

CHALLENGER





FIFTEEN

Fall 2001

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Cover and logo by Alan White

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EDITORIAL: THE SUMMER OF 2001

We will always remember the spring and summer of 2001. The world is different now that it is past. So am I, so is science fiction, so is Southern fandom, and so is America.

In this summer and the weeks abutting it there have been grievous losses, and glorious times. This issue touches on both. Great joy ... great sorrow ... great panic ... great change.

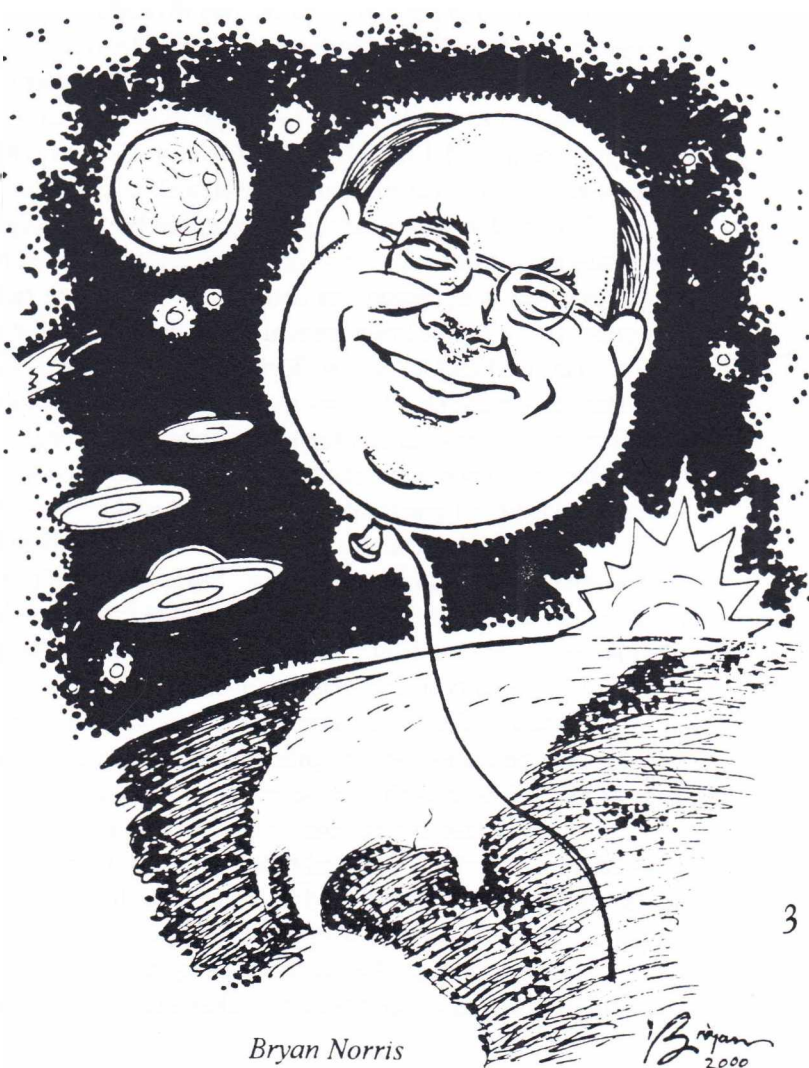
The **Challenger** which follows this editorial proceeds in a rough chronological order, carrying me and mine and us through the season just past. Here and there, like precognitions of the summer's most horrible moment, thoughts and impressions of September 11th will find their way into this issue. My thanks to the authors of these vignettes for sharing them.

There is happiness here, too, and that great happiness has brought new competence at the art of zine-building to **Challenger**. My beloved wife Rose-Marie lends us her considerable skill with the computer, helping **Chall** join the 20th Century – now that it is safely the 21st. Her stepmother, Patti Green, has performed an inestimable service by scanning the photos appearing in this issue onto CD. Whether their reproduction will compare favorably to my old halftones is for you, who are reading the zine, to know, and for me, preparing it, to find out. I do know how *easy* layout is when everything is on the dinkum-thinkum. In any event, any beauty on these pages is to the credit of these two great ladies, and any frailty in them is my doing.

There is great beauty in Alan White's gorgeous cover. Thank Rose-Marie's computer expertise, again, for its reproduction. As for our interior art, all hail to Randy Cleary, Charlie Williams and the inestimable Peggy Ranson for the special illos they did for these sheets. The work by Bryan Norris and Julia Morgan-Scott and others was already on hand, but need I tell you how welcome it was. Digging into stuff in storage brought the lost genius of Jerry Collins again to view; does anyone know where Jerry hangs his chapeau these days?

On the word front, **Challenger** is graced by some of our regular contributors, such as Mike Resnick and Greg Bentford, Bob Sirignano, Charlie Williams and Gene Stewart, and a couple of very welcome new faces, Terry Jeeves and Ben Indick. I imagine it's been a long time since anyone said either of these venerable faces was *new*, but both are very welcome. All of our **Chall** pals add a hopeful, happy perspective to this grim fall.

One face adds not only class, but beauty and hope and the one thing that is greater than these. Another salute to the lady who has made this season, no matter how challenging or terrible, the brightest moment of my life. Read on!



GROWING UP SF'NAL:

a howl at post literate culture

Gene Stewart

If only science fiction would grow up, it could ... what?

What could science fiction accomplish mature and literate that it hasn't done juvenile and pulpy? Would a more literary version of science fiction be better, of just different?

In a recent *Locus* interview, Thomas Disch, one of the leading New Wave writers who sought to bring a higher literary sense into science fiction, declared defeat. Or was it surrender? He writes literary horror pastiches these days, as if too tired to both kicking science fiction anymore. He said science fiction has clearly rejected more literary approaches in favor of a juvenile stance and an unstudied pulp informality.

He's right, but is he also wrong?

