fine. I always defend a client for acquittal, because I always believe that it is in the best interest of the society to protect its law. The only lawyerly duty which might bother me, later, is beating up a victim in court — and as you saw from "**Born to Lose**" in*



*Challenger #7, even that wouldn't bug me if the victim was just as bad, or worse, than my client.*

Re the shooting, one can argue for and against gun control and "need for protection," but if guns become inaccessible fewer teenagers etc. could get'em. In the U.K. we have strict gun control. Oh I know some hardened criminals can get'em, but it is far harder for a teenager to take the family weapons or buy new ones and then go on a shooting spree. Admittedly in America there are thousands of guns already in circulation, they would not disappear if anti-gun laws were enacted. A problem for Solomon.



Harry Warner, Jr.  
423 Summit Ave.  
Hagerstown MD 21740

It is with a very heavy heart that I begin this LOC on the very heavy tenth issue of *Challenger*. I feel a strong foreboding that within minutes, I will hear a news flash announcing that President Clinton has sent a punitive expedition to Mars to avenge the latest cowardly destruction of Earth's polar lander. No doubt an aircraft carrier is already beyond the lunar orbit with no possibility of its recall if Congress should attempt to block this hasty presidential decision.

I don't really sympathize with the belief that

the students who have been shooting up schools and massacring families and so on are only partially responsible for their behavior. But it is obvious that something is causing young people to indulge in very serious life-consuming crimes much more often than in the past. Hazing by other children has gone on in schools for centuries, so has the ridiculing by strong kids against weak children, parents have been in some cases inept in raising children as long as historical records exist, so there must have been some other factor or factors helping to create these tragedies, some cause or causes that existed only minimally or not at all a half-century and more ago. My inclination is to try to control violence in the movies, on television, and in video games by constitutional or unconstitutional means, to see if that helps. Remember, the Hays Office that kept the movies free from violence excesses for a quarter-century was formed because the 1920s had seen such wild behavior and uncontrolled movies were suspected as a cause. The constitution lived through that quarter-century and I think it would survive a return to the regulations that kept violence on the screen down to a reasonable level, didn't permit villains to be triumphant or portrayed in a favorable manner, restricted vile language, and accidentally or not, resulted in the golden age of the movies. *Gone with the Wind*, accepted as one of the all-time great films and the most famous Civil War sound movie, contains only one gunshot. Has anyone counted the number of shots fired in Ted Turner's *Gettysburg* or in the most recent shoot'em-up, *Saving Private Ryan*'s first half hour? Could this difference have an effect on kids' desire to go and do likewise?

*To storm Omaha Beach? War films depicting actual events in a realistic manner couldn't persuade any normal kid to do anything but hide! Such movies de-romanticize violence, and show the viewer what mayhem is really like. And what it is really like is nothing any child, even one "hungry for some desperate glory," would want anything to do with. I must disagree down the line. The late '30s brought wonder to the screen despite the Hays Office, not because of it, and the romanticism that uplifted film in that era was more of a reaction to the Depression than it was a result of the insipid Hays constraints. Yes, the Constitution survived that repressive period — but it survived slavery, too, and the reason it survived these two assaults on its precepts is because it put both slavery and censorship down.*

Like William Breiding, I can't pluck from memory one place that symbolizes my home. While both of my parents lived, we occupied three houses in Hagerstown, for extended periods, several others for just a year or so. None of the longterm houses seems to

me more home than the other two. I've been in this house for 42 years, but all but the first three have been solitary and I can't think of it as a home in the same sense as where I lived with my parents. But I don't see why William, if he wants a home so much to think about, shouldn't go ahead and buy a house and settle down.

Joy Moreau's writings are indeed the jewel you describe them as. I'd never read anything about these first gorillas in the nation and I don't think I will need to do so in the future, because of her comprehensive and gripping narrative. But is it necessary to hunt for any particular incident that causes a wild animal to turn mean suddenly? Maybe it happens because life in that small cage eventually causes something in the mind of the unfortunate beasts to snap.

I feel dismay myself, not because I'm in a cage someone else made (I suspect there is one around me manufactured by myself, but we won't go into that now) but because I'm not going to be able to say something about all the shorter contributions to this issue. Most of them are gripping, several are scary, and I'm sure I don't know how you managed to collect so many items that fit the general theme you devised for this issue.

But I should express appreciation for the article on Lou Tabakow. I knew him only in his sitting-in-the-lobby-holding-court-to-convention-visitors aspect. But I could sense that he was as fine a person as Mike Resnick pictures in his words. I thought Fred Chappell's letter about Wilkie Corner was also splendid, although I don't remember ever having contact with the latter or even reading previously about his death.

I must indignantly claim the continuing status of publisher of the oldest fanzine, if this competition is restricted to fanzines that have had the same editor, haven't had any long interruptions in appearances, and haven't changed title. I just recently mailed to FAPA copies of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of *Horizons*. Only once since 1939 has there been a period of longer than three months without a new issue. That happened in the winter of 1943-44 when I was very ill with intestinal flu and skipped that quarter's issue. Technically, *The Fantasy Amateur*, the official publication of FAPA, is the oldest continually-appearing fanzine, but it of course has had many editors down through the years.

On the other hand, I didn't know that there was a search for hermit crabs at one of the faanish conventions recently. They couldn't have been hunting very hard because they didn't find me.

In general, I believe Maryland during the Civil War had most of its wealthy residents as Southern sympathizers and most of its poor people favoring the North. However, there were thousands of brothers fighting on opposite sides. The Confederate sympathies

seem to have been particularly strong in the southern part of the state and on the eastern shore, less so in its western portion. Here in Hagerstown, a mob burned down the office of a local newspaper that was strongly pro-South and ruined all its type, after word reached town that a very popular Union officer who came from Hagerstown had been killed in Virginia. The editor fled the area. Some time later, the officer in question was immensely gratified to find out how much he was appreciated in his home town, when he came through this area and explained that it had been a false rumor.

It hadn't occurred to me before, that apparently no fan has succumbed to Alzheimer's while active.

*Which implies either that an active mind has less chance of being affected by Alzheimer's ... or that a mind affected by Alzheimer's is not going to be particularly active. It's been my experience that a mind that is depressed, confused, tainted by booze or drugs, or otherwise abnormal is more susceptible to senility, but of course I'm no doctor.*

I read with pleasure and some concern your rundown on the Eddie episode in your life. I'm glad I'm not a judge who has the power to decide if he should be freed or locked up for life.

*Freeing Eddie was never an option to anyone; the question was whether he should be locked up in the state penitentiary or the state mental ward. Not the salient question to me: the important matter was understanding what happened. As you'll see when I finally get around to writing Part II of the story, I've had little luck in that regard.*

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

Thanks for *Challenger* 10. It was nice to see Joy Moreau in print again. I wish Joe Maraglino and Linda Michaels would become active again.

*Amen! Joy's Niagara Falls friends produced a wonderful fanzine in *Astromancer Quarterly* and Linda's art deserved its frequent Hugo nominations. Super people, too.*

I think you've focused much of the blame in the wrong area in regard to Allie's story. While I agree that the individuals who did the stoning deserve to be punished I think it is the administrators and teachers who did nothing to enforce reasonable discipline that need to be punched in the face repeatedly. They are supposed to be the responsible adults and any way I slice it I think they have failed miserably as human beings.

I cannot, no matter what the provocation the

Columbine shooters felt they had, condone or approve of what they did. I can empathize somewhat with their situation since in high school I would fit much of the profile. Above average intelligence, a certain level of social ineptness, interest in computers, etc. There was one thing, though, that I appeared to have, that clearly did not fit the profile. I realized that I did not need the validation of the preppy clique in my high school. Some attempts were made to accept me, but I was above that. I had self-confidence in myself and while I understand and appreciate how others viewed me I knew better than to realize that I needed their validation.

I must also have grown up in a decent school system since while I remember a few incidents where I and others were treated cruelly, it was always dealt with by authority figures and it didn't continue.

Further, I deplore the media coverage of the incident. While it was a horribly compelling news story, it did not need saturation coverage, nor did the private lives of all those even peripherally involved need to be opened to public scrutiny. Also every political wonk and commentator felt the need to openly speculate even before the gunpowder smell had cleared the air. What ever happened to responsible journalism that didn't speculate endlessly before the facts were known?

Our whole society is out of whack on this front and I feel helpless to do anything about it.

*Which is why I think the attention paid Columbine is more than justified. We have to study the horror to understand it and stop it.*

*My ultimate conclusion about Columbine, as (badly) expressed in my third editorial in Challenger 10, was that Klebold and Harris used the agonies of adolescence — the cliques, the cruelty — as a justification for their private psychopathic agenda.*

*The cliques were indeed cruel, the authorities were indeed brainless — but the blame for the massacre rests with the killers. There's a photo taken a few days before April 20th. It shows Klebold and Harris goofing with other members of their class, firing invisible guns at the camera. Seated beside them is Cassie Bernall, a victim. These were guys who could clown with a girl one day and butcher her the next. It wasn't because you had a competent principal at your high school that you didn't turn out like Klebold and Harris, or even because you had too much self-respect. It was because you weren't psychotic. You weren't evil.*

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

Chall 10's cover is eerily reminiscent of its

content, which made me wonder if the resemblance was intentional. Pulling heads off of things is one of the hallmarks of a serial killer.

"Allie's Story" was very effective, all the more so because just after I heard about the Columbine shootings, I went online to check out a website someone had tipped me to; the site is called [slashdot.com](http://slashdot.com), and no, it has nothing to do with slashers. Much of what I read there was echoed in Allie Copeland's article. It was all heartbreaking to me, since I recall my high school years with more affection than dread. I don't recall being befuddled or harassed, but that may be because I attended a high school in an area where the population was very mobile (near an Air Force base in Maryland). A lot of the students in that school were military dependents or government officials' dependents, which meant they moved on average every 2-4 years. Given such mobility, one learns how to make friends or one goes friendless. Learning that so many young people have suffered so much at the hands of their classmates is horrifying to me.

*The transience of your high school's population also meant that cliques didn't have time to form, and the uniformity of background put the damper on class differences. As I so often do, I'm going to refer my readership to a recent article in Esquire. "My Favorite Teacher" not only depicts the shock that comes from discovering a beloved instructor's hidden secret, but chillingly recalls the cruelty of adolescence. Brutal stuff but terrific writing.*

I found "Misfit" to be an excellent piece on what it's like to get up close and personal with a major news story, as well as to discover that one is related — however distantly — to someone who's committed a major crime. Charlie Williams has art in his writing as well as his drawing, and I thank you for publishing

"Home Sickness" struck a deep chord in me, for opposite reasons. While I was growing up in Maryland, my parents would pack us and the Ted Williams pop-up tent-trailer off to Michigan for a two-week vacation in their home town. Being Army brats, my siblings and I may not have appreciated the sense of having a home place then. I can certainly appreciate it now. Even today, when I think of home, I think of my parents' hometown.

Janet Larson asked, "When in history before now has there been the concept of the unwanted or disposable child?" All through history. The ancient Greeks, like many other classical societies, tended to put their damaged children out for fate to handle (i.e. Oedipus). In China in ages past, girl babies were routinely abandoned in favor of sons. In modern China, families are severely punished if they have more than the State's quota of children; the leftovers are sent to

# ERG

40  
October 1972



Teeves

*Electro run off*

orphanages with bare walls and a severe lack of stimuli. Many European cultures also abandoned sick or otherwise "defective" children, often those born out of wedlock. This is nothing new. Human history is replete with such horrors.

Guy, you had better provide translations for the Cyrillic, Greek and Arabic lettering you used or I shall be very cross with you! Don't keep me in suspense too long!

*I obey, proud mistress! The "words" you saw came from my changing my Corel WP font to something exotic and typing either "Challenger" or the name of the author whose article had just finished. Thus "P0YssΩφeΩ" or "رَتَد، نَحْتَد" تَجَد. Rather neat way to sneak hidden messages into one's zine, eh what?*

"Callie" sounded chillingly familiar, given what I've learned over the last ten years of studying serial murder and serial killers. There's *different*, and then there's *dangerous*. Serial killers "in training" (in their childhood years) often do vicious things to animals. Allison was wise to go home.

*You possibly remember a televised PSA on that very theme, showing a photo of a young boy with the voiceover, "When he was 8 he poured gasoline into a bucket of tadpoles" ... and then a picture of the same kid as a teenager, with the narration, "When he was 13 he burned a dog alive" ... and then "We all know what he did when he was 30 ..." and a photo of the boy-become-a-man: Jeffrey Dahmer.*

You warned me about "Eddie" before I read it, concerned about my "sensibilities," which was gallant of you, but unnecessary. As I replied, "I appreciate your concern ... but have been married to a cop for 14 years and I have studied several serial killers and serial murder cases. I don't think there's much that would shock me ... " After reading the article, I was angrier at that sheriff than I was at Eddie.

*Like I said, "Turn the rage."*

I'm not sure where my interest in serial murder and serial killers began, but I think it's intertwined with my interest in multiple personality disorders. I read a book called **When Rabbit Howls** several years ago and

was amazed that that book's "writer" lived to adulthood, given what she said she experienced as a child. From that book I went on to read several others, some of them academic works from doctors. I've also read case histories of serial rapists; the childhood histories of the two serial crimes is very similar (both are often severely abused as children).

I think I understand why you "treasure" the yarn cross. Even Eddie, in the end, is a human being. This doesn't excuse what he did, or what was done to him; it's just a reminder.

*If I could, I'd like to amend what you say. "Even Eddie, in the beginning, was a human being." During his crime spree I don't think he was a human, social creature. While he was in his predator mode I think he was something different, something deadly, something lycanthropic, worse than savage. No, I treasure that cross because it came from a client who was struggling, and I believe sincerely, to return to humanity from literal bestiality. I can tell you now he never made it back.*

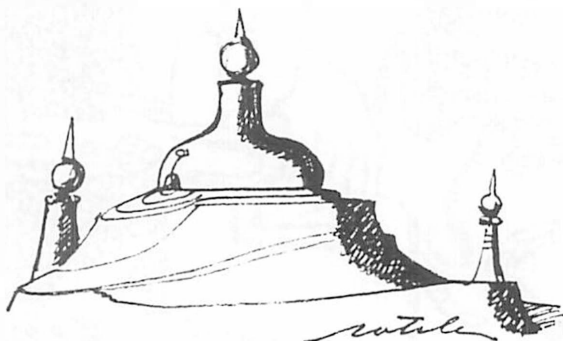
You wrote in "Editorial Three" "Maybe we should demand less and offer more." How perceptive — I wish more people could read those words. I have a seven-year-old son, and I have only recently realized that I should be doing exactly what you suggest. I sincerely hope that other parents wake up and do the same, and maybe Columbine will become a sober reminder of how far off track we as a society went, instead of a harbinger of what daily life will become.

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

The level of compassion and understanding you attempt to bring to amoral sociopaths does you credit, to be sure. Yet I am reminded of the old Irish saying, "He who sups with the Devil must bring a long spoon."

My initial reaction to the Columbine disaster was a shocked horror which was, I admit, somewhat dulled by repetition; my second reaction was relief that the two little swine had at least managed to kill themselves, thus saving the nation the drawn-out and pointless agony of a trial. My own adolescence was not happy (though I suppose it could have been worse; I was simply too small a target for the true thugs of high school). And I went through my share of revanchist fantasies. The difference is that my imaginary revenges seldom involved a higher level of violence than a punch in the mouth, and they were directed at those who had actually done me harm.

I will go along with you and Brant Kresovich that I have few problems with the U.S. Postal Service — I'd like to see them charge first class rates for junk



advertising, which would cut down dramatically on the pollution of my mail box, but that's beyond my control.

In your response to Darrell Schweitzer, you comment that the Vietnam Memorial in Washington is a nation's way to grieve. Consider that even now, they are bringing busloads of schoolchildren to see it, who look blankly at the wall and ask, "What's Vietnam?" In fifty years, no one will be left that cares, and in a hundred, they'll pull it down.

*No, I can't believe the Americans of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century will be any less patriotic or compassionate than their forbears, who still revere their nation's history and visit the monuments of Gettysburg and Valley Forge, imagining and appreciating and learning from the sacrifices people made beneath them.*

I will have to agree to disagree with Joseph Nicholas. Joseph sees the distinction between "fannish" and "sercon" as a false distinction, I see it as a true one. Further argument of this is obviously pointless.

Indulge me in a very minor nitpick. In your review of *Mimosa* #24 you refer to Curt Phillips' article as being about "road racing." It was in fact about NASCAR, or oval-track racing — referred to by road racers as "roundy-rounding." Road racing involves turning right occasionally.

Your over-generous review of my Twink is appreciated. You conclude, "I still don't know much about the editor!" My immediate impulse is to suggest you count your blessings; a more measured response is to note that intensely personal, self-revelatory writing does not come easily to everyone, even assuming there are aspects of their individual lives worth writing about.

Concerning your remarks on page 40 ...

I predict that at midnight of December 31, 1999, I will be in bed, alone, and probably already asleep. I deny that this will be a "big moment," either from my perspective, or of any other.

*Myself, I was at my brother's sister-in-law's house on Grand Island, New York, digesting a splendid boiled lobster and shouting "Happy new year!" into the ear of my 3-year-old nephew. Next stop was the edge of Niagara Falls to watch the cataract propel itself into space.*

I predict that if I make it to the Hugo Awards ceremony at the 2000 worldcon in Chicago, I will restrain myself from booing out loud. More than that, I cannot promise.

I predict that by the spring of 2001, most but not all of the millennial eschatology nut jobs (eschatology = the branch of theology that deals with the end of the world) will retreat to their caves to re-read "The Revelation of St. John" and review their calculations.

I predict that the need for screwdrivers will be diminished, but they will not disappear altogether.

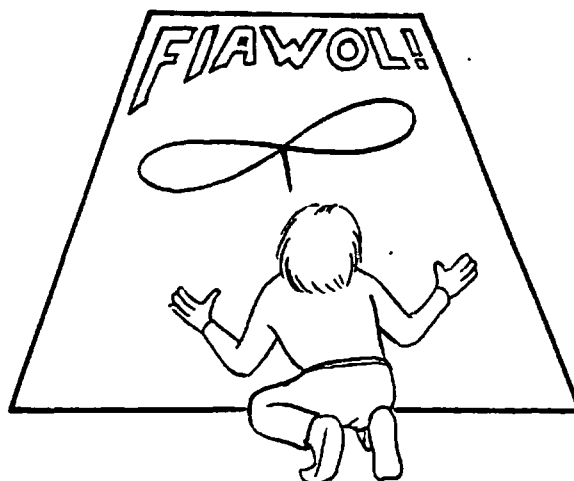
I predict that the next Pope will be African, or at least non-European, and will take as his papal name "Victor IV."

I predict that by the end of 2002, at least half of the fanzines presently in circulation will have ceased publication.

And I predict that "what humans think it means to be human" will continue to mean what it has always meant, i.e., "my small tribe."

I would like to predict that all music by Gilbert & Sullivan, and all Christmas carols except perhaps "O Come All Ye Faithful", would disappear from the face of the Earth; but sadly, neither of those is likely.

P.S. I could live with "O Little Town of Bethlehem" too.



*"My ghod... it's full of Slans!"*

Richard Lynch

P.O. Box 1350

Gaithersburg MD 20885

fiawol@cpcug.org/jophan@zdnetwork.com

Impressive issue, this one might be your best yet. I'm happy to see Charlie Williams doing some writing as well as fan art. An unfortunate typo in our letter of comment, though; it reads "we've not tried to put ourselves about fandom in any way ..." when what I actually wrote was "we've not tried to put ourselves above fandom in any way ..." I'm hoping that your readers will be able to figure out that it was a typo, and what the actual text was supposed to be. Also, your characterization is not correct that we "were planning to can *Mimosa*." The word "can" has a negative



connotation (which you, as a lawyer who has had much experience using the English language, obviously know). We're not thinking of ending publication of *Mimosa* because of some assumed dislike for it.

*If so, you'd be the only fans I've ever encountered who disliked the zine.*

Joseph T. Major  
1409 Christy Avenue  
Louisville KY 40204-2040  
jtmajor@iglou.com

*Editorial: Be True to Your School:* "I never had any trouble with student athletes at my school," you say. In high school, neither did I. (The trouble I had was with the kids who were too disorganized to be on the team and too dumb to do well.) In college — originally, the idea of collegiate athletics was to encourage physical fitness and develop cooperative habits. But, with any competition, the end becomes more important than the means.

University teams have become the be-all and end-all of the university, I fear. The University of Louisville is expanding. They built a new stadium and tore down the old planetarium. The stadium got the big boom from the administration, became the public symbol of our wonderful university football team, and so on. The administration planned not to bother replacing the planetarium until some people raised a big stink.

This is nothing new; recall that the plot (to the extent that one can have a plot in a Marx Brothers movie) of *Horsefeathers* concerns a college that has fired presidents on an annual basis for inability to create a winning football team. What President "Whatever it is, I'm against it!" Wagstaff did to the game was about what it deserved, but more serious schools did about as much. And in sixty years, the strains have intensified. This creates an environment in which deep feelings are repressed.

*Larson:* As with all obvious, sensible solutions there are impediments. Smaller schools cannot affordably have all the programs desired — as Janet points out, schools are expected to be everything parents can no longer bother to be, and small schools cannot afford mandatory counseling, regular Diversity classes, and the like, not to mention the occasional session devoted to education.

Community schools are *racist*, according to the current trend, only in a large school can the student body get the needed diversity required to prepare the child of today for the coming multicultural experience of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If the multicultural experience is mutually hostile cliques, I guess so.

Parental involvement is a negative factor, according to contemporary educational theory. Parents demand to see textbooks, sit in on courses, evaluate teachers. None of this goes over well with the educational dynasties.

*Visitors and Visited:* What strikes me most about these pictures is the sheer joy that Our Editor radiates at being able to provide hospitality.

*Gargy:* Joy Moreau is sadly unappreciated for her ability to evoke a culture that, while not ours, is so heartbreakingly like ours. As for Gargantua ... if he had been a human, the story of his life would have been in keeping for the biography of a serial killer. And yet Mrs. Lintz would have protested vehemently had she been accused of abuse. As for the "tug-of-war" incidents one wonders, did she do the same with her puppies? Did they become as aggressive as Gargantua did?

And if such abuse, from evil or good intentions, can make a gorilla so violent, one wonders how humans, who are more inventive in tormenting-for-their-own-good their own kind, can fare. One book I read on the Unabomber (*Unabomber: A Desire to Kill* by Robert Graysmith) pointed to a little-regarded, yet crucial incident in Kaczynski's development. When he was less than a year old, he developed hives. The treatment involved strapping the baby to a board, so he could be covered in the ointment all over and not rub it off. This took several months. Imagine, if you will, how bad it would be for a full-grown adult, capable of mental activities while in such confinement. And then realize how a baby would be unable to tell the difference. Did Kaczynski fail to bond?

And did the treatment, well-intentioned or malicious, that Buddy/Gargantua received break whatever emotional bonding he might have formed? We attempt to form emotional bonds with our cats and dogs. Lis and I joke about the cats ignoring us and only wanting food, but we never sit down alone. Watching television, working on the computer, is never a solitary experience, even if the furry others in the room are curled up, seemingly withdrawn into their own world. So if Gargantua's ties to others were severed, violence might well be only recourse in dealing with the world.

So many children these days have no bonding with the world.

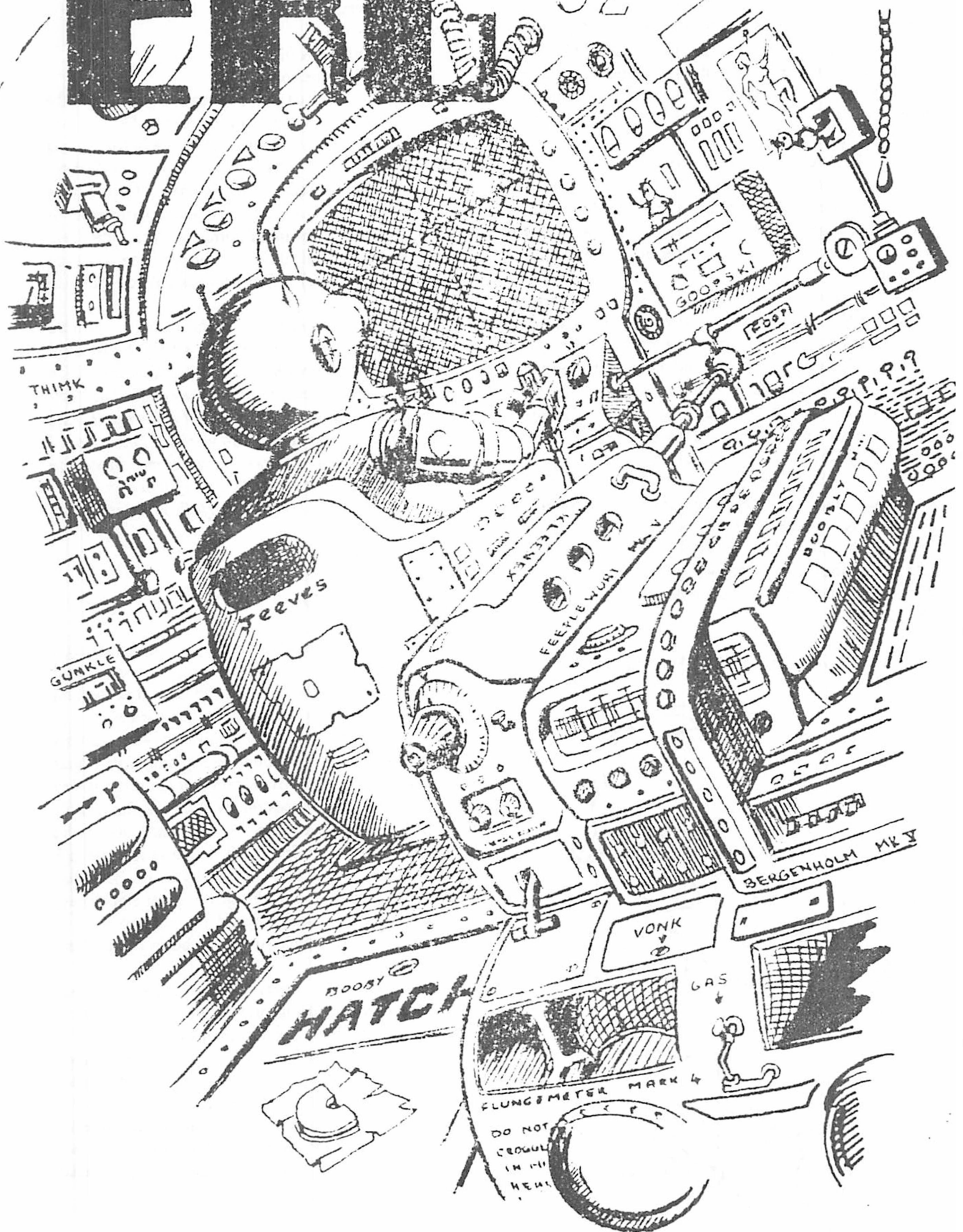
This is getting too grim. Let's have a joke. I see that Joy's father is "the man who traveled in elephants."

*Second Editorial:* Thanks for reprinting [Chris Beamon's censored] story. I think I would give it a "C" — several misspellings, a general run-on style (did you notice it was all one paragraph?), and a rather lame



# ERIC

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ending. A very stream-of-consciousness tale; I didn't find it so much scary as unformed, a realistic depiction of the juvenile lack of comprehension of life. (This is what makes those teenaged soldiers and drug hit-men so violent.) Where did he say that he was actually going to do any of that? Harris and Klebold *said* they were going to kill people.

The real scary Halloween story was how energetic the school system got. This is a story on par with the six-year-old sexual harasser. The distinction between thought and action is realized in the Bill of Rights, but not by those who replaced civics with diversity.

*Wingers want everyone to look and sound the same.*

*The politically correct don't care how you look, but heaven help you if you don't think like they do.*

We hope to see you and all the Challenger regulars at Rivercon XXV, the last ever, in Louisville on July 28-30, 2000. All the living guests of former Rivercons have been invited to be the guests of honor of this final celebration, under the genial overlordship of Mike Resnick (GoH 1990, co-Fan GoH 1991). For a mere \$25 sent to Rivercon, P.O. Box 58009, Louisville KY 40268-0009 you too can be part of this. Check at <http://members.aol.com/rivercon> for up-to-date information. The hotel will be the Executive Inn West, again, and their toll-free reservations number is 1-800-626-2708.

And afterwards:

**WIG WAM WIG WAM WIG WAM WIG WAM**



**Rick Feinberg**  
18 Acacia Road  
West Roxbury MA 02132  
[refeinberg@hmme.com](mailto:refeinberg@hmme.com)

This is kinda dumb — to me you're still the teenage letterwriter I grew up with, reading DC Comics. When I was a kid you were one of my heroes, along with "Castro Mike" Friedrich, Irene Vartanoff, Peter Sanderson, Mark Evanier, Gary Skinner ... I could think of nothing cooler than to be a "known" letterwriter at DC ... especially living in California (a place I idealized, being from Connecticut). How funny to see you as an adult (by Kelly Freas). What the heck did you look like back in the '60s?

*You saw a photo last issue of the scabrous creature carrying my name in 1966; here's Kelly Freas' take on the long-haired hippy of 1972. Mike Friedrich lives in Berkeley and is still in the comics business; he visited NOLA a few years ago. I understand Irene has married. Evanier used to work for Disney, but I haven't seen him in decades. I never met Sanderson or Skinner. Ah, the good old days of letterhacking ... my wonderfully misspent youth.*

**Joy V. Smith**  
8925 Selph Rd.  
Lakeland FL 33810  
[pagadan@aol.com](mailto:pagadan@aol.com)

Good issue, good theme — not something I would have asked to read more about, but it does need to be addressed. The cover fit the issue, but the first thing I thought of was the doll scene in *Con Air*.

*The very first movie I remember seeing — my parents didn't know I was old enough to pay attention — was The Snake Pit. I was horrified at the scene where the little girl crushes the head on the daddy doll.*

Re: "Allie's Story." I'd heard about the backlash against the Goths, which shows how people react blindly, driven and crippled by fear. But what causes the prejudice re: jocks, government employees, academics, etc.? Look beyond the stereotypes. It seldom occurs to people to get the beam out of their own eyes first ...

I liked the variety of experiences, including [Joe Mayhew's] painting of Mrs. Porter's casket. (I enjoy reading about people connecting.) I find it interesting that many movie stars and comics were miserable in their early years, just like us ... Of course, some weren't. Just like some of us? (I've always wondered about the ratio; how many of us were as wretched as we saw ourselves? And what could we have done about it? There were things I could have done. Ah, hindsight.)

Re: my own high school experience. It was not very happy, for a variety of reasons, which I do not allow myself to wallow in. I liked college a lot more. But I was not bullied in school; even though I was not a member of any group. (We moved a lot.) My parents were always supportive, though one has to go to school alone, sometimes scared as hell. The only physical attack was having my face painted in junior high on the street on the way home as part of some sort of initiation. I stood there and took it, afraid and crying inside, and I developed a loathing of hazing, etc. This may have contributed to my not joining a sorority in college (I was asked) and wondering why people thought they had to be part of an exclusive group. And I will never understand why people perpetuate the pain they endured.

I enjoyed [Joy Moreau's] circus background article. I like history. And spreading three editorials throughout the issue was a great idea, as was the closing connection in the third editorial with the last article, "Mrs. Jayne Died of Oldness." Wonderful title. (I swear if I hear "I'm 90 years young" one more time, I will shriek.)

As always, the epistles are enlightening (learning about "pounce" and those nutria with fangs [I lied about those - Ed.]). As are your articles about people like Eddie. I truly hope you will collect and publish them. They are unbiased, yet compassionate, and needful.

Gene Stewart  
1710 Dianne Ave.  
Bellevue NE 68005  
stews@radiks.net

The Charlie Williams cover [on *Chall* #10] is both eerie and evocative, like a ghost examining the demise of a favorite toy long abandoned to the apathetic living. Note that the doll and doll's head are more focused than the person holding it, and the expressions on the faces. Bravo.

Once again, superb writing elevates this zine above all others, bar none. *Challenger* lives up to its name in every way.

Allie Copeland's story should be read far and wide but wouldn't do much good, probably. Those of us who have been on the receiving end of such bigotry know all about it, and those who don't want to know never listen anyhow. I can hear it now, the sneers of "Hey, you chose the [Goth] fashion, now live with the consequences it brings."

Conform or be cast out, Rush sings. Indeed: during the filming the *Planet of the Apes* movies, it was noticed that costumed actors congregated according to

which mask they wore. Chimps clumped, gorillas hung together, and the orangutans all shared a table. There was no intermingling, even though there were no distinct groups prior to putting on the masks and make-up. In fact, some folks actually found themselves separated from friends or acquaintances because no one wanted to break the appearance lines.

*Editorial - Be True to Your School:* Each successive class got worse at my high school. In my senior year we were afraid of the freshmen. For my class, vandalism might've been marking a bathroom stall



with initials, with a pencil. The freshman class in my senior year ripped out sinks, light fixtures, and tore down the stalls, as well as prying up floor tiles, pulling out pipes and wires, and knocking holes through the wall. They did thousands upon thousands of dollars worth of damage and were dangerous to approach. Not all of them, but a high enough percentage that it was impossible not to notice.

Why? Well, in fact, jobs had gotten scarcer and the economy in our area was near dead last in the nation. Coal mines, once pure gold, had become abandoned bony dumps. The steel industry moved to Korea. We were getting down to nothing left, and certainly some of these stressors showed up in the kids. Whether that's reason, excuse, or irrelevance, I just don't know.

There were stabbings, shootings, even the fire-bombing of our principal's house. That freshman class was terrifying to us small town kids and farm folks. We'd never seen the like and didn't like it at all.

My own younger brother ended up trashed by

that class, drawn into drugs and, later, divorce and squalor by being sidetracked early on. He bragged about fights, gang raids, and brushes with the law, all things I found alien and alarming. It was as if Beirut or some big city slum had swooped down to curse our Western Pennsylvania Laurel Highlands small town. Snap answers such as social mores or poverty never cover all the bases, so I'm left shell-shocked but not much wiser.

*Misfit by Charlie Williams:* Nice collage, a patchwork quilt from Hell to keep us all toasty in this cold social climate.

*From 'Passages' by Janet Larson:* Required parental involvement? Have you *seen* some of these parents?

*Painting Mrs. Porter's Casket by Joe Mayhew:* Great story, told with flair. You're right, Joe, you knew the person, all they know is facts. This is a stand-out among excellences.

Nola Frame-Gray's words echoed geekdom's lonely cry, but I'm not sure society glorifies violence outside the media, which most thinking folks know enough to ignore anyway, right? Reasons run deeper, I suspect.

*Alas, alas, I see it otherwise: our society accepts and even applauds violence when it is official. Witness the obscene verdict in the Bronx police shooting case, the mindless massacre of an innocent for the deadly crime of breathing while black. That the killers were cops was enough reason for the jury to turn a cold eye to their racist, arrogant mindset, which let those four thugs attack an innocent man for no sane cause.*

*One hopes the civil jury will be sharper, and gut those cops like fish.*

*Growing Up Wrong by Sabina Becker:* Charming irony. Finding that special magic each of us has can be salvation or curse, but failing to find it can be worse, as Columbine et cetera show all too clearly. So where does self-esteem come from? Anyone know? Lowest common denominator approaches and avoiding competition aren't building much but disillusionment and resentment. Genuine accomplishment requires a focus on the individual, and that's where systematic approaches fail. This is a human problem and must be solved on a human level because in education one side does *not* fit all.

*Gargy by Joy Moreau:* Incredible stuff, interestingly told. I'd agree that this is a treasure trove of knowledge to be preserved, and the gorilla is a worthy topic. So who among us has inherited the face that strikes fear into all who see it? Medusa, anyone?

*Second Editorial:* Beamon's essay/vignette simply made me laugh, I'm forced to report. What

happened because of it, however, is anything but funny. I'm with GHLM on this one. Kids are property with no rights, at least in the eyes of way too many folks in positions to make their lives miserable. Overblown panicked reactions only worsen things for everyone. What did this kid learn? I heard that Today show broadcast, too. He learned to live in fear. To self-censor. To keep his trap shut and goose-step *or else*. And, as GHLM said, to let it all fester, unacknowledged, unaired. He learned to resent idiot authority and have contempt for the status quo. Control freakism is not just pathetic, it's dangerous. And, as GHLM touched on, what ever happened to considered writing as a constructive means of venting inner pressures?

*Mountain Sue by Susan R. Higgins:* Susan doesn't really make clear what made her different from others in the opening of this piece, other than her thinking it was so. This puzzles me. Was it poverty that set her apart? Eccentricity? Nonconformity? It matters only to let the reader more clearly understand her painful, vivid story.

At one point she writes, "I struggled with the vegetarians in the house and others who wanted me to join in their silly games. Finally they got the picture that I wasn't like them and left me alone." This sounds like a conscious, even adamant decision, rather than a state forced upon her by circumstances beyond her control, yet the reader still has no clear idea what's so different about her.

Ultimately this is a story of grit and survival and I like that part a great deal. I guess the point of this difficult piece is that there can be too much "help" forced on people, or at least help of the wrong kind and with inappropriate or draconian strings attached. Helping people be themselves would be a better angle of approach.

And three cheers for Susan. I've lived in a tent in the woods thanks to a lack of funds, so I know the drill and salute another survivor. Her message is important: be true to yourself don't live in the past.

*Joe Mayhew:* Great article on Katharine Anne Porter. Has anyone else noticed Chall's sub-theme of great literary women?

*Gregory Benford:* What rehabilitation program works, though, and for what types of criminals, and at what stages of their careers? Also, there are many rehab scams, so the minimum we pay for public defenders may not be more costly? Talk about a problem begging for some effective social engineering ...

Good point about Engineering vs. Politics, and amen.

*Richard Dengrove:* Macho pissing contests are

an interesting phenomenon, when observed from afar and in the abstract, but lead to excesses in real life, as you point out concerning the Post Office.

As for free will and murder, I've long held that there should be a distinction between physical and other kinds of guilt. If your body did it, other considerations don't matter, your body gets isolated from society as the dangerous component. Admittedly this creates a whole new category of criminal, but it might keep dangerous folks from being among us so easily after their horrendous crimes, and it might make silly excuses such as the Twinkie defense less feasible.

*Don't condemn "the Twinkie defense" out of hand. San Francisco homophobe Dan White was not found Not Guilty & Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity of the murders of Harvey Milk and George Moscone because he ate too many Twinkies, as critics of that verdict claimed, but because he'd suffered a complete mental breakdown. His living on Twinkies was merely cited as evidence of that.*

*Arthur D. Hlavaty:* I share your lament for new short fiction venues, but must wonder how come it doesn't sell, with all the short fiction lust in evidence on zine pages.

Tobacco smoking is self-medicating because the nicotine adjusts brain chemicals into new balance. Once hooked, one smokes to maintain that balance within certain parameters. Withdrawal is the process of getting used to other parameters, and the sad part is that the brain never forgets those nicotine settings, so occasional cravings hit all ex-smokers, if only in their dreams.

*Experts have told me that nicotine is more addictive than any other drug besides heroin. I understand that Malcolm X kicked his addiction to heroin, got off of morphine, and began his recovery from alcohol ... but could never shake the need for cigarettes.*

I often wonder if Philip Jose Farmer didn't have health problems along the lines of Baa'b Dylan or Roger Zelazny — all three had brilliant beginnings and iffy middle-to-end periods, with a fairly stark demarcation at the point of health crises. Having said this, I'll also say that Farmer published a diverting mystery novel, a parody of the hard-boiled school called *Nothing Burns in Hell*, in 1998 or thereabouts. Maybe he just lost interest in SF.

While I'll agree that few writers of any genre can write convincing love/sex scenes, such are especially scarce in SF, which has a prudish streak that may be a remnant of the days when SF was marketed strictly towards male adolescents. (Are those days gone yet? Do the publishers know?)

*Methinks the streak you mention isn't so much*

*prudish as prurient, and that this also reflects SF's essential adolescence. Sexuality was either romantic or pornographic, sappy or titillating. I think a lot of this was because SF didn't manage to present a believable female character throughout the first several decades of its existence. Human relationships aren't our bailiwick, unfortunately. I know there are loads of exceptions — I call for my readers to name their candidates.*

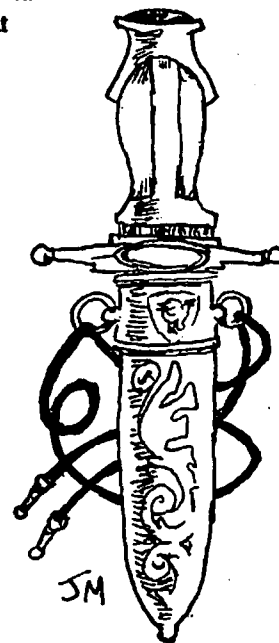
No, you've got the cart inside the horse: it's not that more and more print SF is media SF translated to the page — it's that *some* print SF does indeed have roots in media SF, but almost no media science fiction is rooted in print by more than a kiss and a title. Check out *Bicentennial Man*, for example. They rewrote Asimov, no doubt "improving" its demographics and focus group responses. Also, it seems harder and harder for print SF to keep up with the media's imagery, probably because media SF rarely bothers

with pesky verisimilitude, much less physics, when planning their latest spectacular shot. Also, with the advent of digital imaging, Stanley Kubrick's dictum that, if it can be thought or written, it can be filmed has now come to pass. They can show anything they can imagine in convincing Technicolor now, the SFX are seamless, the illusion impeccable. Try writing that way and you end up with cartoonish parody or, worse, inadvertent self-satire.

So they diverge, with print SF not even trying to compete with media SF, and media SF looting print SF with quick, shallow scoops of title, reference, or trope.

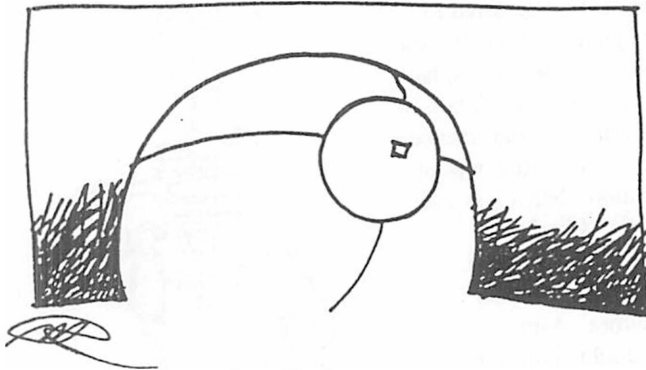
*Books I wish the movies would try: The Stars My Destination (with Al Pacino as Gully Foyle), Rogue Moon, A Case of Conscience ... but only if the films kept the Bester, Budrys and Blish points and tones.*

*GHLIII — a digression:* Rod Serling came to SF late, after a string of successful plays in realistic mode, and, while it was partly his neo's enthusiasm that made *Twilight Zone* a success, it was also what put some episodes over the top or into the cliché vat. He



tended to make the same mistakes all SF neos make when they start scribbling that wild Buck Rogers stuff. Had he know the field better to begin with, he would have avoided many predictable missteps and had a better show. He did have the good sense to hire Charles Beaumont and others, though, give him that.

*No, I disagree. Serling often used SF as a vehicle for his personal agendas, but his early TZs are among the best TV I've ever seen. "The Lonely", for instance: I still identify with that show. "The Mighty Casey", his hymn to the Brooklyn Dodgers (and his*



*explanation for the team's L.A. success — a robotic pitching staff!). "One for the Angels", corny and wonderful Ed Wynn vs. Mr. Death. "Back There", Russell Johnson in his pre-Gilligan's days. Dozens of others. Serling's problems came later, when he lost his edge, and let his message overwhelm his medium: all those pedantic anti-Nazi speeches, speeches, speeches ... Indeed, Beaumont and Richard Matheson wrote the best scripts — e.g., "In His Image", "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet", "The Invaders" — but Rod Serling's vision guided *The Twilight Zone*, the best television show of all time, and though you could never tell from what direction it would come at you out of its fifth dimension, you could usually rely on it being great when it got here.*

Terry Jeeves: How does U.S. adversarial law differ from the U.K.'s?

*I can answer that third hand. One of my judges repeated an anecdote witnessed by one of his colleagues at the Old Bailey, London's magnificent courthouse. The first witness called by the Crown in a criminal case was — the right to remain silent being an American law — the defendant, and during his testimony, the judge leaned over to remark, out loud, "You don't expect the gentlemen of the jury to believe that, do you?"*

Joseph Major: Your objections to military SF

and murder mysteries remind me of an objection I once heard leveled at Shakespeare: "But no one ever spoke in poetry like that." Patrick Stewart once defended *Star Trek* by comparing it to Shakespeare in the sense that the whole set-up is artificial and the language spoken is only partially real in any sense. By these lights, one can see that he's right, they're quite close, and "accuracy" and "realism" has nothing to do with it.