One thinks of Vernor Vinge's recent novels, *A Fire Upon the Deep* and *A Deepness in the Sky*. They are pure space opera, hearkening back to E.E. "Doc" Smith and other pulp favorites. They won Hugo recognition and popularity among fans because of, not despite, this fact. Science fiction readers find themselves in the odd position of preferring to read about the future in retro modes and motifs. It's escapism's revenge for the New Wave having gotten too cute, maybe, and to hell with futurism's shock value.

So why not higher literary values in written science fiction? There have been sophisticated science fiction novels, sure. Poul Anderson made them look easy, yet how many of today's science fiction writers could produce a work like *Orion Shall Rise* or *Boat of a Million Years*? His like is passing, and with such souls go our chances for more of those ethical, courageous, and scientifically insightful stories.

Today, diversity is being homogenized toward corporate blandness. The bottom line of profit counts now more than ever. (And it was always a publisher's dream baby.) Any aspect of writing that makes it harder to grasp is squeezed out because fewer will be receptive to such hard work. Sophistication is, by definition, rare. And it limits appeal. And that cuts into profit potential. And so it must go.

Yes, the Bell Curve is suffocating science fiction. If a writer's first novel doesn't sell both quickly and by the ton, forget seeing a follow-up. And here's the new rub – publishers are eager now for sequels and series, even from first timers, almost to the exclusion of any singleton or stand-alone novel. Some are demanding the second and third book be written before they'll publish the first. If you don't have the kith and kin of Gordon Dickson's virility of imagination, best forget writing these days.

Milking ideas and stretching already thin premises to breakpoint becomes necessary for any professional writer wanting to survive. Sure, one can stretch a story over three – or ten – novels, but at what point in this taffy pull does such work become product sold by quantity? And what of payoffs, the literary tension-release pattern needed for at least rudimentary fan loyalty?

Does quality in fact matter anymore?

Certainly the more compulsively readable a work is, the more it will please readers. The more suspenseful and compelling the plot, the more readers will be thrilled. And creating characters everyone loves and can identify with is the key to franchise heaven.

Harry Potter is first and foremost *product*, a merchandisable character. Only secondarily do such considerations as story line and the details of verisimilitude come in. Writing, actual word use, grammar, syntax and original phrasing, is far down on the list, and please, no big or odd words on which readers might stumble. Never stop the flow of good ad copy.

The marketplace has reduced things to a search for the next Sherlock Holmes, who is arguably the most successful literary and franchise character ever created. He is recognized more widely than Hamlet and

comes in a close second to Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammed.

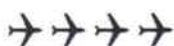
Is it surprising, then, how many recent big budget movies are character driven? From **X-Men** to **Lara Croft: Tomb Raider**, we're seeing more characters and less actual story, or writing. Be it a character From comic books, computer games, or dusty old hardcopy books, it's hero-worship by Hollywood on a scale to shame Ancient Greek myth. If a character can draw loyal repeat business, it's enshrined in the Merchandising Mall of Mammon.

All neophyte writers, listen up! What make something good as literature applies today only so far as creating a great hero, a series character. Beyond that, one is better off picking up a video camera than a pen. Storytelling's dead to words now. Images rule.

But if one must write, then think in terms of graphic novels and video games. Think of kids role-playing their latest favorite hero in any of a dozen interchangeable cliffhanger pitfalls.

If science fiction ever grows up, it might derail the gravy train, and today's narrow gauge Procrustean bed, there is just no room for *that*.

"Procrusty- ... say *what*?"



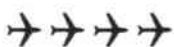
Thoughts on the Scene:

Tim Marion

There is an unusual hush that has fallen over the streets of the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Gone is the usual roar of the traffic, which normally does not cease even at night. The bridges have been closed, and almost no vehicular traffic has been on the streets. The police are everywhere, establishing checkpoints at 14th and Houston Streets, and surrounding the entire area. The people walk around with a haunted look in their eyes - they try to look and act normal, but you can tell the difference. Everyone looks as though they have stared death in the face and wondered why he didn't take them too, and wonder when their turn will actually come. Smiles are a rare commodity in New York now.

The president was in town today, and the constant whooshing growl of unseen jet engines, high in the sky, caused both me and others to look skyward with a questioning gaze, knowing, even if we did see something coming, we would most likely be unable to avoid it in time. No one knows what to expect or why this is happening. Although it is technically, in terms of its devastation, an act of war, at the same time, the fact that it's an act of terrorism means that it was designed more to frighten and demoralize the American people as opposed to totally destroying us. An act orchestrated by a mad coward with delusions that he will get away with it and that it doesn't matter if he doesn't. Someone who believes he serves God in the form of Allah, but most likely serves Kali (Hindu death goddess) and Mammon (Biblical demon who thrives on suffering). We are facing an enemy whose face remains hidden and who, if his face was not, still could not be negotiated with - this is a human enemy so inimical to our life that we must squash it the same as we would any insect or parasite which threatens us.

In order to fight this war, we will have to descend to his level and fight a long, drawn-out war of subterfuge and conspiracies - merely bombing the hell out of deserts or hospitals and schools will accomplish nothing except more misery.



From: Robert Whitaker Sirignano

When I woke up early on the 11th of September, I was preparing to go to the bank. I decided to turn on the computer and check out stuff I had bid on at Ebay.

While I was trolling around and was checking out my bids for a Marvin the Martian T shirt and I also was trying to decide if I really should bid on the Laser disk of **Quatermass II**.

Then:

I got an Instant Message from Susan Palermo: "It's safe in Delaware, isn't it?"

I thought: the hurricane has shifted its course and is heading to the mainland...

I wrote back: "I'm fine. What's by you?"

SP: "Turn on your TV."

I did. I was just struck dumb. The towers were on fire. The planes had blown up after impact.

I exchanged other lines with Susan, broke off and went to the bank. Half way there, I was informed by the radio that all schools in the area would be let out early.

During the ride, I brought to mind a dozen or so people who lived and worked nearby the World Trade Center.

I got back home, called the school and checked the dismissal time.

I tried to phone several people. The lines were overloaded.

I puzzled this over: I got back on line and e-mailed Susan to call the brothers in law. She'd written that she had called her friends and was able to get through.