That you can't suspend disbelief or critical faculties long enough to enjoy Miss Marple or Sherlock Holmes or the latest Turtledove, Bujold or Sterling strikes me as simply a matter of taste. I've got a pal who reads only nonfiction for the very reasons you cite. Hitchcock at the end of his life said he'd given up bothering with fiction for much the same reasons. And yet you enjoy historical mysteries, which is quite interesting, as they're notoriously inaccurate and drive the scholars and authorities nuts. Even Simon Schama can't seem to please all the professors, despite his obvious care.

I enjoy many examples of the forms you loathe or despise *because* they're unreal, artificial, and self-contained. It serves a need for escapism, I suppose, but I just don't care how absurd Poirot might be; it's a lark, a whimsy (Lord Peter or otherwise). That ERB or PKD or Tolkien wrote improbable tales, to say the least, doesn't affect my enjoyment of them in the slightest, and I can't help but think that knowing better doesn't always have to matter.

It seems a matter of measuring time in inches, of applying inappropriate standards, or of expecting the wrong things from this or that package. Complaining that there's no damned meat on the Cheerios box puzzles me.

When Oliver Stone released the film *JFK* a storm of phony controversy blew up over its "inaccuracies," but since when does a fictional movie have to be accurate? It's not a documentary. It's a fantasy that uses certain real-life events as a take-off point, as most fiction does by the way. Anyone expecting it to be "accurate" in any way missed the point or is playing a cynical game of political spin.

The truth is that the movie's basic premise offended defenders of other basic premises concerning the murder of John F. Kennedy. All the blowhard condemnations of the film did was reveal how touchy certain people are to certain topics.

*Like the truth about the most horrible public event of my lifetime! I tell my own tale about the JFK movie elsewhere in this issue, but my contempt for the flick doesn't stem from Stone's having my car towed or the smottiness of Kevin Costner. Sissy Spacek's smile made up for all of that. I simply found it a*

*dishonest movie, in the way it bled true documentary footage in with its own narrative, purporting to prove a conspiracy where it's now obvious none ever existed. (I won't argue the various assassination scenarios; for that, read Gerald Posner's definitive Case Closed.) Stone had his own agenda — his personal anger over his loss of innocence in Vietnam.*

*He tied that nightmare in his own mind to the Kennedy murder, and had the box office clout to translate his paranoid ravings to the screen. He warped history I lived through, demeaning men like Clay Shaw and J.D. Tibbitts whose families are still alive — and for a reprehensible purpose. I love most of Stone's movies, from the magnificent Platoon to Any Given Sunday, but JFK is a lie top to bottom posing as truth, and to Hell with it. Anyway ...*

Your comment to Harry Warner that doctoral dissertations are often bizarre because they must say something "new and different" is correct, but how come the same thing that makes for bad scholarship makes for good SF? Could it be because SF writers are backstopped by an anal-retentive fandom with an elephant's memory, whereas scholars are backstopped by ... other scholars?

*What's this about an elephant's asshole?*

**GHLIII:** Your aside to Harry Warner citing references to Alfred Bester and Ray Bradbury on *The Simpsons* probably stemmed from Matt Groening & Co. researching things SF'nal for *Futurama*. In an interview Groening admitted he knew next to nothing about SF, especially written SF. So why not do a science fiction satire, right? Hollywood Logic 101.

**Marty Cantor:** No, I have not entirely misconstrued anything about the New Wave claptrap. It's the clash between the engineered versus the organic model of writing that upsets so many of fandom's applegarts. What you call "the story itself" is actually secondary in SF, along with all other considerations, the foremost dominant aspect being "idea." If you have a good enough idea, virtually nothing else matters. If you have no new slant or idea, no amount of superb writing matters. How well-designed a story is to elicit a given response to the idea from the prepared audience of fandom is how these things are judged. The New Wave forgot these basics, that's all, and often presented stories with either little or no explicit idea content or in formats that emphasized other aspects of writing, be it characterization, POV, narrative chronology, concrete correlatives, or what have you. They came at SF from a literary, or organic viewpoint, which clashed with the engineering that dominated earlier forms of SF.

Actually, the rules have changed from the Golden Age, so that, as Joseph Nicholas has pointed

out, today's writers are indeed more sophisticated, and must be to compete, let alone to thrive. Storytelling is part of it, yes, but only part, and not necessarily the dominant part of SF even today.

*Your response to Greg Benford's criticism elsewhere in this issue anxiously anticipated.*



**Roger Waddington:** Going entirely electronic with one's zine is a financial decision, as often as not. Face it: paper, ink, and postage, reproduction costs, and sheer time invested make zines a difficult juggle at best. Some succumb to the lure of saving money, and who can blame them?

Your idea of writing down memories before they slip away is an excellent one, hence fanhistory and timebinding and such, too.

When I was a child I could have watched bees flying from holes for hours at a stretch without a break in concentration or fascination. They worried about me quite a bit. My parents, not the bees.

**Julius Schwartz:** Willy Ley was on, of all things, the Disney Channel recently, on a fascinating two-part *Walt Disney Presents* focused on space. They also showed Werner von Braun, those old shows were excellent.

*Mars & Beyond* was one of my first SF favorites, exciting my imagination and — as Disney did so well — forming attitudes that would last a lifetime. The



*Mouse was good at that: remembering the ideals Davy Crockett died for at the Alamo helped get me through Berkeley!*

Nola Frame-Gray's "Two Eulogies" remind me of John Lennon's drawings, and cut to the quick of the dead beautifully.

"Eddie": This one could bring tears if read unguarded. A gut-wrenching yet heart-felt telling of a multiplex tragedy, this piece speaks for humanity even as it details the dehumanizing effect violence has on us all. Betrayal at the heart of such vicious crimes only deepens our own blush because we've all been betrayed enough to understand Eddie's experience of life, yet most of us will now feel both lucky and slightly guilty as we're forced to wonder what we might have become if we'd been unlucky enough to have had it that bad.

The image of the dog clipped by the passing semi lingers with emblematic irony: how many of us would have stopped, or even taken notice? Eddie's cross means *you* noticed, and we're all ennobled a little because you did.

*Editorial Three*: I'm not a supporter of the monster theory. Calling Hitler a monster places him beyond humanity and that leaves us off the hook — which is what lets it happen again and again. We won't stop the cycle unless we learn to see ourselves in such people and at least a touch of them in each of us. Only then can we keep an eye on it and keep it controlled or contained so it doesn't thrive in benign neglect until it's once again impossible to ignore. Why let such pus fester?

Cornell Woolrich, who wrote *Rear Window* and many other superb noir thrillers, died of gangrene because he let a pimple on his leg fester, preferring to ignore it rather than face a doctor. David Lidnay, who wrote the incandescent fantasy *A Voyage to Arcturus*, died in his 20s from septicemia because he neglected his teeth. The human race tends to the same sort of denial when it comes to the worst it contains, labeling it "monstrous" or "evil" and thus supernatural and beyond human will or effort to change. And so it festers, this imp of the perverse, and rises again and again as strong and shocking as ever.

We've got to take down the fences we've built to keep out unpalatable realities. No more easy outs such as "loner" or "loser" or "maniac" or "monster." Those labels explain only our reaction and our willful blindness, our eagerness to turn our gazes away from strays clipped by passing semis.

No one lives invisibly or in a vacuum. Had Eddie gotten some help between being raped and becoming a rapist, a great deal of suffering might well

have been averted. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is a question we'd better start answering with a resounding "Yes." Self-involved apathy lets too many weeds grow, and they're choking the garden.

For evil to prevail, it is only necessary that good people do nothing.

*And for good to prevail ...*

"Mrs. Jayne Died of Oldness" by Jodie Offutt is an affecting, gentle portrait of someone who made a difference in many lives, and whose influence lives on. We should all be graced by someone like this. Beautiful illo, too.

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

Charlie Williams' cover for *Challenger 10* is truly perfect for the issue. It is such a strange mixture of melancholy and madness. The rest of the issue goes on to prove that sometimes you *can* judge a fanzine by its cover.

The articles by Jodie Offutt, Mike Resnick, Susan Higgins, Sabina Becker and Joe Mayhew are all on the melancholy side and all quite well done. Remembrance of things past. Before reading "Gargy" by Joy Moreau, I would have never thought about the possibility of writing a melancholy article about a gorilla. However, Joy does it quite admirably. On thinking about it, the gorilla may have had a similar psychological profile to your client Eddie.

"Home Sickness" by William Breiding is extremely eloquent. Rootlessness seems to have been a general problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It seems to be more pervasive than just not having roots in any place. It also involves not having roots in any *thing*. Reading William's article made me think of Satan's famous quote from "Paradise Lost": "For I perceive the mind as its own place which can a Hell of Heaven make. A Heaven of Hell."

On the madness side, the issue contains "Misfit" by Charlie Williams, "Callie" by Robert Whitaker Sirignano, and "Eddie" by GHLLI. Callie may be the most curious piece of the three. The harmless weird person may actually be more insane than Michael Carneal or Eddie, but he is harmless. His harmlessness doesn't mean I would care to room with him. His problems are apparent to everyone around him but never to himself. There doesn't seem much that can or should be done with him, but in a way it always seems as if there should be something that could be done.

Janet Larson asks "When in history before now

has there been the concept of the unwanted or disposable child?" Unfortunately, the true answer is "In all centuries before 1900." In all the previous centuries, a baby had at most a 50% chance of living to adulthood. I've heard it theorized in college classes that people didn't immediately form an emotional attachment to a newborn baby. They couldn't afford to. They might begin to form an attachment to a child after it was past infancy and had a reasonable chance of surviving.

There was also the situation as shown in the film version of *The Good Earth*. In one quite understated sequence, it is fairly apparent that the female protagonist has just killed a female baby she has just delivered. She and her husband can't even feed the children they already have. No more food really means No More Food. Infanticide is the only practical option, and she takes it upon herself to do the job.

I doubt that fandom would have been enough to have made a difference for Klebold and Harris. Not that I don't think that fandom has many social virtues. Back when I was an English major they used to say alienation was the major theme of 20<sup>th</sup> Century literature. Yet alienation is rather seldom a theme in science fiction. Science fiction characters may be pissed off about many things, but they are not generally alienated. Fandom is probably reason for this. Most science fiction writers are at least somewhat involved with us, and that gives them a society they can interact with. Likewise, alienation has never seemed to be a big topic in fandom. They may be many things about the world that fans don't like, but they don't seem to feel particularly alienated about it.

*The works of LeGuin, particularly The Dispossessed and Left Hand of Darkness, are about alienation, and you can find a strong argument that Bester's great pair of novels are too. Angus Thermopyle in Stephen Donaldson's terrific Gap Into series is a classically alienated character, and of course there are many more.*

Overall, Challenger #10 was a great issue. *Outworlds* #70 has been mentioned as something you could show people as an anthology of excellent fan writing. I think that is true of Challenger #10 also.

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

Many thanks for Chall 10, a truly great issue, both in pagecount and contents — [though] much of the issue was painful reading.

Re the gorilla story, in circa 1975, myself and a colleague attempted to fingerprint Guy the Gorilla at

London Zoo.

*I'll just nip those comments right in the bud! Go on, John...*

We were attempting to be the first to research, by observation and actually taking fingerprints, that all of the almost 200 primate species have fingerprints. (We found that they do.) I had the marvelous idea of putting a strip of wide cellotape, sticky side outside, round my hand, and getting my colleague to posture outside the cage, and as Guy

*What'd I tell you?*

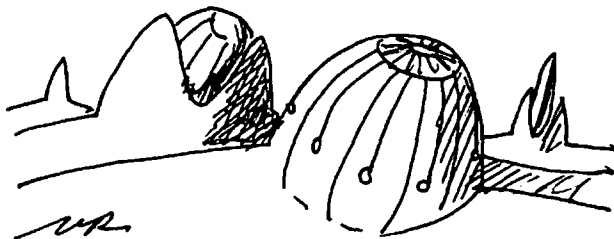
gripped the iron bars of the cage, I would run forward and try and dab the cellotape over a finger surface. I've written up the humorous and frightening account of the experiment in "Ridges and Furrowed Brows", which I will be delighted to send if you'd like to publish it!

*An ape with that name is irresistible. Booked for Chall #12!*

I was quite pleased with the LOCs excerpts regarding my article on Willy Ley, so I've taken the liberty of enclosing my article about Sir Arthur C. Clarke published in a recent *Orbit*. [Also elsewhere in this issue.] He actually wrote a LOC to me [and] told me he liked the article; re my illustration of him, he wrote, "I've seen worse." When I complained to him that I'd sent a five-pound note to the Sri Lanka Main Post Office for a first day cover of a stamp issue dedicated to him, and had not received a reply, he sent me his last spare cover, suitably autographed. He also asked that the copy of *Orbit* be sent to his new "museum" being built in Minehead (where he was born) to be retained in the files.

*I wonder if he has a copy of that Chinese fanzine — see my "Zine Dump" this issue — with his photo in it.*

Re rape cases. I was involved in several, giving fingerprint evidence. In one case I remember, a girl around 18 years old accepted a lift from a stranger, with the perhaps inevitable result. My evidence concerned the finger and palm imprints on the car's passenger window, indicative of her attempting to vacate the vehicle. Whilst the trial was proceeding, the girl felt that everyone was looking at her, and I invited her to sit in a room reserved for police officers — although they were looking at her also! When the Not



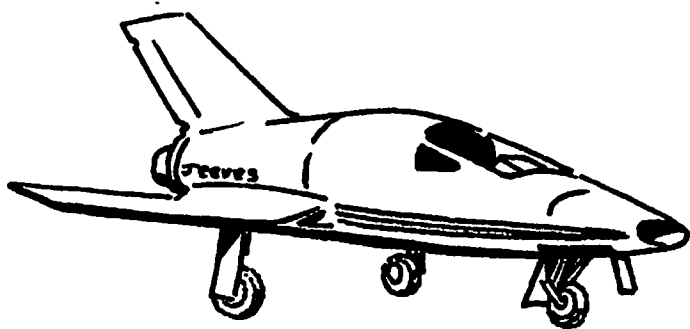
Guilty verdict was given, the girl was in a terrible state, and I believed she was raped — no doubt about it. However, when she was cross-examined, she admitted that after the rape, she asked the man for his comb, and combed her hair, looking in the car mirror. Being a lawyer yourself, you would appreciate how the defense lawyer in this case must have grinned in triumph!

*I hope he didn't grin, because one must always respect a victim's suffering, but he was duty-bound to point out to the jury how her actions did not sound like those of a crime victim. The issue in that case is obviously whether or not she consented to the act.*

*Hearing what you tell us, and nothing more, the answer is at least questionable.*

The artwork in **Chall** is exceptional, most especially Joe Mayhew, and I also liked the photosheets. The front cover [by Charlie Williams] really startled my wife, who, due to an unknown reason, has a phobia about dolls' heads removed from their torsos, and the look on the doll's visage is somewhat challenging!

*I couldn't get over the variety Charlie Williams brought to his art in Chall 10. The frightening cover, the gentle frontispiece in the editorial, the photo-realism of the Tabakow portrait, the simplicity of the closing illo of the elementary school class ... If only I could've printed one of his wacky caricatures or cartoons, such as used to bedeck the Lynchi's Chat and the Knoxville mafia's work in SFPA ... but check out his work for the Proctors this issue!*



Lloyd Penney  
1706-24 Eva Rd.  
Etobicoke ON M9C 2B2 Canada  
penneys@netcom.ca

A thousand thanks for issue 10 of **Challenger**.  
Some comments ...

... beginning with the cover. Charlie Williams has drawn a most disturbing cover, and after a quick look inside, I can see why. The incidents at Littleton CO and Conyers GA and Taber, Alberta, and just

recently, at a school in the Netherlands show a horrific product of our age ... the homicidal child, one who kills (and knows how to kill) for a toy or a Pokemon card, or because someone "dissed" him. There seems to be a total lack of remorse or regret or conscience in every one of these children, replaced by a sense of vengeance achieved, or even just a sterility of the soul.

What created this product? Many things ... Get Them Back, rather than Do Unto Others ... looking out for Number One, proving you're Number One ... our hypermaterialistic attitudes ... no one to teach them to care or wonder or imagine, or even think ... and the worship of The Gun, which, they are taught, shall right things for you.

Who teaches all this? Modern movies and television, which show by example that instant reaction with a gun solves your problems, for the other guy is just scum, and his death is easily justified. I am against censorship, but I think a little self-censorship by Hollywood would work some wonders. Charlie draws more than just a doll destroyed, but childhood destroyed as well, and through the clear features of the doll, but the blurred features of the person holding its head, there's an alienation that goes through much of the issue.

But what fuels this homicidal child? It is frustration, the need to vent emotion. When we were younger, we could play, compete, ride our bicycles, toss a ball ... life was carefree. We could get angry, cry and maybe throw a punch or two ... we had plenty of outlets for our emotions, and our moms said it's okay to cry. Later, when we grew up, the carefree life went away, and we sighed over past childhoods, but at least we learned how to be emotional. Today's children have never had a childhood ... they must become adults immediately, never knowing that carefree life, never have that emotional vent. They grow up too competitive, too fast. They can't cry, for fear of looking less than macho in the eyes of their peers, all of whom have the same fears. Perhaps what I referred to as emotional sterility is that only on the outside; on the inside, emotion seethes, looking for an outlet, building up to explosive levels. In such a violent society, the explosive vent, once it builds up beyond the ability of the child to keep it in, can be violent and lethal. Chris Beamon's necessary vent was quickly sealed by ignorant adults. Janet Larsen also mentions the idea of an emotional and creative vent, and goes a step further ... many kids have an innate creativity that is often ignored by schools.

As someone who can look at the U.S. from the outside, and as someone who is subject to a barrage of American news from American sources, it appears to me

that America, in search of continual appeasement to its ego, needs someone to dominate again and again to prove it's Number One ... Grenada, Iraq, Persian Gulf, Vietnam, more ... America teaches this egotism to its citizens so that each citizen is Number One, the best in the world. It has driven Americans to great achievements and inventions, to infamy, and to great horror and death. Klebold and Harris were merely carrying out what they'd been taught ... their egotism over those they found inferior is a mirror of America's, and the availability, the worship of guns allowed them to carry out their mission with ease. When America has no one to dominate in a military or economic way, it attacks itself, and finds an enemy internally.

I guess most of us were misfits, or loners, or pessimists, or just different. I was younger and smaller than my peers in school, so that was the beginning of my problems, but later on, I discovered that I was becoming an individual, and earlier than those around me.. Perhaps that's all a misfit is, an individual who emerges from the pack before the others do. Maybe he becomes a Nobel Prize winner or a serial rapist. I was neither, but was smart enough to realize that I had to endure my school torture only for so long, that graduation would come. [When it did], life opened up with new friends, a girlfriend, and my first encounters with fandom.

Sounds like Sabina Becker had my childhood, too. A shame we had to grow up individually. We could have had a support group before the idea came into vogue. I heard the accusations of being gay, whatever that was, at age 14. I remember coming home from school either depressed or in tears, and being somehow comforted that whatever didn't kill you made you stronger. After all the abuse, the teasing, the shunning, here I am, Hercules.

Most of us have the common sense and strength of character to pull ourselves out of our misfittedness and get on with our lives. Sometimes, even that isn't enough for bureaucracy conspires against us, as it did against Susan Higgins. Bravo to her for fighting off an abusive husband and a just-as-abusive bureaucracy.

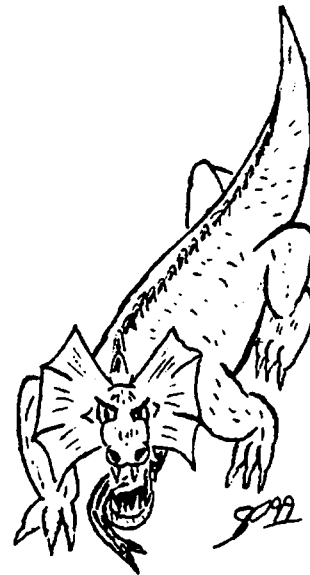
Fandom is great for accepting misfits, true, but it is also great for allowing you the emotional and creative vent I wrote about earlier. Fandom teaches you that you can embrace your male friends without anyone wondering if you're gay, and they know you embrace them because you care. It teaches you that you can embrace your female friends and they know the same thing, without any sexual connotations. It teaches you that in times of trouble, you can lay your soul open in front of your friends, and they will help. It teaches you that if you want to be frivolous, or silly, or busy, or

creative, you can, because there are all kinds of outlets for this creative, emotional behavior. You're right, we shouldn't need this hobby to reach out and touch others. But, it allows us to do so with ease, and have a whole whack of fun doing it.

Wonderful essay by Mike Resnick on Lou Tabakow [*speaking of which*]. When I read such remembrances, I wish more and more that I'd been around earlier so I could meet these folks.

Many bright lights of fandom have passed on recently, especially those survivors of Irish fandom, like Bob Shaw, James White, and Walt Willis. Sometimes, those bright lights shine brightest just before they're extinguished, so that other lights like Wilkie Conner are often just not seen. Thanks to Fred Chappell for allowing us to see Wilkie's light.

Jodie Offutt's story of Mary Alice Jayne brings the zine to a redeeming close, with the reminder that with all the horrible and vile people in the world, there are wonderful, decent folks out there, too. They teach their wonderfulness and decency to others, and thank the Lord that people like that are still in the majority. I hope the good folks can keep their majority, for I fear their numbers are smaller every day.



Robert Lichtman  
P.O. Box 30  
Glen Ellen CA 95442  
robertlichtman@yahoo.com

Allie Copeland's article was sad: sad in that she had to suffer because of stereotyping by her classmates, sad because it's clear that the high school culture never changes no matter how much so-called enlightenment



and awareness [there is] said to be going on in society as a whole. The truth of the matter is that despite lots of advances in science and technology, we as a race are still pathetically retro. Herd mentality and revenge are hard to shake.