What I had missed was brother in law Robert's phone message. He'd been late for work – which is about two blocks from the World Trade Center. He had to calm down the Mafia wife next door (another story for another time) and it took ten minutes. Enough time for him to be on the Brooklyn Bridge, biking to work. He saw the first plane hit. He stopped and turned around. He phoned in knowing it would be impossible later.

6 It took a couple of days, but Giani and I only got through that Eugene (the other brother in law) was fine, having been on his New York Transit job, collecting tokens in Coney Island.

We worried anyway.

Over the next few days, we had fears taken away from us bit by bit, connecting by e-mails and phone lines and letters. We didn't "lose" anyone.

But I can stare at the pictures of the devastation and wonder if it could happen again, and who would be gone?

The people responsible for the attacks began to show up as evidence. I was never really fond of the towers as works of art, but the lives lost transformed it in my mind. Anguish and irritation began to surface.

I lost the Marvin the Martian t shirt in that auction. It was Marvin saying: "YOU MAKE ME SO VERY ANGRY!"

That says it all.



Two websites which I hope are still up. Check out <http://kill-9.com/wtc-photo.jpg> – give it some time to load; it's worth it.

Also, <http://alumni.caltech.edu/~copeland/mommy.html> – Liz Copeland's quilt.



Skål

a farewell to Poul Anderson

Guy Lillian

He was a gentleman, and a scholar. He was generous, and patient, and genuine, and he wrote like a dream. He had a secure ego, an even and happy disposition, and a voice as deep and warm as a Mediterranean tidal pool. He put up with my boyish questions about writing, and he invited me into fandom. He was a great man.

I knew him throughout my college years at Berkeley, when, by his invitation, I was a member of the Elves, Gnomes and Little Men's Science Fiction, Marching and Chowder Society, which met every week at J. Ben Stark's house in

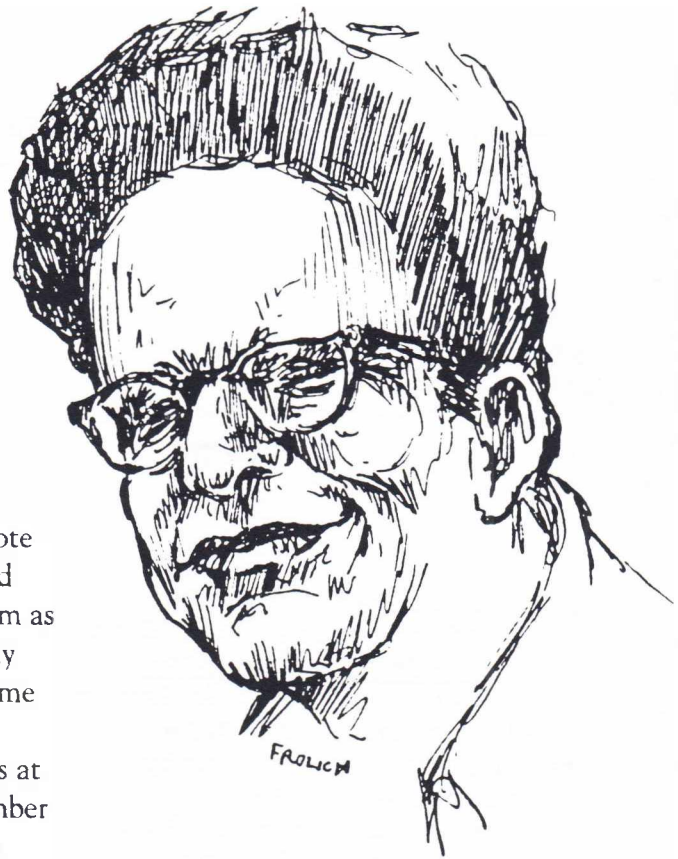
Richmond. After every meeting, the group would retire to a bar under the freeway overpass within sight of Spengler's, a great seafood restaurant. There the conversation would really flow. Alva and Sid Rogers would be there, and Bill Donaho, and the irreplaceable wonderfulness that was and is Chelsea Quinn Yarbro ... and that night's guest speaker, be he Reginald Bretnor (in his beret) or Randall Garrett (in his gold eyelash best) or Chip Delany or Greg Benford. And of course Poul and Karen.

I was there, aged 18, 19, 20, 21. I met all of the above SFers, and more ... and it was all because of Poul. I am in your company now ... because of Poul.

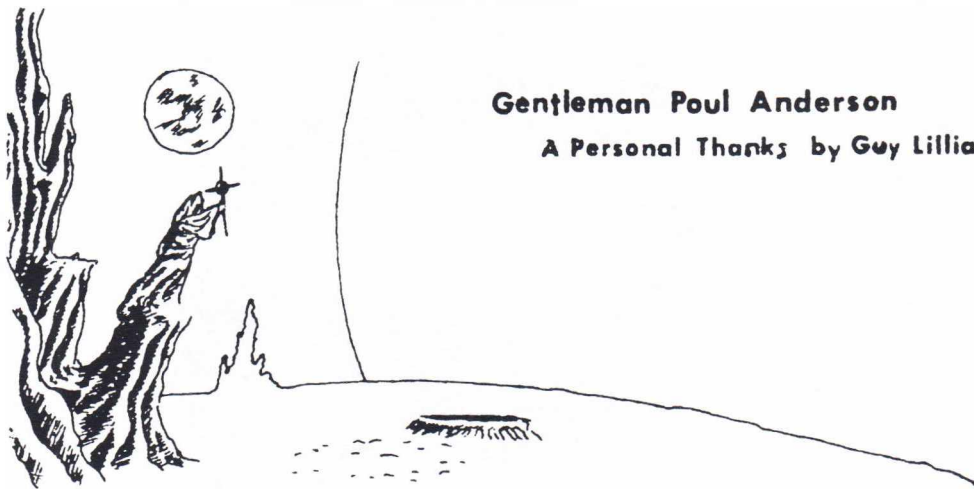
When Poul was guest of honor at the New Orleans DeepSouthCon in 1971, I mourned – because even though I had urged his selection, I could not be there. But I could write an article about our first meeting for the special issue of *Nolazine*, the local club's genzine. What appeared was not entirely my product – the editor of that issue was Patrick Adkins, later to publish three novels himself, and he couldn't resist juicing up my description of Poul's voice. Well, neither of us could capture the indescribable.