Your high school experiences probably parallel almost everyone's: "Life belonged to the pretty people and the rest of us got what they left." I don't look back on high school as a particularly enjoyable time, despite all the propaganda about how we would. I don't have my annual anymore, so I can't check to see if I had a Danny Scott — but I do remember one Ginny Lou, who was quietly beautiful and who wrote words in it that told me she was "interested" in me. Had I only known. *Thus my point. Everyone's miserable in high school.*

*The beautiful girl can't reach across the imaginary social gulfs to the bookish fella she'd really like to know. The jock is under constant pressure to perform, perform, perform. Real life for all of us seems an eternity away. "Had we only known" ... maybe we could have helped each other. Well: we know now.*

Regarding Charlie Williams' article: we had a

Michael Carneal type in high school, too. If I and my friends were on the geek fringe, he was *our* geek. Quiet and reclusive, he never shot anyone, but when he'd get worked up he'd carry on about building a bomb and blowing up the school. No one ever took him seriously.

*Nowadays, if overheard, he be arrested and/or expelled. Which tack, I wonder, is smarter?*

Joy Moreau's article on Gargantua was excellent, worthy of inclusion in any eventual fanthology for 1999.

In the lettercol, I enjoyed (if that's the right word) reading Fred Chappell's reminiscences of Wilkie Conner. What he failed to mention, regarding Conner's long-time friendship with Lynn Hickman, is that the two of them were co-founders of a now mostly forgotten fannish organization back in 1950: *The Little Monsters of America*.

*I believe Fred was a member.*

Joseph Nicholas draws a good distinction when he writes, "The real distinction is not between fannish fans and sercon fans but between fans who discriminate in their choice of reading matter and those who are so besotted with science fiction that they have lost all sense of judgment and proportion, and give every appearance of thinking that all of it is good just because it bears the hallowed label." That's something I've noticed many times over the decades. He makes another good point later when he says, "Only those who trumpet their status as sercon fans can explain why they hold the anti-fannish views they do." It'd be good if they'd make their explanations, since stuff like, for instance, Norm Metcalf's referring to the likes of you and me as "pseudo-fans" does nothing much to further dialog.

Loved Howard Devore's Willy Ley anecdote.

Gene Stewart is off the mark in his statement that the Cult was "a dire plot hatched by the Barrington Hallers in Berkeley." It was actually founded in 1954 by Peter J. Vorzimer, who was then living in West Hollywood. Various Berkeley fans were participants later on, but Terry Carr didn't move to Barrington Hall from San Francisco until sometime in 1957.

*Reminding me of my great Barrington Hall fandom story...*

Mike Resnick on Lou Tabakow and Jodie Offutt on Mrs. Jayne were both excellent, as was your lengthy piece on Eddie. These legal pieces of yours are some of the best parts of *Challenger*.

Marty Cantor  
11825 Gilmore St. #105  
N. Hollywood CA 91606

[A]re you a devotee of 99-year centuries?  
Both the new century and the new millennium

commence on January 1, 2001. The mass of idiots out there may not know any better, but, as a fan and a person of supposed perspicacity, I would expect that you would. \*grump\*

I never had any trouble with jocks or other students in high school. I was mostly interested in reading books ... [a] type of alienation from my immediate society [that] has remained with me all of my life.

When I got to Pasadena City College I opened up a bit, mostly hanging around with drama, literature and journalism students. During those years, the school had a good football team, making the finals for the junior college "Little Rose Bowl."

Addison Hawthorn was one of the stars of the team. It was my habit to listen to classical music (of my choice) in one of the small listening rooms, and he often joined me to listen to the music. In those years I was "out of it" in regards to social mores that I only vaguely recollect some puzzlement that a black football star would want to spend time with a white wimp listening to classical music.

[So] I was sincerely touched by your story about the jock you call Danny Scott. As I discovered with Addison, one must not consider jocks as insensitive, muscle-bound idiots. Some of them are real people, and sensitive. We both got something good out of our school years.

Like Greg Benford, I also disagree with the "gladiator model" of our justice system. The justice system should be about a search for truth, and the adversarial system is too often about the scoring of points as a method of winning. But I part company with Greg in the matter of "people whom all largely know to be guilty." We may all think that we know the guilt of the accused, but our system is set up to work with the criminal defendant presumed innocent until the prosecutor can prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt.

*Actually, just "beyond a reasonable doubt." The exact definition of that term is left up to the jury.* In my article in this issue I touch on this. I think we did the system proud — we refused to be a rubber stamp, making certain that what appeared to be true was actually true by being proven to be true. We would not have voted the defendant guilty unless we felt that the prosecutor had proven this to be the case.

As any one of us can be accused of a crime and brought before the Bar of justice, you damn betcha we should insist on the full due process we are promised. I say to Greg that it is a slippery slope upon which he is implying we should stand, when he would have us automatically convict those "whom all largely know to be guilty."

Your response to Terry Jeeves' question about

how you defend one whom you know to be guilty was superbly put. Would that more of those who decry the spending of time and money on the "obviously guilty" pay heed to your wonderful words.

Here we have Gary Robe and Milt Stevens writing about the air in Los Angeles. They remind me of a truism: never trust air you cannot see. Today, though, I am happy enough not to go out as it looks as though the air has been freeze-dried.

Harry Warner writes that Twiltone doesn't rot away if it is kept in boxes away from light. This is not my experience. I find that [old] zines in my collection printed on Twiltone are stiffening, making them difficult to open without shattering the paper. But I do share Harry's fondness for mimeography, and I am glad that Gestetner reinvented it ...

In reading Joe Major's "Revolution in Nihilism", I must say that he is on to something but I do not believe that he is completely correct. The refusal to take responsibility for one's actions *is* at the core of much of our problems. However. Without access to firearms, those kids at Columbine would not have been able to shoot their victims. But joe is coorect in assigning blame — and not only in the gross actions which make the news. I echo Major here — I have no solution as to how to turn this around.

You write in your mention of *Bento* that the best way to see the Bradbury Building is in "Demon with a Glass Hand". Sorry, but the Bradbury Building is absolutely best seen *in person*. To be totally surrounded by its absolute magnificence is stupefyingly wonderful. The next time you visit Los Angeles, I will take you.

*Booked!*

Roger Waddington  
4 Commercial Street  
Norton, Malton  
N. Yorkshire YO17 9ES U.K.

...But then, who said that fanzines had to be all sweetness and light?

Strikes me that Columbine is going to resonate in the American experience as much as Dunblane did in the British; although you didn't find an instant, easy, and totally wrongheaded answer like ours, i.e. banishing handguns with a wave of a magic wand. There's the divide of an ocean between us, but the anguish is no less.

*Dunblane horrified — too weak a verb — everyone who heard of it, regardless of nationality. As I said in an earlier issue, it was evil so atrocious it warped the space around it. A pedophile seeking to destroy the innocent objects of his obsession — even that obvious explanation seems lame, and utterly*



*inadequate when one looks at the faces of the victims.  
Literally, truthfully — how could he?*

However, trying to grope towards an understanding, it seems to me that never before has teenage rebellion had the potential to be so lethal.

Rebellion has always been an essential part of the growing process. We measure ourselves against our parents, against our teachers, even our contemporaries, and find them wanting; the reality is that most of us are ugly ducklings who will turn into ugly ducks, but that doesn't stop our striving for swanhood. We all find ways to make ourselves different and special, from the "DA" haircut of yesteryear to the Goth apparel of today.



Way back in the '60s, my "speciality" was a Beatles hairstyle, enough to give a passerby almost instant apoplexy. That must have been my finest moment. (My appearance wasn't in the mode of John, Paul, or George, but Ringo: it's a nickname I hold to this day.)

But that was the high point of my rebellion, as it must have been for most of my contemporaries. But now? Well, apparently Columbine is now: if anyone upsets you, shoot them dead, and who can stop you?

Re the protection of innocence, perhaps we're trying too hard. We wrap up and cocoon our children; we're never happier than when we know where they are. Even a visit to the local swimming pool has to be supervised. We were remarkably resilient as children, and childhood itself hasn't changed, just our perception of it.

On the tale of Eddie ... it makes me wonder how I can read crime and mystery novels with equanimity, with anticipation even, when this is the reality behind the

fiction. We settle down eagerly to read about the corpse in the library or behind the trashcans, but if we ever saw them in reality, we'd probably run a mile. It leaves me with a certain admiration for those nearer the cutting edge, those who have to pick up the pieces of ruined lives.

*And now, two more late LOCs to Chall #9 ...*

**Norm Metcalf**  
**P.O. Box 1368**  
**Boulder CO 80306-1368**

Thanks for reprinting John Berry's "Willy Ley" from *Orbit*, "a philatelic journal." In other words you don't have Damon F. Knight's stamp of approval for this reprint. Berry does a good job of highlighting Ley's life in one page.

Bob Sabella's letter is interesting. He proposes Edgar R. Burroughs, Hugo Gernsback and John W. Campbell, Jr. as "... the three most important shapers of pulp SF in this century." I suspect I know why he made the statement and I'm somewhat inclined to agree with him. But to him these are negative figures, inferior to the literary lights of science fiction, among which he ironically includes Philip K. Dick as a non-pulpster. Dick grew up reading the pulps, he told me that he vastly admired John W. Campbell, Jr. and his career began in the science fiction magazines as they were shifting from pulps to digests so that he had a number of stories in the pulps.

Sabella lists Herbert G. Wells in opposition to Hugo Gernsback, yet Gernsback reprinted some of the best of Wells' science fiction. Gernsback had a very eclectic taste, publishing the works of Burroughs, Wells, Abraham Merritt, Howard P. Lovecraft, Edward E. Smith, etc. with stories ranging from fantasy through soft science fiction and hard science fiction to super science fiction in which the authors transcended reality by using gobbledy-gook science.

Furthermore, Gernsback only published a few science fiction pulps, i.e. *Wonder Stories* from Oct. 1930 until Oct. 1931 and again from Nov. 1933 until Mar.-Apr. 1936. The rest of the time Gernsback's science fiction magazines were bedsheets with paper ranging from coarse-weave to slick.

However, Sabella is correct that Gernsback influenced pulp science fiction in that some of the authors he featured went on to write for the pulps.

But I don't agree with Sabella's blanket condemnation of pulp science fiction. Sure, some of it was atrocious. But some of it was excellent. "Theodore Sturgeon," Ramon Alvarez-del Rey as "Lester del Rey," Robert A. Heinlein, Catherine L. Moore, Howard P. Lovecraft, "Talbot Mundy," etc. did

some very good work for the pulps. Among "literary" works of science fiction are some terrible stories. Instead of sorting science fiction into two categories and then denouncing one, I prefer to judge each story on its own merits.

David Drake claims that Leigh Brackett and Poul Anderson were writing "lead novels" for *Planet Stories* in 1950. Poul Anderson's only 1950 contribution was the short story "Star Ship" in the Fall issue. Leigh Brackett had no contributions that year.

Darrell Schweitzer's letter made a number of good points. I agree with him that the average fantasy is inferior to the average science fiction. Too much fantasy relies on invoking nonsense, whereas much of science fiction at least makes an effort to deal with extrapolated reality.

Guy, you did a great job with this issue of *Challenger*. You certainly weren't editorially challenged.

Eric Lindsay  
P.O. Box 640, Airlie Beach  
Queensland 4802  
Australia  
eric@wrevenge.com.au

Many thanks for *Challenger*, which arrived some time ago and hid in the bottom of my mail pile.

Regarding having your zine on the Net, it is great that Richard Brandt is helping but *Challenger* on, however I'd like to point out that even a slow 386 can be used to surf in a reasonably satisfactory manner. The slowest thing about the Web is your modem, not your computer. The Internet was invented well before 386s were out on the market, and you simply don't need to have the latest and greatest to use it.

Interesting to read Curt Phillips thinking almost of the South as a different country. From outside, it doesn't really seem that way.

*It isn't, anymore. America's mobile lifestyle and love of the sun finally discovered that the South met most of its industrial and corporate needs, and the influx of what some call outsiders and I'd call newcomers significantly changed the region. Atlanta is more like Welcome to L.A. than Gone with the Wind these days, and if the South manages to keep what's affirmative and strong about its character while changing what's sour and dumb, then the infusion of new blood has been all to the good.*

Gary Robe's fine article on paint doesn't explain why on three different hand-held computers I've owned, the paint surface either peeled, or in one nasty case, turned sticky and apparently came off. Maybe people need to know more about paint.

**WAHF:** Pamela Boal, Brian Connes (Ygnacio Valley High School class of '67!), Jeff Copeland, Tom Feller, Steve Hughes, Dave Langford, Rodney Leighton, Ulrika O'Brien, Jerry Page, Karen Pender-Gunn, Charlotte Proctor, Geri Sullivan (blessings)

Illustrating this letter column: R.J. Batrop, Joe Mayhew, R. Korati ("Shuttle Down" & "FIAWOL"), William Rotsler, Sheryl Birkhead, Terry Jeeves (covers to *Ergs* 32 & 40), Frank Kelly Freas, Nola Frame-Gray, Elizabeth Atkinson, Scott Patri, Julie Kahn, Ian Gunn



## DEEPSOUTHCON 2000

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*A special LOC on Challenger #10 from the father of Allie Copeland, whose article led off that issue.*

Challenger 10 has been sitting here for a while, nagging at me to write a LOC. Normally, Chall is good for some light reading and amusement, a little edification and perhaps a bit of food for thought. This time, it is more than a little upsetting — from my own daughter's introductory piece, which she was nervous about me reading, through the rest of it — which is why it has been sitting here for so long, unanswered.

What caused my thoughts to coalesce was coming back last night from watching Hillary Swank's Oscar-winning performance as Brandon Teena in *Boys Don't Cry*. Allie and a friend had wanted to see it, so after a reminder to the girls that it wasn't a pretty story, and it ended badly, we trooped off to the theater. Two hours, two handkerchiefs and two very upset teenaged girls later, we left.

I believe in the inherent goodness of people. I simply must do so, or I'm not sure life is worth the effort. But events like the one portrayed in this movie, where hate, fear and simple stupidity conspire to kill people because they're different make me rethink that. Just like the events at Columbine High School a year ago made me rethink it.

But the insight I got once I started thinking about it wasn't the same one I reached a year ago. There's a certain insularity out there, a fundamental suspicion of anything or anyone different. That's the hate of difference that is responsible for Matthew Shepard's death. It's the fear that killed Brandon Teena. It's the insularity that makes Allie's gay friends in Colorado fear for their safety. Time magazine's article on Columbine quoted one of the students:

*Evan Todd, the 255-lb. defensive lineman who was wounded in the library, describes the climate this way: "Columbine is a clean, good place except for those rejects," Todd says of Klebold and Harris and their friends. "They're a bunch of homos ... If you want to get rid of someone, usually you tease 'em. So the whole school would call them homos, and when they did something sick, we'd tell them, 'You're sick and that's wrong.'"*

"Hey, he hit me for no reason at all. All I did was shove him around a little." When my children do things like this they get sent to their rooms. But nobody gets sent to their rooms for lack of civility in high school anymore.

I graduated from high school in 1974. I sometimes think I went to high school on a different planet. It wasn't perfect. It wasn't always fun. It wasn't the best education on the planet, though I had a couple of strikingly good teachers. But except for one day when some kid was looking for trouble and took a swing at me — and I solved that by taking one punch and walking away, figuring that backing down and losing face was a better choice than getting pummeled — no one ever hassled me. There were gay kids and black kids and white kids. There were Catholic kids and Jewish kids and Protestant kids. But except for some lingering racial tensions, those differences were not a big deal, even though the school district had recently been through a massive realignment of district lines to eliminate *de facto* segregation in the elementary schools.

Something's wrong out there. The pressure to conform is too high. This isn't like the pressure in a Japanese school where "the nail that sticks up gets pounded down," but rather a debilitating fear of anything different at all. I don't understand it. I don't understand what the solution is.

Mike Straczynski spent five years putting words into the mouths of his characters on *Babylon 5*, and one of them said, *There is a greater darkness than the one we fight. It is the darkness of the soul that has lost its way. The war we fight is not against powers and principalities, it is against chaos and despair. Greater than the death of flesh is the death of hope, the death of dreams. Against this peril we can never surrender.*

I will do the best I can in my little corner of the universe. I try to celebrate and embrace diversity where I can. I have worked hard to make my kids proof against fear and make them accepting of differences. I am afraid for them — for all of us — but I will not surrender.

Jeff Copeland, 3243 165<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE, Bellevue WA 98008 \* [copeland@alumni.caltech.edu](mailto:copeland@alumni.caltech.edu)

*Mike Resnick is the most generous of men. On a rainy evening soon after the New Year, he was called from the Cincinnati airport by a cold-ridden, booze-besotted, flight-frightened aerophobe ... named GHLIII. My flight from Buffalo to New Orleans had been battered all the way by terrifyingly rough air, and when it stopped in Cincy, I ran for the phone -- and Mike came to get me. That evening I was treated not only to respite from the stormy skies, but to an unforgettable tour of Chez Resnick, and dozens of glorious stories. His is a great life, and here is part of it.*



*Meals* form one of the most important parts of my life. I sell books at meals. I sell short stories at meals. I buy short stories at meals. I hire agents at meals. I pitch stories to Hollywood at meals. I even proposed marriage to Carol at a meal.

Furthermore, Carol and I love to eat. We'll go 100 miles out of our way to try out a highly-recommended new restaurant. We've dined at 5-star establishments and dumps in both hemispheres. We've found unheralded restaurants that were strikingly good and world-famous restaurants that were shockingly bad.

And now, 60,000 meals or so from the beginning, I thought I'd share the most memorable with you.

*Illus by Joe Mayhew*

## SCIENCE FICTION MEALS

*Most Expensive:* This took place the Tuesday before the start of the 1998 Worldcon. We had just arrived in Baltimore, checked into the Marriott, went down to their coffee shop for lunch -- and found that the stock market was in free fall. Someone had turned the television over the bar to MNBC, the all-day market channel, and between the moment we ordered sandwiches and drinks and the moment they arrived, we lost \$8,200. Now, *that* was an expensive meal.

*Most Profitable:* This took place at the ABA Convention in New Orleans in 1986. I sat down at a long picnic table to have a very informal lunch with my Tor editor, Beth Meacham. During the first hot dog I described a couple of books I wanted to write next -- *Ivory* and *Paradise* -- and during the second hot dog she asked a bunch of questions and made a bunch of suggestions. She agreed to buy them as we were finishing our soda pop. Over the next 10 years, those two novels (including reprints, foreign editions, and movie options) were worth about a quarter of a million dollars to me.

*Most Expensive Meal For Someone Else:* In the fall of 1997, Miramax optioned *The Widowmaker* from me, and hired Carol and me to write the script. In February of 1998, they decided to introduce us to our director, Peter Hyams, and some of the execs who would be working on the film, so they flew us out to California for a business dinner. They bought us first-class airfare, of course, and since they did it on two days' notice, the tickets came to \$3,800 for the pair. They put us up in a three-room penthouse suite at the 5-star Nikko Inn; I asked at the desk and found out that the rack rate was \$1,300 a day. We were picked up by the longest limo anyone ever saw, and that limo and its driver were at our round-the-clock disposal; chalk up another \$400. Finally, we met Hyams and the Miramax folk for dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel's 5-star restaurant. The tab came to \$1,250 for ten of us, so we figure our share was \$250. The entire meal and discussion lasted about 90 minutes. We flew home the next morning. Miramax's total outlay for a 90-minute dinner with the Resnicks: \$5,570.



*Most Break-Even:* Lunch with Marty Greenberg at Noreascon III in 1989. He asked what I was working on. I told him I was writing "Bully!", an alternate history of Teddy Roosevelt (which would eventually be nominated for both a Hugo and a Nebula.) Somehow that gave him the notion of selling an anthology of *Alternate Presidents*, with me as the editor, and before he was finished, he had sold four more alternate anthologies to Tor, the titles being *Kennedys*, *Warriors*, *Outlaws* and *Tyrants*. Our gross income, including advances, royalties, book club sales, and foreign editions, came to about \$81,000. But since I insisted on paying a word rate that would attract the best writers, and since Tor liked the notion of 140,000-word books, our net profit after paying the writers (and splitting royalties with them) was \$7,700, which meant my share was \$3,850 for editing 5 books. (OK, it's trivial, but why is it break-even? Because while people kept buying Resnick books, they were confronted with so many titles that they often bought the *wrong* Resnick books -- anthologies, on which I got a quarter of the royalties, rather than novels, on which I kept 100% of the royalties -- and we doped out that I lost about \$3,800 in anticipated novel royalties while those

anthologies were in the stores.

*Most Potentially Expensive Meal:* This was a breakfast at Little Governor's Camp in Kenya's Maasai Mara, and for doubters, I have the entire incident captured on videotape. Carol was just sitting down to eat when an enormous elephant smelled the citrus fruit on the table and mosied over to share it. Carol felt this was an unacceptable intrusion and refused to move. Jumbo kept approaching. Carol flexed her 130 pounds of muscle; Jumbo flexed his 13,762 pounds of muscle. Carol snarled and showed her fighting canines; Jumbo showed *his* fighting canines, which extended for about six feet from each side of his mouth. When Jumbo was literally eight feet from the table and tentatively extending his trunk, Carol finally retreated. Damned good thing, too; the cost of getting another Carol would have been prohibitive.

*Most I'm-Glad-Our-Insurance-Was-Paid-Up Meal:* I was in Philadelphia to deliver a speech, and of course Carol was with me. As always when we're in town, we stopped to visit Gardner Dozois and Susan Casper. Finally Gardner suggested we all go out to his favorite Philadelphia restaurant. We did. They seated us. We ordered. And -- so help me -- the restaurant burned down before the appetizers arrived. (I resisted the urge to walk to the nearest Greyhound station and scribble "For a hot time, call Gardner" on the wall.)

*Biggest Tab For A Fannish Meal:* This took place during Iguacon, the 1978 Worldcon. We joined John Guidry for lunch at the Hyatt's atrium coffee shop. A few minutes later Tony and Suford Lewis sat down. So did Rick Katze. Lou Tabakow wandered over. By now the table was getting crowded, so we pulled another table over. It was immediately filled by Mark and Lynne Aronson and Bill Cavin and Jo Ann Wood and Pat and Roger Sims. Someone -- I think it was Banks Mebane -- broke out a deck of cards, and pretty soon there was a bridge game going on. Then someone opened up a portable chess set. We had to leave for a few hours. When we came back with Stu and Amy Brownstein, there were all-new faces at the table, but the card and chess games were still going on, and the tab was about three feet long. Each person tossed money into a coffee cup when he left, and when the last person relinquished the table about 30 hours later, the coffee shop's cashier raked in upwards of \$500.

*Most money wasted:* This took place at the Nebula banquet that was held in San Francisco in 1990. Tor Books had five of the six nominees for best novel, and all five of us -- me, Jane Yolen, Orson Scott Card, Poul Anderson and John Kessel -- were being treated to dinner by Tom Doherty. Just before the ceremony began, Tom surprised us by having Dom Perignon delivered to all three of the Tor tables to celebrate the publishing house's pending victory. And, of course, just about the time we popped the corks, it was announced that Elizabeth Scarborough, the one Bantam author, had beaten us all.

*Longest Meal:* the 1968 Worldcon banquet. I won't go into details here, since it's the subject of a forthcoming article elsewhere. But ask anyone who was there.

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There is a Resnick Listserv (which is very much like a computer-driven apa for Resnick friends and fans) that is run by a fan called Mike Nelson, who also runs my web page. (You can visit the web page at [www.MikeResnick.com](http://www.MikeResnick.com) and can join the Listserv from the web page.)

The discussions can be serious or trivial, and are definitely not limited to science fiction. At one point, we all listed the best and worst meals we'd had in restaurants, and since this article happens to be about meals, I thought I would repeat my own lists here.

## BEST AMERICAN MEALS

**1. Doro's (Chicago):** My all-time favorite. It closed about ten years ago. In a country where almost all the 5-star restaurants are French, this was Italian. They served a wonderful soup with a poached egg in it, the best veal parmesan I've ever eaten (with some outstanding Fettucini Alfredo on the side), and a dessert tray to die for (but I always ordered the chocolate souffle).



**2. Le Francais (Wheeling, Illinois):** This is Carol's favorite restaurant, and most surveys rate it the best in America. French, but with a surprising assortment of game meats, exquisite sauces, a huge and very upscale wine list (I don't drink anything stronger than coffee, but I have been assured by many patrons that this is one of the best lists in the country), fabulous deserts. Not cheap, but we've blown maybe \$3,000 there on 20 meals over the years, and we plan to go back for more.

**3. Commander's Palace (New Orleans):** In a city with such stellar restaurants as Antoine's, Arnaud's, Broussard's, Gallitoire's, and Brennan's, this one is clearly, easily the best. We've never had a bad appetizer, main course, or dessert (and Carol adds that she's never been touted onto a bad wine by the waiters).

**4. La Caravelle (New York):** I've never seen anyone rank this at the very top of New York's restaurants, but it's always in the top half-dozen, and it's my favorite. They have a fabulous pea soup that's heavy on the sour cream, they do unbelievable things with roast duck, and they make the best chocolate mousse in the country – and they're a safe and easy walk to the theaters, which is a major consideration in Manhattan.

**5. Ritz-Carlton Dining Room (Chicago):** All the Ritz-Carltons have fine dining rooms, but I think the one in Chicago is the best. Very French, except that they serve man-sized portions. They do fabulous things with sauces, both on their main courses and their desserts.

**6. Nikoli's (Atlanta):** This one affords eye-catching views from atop the Hilton, but if it were in a windowless basement it would still be the best restaurant in Atlanta. I actually enjoy their salads, and I *hate* green stuff. Very nice traditional appetizers and main courses (and the beef Stroganof was outstanding), and great one-and-two-person souffles for dessert.

**7. Four Seasons Dining Room (Beverly Hills):** Like the Ritz-Carlton chain, all the Four Seasons hotels have excellent dining rooms. This is the one we are usually put up at when we're flown to Hollywood, and the food is so good that even when a production company puts us in the Nikko Inn or the Beverly Hilton instead, they always take us here for dinner. (Breakfast is pretty good too. I always have coffee and eggs Benedict, Carol always has coffee and granola sprinkled with fresh fruit, and the bill – which we always charge to whatever movie company is putting us up here [usually Capella] – is always \$45.00.)

**8. La Maisonette (Cincinnati):** This restaurant, about 17 miles from my house, has been a 5-star restaurant longer than any other in the country: 32 years. And it deserves it. More American than French despite the name, they have a venison dish in a rich brown sauce that is superb; a bottomless bowl of scallops in a thick wine sauce; great deserts; and surprisingly friendly service.

**9. Lutece (New York):** Haven't been here in a few years. When we went, it was the consensus #1 restaurant in New York. These days it doesn't make anyone's top ten. But the two meals we had there were truly memorable. Carol had fish dishes, I had meat once and duck once. I don't like mussels, but they had a mussel appetizer in cream sauce that I still remember, and unbelievable mousses and souffles for dessert.

**10. Christini's (Orlando):** I prefer Italian to French or American, and with the passing of Doro's (see #1), this is probably the best Italian restaurant left in America. (I haven't tried 'em all, but I've tried a hell of a lot of them.) Fabulous veal dishes, great pastas, everything you could want in a very upscale red sauce Southern (much preferable to Northern) Italian restaurant.

**11. Victor's (San Francisco):** This one's atop the St. Francis Hotel. I don't even remember why we went there the first time; I know why we went back three more times. The main course was good, but not outstanding; the appetizers and the desserts were the best we've had on the West Coast except for the Four Seasons. They had so many wines that they have two stewards: a white wine steward and a red wine steward.

**12. La Tour du Bois (Lake Geneva, Wisconsin):** I believe this one's closed, too. It was at one of the resorts surrounding Lake Geneva. When we lived in Illinois, Carol and I spent a weekend there, then extended it another day so we could eat a third dinner at La Tour. Very French, high-cholesterol sauces over very French portions (i.e., not too big), but so damned many courses that it didn't matter.

## BEST FOREIGN MEALS

**1. Chobe Game Lodge, Chobe National Park, Botswana:** The meal, eaten while watching a few hundred elephant drinking less than 75 yards away, consisted of an appetizer of eggs Florentine, a thick mushroom soup, ragout of impala (the best single dish I've ever had), and a dessert of trifle with an exquisite custard sauce.

**2. Ocean Sports, Watamu, Kenya:** They have a Giriama chef who was schooled in London, and could make a fortune if he'd ever leave his tribe and go to New York or Paris. The resort was run down; we couldn't figure out why our guide had recommended it -- until we got to the dining room. Ex-pat Brits and Germans drive 100 miles each way just to eat here. Best Lobster thermidore I've ever had (that was dinner; I had a whole cold lobster with melted butter for lunch; then I had both meals again the next day, just to make sure I wasn't imagining how good they were the first time around) and a chocolate mousse that's even better than La Caravelle's in New York. Carol made serious inroads on the crab population before we were ready to move on.

**3. Mount Kenya Safari Club, Nanyuki, Kenya:** Their justifiably world-famous lunch buffet takes up about two dozen tables, with excellent hot and cold plates, cheeses, fruits, salads, desserts...but the *real* treat is to have a member (there are less than 100; our guide was one of them) take you to dinner in the Member's Dining Room, where you'll have the most memorable 10-course dinner on the continent.

**4. Livingston Room, Victoria Falls Hotel, Zimbabwe:** They specialize in my two favorite game meats -- impala and Thompson's gazelle -- but the best single meal I had there was kudu in an excellent sauce. Though landlocked, they have shrimp and lobster dishes, and far better desserts than one would expect from such a British-type restaurant. And no, you can't quite see the Falls from the dining room -- though if you eat outside you can. (Interesting footnote: the restaurant is right next to the I Presume bar. Honest.)

**5. Last Days of the Raj, London:** The single best Indian restaurant we've ever been to, it's on Drury Lane opposite the eternally-running turkey, Cats. There's a more popular Indian restaurant a couple of miles away, the Bombay Brasserie, which has better ambience but poorer (though far from poor) food.

**6. The Carnivore, Nairobi, Kenya:** An outdoor restaurant built along the lines of an open-pit Brazilian barbeque. The menu changes, but they always have six or seven different game animals roasting on a spit, and the waiters bring the meat to your table on a skewer, explain what it is, and slice off however much you want. Over our many trips there, we've had impala, hartebeest, eland, wart hog, gazelle, zebra, crocodile, topi, wildebeest, and half a dozen others. A great bar, for those who care about such things.

**7. Petit St. Vincent's, Grenadines, Carribean:** This is a small private island in the southern Caribbean, with eleven villas, none of which are within sight of the others. All you do here for a week or so is snorkel, sleep, and pig out at their 5-star restaurant. If you get up before noon, you can wander around (it's about a mile in circumference) and see dinner being caught. They also import beef and veal for those who don't like fish.

**8. Bishopstrow House, England:** Halfway between Bath and Stonehenge, this is an ancient manor that was split into two garden suites and maybe half a dozen rooms. We ate all but one meal in our



suite, but the one we had in the restaurant was the single best non-Indian meal we ever had in England. Shrimp cocktail, excellent Yorkshire pudding and gravy, fabulous beef, and a seven-layer cake that was as moist as you could want. (I find most British pastries too dry.) (This one also makes my Worst list, for totally different reasons.)

**9. Royal Caribbean, Montego Bay, Jamaica:** I think this is a Sandals now, but back when we were there it was still a unique hostelry, with the nicest beach of all the Montego Bay area resorts, including Half Moon Bay (which is usually filled to overflowing with royalty and Hollywood celebs). We had about 30 meals here, and I can't recall a bad one. It's where Carol fell in love with Red Stripe beer, and I became a Jamaican coffee addict.

**10. Ramses Hilton, Cairo, Egypt:** The best meal in Cairo, with entertainment that includes belly dancers and an authentic whirling dervish. They serve a very interesting and exotic Egyptian coffee. It has much the same menu you might find in any Middle Eastern restaurant, but prepared with enormous flair and skill.

**11. Ibis Grill, Nairobi, Kenya:** Elegant food, elegantly prepared and served in elegant surroundings – the venerable Norfolk Hotel, temporary home to Teddy Roosevelt, Ernest Hemingway, King Edward, Robert Ruark, and (blush) the Resnicks on 4 different occasions. We always manage to have one dinner in the Ibis Grill. Fabulous cuts of meat, mouth-watering appetizers, adequate desserts. And if you have a cottage, as we always do, they'll walk the 50 or 100 feet and serve you your dinner on your porch while you relax and watch their aviaries.

**12. Tamerind, Mombasa, Kenya:** The Tamerind is known as the best seafood restaurant in Africa. It's in a former harem overlooking the harbor at Mombasa, but they also own a huge dhow, and you can make arrangements to eat on the dhow as it sails the Indian Ocean for the evening. And until you've had shrimp and crab and lobster in their unique sauces, partaken of their excellent wine and booze (so I'm told; I'm a teetotaler), and then danced to "Perfidia" and "The Blue Tango" while sailing out past Mombasa on a cloudless night, you don't know the meaning of the word Romance. (One caveat: don't sit down to eat until the dhow makes it out of the harbor, which smells *horrible* when the wind blows the wrong way.)

**13. Crane's Beach Hotel, Barbados:** Perched on a cliff overlooking the Caribbean, Crane's restaurant specializes in island fare – fish and poultry in spicy fruit sauces – but you can also get a 20-ounce steak or a huge slab of ribs if you ask for them. Probably the most interesting (and tasty) fruit plate I've ever seen; the dips tasted so good I still can't believe they were yogurt.

(Okay, so why didn't I list any Paris restaurants? Easy. We were there for the first time last spring, after a convention in Nancy – we'll have been there again before this article appears, and I might finally have some names to add to the list – and though we made reservations at Maxim's and a couple of other world-class restaurants, we were so exhausted from sightseeing that we kept canceling out and eating at local brasseries. Which is not to say that we didn't eat well, or pig out on wonderful souffles and quiches and mousses and crepes and the like; just that they weren't quite world-class. [But they would have cost three times as much in America, and you wouldn't have felt cheated.] Anyway, for anyone who stays on the Right Bank near the Seine, there is one brasserie in particular I'd like to recommend: **Zimmer's**, about two blocks from our hotel – Le Grand Hotel du Champagne, which is a mighty impressive name for a little 22-room hostelry in a 400-year-old building – which was open 24 hours a day, and which we kept visiting at 3 and 4 in the morning after we'd take a nap and get our second wind. It never disappointed.)

### THE NEAR-GREAT MEALS

*(which won't quite cost you a week's pay)*

-- Stefano's, in Orlando, Florida. So far off the beaten track even the locals have a hard time finding it – but enough do to fill it up every night. Fabulous Italian food, and the whole family gets into the act: Dad cooks, Grandma supervises, and the next two generations serve as waiters, waitresses, hosts, hostesses, and buspeople. Superb veal dishes and pastas. Carol always asks for whatever the day's special

is. Dad comes out from the kitchen every half hour to see how everyone's enjoying the food and talk about the joys of cooking. If you don't drink wine, you'll be out of there for about \$11 a head for one of the half-dozen best Italian meals in the States.

-- Ocean Sports, Watamu, Kenya. I mentioned this as one of the two best foreign restaurants, but it qualifies here too, because it's surely one of the least expensive. How inexpensive? Try five dollars for a whole lobster, or twelve for lobster thermidore with a desert of chocolate mousse -- and remember, I consider this not just a good meal, but a world-class one.

-- Idra, Greenwich Village, Manhattan, NY. I don't know if this one's still cheap, or even if it still exists. Great Greek restaurant on the second floor, above a Greek grocery store. We found it back in 1967. No one speaks English. You have to hold up three fingers and make a stabbing motion at your plate, all the while repeating the word "fork", if you need one. But the food makes up for it, and we never spent as much as ten dollars a plate, which is great anywhere but unbelievable in Manhattan. It's been about eight years since we were back.

-- Piccolo Mondo, Manhattan, NY. A great Italian restaurant on the East side, 1st or 2nd Avenue, somewhere around 62nd or 63rd Street (again, assuming it's still there; it's been six years since we were there. And I suppose I should point out that the reason we haven't gone back to our favorite cheap restaurants is that these days editors and publishers treat us to our favorite expensive ones.) Great linguini and fettucini, fabulous veal dishes, nifty pastries. Last time it was getting up around \$20 a plate, but that's still dirt cheap for Manhattan.

-- The Greek Isles, Chicago, IL. We've been frequenting this one for close to 30 years. Outstanding saganaki, dolmades, pastitso, mousaka, Greek pastries. Alas, no belly dancers (but that just means they're serious about their food). It's maybe \$15 a head, and worth double that.

-- Baboush, San Pedro, CA. Great Middle Eastern restaurant, where you sit on the floor and eat with your hands. Great belly dancers, too. A flat \$20 a head no matter what you eat. Susan Schwartz and Lyn Nichols can vouch for this joint, because we took them there during the 1996 Nebulas. Marvelous decorations and ambience.

-- The Silo, Lake Bluff, IL. Home of the best (and most filling) pizza in the universe. You don't know the meaning of "deep dish" until they bring a 3-inch-deep pizza to your table here. Carol, Laura, Joan Bledig and I used to go there all the time when we lived in Illinois (and we still hit it occasionally); we would order a medium pizza for the table, and the four of us, none of whom can reasonably be termed a shy eater, never managed to finish one. Spread over a party of four, I'd say even a large pizza and a pitcher of beer probably doesn't come to \$6 a head.

-- Montgomery Inn/Boathouse, Cincinnati, OH. Said to have the best ribs in the country. (Bob Hope has his private plane fly in for them twice a week.) But while the ribs are unrivaled anywhere I've ever been, the whole menu is excellent. These are sister restaurants with identical menus -- one about 4 miles from my house in Montgomery, the other about 17 miles away, hanging out over the Ohio River. Their cheese onion soup, served only on Wednesdays, is one of the two best soups in the country (La Caravelle in NY has the other, and charges 8 times as much for it). You'll get out for under \$20 a head.

-- Passage to India, Orlando, FL. The best Indian restaurant in the Orlando area -- and because it's on International Drive in the tourist area, just about every hotel and tourist guidebook gives out half-price coupons to it...which means you can eat a huge and incredibly satisfying Indian meal in gorgeous surroundings for under ten dollars.

-- La Fondue, Manhattan, NY. One of the few midtown restaurants that don't cost an arm and a leg. Usually jammed at lunchtime, but if you go at 11:00 AM or 2:30 PM you'll probably get in. They make about 50 types of cheese fondue, and the best damned chocolate fondue you'll get anywhere, for a third of what you'll pay at any other restaurant within three blocks.

-- Zimmer's Brasserie, Paris, France. Paris is filled with hundreds of brasseries, and we stumbled onto this one as a matter of convenience, since it was only two blocks from our hotel on the Right Bank, maybe 3 blocks from Notre Dame in one direction, and 5 blocks from the Louvre in the other (for those

who've been there, this'll help you get your bearings). Superb quiches, souffles, pastries, mousses, crepes and the like, open 24 hours, and I don't think we ever spent over \$11 a person.

-- The Student Prince, Springfield, MA. When I was Guest of Honor at Boskone earlier this decade, the committee took me there four nights in a row. I was assured that it was not the only restaurant in town (we were beginning to wonder), but simply the best. A great selection of game meats. Not only venison, but even such exotic treats as bear and lion -- and we never came to a dish we didn't like. Even today it's got to be under \$20 a head.

-- The Chinese Dumpling House, Highland Park, IL. People drive here from Wisconsin, Indiana and Iowa, just for the superb Chinese food. The restaurant used to be a barbeque house, and though it's been there for 30 years, they haven't quite got around to taking down the cattle horns yet. The total lack of ambience doesn't keep anyone away. Their sizzling rice dishes are superb, and when you ask for your Setzuan dish to be hot, trust me, it'll take the enamel off your teeth. Even today, you can still have a fine meal there for under \$15.

-- The Horseman, Karen, Kenya. A superb local restaurant in the Ngong Hills, unknown to tourists, frequented mostly by ex-pat Brits. Fine British dishes (far better than in Britain, in fact), with a mushroom soup and a brisket of beef that you can't beat anywhere on the continent. And you'll never pay as much as \$12 for a complete dinner.

-- Julie's Waterfront, Orlando, FL. Carol insisted that I include this one, since we eat there quite often. But it's strictly for the ambience. They have a bar and you get bar food -- hamburgers and the like -- but you eat it under a swamp-cooler to keep the sun off your head while you watch otters, water skiers, and the occasional alligator frolic in the lake that comes to within fifteen feet of your outdoor table. The food truly isn't memorable, but we could (and do) sit there for hours, unwinding and watching the otters, who are the most playful and energetic beasts you can imagine. \$8 a meal will do it, and that includes your beer.

-- The Athenian, Santa Monica, CA. Wonderful decor and ambience, and probably the best Greek meal you can get outside New York and Chicago. The pastitso and mousaka were fabulous, and the Greek salad was outstanding. We've never spent \$30 for the two of us.

## MOST OVERRATED MEALS

**Ernie's:** San Francisco's most famous restaurant. The service was slow and surly, the meals poorly prepared, the menu uninspired. Even the chairs were uncomfortable.

**Le Perroquet:** Pricey Chicago restaurant with an international reputation. You practically need to know the Secret Handshake to get the elevator to take you to the dining floor of this dilapidated Gold Coast building. Appetizers were excellent, a sadly undelivered promise of quality to come. The meal wasn't bad -- but for the highest price in the most expensive area of an expensive city, "not bad" isn't good enough.

**Bishopstrow House, England:** A great meal, as I said elsewhere. So it wasn't the meal that was overrated. It wasn't even the service, since the meals were exquisitely served. It was the goddamned cultural conflict.

Let me explain. We're there with Pat and Roger Sims, and it's a chilly evening, and we sit down at the table, and when the waiter leaves the menus, I tell him I want a cup of coffee. He explains that coffee is served with desert. I explain that I'm cold and I want some coffee *now*. He explains that it simply isn't done. I explain that if he wants more than a halfpenny tip, it's gonna *get* done. This fight goes all the way up to the manager, who gives me all the same arguments about when civilized people drink their coffee and finally yields to my demand. And brings me a demitasse half-filled with coffee -- maybe an ounce, if we're being generous. I drink it in one small swallow and tell him I want another. He looks around at his staff, and it is the same look King Henry II gives *his* staff when beset by Thomas Beckett, and it is a look that says "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?" (for "meddlesome priest" substitute "barbaricAmerican".) After arguing another ten minutes, I get a second half-filled demitasse, by which time my taste for coffee -- and Bishopstrow House -- has pretty much vanished.

**Hotel Pierre, New York:** The time is 1981. Carol and I have gone to Manhattan with Sid Altus, a good friend who would, for a time, become my hardcover publisher at Phantasia Press. During the day I visit editors and Sid goes sightseeing, and we meet for dinner and a play each evening. And on Sunday morning, because I've made a few book sales, I decided to celebrate by treating for brunch, and I not only invite Sid but Barry Malzberg and Loni Litt as well. Sid was staying at the Plaza, as we were, but we'd heard that the Hotel Pierre, an elegant establishment about a block away, had a truly memorable brunch, so we decided to go there. (I think it was the first time I met Barry, who has long since become my closest friend in science fiction, in person.)

So we eat, and the meal's as good as it's supposed to be. And the waiter comes by with a check, and I see that the bill has an area marked for me to include the tip, so, because it is a truly fine meal and a truly elegant restaurant, I scribble in a 20% tip, and the waiter takes my card and goes off to get it approved.

He comes back with the approved AmEx slip, and the price of the meal is filled in, and "Tip to Waiter" is filled in at 20% -- but there is a line I've never seen before, which is "Tip to Captain". And no one has added up the total, because obviously I am expected to add a tip to the Captain, who nodded hello to us on the way in and has been invisible ever since.

And that pisses me off, because I feel they're trying to rip me off for extra tip money -- had I known there was a separate area for the Captain, I'd have given 15% to the staff and 5% to him -- so I leave the "Tip to Captain" column blank, add up the rest, write down the total, sign it, and hand it to the waiter. He looks at it and frowns. "Didn't you forget something?" he asks.

"Not a thing," I reply.

He comes by two minutes later to say, "The Captain wants to know how you enjoyed your brunch."

I tell him to tell the Captain that it's pretty good as brunches go.

Two minutes later he's back again. "The Captain wants to know if there is anything he can do for you?"

I reply that, for starters, he can stop sending me messages.

A few minutes later I get up to go to the men's room. The Captain follows me in and asks if he's done anything to offend me. I tell him that I am not in the least offended, but that I am not overmuch burdened by unwarranted guilt trips either: I pay 15% tips at normal restaurants and 20% tips at high class ones, and I don't care how he and the staff split it up, 20% is all he's getting.

Practically in tears, he points out that there is nothing in the box next to "Tip to Captain".

I tell him that we all have to learn to live with life's little disappointments, and that in the future it might be a good idea to let the diners know that he plans to extort a second tip from them after they've agreed to pay a generous first tip.