When I learned of his brave death, last summer, I remembered that voice, remembered the way Poul would cup his ear to better hear what you had to say – even if you were a callow college kid – and remembered how it was to know that wonderful man. Here's that piece again. Pray, forgive the youthful enthusiasm it describes and the youthful manner in which I described it. I hope my writing has improved since then.

Be assured, though, that the feelings toward the subject remain as they were. Gratitude, admiration, and love.



Art by Dany Frolich



Gentleman Poul Anderson

A Personal Thanks by Guy Lillian III

Art by Kenneth Hafer

8 As I recall, it was from the back cover of the S.F. Book Club edition of Trader to the Stars that I learned that Poul Anderson & I shared not only the same universe, but the same county. It was a stunning moment as I read the words "Lives with his wife and daughter in Orinda, California", for Orinda was-- what? 7 mere miles?-- from the town where I then lived with my parents. A phone book was handy and I, 15 years old just into the 10th grade, leafed through it anxiously, seeking the name. Indeed, it was there, with an address behind it, and across a row of dots from that address an honest-to-be-jesus phone number. The act of looking up that number was a decisive event in my life as a fan. The act of dialing it was a test of my neo-manhood. Should I call him up, I asked myself? What would I say to Poul Anderson, the man behind/a-bove/beyond the books that had regaled me for years? 15 can be a shy age: it was 1964, a more timid era, a younger Lillian. But that boy then holding my name had his measure of guts, and dial, dial, shudder, dial, gulp, the call was commenced.

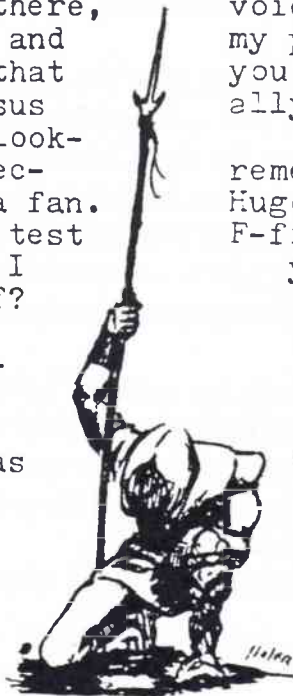
The reciever rang a thousand years before the rattle of the wires was supplanted by a feminine voice, rich and red-headed. Somehow I managed to ask if Mr. Anderson were at home, and she said yes, he was, and after a fearful fantastic moment out of Purgatory another voice, male and maelstrom-deep, said "yes?"

I didn't hang up, the natural out for a panic-stricken kid. I asked the question which I'd concocted for my conversation with Poul Anderson. My voice didn't break, I didn't wet my pants, I survived. But would you believe the question I finally asked him?

"Uh, Mr. Anderson, do you remember wha-what story won the Hugo in 1962 for Best Short F-fiction? That was the year year after you won your first one--and--and Stranger in a Strange Land took the best novel award--uh. . ."

There was a hmmmm of surprise at the opposite end of the connection. No, no, didn't think that he did . . . pardon him a moment, would I, and he'd ask his wife. . .

Well, she didn't know either. I thanked him in real gratitude and rang off,



thrilled, thrilled, really thrilled, because a book wasn't an inhuman thing anymore; it had a voice, at least, behind it, above it, beyond it, which was oh, such a marvelous discovery to make. . . .

In 1967 I turned 18 and entered the University of California at Berkeley. It was my folks' last year in California before moving to Louisiana in January of 1968, and before they left I began a practice of visiting writers I found to be living in the area. First of these was Jack Vance, whom I met at his house in the Oakland hills in October of '67. Three months later, a couple of weeks before my parents moved South, I decided to try for Anderson. So in January, at the beginning of my second quarter at UC, I again prowled the phone book, found the number, and, not feeling any-the-less timid, called Anderson once more. This time I requested a visit.

Poul was finishing up a book and asked me to call back in a few days. Contractual agreements were at stake, he explained. On the proper night a weekend later I rang the Orinda number once again and received a most unexpected right-tonight invite that took me completely unaware. He gave me directions to get to his house, and if you have ever made the trip, you know that a descriptive talent of Poul's magnitude is necessary to get you there.

Somehow I managed to talk my poor mother into coming out to Berkeley, picking me up, and driving me up that Orinda hill. She merits public thanks for the evenings chauffeur-service. Leaving the car at the base of the Andersons' incredibly steep driveway, I hauled myself up that concrete bank to the dark, quiet, greened-over tree-smell-



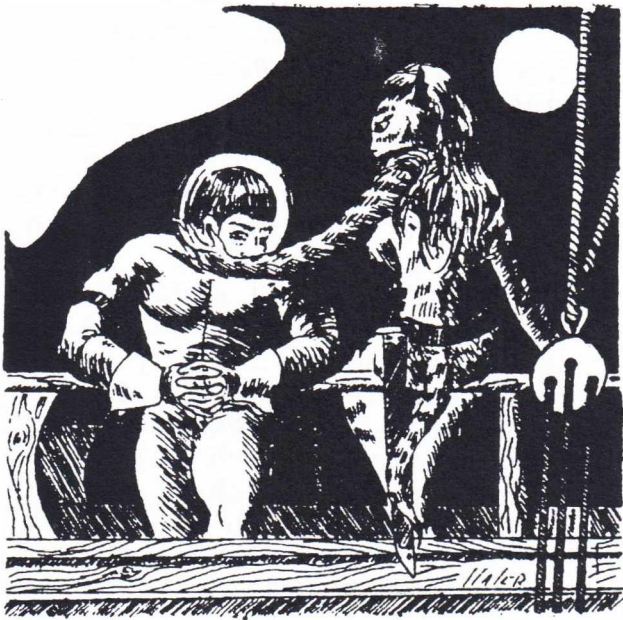
ing house at the top.

I passed the window on the porch as I walked to the door, and glimpsed Poul slouching in one of the Danish style chairs in his living room, reading a book. Gulping, wondering how not to make an idiot out of myself, I went to the door, and knocked.

Poul came to the door and invited me in. My briefcase bumped something as I came into the Andersons' living room, which was furnished in low couches and

chairs, walled with windows on two sides, a white brick fireplace on the third. The kitchen and a hallway full of books was visible on my left as I entered, and there was a straight backed piano with Revell models of the Enterprise and a Klingon warship sharing the space atop it with autographed photographs of Major Bob White and Gene Roddenberry. Over the fireplace was a bookshelf with paperbacks by Christie and Leiber tossed therein, and on the mantle a white marble bust of a strong-featured Scandinavian male--I have enough Erickson genes in me to tell a Scandinavian face when I see one--with the faintest smile of marble pride. A photo, dark in contrast, which I'd later learn to be of Fritz Leiber, held the center of the mantle with its own slight smile. This was the room into which Poul escorted me.

Poul's height impressed me, and the jungle of curls that covered his head, but I knew these things already from the back cover of Trader to the Stars. We sat facing each other in low, unbearably comfortable chairs, and I began asking him whatever idiot questions I could find to ask. Dumb questions, kid questions, certainly not anything he had not been asked before. He would lean forward a little, cupping one ear and tilting the



side of his head ever so slightly as he spoke. His face, which that marble countenance on the mantle above us resembled strongly, would tense as though to focus every sense on the question to be answered.

And the things I asked... Can you tell me, Mr. Anderson--ah, Poul--how does it feel to--win a Hugo?--then as now the awards were my major interest in fandom, and at that time they were my only knowledge of fandom. "Oh, fine...." he answers after a moment, and that oh is the longest, most mellifluous, most meaningful monosyllable you can possibly imagine. And then more dumb questions--don't ask me what--I don't remember and it doesn't matter. Poul mentioned that his wife and daughter were in San Francisco that night, marching to "Save Star Trek." We discussed the show for a while, and Poul said that he could take or leave it. And then I asked to see where he did his writing, which was pretty nervy, but Poul was only too happy to lead me down the book-lined hallway to the "Factory."

Reference books filled two shelves in one corner; against another wall stood his writing desk, which was at the time stacked with ms. of a non-fiction book in the works. A floor-to-ceiling shelf held the Anderson archives--about forty books and God knows how many short stories (God may know; Poul does not). A small cabinet in one corner held two differing Hugos (a third has since been added), a plaque of some sort, and a 100,000 year-old handaxe sent to Poul by an anthropologist friend. Poul pulled a large book from one of the reference shelves, a collection of astronomical paintings by the Russian spacewalker Alexei Leonov that Poul especially prizes.

Returning to the living room I asked Anderson about writing. Though I didn't know it then, this question was at the heart of my visit. "It's a lonely occupation," he said, and his hands told it all as they climbed the air and molded it to shape, "but I prefer it to an eight-to-five necktie thing. It has its own rewards that you can't find anywhere else." His hands, man, oh, those soaring hands in the air as he spoke. (When you meet him and talk with him, watch his hands. They are the story.)

Poul was an incredibly gracious and tolerant host. His tolerance he exhibited to a high degree when he allowed me to crack open my briefcase and autographed the five or six Anderson works I'd brought with me. (Another note to the DSC members who happen to be, as I was, autograph fiends: Poul is far too gracious to say so, but he'd much rather sit across a couple of good brews and shoot the bull than to scribble his name into a lot of books. I heard him say

so once, at the St. Louiscon Washington party, a year plus after our first meeting, a lapse owed to the early hours and the many beers.)

Lastly, he asked me if I'd ever had anything to do with fandom. "If you want to meet writers," he said, "that's the way to do it. Ever hear of the Little Men?" I hadn't. "It's a Berkley-based fan club," he said, "it has, oh, a fair number of young people in it ... it meets in a member's home every two weeks ... as a matter of fact, it's meeting this Friday ... and my wife and I could give you a lift if you have no way of getting there and would like to come ..."

Little novas went ponging around my brain. Of course I accepted, thanked Poul greatly, grabbed my briefcase and set off back down the hill to where my mother and kid brother had been waiting--can you believe it?--all that time.

A couple of days later I gave Poul a call and arranged to meet them at Berkeley's Student Union that Friday night. Poul came in to fetch me; Karen drove their family car (now license-plated WYVERN) into the hills northeast of the campus. The Pueblo incident had just come down hard on Americans of Poul's political persuasion, and we talked about it as Karen negotiated the green machine up the winding Berkley streets. At one four-way intersection we ran over the corner of a concrete island and racked up the bumper slightly, which, for the sake of omen, was my introduction to science fiction fandom.

Well, that's unfair, because the Little Men turned out to be a Fascinating organization. I have been a member ever since that meeting, save on occasions when dues and survival have competed for the same money, and survival took temporary precedence. Joining the club has

brought me into consistent contact with old-time fans (close fannish contact with people my own age would have to wait a year, till I met NOSFA in 1969), as well as the opportunity to talk with Poul and Karen and eventually Astrid in a social situation. Through the Little Men and its after-meeting beer busts and gab sessions at Brennan's, a by-the-Bay Bar and Cafeteria frequented by the club for the past decade of so, I've had more conversations-of-a-lifetime--for me, anyway--than I could ever hope to recall with Poul, Karen, and the other LMs. Their kindnesses are beyond number--allusion and a couple of examples will have to do. In the autumn of 1969, after my first summer as a member of the New Orleans Science Fiction Association, I arranged through Quinn Yarbro to visit the Anderson home (where Quinn and her husband-to-be Don Simpson had other business) and snap some pictures of Poul and Karen to be used for Nolacon II advertising. The adult Andersons were enthusiastic backers of that illfated bid and posed for a score of photos with "New Orleans in '73" buttons pinned to their tunics. Alas, the camera malfunctioned, and the bid fezzed out,



but the generosity and kindness of the Andersons remain.