I left him mumbling about how he should never have left France. I returned to the table, did a little mumbling myself about how we should found a deli and grabbed some chopped liver and blintzes for a quarter of the price, and then the meal was over and we flew home.

**Postscript:** Carol just stopped by to tell me that if I don't stop biting my fingernails during Cincinnati Bearcats' basketball games, she's going to insist I add them to my list of "Favorite Meals" if I write a sequel. \*sigh\*



# THE SOUTH and SCIENCE FICTION

Greg Benford

*The text for the Guest of Honor speech before the Science Fiction Research Association in  
Mobile, Alabama, June, 1999*

*The South* has played a strong role in American fantasy, but little in science fiction. Southern settings seem, in the mind's eye, to have an almost automatic fantastic glaze. We readily call up images of brooding purple ruins, green corpses, melancholy figures shrouding a dread secret that reeks of musty shadows. Edgar Allen Poe, the first great Southern writer, started it all — along with the detective story and, indeed, the short story itself.

This dominance of fantasy is a bit curious, considering that one of the distinctive inventions of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American literature has been modern science fiction, a jury-rigged genre put together in the same era when the South was undergoing its own great cultural renaissance. Between 1930 and 1967, the era marking science fiction's rise, the South had 21 Pulitzer Prize winners, eight of the 24 New York Drama Critics' Circle winners, nine of the 32 National Book Award winners in poetry and fiction, and of course William Faulkner won the Nobel Prize.

But SF got nothing from the Southern Renaissance. That genre was and is dominated by what my grandmother termed "Nawth'n Cult'ral Imperialism".

It's easy to see a deep reason for this, stemming from that four-year "moment" when the South was a distinct nation, the Confederate States of America. The war itself did not change Southern culture very much — people were too busy fighting and dying — but, in a profound irony, the South thereafter was more powerfully influenced by the Lost Cause mythology than by dimly remembered Confederate realities. The region's response to battle, defeat, and shaky Reconstruction spawned a myth-history which ennobled the great catastrophe.

Somehow, in the minds of millions, the Southern cause was not only undefiled by defeat, but the colossal bloodbath actually sanctified the values and ideals of the Old South. And all this was done by the people themselves, not by North'n meddling or falsified history. Scratch a Southerner and you'll find a history buff, a military history buff. We peer backward, almost reflexively. Look away, Dixie land.

I am a son of Alabama and so a product of that steeped culture. I feel it a dozen times a day, but I can't explain it. It's in the blood. Long a resident of California, I find that I can now only dimly fathom the intricacies of Southern manners and indirection. (I love the tones and sliding graces of the language still, south of what we call the Mason-Dixon Line.) But I remain a Southerner.

How odd, then, that I became a part-time writer of science fiction, a genre devoted to technology and tomorrow. The Southerner's identity rests firmly on events now shrouded by more than a century of misty recollection and outright fabrication.

Science fiction is about the future, mostly. Frequently it has been molded by a Heinleinian fascination with the winners, the doers. Much of the best Southern literature is fixated on the long recession from that glorious defeat.

The frontier looms large in SF as a place to be confronted, pushed against, defeated, expanded. The South was definitely not a frontier. Instead, from early on it was a wilderness already enclosed by the still-expanding nation. As a boy growing up in rural Southern Alabama, the South was a great piney reserve holding unfathomed mysteries and a sense of the stretching past. Much of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature can be seen as a conversation between the Southern sense of the wilderness vs. the Nawth'n image of frontier.

Such subconscious elements have a deep influence on all the arts, often without our realizing.

To its loss, SF has learned little from Southern concerns and literature, a deep facet of American culture. We Americans are embedded in a rich and fruitful past, none more deeply than Southerners, but the genre keeps its beady gaze firmly fixed on the plastic futures we authors so glibly devise. Yet much of history



is dominated by inertia, not by the swift kinetics of technology.

The United States has been profoundly lucky. Bismarck, the great German foreign minister of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, remarked that his study of history had taught him that God helps three groups: women and children, and the United States of America. There's a lot of truth in that aphorism. We took on foreign antagonists in the best possible circumstances and prevailed, often with little damage — two wars each against the British, against the remnants of the Spanish empire, then against the Germans and allies. Now we have destroyed the Soviet empire by containing it and waiting.

Our greatest casualties, though, came from our war against ourselves. That war also left the deepest wounds; despite all the talk of the New South, the region has not fully recovered.

Yet even in that catastrophe we were rather lucky. After all, the South came quite close to winning; only timidity made the Confederates not immediately follow up on the Northern disaster at the first Battle of Manassas (Bull Run). The South outfought the North for years; indeed, it is still something of an embarrassment to historians to explain why a nation outnumbering the South by better than two to one and possessing far greater resources took four years to win.

But the United States has been lucky in a more profound way, too, as Bismarck noted. We were able to take on the European powers one at a time in our wars, and to fight our own War of Southern Succession without significant meddling from Europe's vying factions.

This was enormously helpful. It framed the issues clearly, without intruding nationalisms of varying stripes. (Of course, the great constitutional issue of whether a state may leave the Union was not settled, and will, I predict, come back to bite us again.) It was a fair fight and we got to slug it out alone.

Lebanon is merely the most awful recent example of what can happen when outside interests stir the red pot of hatred and anger. With a few rather minor changes, our Civil War (as it is known in the Nawth) might well have settled nothing and devastated much more.

Realizing this takes some imagination, and that is where Harry Turtledove excels, exploring the delicacy of history. Of all alternative historical themes, it is remarkable that variant outcomes of the Civil War are only slightly less numerous than variations on World War II. Turtledove shows why: it is a fruitful fulcrum for history's blunt forces.



*Illustration by Robert Ripough*

Few historians have ever written speculative fiction. There seems a natural contradiction between the precise inspection of the past and the colorful, evocative envisioning of the future. There are notable exceptions, of course: the entire subgenre of alternative history, which flows forward from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This method of inspecting the currents of history has produced such masterworks as L. Sprague DeCamp's *Lest Darkness Fall* and Ward Moore's *Bring the Jubilee* (an artful vision of another outcome of Gettysburg). To tinker with history and test one's ideas is enticing, endlessly attractive.

But most practitioners of alternative history are earnest amateurs, like me. Harry Turtledove is the real thing, with a Ph.D. in Byzantine history. Indeed, I believe him to be the first historian to become a professional practitioner of the organized imagination known as speculative fiction. He took up a fantastic alternative outcome to our Civil War in *The Guns of the South*. However, his *How Few Remain* begins with a less fantastic possibility, one touching upon a perpetually debated point of military history: why did Lee perform so badly in the Gettysburg campaign? Even without the error invoked and corrected by Turtledove in his very first scene, Lee's failure of imagination and even of conventional military craft in his most important campaign is an enduring mystery.

So even though looking backward — and looking away, Dixie Land — is common in recent speculative fiction, particularly in alternative history, why do we seldom recall that Richard Meredith's *We All Died at Breakaway Station* was a striking tale of dying for a cause written by a Southerner in 1969? That Daniel F. Galouye in *Dark Universe* wrote a major novel in 1961 about conceptual breakthrough from blindness to sight? And though my own *Against Infinity* is still in print after nearly two decades, few view it as a Southern novel, even though it is clearly written in the storytelling cadences I learned from my grandfather, in the voice of Faulknerian faded grandeur?

Perhaps because of Poe's vast influence, the rise of modern prelapsarian fantasy — Tolkein's European nostalgia for a better past grafted onto the American wilderness, in uneasy genetic marriage — we arrive at the sensibility of the U.S. fantasy culture, with its unending trilogies. To my taste, these novels reek of a past imagined by comfortable suburbanites who have never hoed a row, ridden a work horse, tilled a dusty field or done any of the grunt labor that filled the true human past. They don't feel like earned experience. The Tolkein world was one of a magically easy life, greenery where nobody much toiled and lifted: the ground without the grunt. Most modern fantasy seems phony precisely because it is ignorant of what science and technology have meant in modern times — liberation for the great masses from numbing work.

Yet in our comfy time we yearn for meaning beyond ease — for context. Science gives a large frame, but not a personal one. For that we must return to our deepest connections.

Perhaps we miss this salient point because we believe that Southern fiction should merely concern the eternal return, a cyclic view of life immersed in that great Southern preoccupation: family. Fair enough, but not enough. No one wishes to return to slavery, yet we must revisit it to fathom how it still acts in our time. That war isn't really over, after all.

I believe that Southern speculative fiction embraces several aspects: concern with continuity and thus history; landscape as a shaping force; and voice embodying moral authority. And we must never forget that eternal return does not imply no progress: nothing is more alien to the spirit of science fiction than that other hallmark of our history, slavery.

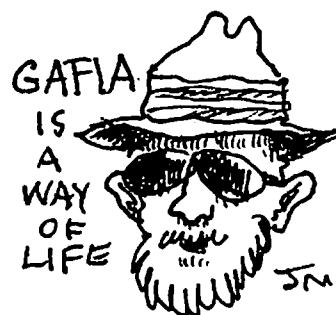
Style is crucial to the common sense of an apparent manner of telling, and is crucial to the first two concerns, because land and past must speak in their own tones and idioms.

There is a further commonality between SF and the South: we're outsiders. Though the South has dominated conventional culture to an impressive extent, and SF is the champion American genre (still alive in the magazines, and ruling Hollywood), they profit from taking an exterior angle. For a Southerner this is automatic. I remember clearly when my father, a career Army officer, was on General MacArthur's staff in Tokyo during the Korean War and I watched half a million Japanese riot through the streets, shouting "Yankee, Go Home!" A boy standing only a few feet away, scared, I felt relief, after all. I wasn't a Yankee.

That feeling of perspective born of remove is essential to SF, and more visceral to a Southerner.

# THE ZINE DUMP

*Publications received between 11-1-99 and 4-15-00. Items not received, but thought of, italicized. New Policy: starting now, listings will be deleted after their second italicization.*



**Aces #14** / Paul McCall, 5801 W. Henry St., Indianapolis IN 46241 / pmccall@Indy.net / \$10, no subs, limited trades / A change of pace for this epic publication, with a cover based on the *SF* pulps — featuring a self-portrait (by “Frank R. Paul/McCall”)! The zine is marvelous as usual — I especially note Richard Kyle’s hilarious review of a 1931 pulp story set in 2000 A.D., a city with 500-story buildings, air cars, and electro-sub-cubes. The way the future was, and I wish it had turned out that way! The usual welcome emphasis on Doc Savage, pulp art (including an interview with Frank R. Paul by the Man, Julius Schwartz, from 1935, accompanying an appreciation by Terry Jeeves), bibliographies, portraits, covers covers covers ... One quiver of horror: my issue is marked “14 of 25”. Do only 25 of us get to share this gem? If so, I’m honored.

**Adventures of an Unemployed Entomologist No. 10** / P.O. Box 3026, Worcester MA 01613-3026 / \$2 or trade / The final issue, proclaims the anonymous editor, since he has apparently found a job. It’s too bad — that he’s quitting the hobby. His eulogy for his father, the accompanying piece about the cactus his dad dug up at Alamogordo, and his movie reviews (*Antz* and *A Bug’s Life*, of course) mark a talented writer. Now that he’s employed, he can afford to do more zines!

**Adventures in Crime & Space Vol.5 No. 6-7** / Lori Wolf, 609-A West 6th St., Austin TX 78701 / e-mail: acs@eden.com; web: www.eden.com / Big news in #6 is the store’s move to a new address, which Willie Sirois discusses in his column. I am more anxious than ever to visit. #7 marks the store’s 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Sara Felix takes full credit for getting the multi-Nebula winner James Morrow invited in for an autographing session.

**after/shock/thoughts** / vol. 1 issues 3-4 / Sabina E. Becker, 670 King St. E., Cobourg, Ont. K9A 4J8 Canada / coldfire@sympatico.ca / \$2.50@ Cdn/US / Anger over the Colorado gay-bashing trial, “Rapestock”, the new Woodstock’s bollixed attempt to recapture the ‘60s, the outre idea that Larry Flynt is a revolutionary and various court decisions involving sexual harassment enrich these issues with genuine

passion. I’m not sure I completely buy Sabina’s account of her high school reunion, but it reads wonderfully and makes emotional sense. I recommend Sabina’s pub as a zine to ponder, because as we saw from her piece in *Chaff* #10, this is a lady who thinks and feels deeply and writes very well, and those are qualities to respect.

**Ansible #148-152** / Dave Langford / 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU, U.K. / U.S. Agent: Janice Murray, P.O. Box 75684, Seattle WA 98125-0684 / SAE or. / Another altercation, albeit a long-distance one, between Harlan Ellison and Charles Platt provides two items for Langford’s Hugo-winner one-sheeter; I wish *SF* could abandon such things to the distant 20<sup>th</sup> Century and move on. An enclosure trumpets the east-to-west 2000 TAFF race. Too many eulogies — even as heartfelt and beautiful as that Dave gives Walt Willis — mar the follow-up issues. (I didn’t know about A.E. van Vogt.) In a later issue Langford laments having an item he’d penned about Arthur Clarke rewritten into unrecognizability by a magazine editor; Time recently did the same thing to me. The usual fun features include embarrassing typos and horrendous sentences from professional works, Brit con listings, and brief personal anecdotes.

**As the Crow Flies 3** / Frank Denton, 14654 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle WA 98166-1953 / bearlodge@msn.com / Trade / In this one-sheeter Frank describes an idyll in his cabin near Mt. Rainier, complete with recorded operas, “riverwalking” and *Riverwalking*, a famous tome about ... riverwalking, and his Canadian Thanksgiving.

**Banana Wings** / Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 7HA, U.K.; Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE, U.K. / banana@tragic.demon.co.uk

**Barmaid #8** / Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpey, Worcs., DY12 1NP UK / yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk / trade / You can’t mistake a grand perzine for one by another faned. *Barmaid*, a multiple-Nova Award winner, is a *grand* perzine, with a real personality behind and within it.

Though the first men on the Moon left from the South, and the civil rights movement was invented in the South (winning us a Nobel for Peace), the South is fundamentally not about innovation and technology.

So of course it may seem odd that I am a Southern SF writer, because I am usually described as a hard SF type, and everybody knows that such writers are relentlessly pitched forward on the cutting edge of the new. True — but the South remembers that a lot of the New is just fancied-up Old.

That is why I set *Against Infinity* on Ganymede, a moon of Jupiter, where a crucially Southern distinction comes into play. Again, the South historically was born into a wilderness. Most Northern SF is about pushing back the unknown, building galactic empires (such as Asimov's, thinly covering its anxieties about America, with Rome still looming large in memory, and subduing. I wrote about humanity recapitulating an old mode, going out from their settlements to hunt the Aleph, a thing out of prehistory, alien and unstoppable and still coming, despite all human efforts to either kill it or understand it — clearly, it didn't matter which.

But the Aleph cannot be killed forever. It returns in the last pages of the novel, whose last phrase is "... and he knew he would remember." That's what makes a Southern novel, amid all the high tech trimmings.

Another way to think of SF in our time is through Newton's Second Law:

$$F=MA.$$

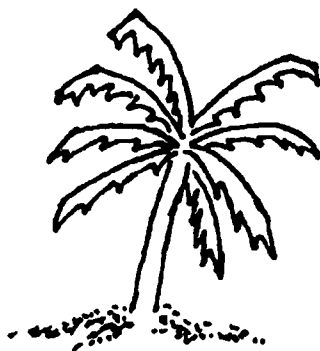
Force drives Masses to Accelerate. SF is big on F, the hammering march of progress through science to technology is jarring social change.

To get that heady acceleration A that mainstream readers find jarring (never mind the science, too!), SF minimizes the Mass, M — that is, social inertia. We dream of a Singularity coming soon to a theatre of the mind near you — Vernor Vinge's Northerner fantasy of the moment when mind-computer linkage takes some of us off into utterly incomprehensible mental realms. This image of freedom from both history and our bodies is quintessentially Northern.  $A=F/M$ ; let's go! (Note that even the cerebral Arthur Clarke's love of intellect and desire to shuck our skins, from *Childhood's End* onward, does not also abandon history; he uses analogies and references to the deep past, from Babylon and the Olduvai Gorge.)

What's Southern SF? That with an appreciation for the magnitude of M. In this sense Southern SF is not regional, though its approach often stresses landscape. It can be seen in some British SF, from J.G. Ballard's acceptance of inevitability in his early disaster novels to Brian Aldiss' sense of the ponderable weight of time in his *Helliconia* Trilogy. It is there in novels which trace the failure of hubris to overcome, such as Tom Disch's *Camp Concentration* and Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*. Novels with a great weight of landscape give this sense, such as Kate Wilhelm's *When Late the Sweet Birds Sang* and George Stewart's *Earth Abides* (a Southern title indeed).

That is the sense the South can give to speculative fiction, no matter how broad and distant its technological ramparts. The rise of alternative history as a subgenre may be expressing a growing perception in our American culture that F is too big and we need more M, because we don't like the A we're experiencing.

If so, there will be more Southern spice and flavor in our future literary cuisine. I wouldn't mind that at all.



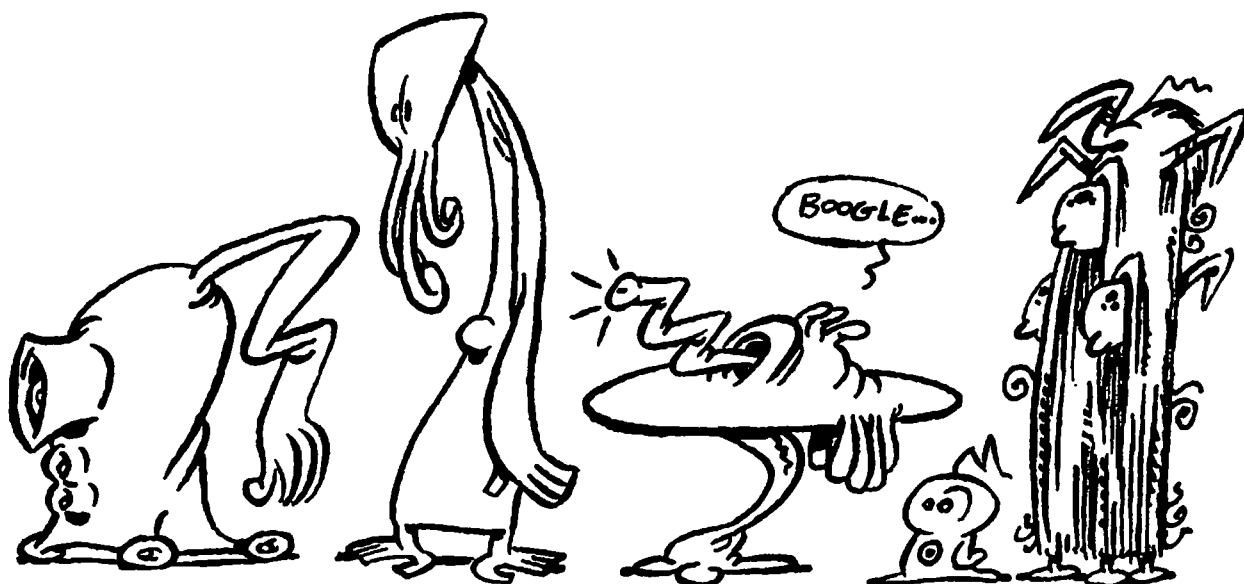
Such is obvious from the cover caricature of the editor (in response to a Rodney Leighton review) and the open, engaging writing within ... and from her FAAn Award as Best Newcomer to Fanzine Fandom. Yvonne deals — movingly — with the death of her father, describes nursing — almost literally — a duckling back to health, and prints lots of LOCs (severely edited though they are). She's retired from tending bar, but I vote she keeps this fanzine title, because Yvonne sounds like the kidn of barmaid you'd find in a Ray Lafferty story, and there is no higher calling.

**Baryon Magazine** 73-76 / Barry R. Hunter, P.O. Box 3314, Rome GA 30164-3314 / \$1 or t.u. / Super covers by Nene Thomas, Lawrence Allan Williams and Bob Hobbs front these collections of sharp book reviews by an old comrade from Southern fandom. Barry covers everything from Hannibal and Hearts in Atlantis to Quinn Yarbro's *Communion Blood*, with musical introductory natter to each 12-page issue. Barry belongs to Zine Guild, with which I am not familiar, but to which he points via <http://zineguild.bizland.com>.

**Batteries Not Included** Vol. VI #11-12, Vol. VII #1-3 / Richard Freeman, 130 W. Limestone St., Yellow Springs OH 45387 / \$3@ / As usual when he appears, it's the writing of porn legend Richard Pacheco which highlights #11 for me. This time he declaims with true fury over the noisy audience — and not for the first

time — when he is given a Lifetime Achievement Award by a "free speech" group. Funny piece by David Steinberg on what ensues when his sex toy sets off an airport metal detector, more of Lisa Falour's 20-year-old diaries, many reviews of brainrotting pornography, an article on erotic anime, and so on. #12 showcases an insightful article about diversity from Steinberg that manages to avoid the PC hectoring that usually accompanies the term, and a tough, angry piece attacking Jewish and gay defensiveness by Mykel Board. Powerful fare, an interesting balance to Dave Cummings' lighthearted glimpses inside the sleaze industry. Is he the guy with the spatula ... I mean, speculum? He appears again in the first issue of the century — describing some of his thespian moments, including a memorable scene in an extra-wide port-a-potty. *So this is love*. My favorite article in the February issue is a report on a "Sexpo" and its "gobbo perverts" by Aussie punkette Damo Muscle Car. I feel like I've been living in a cloister. Down, hard, we come in VII.3, with a piece describing the late Savannah's immaculate apartment and septic mindset. The contrast is telling, especially when you consider how that supreme sex object and supremely pitiful human being sloughed this vale of tears. BNI does have its surprises.

**Bento** #11 / David Levine and Kate Yule, 1905 SE 43rd Ave., Portland OR 97215 / [david.d.levine@intel.com](mailto:david.d.levine@intel.com); [kyule@spiritone.com](mailto:kyule@spiritone.com) / "editorial whim or the Unusual" / The cover to this latest palm-sized publication states



*Just a sad collection of shoddy life forms*

SCHIRM  
99.

that it was prepared for the combo Potlatch/Corflu. There's a variety of clever anecdotes and rants and features, including a "Dingbatian" menu cipher, and a critique of "Demon with a Glass Hand" provoked by a visit to L.A.'s Bradbury Building, where the classic *Outer Limits* was filmed. I hope David will forgive my opinion that he somewhat misses the point of Ellison's fable. About 1/3 of the issue is lettercol. A Hugo nomination ballot was included; I suppose all us faneds have been thinking along those lines.