Much has changed with me since that first meeting with Poul Anderson, as much has grown--but despite the radicalization of my political views (I call myself a radical skeptic or a skeptical radical depending on which of my sinuses is less clogged that day) my admiration for Poul's work has not changed except to grow. Poul suffers under the "hawk" label, and I suppose that politically he is a conservative in many ways. But unlike some of the principles propounded by other writers, Poul's beliefs are always infused with compassion...an underlying and fundamental faith in the worth of human life. When this is considered, political disagreements are twaddle.

Anderson's writing--well, enough has been said about that subject. Its clarity, its motion, Poul's three Hugos (he is currently up for a 4'th, for the mind-blowingest book ever printed in the field, Tau Zero) ... all are public knowledge.

The influence of knowing him, of knowing a professional writer, has been the gift of a lifetime, personally speaking. I've this lifelong ambition, understand, which has to do with language ... whatever I write, and it probably won't be science

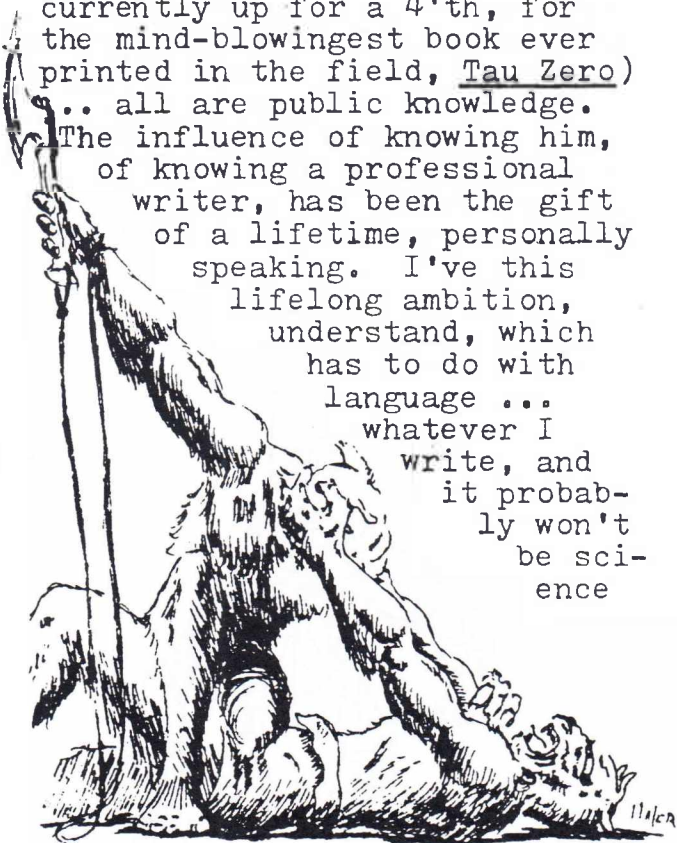
fiction, I have a head start on that ambition from knowing a man who has been there before, and who has made it, and who writes successfully, but never cheaply.

This article is designed as thanks to Poul Anderson ... for the kindness he's shown me and the other littler members of the Little Men, for his support of NOLACON II, and for those hours of talk over the beer-puddles in the Brennan's tables. The accomplishments, the kindness of Poul Anderson are many. For one of the more minor of these accomplishments (minor when placed in any external spectrum), a personal public thanks for showing a skeptically radical young snortsnarler just how excellent a good writer can be.

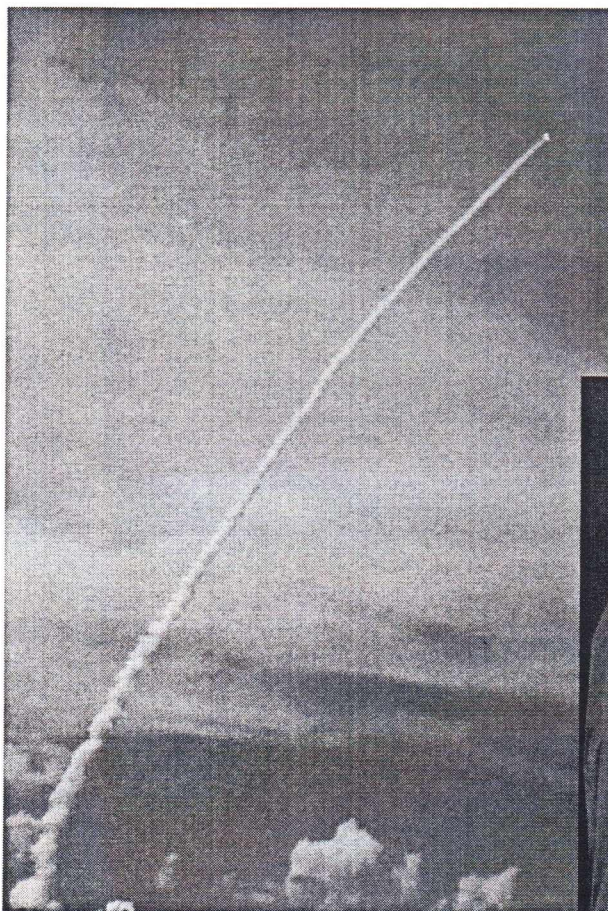
And by the way, Poul.... in case it ever happens again. ... Brian Aldiss' "Hothouse" series won the Hugo in 1962. You'll be ready next time.

LONG RIDERS

I watched the winds of fliers
dead
Read signals in his hair
And twice the message seemed
most said
In the measure of his stare:
"Life means 'You fly', it's
simple," he laughed.
"You either fly or sink.
"I know the clouds. I know
the sun
"The stars at noon, I think.
"I'm not quite sure of the
stars at noon ..." and the
winds of fliers dead
Read signals in his flaring hair
The message that seemed most said



*You are cordially invited
To the
Launch of the Lillians
June 30, 2001
Cocoa, Florida*



R. J. V. P.

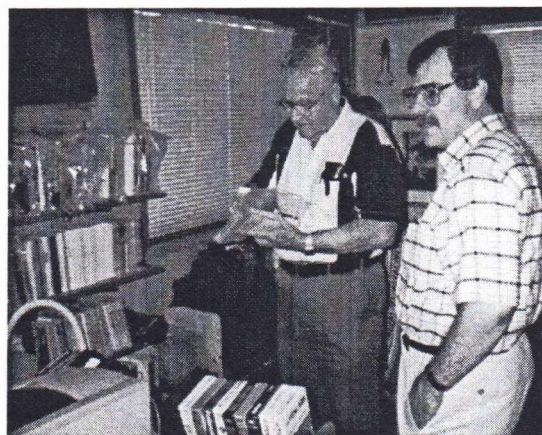
Rose-Marie Donovan and Guy H. Lillian III – June 30, 2001



It was a beautiful day at the Porcher House in Cocoa, Florida when Rose-Marie and I were wed. Earlier that day, as depicted on the last page, a Delta rocket had risen to the stars from nearby Cape Canaveral ... but by two in the afternoon, I'd forgotten it ever happened. Here is the most beautiful bride in the world with my brother and best man, Lance, matron of honor Annie Green, and the unworthy groom.

Photo by Jose More

Methought the meetings of the Clans went well. Bro Lance was appropriately impressed by my Father-in-Law, Joe Green, the first for-real writer he's ever met. Here he checks out Joe's workshop and shelf of publications.



I4



Our reception was, if I do say so, a hoot. Here Annie & Justin Winston tear up the floor as they fulfill a promise to dance at my wedding.

Below: the Greenhouse gang.



Our wedding song.

Many a tear has to fall but it's all in the game
All in the wonderful game that we know as love
You have words with him and your future's looking dim
But these things your hearts can rise above
Once in a while he won't call but it's all in the game
Soon he'll be there by your side with a sweet bouquet
And he'll kiss your lips
and caress your waiting fingertips
And your heart will fly away ...
Soon I'll be there by your side with a sweet bouquet
And I'll kiss your lips
and caress your waiting fingertips
And our hearts will fly away



And so off we go ... it was a great day. If you weren't there, we wish you had been.

Guy and Rosy



I received this commentary on the Internet, where it had circulated so widely that its author, a columnist living in San Francisco, was written up in USA Today.

A QUESTION

Tamim Ansary

I've been hearing a lot of talk about "bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age." Ronn Owens, on KGO Talk Radio today, allowed that this would mean killing innocent people, people who had nothing to do with this atrocity, but "we're at war, we have to accept collateral damage. What else can we do?" Minutes later I heard some TV pundit discussing whether we "have the belly to do what must be done."

And I thought about the issues being raised especially hard because I am from Afghanistan, and even though I've lived here for 35 years I've never lost track of what's going on there. So I want to tell anyone who will listen how it all looks from where I'm standing. I speak as one who hates the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden. There is no doubt in my mind that these people were responsible for the atrocity in New York. I agree that something must be done about those monsters.

But the Taliban and Ben Laden are not Afghanistan. They're not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who took over Afghanistan in 1997. Bin Laden is a political criminal with a plan. When you think Taliban, think Nazis. When you think Bin Laden, think Hitler. And when you think "the people of Afghanistan" think "the Jews in the concentration camps." It's not only that the Afghan people had nothing to do with this atrocity. They were the first victims of the perpetrators. They would exult if someone would come in there, take out the Taliban and clear out the rats nest of international thugs holed up in their country.

Some say, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, hurt, incapacitated, suffering. A few years ago, the United Nations estimated that there are 500,000 disabled orphans in Afghanistan – a country with no economy, no food. There are millions of widows. The Taliban has been burying these widows alive in mass graves. The soil is littered with land mines, the farms were all destroyed by the Soviets. These are a few of the reasons.

We come now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age. Trouble is, that's been done. The Soviets took care of it already. Make the Afghans suffer? They're already suffering. Level their houses? Done. Turn their schools into piles of rubble? Done. Eradicate their hospitals? Done. Destroy their infrastructure? Cut them off from medicine and health care? Too late. New bombs would only stir the rubble of earlier bombs. Would they at least get the Taliban? Not likely. In today's Afghanistan, only the Taliban eat, only they have the means to move around. They'd slip away and hide. Maybe the bombs would get some of those disabled orphans, they don't move too fast, they don't even have wheelchairs. But flying over Kabul and dropping bombs wouldn't really be a strike against the criminals who did this horrific thing. Actually it would only be making common cause with the Taliban – by raping once again the people they've been raping all this time.

So what else is there? What can be done, then? Let me now speak with true fear and trembling. The only way to get Bin Laden is to go in there with ground troops. When people speak of "having the belly to do what needs to be done" they're thinking in terms of having the belly to kill as many as needed. Having the belly to overcome any moral qualms about killing innocent people. Let's pull our heads out of the sand. What's actually on the table is Americans dying. And not just because some Americans would die fighting their way through Afghanistan to Bin Laden's hideout. It's much bigger than that. Because to get any troops to Afghanistan, we'd have to go through Pakistan. Would they let us? Not likely. The conquest of Pakistan would have to be first. Will other Muslim nations just stand by?

You see where I'm going. We're flirting with a world war between Islam and the West. And guess what that's Bin Laden's program. That's exactly what he wants. That's why he did this. Read his speeches and statements. It's all right there. He really believes Islam would beat the west. It might seem ridiculous, but he figures if he can polarize the world into Islam and the West, he's got a billion soldiers. If the west wreaks a holocaust in those lands, that's a billion people with nothing left to lose, that's even better from Bin Laden's point of view. He's probably wrong, in the end the West would win, whatever that would mean, but the war would last for years and millions would die, not just theirs but ours. Who has the belly for that? Bin Laden does. Anyone else?

Philip K. Dick wrote that if someday we teach an inanimate object to think – to feel – to care – to love – then, in direct and devastating contradiction to Asimov, and I'm afraid to A.I., the inanimate has not conquered us, we have conquered the inanimate. So ... what do we tell it to do?

A.I.