**Ben's Beat** 58-59 / Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave., Teaneck NJ 07666-2626 / Ben's zine marking the 250<sup>th</sup> FAPA mailing is as compelling a personalzine as any listed here. His interest in theatre is infectious, thanks to his very incisive reviews; like *Brooklyn!* below, they make me miss New York, and remind me: some years ago I read a Time review of a play about the Donner party trial. I'd love to scan the thing; does Ben know of it? Also, he mentions a Ramsey Campbell collection, *Uncanny Banquet*, unfamiliar to me; is it in pb? Ben closes his zine with reprints from *The New York Times* dealing with the demands of cancer patients, thoughtful and sad and worth reading. #59 features a rich account of the gorgeous Amalfi coast, illustrated with real photo prints, and pointed book reviews.

**Brooklyn!** / Fred Argoff, 1204 Ave. U #1290, Brooklyn NY 11229-4107 / \$10 per 4 quarterly issues / Reflections on New York's funkier borough with lots of photos and descriptive color. I lived in New York for a year in my youth, with tons of friends from Brooklyn, fell in love with a sweet Jewish girl from Brooklyn, and my shrink actually went to Brooklyn College. Not surprisingly, this zine sent me into a reverie of nostalgia and fantasy. What if that sweet Jewish girl hadn't crushed my heart like a cockroach, and I had married her and now lived in Brooklyn ... would I have written a shelf-full of novels? Would I have a son at Harvard and a daughter at Yale? Would I love the streets and parks and buildings of Brooklyn with the zest Argoff obviously does? Listen, Fred, one of my remaining cache of ambitions is to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge as Gary Tesser and Chuck Spanier invited me to. I never did, someday I will: join us.

*The Cat's Cradle* / Mandy Pack, 227 Leonard Place, Knoxville TN 38917 / [Knoxsf@aol.com](mailto:Knoxsf@aol.com) / *Journal of the Knoxville Area S.F. Association* / 4 issues, \$2

**Chicon 2000 Progress Report 5** / Terry Patch, Chicon 2000, P.O. Box 642057, Chicago IL 60664 / [chi2000@chicon.org](mailto:chi2000@chicon.org) / membership / Sent with a "bureaucratic supplement" containing the Hugo nomination ballot, hotel reservation form, and so forth,

this attractive p.r. has the exact mandated effect: builds excitement for the upcoming worldcon and provides useful, colorful info about the con and the city. Having enjoyed a magnificent dinner with Leah Zeldes and Dick Smith after last December's Smofcon, I especially value Leah's guide to the better Chicago restaurants — she's a food critic, you know. Also included, the membership's list of the top ten SF films of all time — ludicrously, *Star Wars* didn't make the cut! Chicago's a pleasant overnight train ride away. Member A2151 is booked and aboard!

*Conferring with Earthquakes* / Brin-Marie McLaughlin, 247 19th Avenue Apt. 6, San Francisco CA 94121-2353

**Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi** no. 5 / Andrew C. Murdoch, 508-6800 Westminster Hwy, Richmond B.C. V7C 1C5 Canada / [raven@wolf.spydernet.com](mailto:raven@wolf.spydernet.com) / Taral Wayne's cute cover Mouse begins a delightful pub wherein Andrew calls for assistance with his website fanzine list, a list of non-Hugo awards, and a few zine reviews. Gene Stewart chimes in on world-saving in SF, and spirited, chatty exchanges in the lettercol. Been too long, Andrew.

*Cube* / Hope Kiefer c/o SF<sup>3</sup>, Box 1624, Madison WI 53701-1624 / [CubeNews@aol.com](mailto:CubeNews@aol.com). / SF<sup>3</sup> membership

**Demi-TAFF Americain** Vol. 1 No. 4 / Ulrika O'Brien, 123 Melody Lane, Apt. C, Costa Mesa CA 92627-7104 / [uaobrien@earthlink.net](mailto:uaobrien@earthlink.net) / Included with the ballot for the UK-to-Chicon TAFF ballot, Ulrika's latest newsletter details the results of the '99 race (this time I'm listed as a voter) and her successful efforts to pack the fan fund's coffers with auctions and such.

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

*De Profundis* / LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood CA 91601

**The Devniad** / Bob Devney, 25 Johnson Street, N. Attleboro MA 02760 / More superb e-commentary from one of the best fan writers. In early '00 he passed along his favorite films of the past year, many of which also appear on my list (*Three Kings*, *Being John Malkovich*); his natter always holds my interest.

**Ditto #13 - PR 1** / unstated, but received with Stet #9 / Neil Kaden, 801 Timberwood Circle, Fairview TX 75069-9183 / [kaden@alum.mit.edu](mailto:kaden@alum.mit.edu) / <http://www.circlenk.com/ditto> / Ad for the alternative to the alternative, the Other Fanzine Convention, to be held in

Dallas 9/22-24. I've promised the Smiths I will attend.

**DUFF 2K: The Newsletter** / Janice Gelb, 1070 Mercedes Ave. #2, Los Altos CA 94022 & Terry Frost, 4/8 Walker St. W. Brunswick, Vict. 3055 Australia / j\_gelb@yahoo.com, hlector@netspace.net.au / DUFF web site: <http://home.pacbell.net/jgelb/duff2k.html> / Neat one-sheet wherein each of the DUFFers "gush" about exciting cities hit on their journeys, Terry on NYC, Janice on Melbourne. A financial report is appended — DUFF's rolling in dough — and the 2000 ballot is enclosed. I know neither Susan Batho nor Cathy Cupitt, so rather than slight either, I voted No Preference.

**Each Charter'd Course: Vol. 4 of Fables of Irish fandom** / Ken Cheslin, 29 Kestrel Road, Halesowen, W. Midlands B63 2PH, U.K. / \$5 suggested / Do copies remain of the earlier volumes?

**Erg Quarterly** / Terry Jeeves, 66 Red Scar Dr., Scarborough, N. Yorks. YO12 5RQ U.K. / The. / I reprint a couple of Terry's nifty covers in this issue.

**Fanorama: Walt Willis' Fan Columns from Nebula** / Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442 / \$10 / Robert may have a few of these sparklers left, so if you move quickly ...

**File 770:133-4** / Mike Glyer, 705 Valley View Drive, Monrovia CA 91016 / MGlyer@compuserve.com / \$8 for 5 issues / Thick and involving issues of the premiere fannish newszine, rich with variety. Most interesting in #133 is the story of the Collecting Channel, Arnie Katz's incredible Net site, with contributors reading like a Who's Who of senior fanzine fandom. I'm going to spend serious time scanning *that* puppy. Other news is social (Laurraine Tutihasi got married!), economic (a fan won \$20K on a quiz show), medical (Ted White's leg, Ray Bradbury's stroke), controversial (which is the oldest SF club?), conventional (Jack Speer and Roy Pettis review Aussiecon), philatelic (Chris Barkley repeats his Chall #9 rant about SF stamps), sad (many obits, including one for Walt Willis). And *then* there is #134, with strikingly good art by Alan White, a moving piece by Marie Bartlett-Sloan about their third adopted child, Steve & Sue Francis' Aussiecon report, Steven Silver's Jeopardy experience, Glyer's take on the Internet ... get the idea there's an *awful* lot to F:770?

**Flashback #2** / Jerry Page & Jerry Burge, 193 Battery Place NE, Atlanta GA 30307 / \$6@, no subs or trades / The superb artwork of Paul McCall (see Aces) stands out in this second issue of the Jerrys' pulp-oriented genzine, but there's much else, including a jungle art

portfolio and a representative sampling of the work of Wilbur Thomas. Written fun includes reviews of pirate tales and a riotous work of fiction, "Nadir of the Chimps". I'm not sure which is my favorite illo in this labor of love, McCall's color bacover, Jerry Burge's heartbreaking line sketch of Heather Binion, or the photo of onetime Challenger cover girl Mary Ann van Hartesveldt holding a giant spider.

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

**For the Clerisy Vol. 7 No. 37** / Brant Kresovich, P.O. Box 404, Getzville NY 14068-0404 / kresovich@hotmail.com / \$2 or trade / "Clerisy" are apparently "people who read books for the sheer pleasure of it." Here's an additional benefit: a "seasonally" published journal of thoughtful reviews and serious opinions. Among the volumes Brant discusses this time are my own favorite American novel, Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*, Shirley Jackson's epochal *Haunting of Hill House* (so beautifully written it weeps — as Stephen King once said, Jackson never had to raise her voice — and yet, I prefer the Robert Wise film), an obscure Robert Graves, a splendid Solzhenitsyn. He also reviews a wide variety of zines (and is kind to Challenger #10), many non-SF, goes mano a mano with many correspondents, talks straight about alcoholism, and praises an unknown WW2-era Japanese bureaucrat who risked career and neck by faking hundreds of visas for Jews. The priest who later became Pope John XXIII did the same thing; that war wasn't only fought on the battlefield. Changing tones a bit, #38 features a long article about *The Simpsons* and a piece on historical novelist Kenneth Roberts. Brent's article on "Reaganistas" has a bitter conclusion, that it doesn't matter who's President, but that's a topic on which I invite him to extrapolate in my 12<sup>th</sup> number.

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





**Fosfax #197-8** / Timothy Lane c/o FOSFA, P.O. Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281 / \$3 or. / The editors of this thick and distinguished journal threw me a curve in issue #197; they listed an item on their contents called "Challenger high." Thinking in my pristine innocence that this was a full review of my last issue — instead of a mere mention, as is their wont — I tore to the appropriate page, and found ... a piece on Kentucky's new Challenger Learning Center. Well, I cannot be disappointed, because nestled in the 84 pages of infinitesimal print are zillions of incisive reviews by



Joseph Major, Rodney Leighton — he's everywhere! — and others, con reports, and some special pieces. I especially liked Sally Morem's reply to David Brin on Star Wars morality, Milt Stevens' reminiscence of the career of Vargo Stratten, and Mike Resnick's paean to the late Alexander Lake. Dale Speirs' article on the history of Copying should be *de riguer* for SFers. As usual, I find Timothy Lake's Clinton-bashing tedious, but the rest is fine, and Poul Anderson's presence in the sumptuous lettercol helps me keep in touch with that grand gent.

**The Freethinker** / Tom Feller, P.O. Box 68203, Nashville TN 37206-8203 / ccws74a@prodigy.com

**The Frozen Frog** / Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boissat, Cap-Rouge Quebec G17 1Y9 Canada / frozfrog@clic.net / C'est mort.

**The Geis Letter** #s 69-71 / Richard E. Geis, P.O. Box 11408, Portland OR 97211-0408 / CompuServe: 100313,3440; Internet: 100313.3440@compuserve.com (in ASCII) / \$1@. / Dick's 69<sup>th</sup> issue takes a breather from the shadow world of conspiracy-baiting to concentrate on LOCs and short, tart reviews. #70 continues this welcome trend, with choice letters, a staggering number of book reviews, and a single item about Waco and government super-control to spice things up. #71 features chat about paranormal experience, sad eulogies, good reviews. Dick's recent injury has closed this chapter in his fan career, and too

bad: I enjoyed **The Geis Letter**, and we will all miss it.

**The Good Fan, John B.** / Bill Bowers 4651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati OH 45238-4503 / eWorlds@Outworlds.net / On-line zine from the publisher of **Outworlds**, mostly natter about his continuing struggles to attend various conventions and zine auctions to finance same. *Note:* Bill recently sent out a general call for contributions to **Fanthology 1995**, which he will edit for the aught-1 Corflu. E-mail him (with "Fanthology" as subject) for criteria.

**Green Stuff** Nos. 8-10 / Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Street, Mississauga Ontario L4Y 1C8 Canada / mmoores@pathcom.com / Enclosed with **Dinosaur Spit #1**, a zine for SAPS, these are one-sheet FAPazines with mini-essays (Harry Warner's attic — I've sat below it! — a lecture by William Gibson) and natter, by one of my favorite LOCmeisters. **Dinosaur Spit** is an introductory issue, so we get to learn details I, for on, never knew, such as that Murray used to be a reporter.

**The Holy Babble** / Elst Weinstein, 1427 Cambridge Ave., Upland CA 91786 / elst@cyberg8t.com / Priceless / A gift from the editor, this 1998 production is the holy word of Herbangelism, the religious doctrine based on the fat and obnoxious ACG character of the early '60's. (I'm so old I remember when Herbie was on the stands.) Elst is joined by frequent collaborator Mike Glyer and other saints of sacrilege in creating a masterpiece. Less inspired lunatics would find it difficult to sustain a gag for >100 pages, but for the honchos behind the lamented Hugu Awards, it is simply their destiny. Elst proclaimed me the High Priest of Herbangelism for Louisiana when he was down here in February; I'd better study this tome lest the sacred lollipop fall.

**Ichthyoelectroanalgesia** / Sean McLachlan, P.O. Box 3734, Tucson AZ 85722-3734 / e-mail: c638125@showme.missouri.edu

**Idea** / Geri Sullivan, Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315 / Geri paid me and Chall #10 a wonderful compliment during last December's Smofcon here in New Orleans. I think she understood what I was trying to do in that issue better than any other critic. I was and remain croggled with gratitude. She remarked that it had been two years since her last **Idea**, so I've got a terrific one: that she return to fan publishing soon.

**The Incisors Report** Vol. 3, No. 1, Issue 5 / Peter & Athena Jarvis & Murray Moore, P.O. Box 3, Station A,

Toronto Ont M5W 1A2 Canada / Pubs@Torcon3.on.ca / The newsletter of the Toronto in '03 worldcon bid leads off with a reminiscence of the last Torcon by Ro Nagey, and continues with news about the bid (over 1200 presupporters before year's end), and an amusing list of 1985 of the 2003 reasons to visit Toronto ... my third choice for the '03 worldcon, after Wig Wam Village and Cancun, but a celestially beautiful sight from my mother's neighborhood, across Lake Ontario.

*International Revolutionary Gardener* / Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU U.K.

*It Goes on the Shelf* No. 21 / Ned Brooks / 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn GA 30047-4720 / nedbrooks@sprynet.com / <http://home.sprynet.com/~nedbrooks/home.htm> / More acquisitions for Ned's already awesome collection, described with Ned's inimitable wit.

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

*Kerles* / Tommy Ferguson, 40 Deramore Ave., Belfast, BT7 3ER, Northern Ireland / kerles@net.nrl.com / t.u.

*The Knarley Knaws* #78-80 / Dr. Henry Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton WI 53024-2017 / welch@msoe.edu or LethaWelch@aol.com / \$1.50 @ / In #78: Knarl reviews works by Terry Pratchett and David Bischoff and gripes about the phone company. Charlotte Proctor's "Web" reviews the latest Lois Bujold but loves the book and so has no complaints. Alex Bouchard is full of righteous complaints about Congress' moral hypocrisy. The followup issue features a nice Mayhew cover — a sheep boy — that somehow gives me the willies, Knarl's report on Ditto (he, too, shared a delicious dinner with Dick and Leah Smith), an infectious giddy report on a trip to Israel by Nora & Todd Bushrow, Charl Proctor's thoughts on Harry Connick Jr. (whose father should retire as Orleans Parish District Attorney), Bouchard's thoughts on Arthur C. Clarke (does anyone else find a streak of von Danikenism in ACC's writing?), and a passel of relaxed, chatty. LOCs opining on topics near and far, blatant and subtle. This is a constant. TTK attracts a friendly, involved readership. Gene Stewart's commentary on authors' atypical stories — specifically Asimov's "Ugly Little Boy" — highlights #80, as another issue of one of fandom's most consistent and well-crafted zines hits the silks.

*Kronos* / Debra A. Hussey, 115 38th Ave. N., Nashville

TN 37209 / dah2@hotmail.com / On-line and on-time, the Nashville area's electronic newsletter surges on, with local club news and reviews. They have lots of good times in Tennessee Titans country.

*Lily on the Beach* #s 6-8, *Etidorhpa* #2 and *Amira's Head* / Fran McMillian, PMB 170, 40 E. Main St., Newark DE 19711 / Marybld@aol.com / send sase for costs / Involved, handsome fictional works, with one direct editorial *cri di couer* (*Etidorhpa*) about Columbine, resonant with anguish. As for the fiction, I'm blundering into the middle of something profound, and prudence dictates silence until I read it all.



*Lofgeornost* #57-58 / Fred Lerner, 5 Worcester Ave., White River Junction VT 05001 / fred.lerner@dartmouth.com / Fred is still traveling, to the South Dakota badlands in this issue, Indian country and Mount Rushmore, an enviable trip to the wide-open spaces. I disagree with his evident disapproval of the Crazy Horse memorial, in progress; I love it when men reshape mountains in the name of honor. Later he and his entourage circle Devil's Tower, presumably murmuring "This *means* something!" Pushing one of my buttons (and Bob Whitaker-Sirignano's), he laments R.A. Lafferty's obscurity amongst all but science fiction writers ... and prompts me to fret that newcomers to the field might never encounter the mad Patrick of Tulsa. Some publisher must reprint *everything* he ever wrote! #58, prepared for the 250<sup>th</sup> FAPA mailing, begins with a stirring salute to Lerner's fannish mentor, John Boardman, who has apparently just published his 2000<sup>th</sup> zine. A Dutch trip report, commentary on gay rights court decisions, and an exciting "Postcard from Inner Mongolia" (I never knew it existed) by Elizabeth Lerner round out one of the more interesting perzines published on this side of the Atlantic.

*Mainstream* / Jerry Kaufman & Suzanne Tompkins, 3522 N.E. 123rd St., Seattle WA 98125 /

*jakaufman@aol.com, suzlet@aol.com / \$5 or trade*

**Memphen 265** / Memphis SF Association, P.O. Box 820534, Memphis TN 38182-0534 / Trade / Lots of news in this clubzine (which lacks page 2) about MSFA meetings, the Darrell Award (eternal debate, that eternal fannish joy, attends discussion of the honor), the final Nebula ballot, plus a review or two and a letter from writer Harris Lentz III about his recent projects. Nice cover by Suzan Bongers. I'd like to see another DSC bid from these guys.

**Mimosa 25** / Richard & Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 1350, Gaithersburg MD 20885 / e-mail: jophan@zdnetwork.com NEW / website: <http://www.Jophan.org/mimosa> ALSO NEW / \$4 or. / Julia Morgan-Scott's scratchboard cover — 'roos in space — signals at the very first that the Lynchi are celebrating Aussiecon in their 25th issue, and indeed, *Mim* 25 is something special. Nicki and Eve Ackerman provide convention & trip reports, John Foyster an affectionate portrait of Oz fandom. Forry Ackerman chimes in with a piece explaining just where he was during the worldcon — only the second he's ever missed — but I'm still disappointed that he let the string be broken. Names I know mean wonderful zine reading fill the contents — Dave Kyle, Joe Mayhew, Mike Resnick, Harry Warner — and Nicki tells her favorite Guy Lillian story, when I "mistied" Indiana Jones. A sad tone nevertheless hums throughout; the dominant articles are tributes to Walt Willis. Still, there are lots of photos and lots of smiling fan faces ...

**Minicon 35** / Anne Gay, P.O. Box 8297, Lake Street Station, Minneapolis MN 55408 / request@minicon35.mnstrf.org / Well-produced P.R. for a major event I've never been able to attend. (This one was April 21-23, probably past by now.) These guys ought to bid for a worldcon in a year *after* 1973.

**The Monotreme Numbers One-Nine** / The semi-daily newszine for Aussiecon, sent in a packet with the program book. Well-turned publication featuring updates on various convention crises — when will Michael Straczynski finally appear? — an ongoing trivia contest, party news, and ... oh, you know. My favorite item involves alternative sites for laundry. I'm perversely glad this zine doesn't print the voting breakdown for the Hugos; it doesn't ruin a fan's worldcon to lose a Hugo, but it could indeed do so if he either came really close or, as I have, worse than No Award. Such stats can wait till after the con is over.

**Multi-Dimensional Space / Science Fiction World Monthly** / Haifeng, No. 11 section 4, South people's

Road (Renmin nan Road), Chengdu Sichuan, 610041, People's Republic of China / The zine is in Chinese, with only the title in English, but there's a futuristic tank on the cover, ads for books with "Asimov" in the logo, and a photo of Arthur C. Clarke in the text. Says the cover letter, this is a quarterly journal of the SF fans club, discussing trends and activities of Chinese SF fans, with some translations. See *Nebula*.

**Nebula** / Yaohaijun, see address for **Multi-Dimensional Space** / "The first fanzine of China." According to the editor's letter, this contains mostly news and reviews. Both it and its companion volume are 32 newsprint pages with slick, well-drawn covers, and both feature photos of young people staring at the camera — instantly identifiable as fans. I feel a little squirrely sending these folks a quirky personal genzine like *Chall*, but I'm sure they'd enjoy more sercon fare.

**Neil Armstrong's Second Trip to the Moon** / The BabyNous Cult & BarfOnMyFace Graphics, 110 1/2 State Ave., Bremerton WA 98337-1241 / The search for the Mirror of Khonsu by the heroic Neil, who has transmuted his brain into the skull of a cat. Maybe that's why I've never seen him in person. An elegant and insane production, this impresses me especially thrice: the author knows who Yuri Gagarin was, is hip to the history of the Apollo program — and created a beautiful individualized mailing label. Gotta see more.

*Never Quite Arriving* / Christina Lake, 12 Hatherley Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8QA U.K. / christina.l@virgin.net / Trade / *Maybe she hasn't published of recent, but she's won a FAAn Award for best fanzine writer ... so Christina has already arrived.*

**No Award #6** / Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore St. #105, N. Hollywood CA 91606 / There is probably no adequate response I can give to a fanzine which describes me as "a long-standing member in condom," as Joseph Major does in his review of *Chall* 9, except to say that in condom or not, my member can't stand as long as it used to. But Joe's true meaning is clear and I am googly with gratitude to him and Cantor for the incisive yet kind notice. In other ways, too, this issue is fun — probably Marty's best genzine, ever. There's a superb Brad Foster cover, a LASFS reminiscence by Len Moffatt, Mike Glyer's thoughtful review of *The Sixth Sense* (a film that indeed justifies two viewings), a funny demolition by Milt Stevens of Edward Bellamy's unspeakable utopian philosophizing, *Looking Backward* (which I was forced to read in college, so Milt, you struck for me), a fannish National Guardsman's view of the last L.A. riots by Ed Green, and a zippy lettercol. I think what I enjoyed most about

NA6, though (after Major's piece, I do admit), was the nifty graphics work. Cantor has obviously put in some valuable time learning his word processing, and his efforts make for an inventive and attractive layout.

**Nova Express** Vol. 5 No. 2 / Lawrence Person, P.O. Box 27231, Austin TX 78755-2231 / e-mail: lawrence@bga.com / 4/\$12 U.S.; 4/\$16 Canada & Mexico; 4/\$22 International / Outstanding sercon material fills this "one-time Hugo nominee." A good interview with Sean Stewart fronts the issue — is anyone besides Person interviewing pros nowadays? — but its core is a long symposium on Bruce Sterling's "slipstream" style of fiction, described as "anti-realist" and "postmodern," "polyvalent" and "de-centered." Believe it or not, I think I know what that means. Russell Blackford and John Clute debate an Australian SF&F encyclopedia, or rather a recent Clute review thereof, there are many incisive book notices (particularly Stephenson's *Cryptonomicon*), and a chiding editorial note that NE is a fanzine for Hugo purposes, *not* a semi-prozine. Whatever you call it, NE is an impressive publication about science fiction and fantasy, not their fandoms, which makes it, like *Tangent*, a rare thing in my mailbox, and valuable and intelligent work.

**Opuntia** #44-44.1D / Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7 Canada / \$3 @ or. / The zine with the cactus on every cover churns on. The whole of #44 is devoted to Garth Spencer's exhaustive article on conventioning guides, and after reading it, I feel like I could chair one myself. Included is *Sempervivum* 14, reviews of mail art zines. There's an announcement of the June 21<sup>st</sup> World Wide Party, when we are all asked to raise a toast or do a zine at "21h00" local time, which I *think* is 9PM. 44.1A & D concentrate on zine reviews, particularly Russ Forster's cool *8-Track Mind*, a zine about pre-recorded tapes and other items of interest. "Just because it's old, doesn't mean it's useless." It'd be nice to think so. The next issue concentrates on reviews of zines and books; it touches on many publications I never see, and multitudes of Mail Art Listings, apparently an extensive movement of some importance, and .1C hails *The Snouters*, which look like they could hail from Australia, an "amiable parody of scientific monographs."

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

**PhiloSFy** #14 / Alexander R. Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Rd., San Antonio TX 78239-4022 / alex\_slate@hotmail.com NEW / trade preferred / The

ATom cover is subtitled "Ethics with a Genre Edge", ethics being the subtext of almost every issue. Here Alex Slate — an incredibly enthusiastic presence in San Antonio; I hope he makes it to Chicago — takes on medicine and "governance," heady topics indeed on which readers chime in for debate. Slate uses the positions of LOCsters as platforms from which his own opinions sail, and it makes for a high pitch of involvement. This is why I wish Alex would publish more often; he does keep people talking. I also enjoy the diaries with which he opens each issue, ranging this time from Gaylaxicon to the National Gallery of Art.

**Pink Mind Wallabies** / Karen Pender-Gunn, P.O. Box 567, Blackburn Vic 3130 Australia / fiawol@ozramp.net.au / A tribute to the late Ian Gunn by his widow, distributed at Aussiecon. Several funny articles by Ian and KPG, with fillos by Ian and others. Ian is and will be missed.

**Please Come to My Party** / Neil Rest, 1549 Birchwood, Chicago IL 60626-1703 / It was on December 4, 1999, and I wish I could have gone! How about we come to worldcon?

**Plokta** issues 15-17 / Steve Davies, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks U.K. RG30 2RP; Alison Scott, 24 St. Mary Rd., Walthamstow, London U.K. E17 9RG; Mike Scott, 2 Craithie Rd., Chester U.K. CH3 5LJ / locs@plokta.com / www.plokta.com / LOCs (1 copy), trades (3 if possible), contribution / My major discovery in the fanzine field of late has been Brit perzines, and this must be the *ne plus ultra*. An Aussiecon Hugo nominee, *Plokta* is witty and creative, festooned with good art and personal photos. Wild variety evident in just these three issues: a parody of tabloids, a remarkable *SatEvePost* cover gag, notes on vacuum cleaners, the millennium, eclipses, Aussiecon — at last I get to see what its Hugo base looks like!

**Poor Richard's Almanack** # / Millennium Philcon / P.O. Box10 / Huntingdon Valley PA 19006-0310 / #1411A will be there!

**Potlatch Nine** b/w Corflu 2000 P.R. #2-3 / P.O. Box 31848, Seattle WA 98103-1848 / ianh@scn.org, fanmailaph@aol.com, squib@galaxy-7.net / Sprightly come-ons for the late-Feb/early-March conventions, which sound like righteous laughs. I yearn for post-event reports. Accompanying #3 was a FAAn Award ballot, dutifully completed and submitted.

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

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

tomfamulus@ dmc1.net / Or \$3 / Pretty color work stands out in this issue of one of fandom's best *personal* genzines. Photos of contributors and "flexies" from the cover through to the back are rich with varied hues. Variety rules also in the contents, by an impressive array of contributors: Robert Sabella, Gene Stewart, Sally Syrjala, Rodney Leighton ... and more. There's a superb collection of Alan Hunter illustrations, neat anecdotal tales by Sheryl Birkhead and Alfred Byrd, a funny fannish pastiche of Homer (the Greek poet, not Simpson) Gary Deindorfer wrote in 1962, and some friendly LOCs (including what may be the last extant from Buck Coulson). Sadler's editorials are various and most expansive, ranging from space exploration at the fore and the inevitability of typos at the rear. *Rear*, I mean. Boy, does he go on about it. To sum simply, TRF is one of the great zines; as Eeb Frohvet says in the lettercol, it's overdue for Hugo recognition.

**Robbery with Violets by John Berry / Ken Cheslin**, 29 Kestrel Road, Halesowen, W. Midlands B63 2PH, U.K. / No price given ... so, a literally priceless volume collecting John Berry's '50s and '60s articles on police work from **Orion** and other sources. You'll find an example of John's reminiscences elsewhere in this **Challenger**; here is a mass of them, with the original Atom illos. They're sharp and funny. Cheslin is doing the fanzine universe a great service by keeping this and other treasures in print.

**The Sci-File #148 / Science Fiction Weekly / <http://www.scifiweekly.com> / My first look at this e-zine, which looks to be entirely big-media news flack. Nothing wrong with it if you're worried that Leo DiCaprio is too old to play Annakin Skywalker as a teen.**

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**SFSFS Shuttle #139-140** / Carlos Perez, c/o South Florida SF Society, P.O. Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33307-0143 / I'm confused by the dates on issue #139; the logo reads November & December, but the interior pages proclaim July & August. Whatever, this is a good clubzine, improving its layout and expanding its content with every issue, while retaining the voice of its club. Joe Siclari contributes material from his fan history project; with Edie Stern and the editor he also touts the '99 "traveling fete" in Cocoa Beach, wherein much space history resides. Other club members (I take it) contribute book reviews and short essays, and there are a number of terrific (and strangely perverse) fillos by Adam-Troy Castro. Highlight of the zine is Nick Simicich's berserk article on making money for SFSFS, which proposes taking over Mir and marketing Jar Jar Binks prosthetics. To quote my Methodist mentor, George Wells, my brain hurts. #140 features a cover photo of Perez (I presume) holding a somewhat grumpy baby, who obviously has no truck with that crazy Buck Rogers stuff. Inside, a membership directory, a list of fanzines received (without addresses, tsk), notes on future plans, which include a new clubhouse and Tropicon, next November. There are LOCs, E.B. Frohvet and "little petey barker" contribute squibs, and again, some very *different* illos.

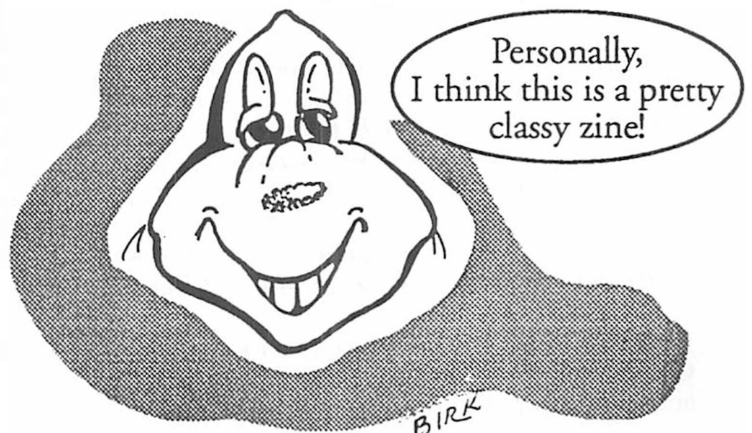
**Son of Grafan No. 42** (suborbital) / Michael McFadden, 608 Ellwine Dr., St. Louis MO 63125-3604 / [Grafan@aol.com](mailto:Grafan@aol.com) / SoG marks McFadden's return to zining after a long absence. In a cover letter, he mentions knowing my name from the comics lettercols. His love of the graphic arts shows in the diverse but nifty art he spreads through this professionally-printed pub. As for the writing — well, if you think I gush, Michael's a Pococatapetl of enthusiasm. His article on "sci-fi toys" (he's not afraid of that word — "sci-fi," I mean) is very entertaining. Welcome back, Michael.

**Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin Vol. 7** No. 5-6 / Julie Wall, 470 Ridge Road, B'ham AL 35206-2816 / [jwall@usit.net](mailto:jwall@usit.net) / SFC membership or. / Julie still produces a worthy version of Southern fandom's essential newszine, only not so often: the DeepSouthCon voted to save confederation funds by letting her publish three times a year instead of four. Julie's essay on silly Southern drinks juices up #6, and con reports on DSC and Aussiecon, Tom Feller's fanzine reviews, convention listings, and long lettercols complete these friendly and informative zines.

**The Space Cadet Gazette** / R. Graeme Cameron, 1855 West 2nd Ave. #110, Vancouver BC V6J 1J1 Canada / [graeme\\_cameron@mindlink.bc.ca](mailto:graeme_cameron@mindlink.bc.ca)

**Starfire** / Wm. Breiding, P.O. Box 2322, Tucson AZ 85702 / [wbreiding@juno.com](mailto:wbreiding@juno.com)

**Stet #9** / Dick & Leah Smith, 410 W. Willow Rd., Prospect Heights IL 60070-1250 / After Smofcon Dick & Leah treated me to a magnificent dinner at NOLA's superb Brigtsen's Restaurant. The perils of dining with a culinary critic: the roast duck was so irresistible I suffered a *food hangover* the next day! Between bites the Smiths mentioned their new *Stet*, and rumor later circulated that the zine was so glorious that rival faneds, like me, would seek high windows from which to fling ourselves. The truth is not far off. *Stet* 9 is spectacularly clever and attractive. Professionally printed (and seemingly, so designed), and phenomenally well-illustrated. I particular salute Alan Hunter, whose "hand" on page 8 strobes with connotation, and Barry Kent MacKay, but all are excellent. *Stet* is one handsome puppy. The contents are original, consistent, and *my* fun, fashioned after a traditional "Old Fan's Almanac". Mike Resnick predicts the next 100 years with hilarious in-group jibes. His daughter Laura provides a top ten list of developments in romance. (Least likely: "Guy gets a date.") Guy Wicker — I like that name; I know a cute lady judge named Wicker — names future poisons (!). Jon Stopa talks about the weather, and Bill Higgins discusses craters on the various worlds named for SF writers. Here's my other recent visitor, Elst Weinstein, declaiming on Herbangelism, George Flynn on the Hugos and Site Selection, anecdotes from Ray Nelson and Langley Searles. And the skiffy calendar is included, too — mentioning my upcoming 51<sup>st</sup> birthday on Moonday, too. Wow. If I have a criticism it's that there is too much here that really isn't needed — lists of the Hugo winners, for instance. Sure, this is supposed to be an almanac, but we get that stuff annually from the worldcon program book. However, we *don't* get this much verve and wit — this much joy in our people and our family. Shazam.





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

*Thyme* #127-128 / Alan Stewart, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia / a.stewart@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au / The or \$A 3; subscription \$A 15. / To know Oz, know *Thyme*. The pivotal fanzine of the land downunder comes forth with its first post-worldcon issues, remarkable for its photos of the Lynchi, Ned Brooks, and Bill Gibson, all of whom have been or are members of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance (yes, even Gibson, in his pre-cyberpunk youth). Also noteworthy, a touching reminiscence by Merv Binns ("without SF fandom life would have been very dull"). #128 is rich with fan news, fund news, awards news (including a fascinating breakdown of the Hugo voting), book news and reviews, articles on the worldcon. Included, a ballot for the next FFANZ race to send an Aussie to New Zealand. My money's on Little Ted.

*Tortoise* Issues 5-7 / Sue Jones, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury SY1 2BQ U.K. / sue.tortoise@talk21.com / trade / The mighty invasion of superlative Brit perzines rolls on! *Barmaid*, *Quasiquote*, *Plokta*, *Tortoise* ... the UK blooms with nifty perzines. each more charming than the next. Will this be the next great trend in fanzining, or is it already, and lumpen goliaths like *Challenger* are simply behind the times? Anyway, Sue's is a clever, creative publication; each issue has its own theme — "Patterns", "How it Works" — writing by the editor and illos by others on that topic, a lively lettercol, and sprightly natter to fill in the corners. In these issues Sue's move to a new apartm- ... a new *flat*, forced by her landlord's incipient insanity, holds her to the real world, while she engages in flights of fancy involving maps, turtle-shaped fireworks, Charles Darwin, and her pooka, the tortoise Siberia. Issue #8's theme: "English"!

*Trap Door* / Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442 / locs2trapdoor@yahoo.com / the usual or \$4@ / The deserved winner of the FAAn Award for Best Fanzine, the absence of a new issue is a palpable ache. *Congrats, Robert!*

*Trash Barrel* / Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood CA 91606-2308 / Trade / How's the hat?

*Tripe Reportcard* 37 / Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills CA 91344 / Bruce was at Smofcon here in Nawlins but I don't think he sent out potscrads.

Here's one from Catalina.

*Twink* 16-17 / E.B. Frohvet, 4716 Dorsey Hall Dr. #506, Ellicott City MD 21042 / The u. / *Twink* is one of my favorite genzines because it manages several tricks I'd like to teach *Challenger*. First of all, it's of a reasonable length (36 pages, this time). Secondly, despite a number of good contributors, it maintains a consistent voice ... its editor's. Thirdly, I *love* that typeface. The 16th issue leads off with a guest editorial on political correctness by Lyn McConchie which disturbs me somewhat; she swears she doesn't mind being called a "cripple" instead of "differently-abled," when she proves through her wit and spunk that she is a strong, tough lady — the antithesis of "crippled." Eeb follows up with an extremely perspicacious piece on "SF and the Law" which I would have loved to have run here. Gene Stewart chimes in with book reviews and an essay on *genuine* SF (the distinction: new ideas), there are some zine reviews by the editor, and then the LOCsters — bless'em — take command. I love that Margaret Simon art. Steve Stiles' cover is only the first excellent drawing in #17, which shows a welcome concentration, despite their general cynicism, on writing workshops. As a veteran of inspiring classes taught by Jackson Burgess, Fred Chappell and Lillian Hellman, these articles remind me of good times. I think my favorite part of almost every *Twink* is Frohvet's closing page of "Miscellany"; I may imitate it in this *Chall*. Why, though, is #17 printed on hole-punched paper? Eeb honors *Chall* by stating he nominated it for the Chicon Hugo; I swear I hadn't read that note when I filled out *my* ballot, and numbered *Twink*.

*Vanamonde* Nos. 333-352 / John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St. No. 409, L.A. CA 90057 / Trade. / Glyer praised Hertz' one-sheet Apa-L pub in a recent *File:770*, and I can only chime in; for John, variety is still the spice. In these issues he concentrates on mailing comments, but also quotes the best one-liners from his LOCs, and there are some beauties. I particularly salute his mention of the spiffy Freddy the Pig series of kids' books by Walter Brooks; I think I read all but one, and still remember the sick day on which I read two. Not *haiku* — John's predilection — these zines, but welcome, like the Kurt Erichsen illos here and there, and a new Brad Foster logo to mark the new century.

*Violet Books* / Jessica Amanda Salmonson, P.O. Box 20610, Seattle WA 98102

*Visions of Paradise* #82-83 / *Halcyon Days* #82-83 / Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake NJ 07828-1023 / bobsabella@nac.net / Lamenting that his



superb zine has grown too large, Robert begins *Halcyon Days* to accommodate its LOCs. Trinlay Khadro dominates this first issue. As for VoP, #82's journal section covers the summer months of '99, active with trips and books and friendships and Einstein ... and frightening, as his mother finds evidence of surface cancers. Best of luck to her. I love other people's diaries — it's comforting to realize that other people have rich, distinct lives. An interesting editorial about abortion and its opponents from Terry Jeeves leads to the best part of the issue: Sabella's adept SF criticism. He praises *The Fall of Hyperion* as much as I would; that Dan Simmons' epic tetralogy won only one Hugo is a disgrace. He also hails Greg Benford's *DeepTime*, a nonfiction appraisal of the future with which Robert heartily concurs. Finally, he embraces *The Knarley Knews* as "[his] kind of fanzine" ... and indeed t'is, part of a strong generation of publications which has revived the personal genzine in today's fandom. Just like *Visions of Paradise*. #83 features a fine cover by Margaret Simon, a striking bacover by Frank Miklis, an article on Tibet by his friend Fei Fei, and an admittedly self-indulgent list of his favorite books, authors, rock songs and albums of the late decade. He rates Kim Stanley Robinson highly, as would I, but nukes Antarctica as glacially slow at the front. I must mention the "actual answers to a 6<sup>th</sup> grade history test" that he lists: they're all correct, even when they involve literature, not history. "Romeo's last wish was to be laid by Juliet." Deny that whoever will!

**Vojo de Vivo #1** / Michael J. Lowrey, 1847 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Milwaukee WI 53212-3760 / orange@execpc.com / \$14 for 7 issues / Wildly enthused and distinctively colored introductory FAPazine by a true Soldier of Orange. Another veteran of *Mr. Bass and the Mushroom Planet* (is there a better introduction to written SF?), Michael mostly works the e-lists, but he hits the cons and enjoys the SCA, too.

**Westwind #247** / George Nyhen, NWSFS, P.O. Box 24207, Seattle WA 98124 / mwsfs-info@sfnorthwest.org / free to members; dues \$20/year / Lots of info for the active "nizfizzies" of the Northwest SF Society, who have monthly socials, the huge Norwescon, Clarion West and much else to keep them occupied. Check out the wild antics on the photocover! An intelligent interview with the author of a local stage version of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* "centers" the issue.

**What If ...** / P.O. Box 4193, San Dimas CA 91773 / Amusing "magazine of the modern philosopher," with about as much relationship to Kierkegaard or Spinoza as

I have to Michelle Pfeiffer **PFEIFFER**, but all the more fun for that. Gift of Rodney Leighton, to whom thanks.

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



*Illustrators for this section of Challenger are:* Joe Mayhew, Jim Schirmeister, Wm. Rotsler, Ian Gunn, Sheryl Birkhead.

## a flagrant plea

Try saying that headline three times, quickly.

It costs a great deal in both money and hassle to send *Challenger* overseas. Every copy sent beyond these shores — even Canadian packages — must be affixed not only with extra postage, but with pain-to-complete customs declarations. It would save both cash and craziness if some kind soul in a foreign land would accept the task of receiving a box of packaged, addressed *Challengers* from me and sending them forth from there. Of course, I would bear all costs. Do I see any volunteers? Any foreign faned need an American agent? I'll be glad to exchange hassles!

## (More) Contributors

cont. from p. 27

**Gene Stewart**  
1710 Dianne Avenue  
Bellevue NE 68005

**Charlie Williams**  
1200 Woodcrest Drive  
Knoxville TN 37918  
cwilliams@icx.net

**Lew Wolkoff**  
2118 Penn Street  
Harrisburg PA 17110



## The BACK Page



This little drawing is a caricature of yours truly by the late Dave Ryan. He drew it in 1981, at the collation of the 100<sup>th</sup> mailing of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance. I was Official Editor, the apa had gathered from near and far, the mailing was the largest in fan history (1750 pages, and all good), the illo reflects my joy at a superb shared fannish achievement. I carry it in my wallet to remind me of Dave, of those good days — and from now on, of *these* good days.

**Challenger #11** comes to its close on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, 2000. The local CopyMax is offering a penny-a-click sale on self-serve printing, so, since my court is closed, I've spent the past several days slaving over a hot Xerox, bringing this pub to paper. A few smeary copies here and there, but by and large, I'm pleased. I'm also bone-weary.

This is a primitive publication in so many ways. I don't have a scanner, so my photos are halftones and like all my illos, are pasted in by hand. Even my page numbers are glued to the masters by my own gummy fingertips. Now I'm personally running the sheets through the Xerox and will presently be personally collating all into a completed zine. Ah, my achin' back! Why *don't* I own a scanner? Why *don't* I learn how to lay out a zine on the computer?

Well, maybe I simply enjoy the scut work. Maybe **Challenger** feels more like a *fanzine* that way. Maybe it all has been to a purpose.

Groggy and grumpy, and frankly dreading the xeroxing chore which awaited me, I started yesterday by checking my e-mail. I found a message from Michael Nelson, head of the Chicon Hugo Committee, and, wide-eyed, opened it. “\_Challenger\_,” it said, “received enough nominations to be placed on the Chicon 2000 Hugo Awards ballot.” Did I have objections to “\_Challenger\_” being placed on the ballot?

I must have sat in my chair and stared at the screen for a full minute, or two. Then I found the “REPLY” function and, very deliberately, formulated my answer. No, I said, no, I had no objection, none whatever, not a one, not a *shadow* of one, to having **Challenger** on the Chicon 2000 Hugo ballot. The truth still had me stunned as I sent the reply on its way: *Challenger is a Hugo nominee.*

The sheer happiness of the news sustained the rest of the day. I giggled at my reflection in the mirror, and thinking about the news, got a little misty. Yes, I was on the Hugo ballot twice for Best Fan Writer in the late eighties, but I didn't really deserve those nominations — and I think **Challenger** does. Because I don't stand alone inside its pages. This nomination is to the credit of the people who supported **Challenger** and filled it with their beauty and their wit and their trust and their nerve. They're the ones who have brought it to fandom's penultimate pinnacle. Them and the readership I knew I could count on, Southern fandom, and the readership I *came* to count on, contemporary fanzine fandom. Y'all did it, y'all should share in my delight. I just wish every one of you was here right now ... so you could help me *collate* this thing.

Many, many, many thanks! See you at Chicon!