CIRRUS
SOCRATES
PARTICLE
DECIBEL
HURRICANE
DOLPHIN
TULIP
GHLIII.

Well ... did it work?



Nothing is more ridiculous than a science fiction film with pretenses to profundity ... which doesn't deliver. I have in mind **Solaris**, a cheap Russian ripoff of **2001** which made no sense, and of course, the first **Star Trek** movie, made by a veteran of a truly profound SF film who should have known better. **Metropolis**, of course, was a stunning sociopolitical statement, and **The Day the Earth Stood Still** – the Robert Wise film I just mentioned – was the first genre film to take on the moral quandary of nuclear war. **The World, the Flesh and the Devil** and **On the Beach** did the same thing, and the original – and infinitely superior – **Planet of the Apes** made a potent point despite the obviousness of its finale.

But politics and A-bombs are *big* issues. Their society-wide scope shields them from the dangerous emotional intensity of the personal. Seldom is science fiction on film geared to a purpose with a connexity to human feeling. Sometimes, though, the field surprises you. **Blade Runner** overcame its lame voice-over narration and confused pretenses ("Hey, let's make *Deckard* a replicant! That would be *really heavy!*") through the splendid performances of Rutger Hauer and Darryl Hannah, and John Sayles' simple, brilliant **Brother from Another Planet** was a moving portrait of a freedom-seeking slave.

Now there is **A.I.**, and its theme: the big enchilada: **LOVE**.

For a while after its release, fandom sang with debate over the collaboration, so different from anything either has ever done: Stanley Kubrick, visionary and cynic, who envisioned the film, and Steven Spielberg, romantic and optimist, who brought it to be. At least one fannish voice I respect thought the film derivative and dull. I saw in it a profound – but one-sided – reflection on the nature, power, perversity and purpose of love, and was deeply moved. Stanley Kubrick, SF's great poet of cynicism, seemed to have been fighting back against that cynicism, desperately trying to find humane value in a universe he'd found cold and cruel ... or even worse, ridiculous. His career must have brought him little solace. In **A Clockwork Orange** political corruption subsumed criminality. In **Dr. Strangelove** racial existence itself was threatened by idiots' machismo. The romantic, if perverse, imaginings of Humbert Humbert were dashed in **Lolita**. In **2001**, of course, the exploration of space and the rebirth it will bring mankind were given unforgettable metaphorical depiction. But how impersonal was its promised fate for our species? There wasn't a trace of personality in any character in

2001; HAL was the only creature of interest. In all of Kubrick's work, only *Paths of Glory* afforded a glimpse of human compassion and dignity, as a German girl's simple folk song was taken up by the French soldiers who kill and are killed by her countrymen, singing that same song in the trenches. It was a unique poignancy in Kubrick's *oeuvre*; the rest, however brilliant, was as cold as interplanetary space.

At life's end he sought outside help. In deeding *A.I.*, which he had story-boarded almost to completion, to Steven Spielberg, he may well have been trying to offer humanity a final redemption after a lifetime of disgust. Spielberg, with a tendency to insipidity, may have seemed an extreme answer to an extreme problem. But if the combination worked, *A.I.* would be at once a chill and brutal analysis of love and a warm and *forgiving* celebration of its power. That's the ambition I see. What's the success?

Despite the above, I'm a strong believer in the idea that a work of art attains a life of its own, separate from the intent of its creator(s), so it's probably unimportant, however instructive, to trace the directors' sensibilities. Okay ... let's offer due notice to the awesome (and quite original) fx and the exquisite John Williams music. Let's acknowledge that Haley Joel Osment and Jude Law gave phenomenal performances as clockwork toys both replicating human emotion and commenting on it. That done, let's face the flick as it is, a separate being from its creators, and ask, what does *A.I.* say about its immortal topic, love?

*For the world's more full of weeping
Than you can understand*

Love has baffled philosophers and artists since civilization's dawn. It is by far the best and most agonizing thing about being human ... and we don't understand it at all. It seems beyond our capacity to understand ... so big, so wonderful, so resistant to comprehension that the phrase "God is Love" might truthfully be reversed. Love is so important and so confusing to human beings that it might as well be our deity. So ... where does that leave agnostics? The fool hath said in his heart that there is no God. Doesn't that mean that the fool hath said in his movie that there is no Love?

It's easy to see how a hard-boiled doubter like Kubrick would find the whole idea of Love an enduring fairy tale, and indeed, the film's use of fairy tales as a metaphor for love is complex. When the doctor and the human father first discuss the idea of substituting a robot child for a lost human one, they stand before an illustration for "The Emperor's New Clothes". They could be acknowledging that the whole idea is Folly, and the film's characters are fools in search of a fairy tale. This metaphor is overt later, once David learns the story of Pinocchio: not only is Pinocchio a central theme, but remember the mother losing her shoe on the way to the ball? Reflections of a glass slipper, perhaps?

But the quest for Love defies cynicism. It resonates on too universal a scale: it carries too familiar a pain. The pain of the mother who has seemingly lost her human, "orga," child is too real to be scoffed at so cavalierly. An image of a mobile, a maternal figure with an empty heart, is shown again and again. That heart demands to be filled.

Maternal love is only one form of love, and the emotion is imagined in *A.I.* in many different forms. Its need is paraphrased in many ways. When Hurt's "meca" secretary, in the opening sequence, is asked to describe the feeling, she launches into a description of physical, sensual simulation straight out of **Romance of the Rose** and centuries of soft-core pornography since: heavier breathing, increased tumescence, the imitation of desire. It's that shallow understanding that Jude Law's spectacular Gigolo Joe affects. This robot lover is a wonderful character, protective of David yet defiantly cynical. His advice to David on human love, the feeling he was constructed to mimic, is bleak: "They [people, us, orgas] don't love you; they love what you do for them."

(Gigolo Joe is a strong, strange character. His final words – as he's captured, presumably due for the robotic equivalent of a glue factory – are a protest and a declamation, as well as a – perhaps inadvertent – reflection of the only name ever claimed by the Creator: "I AM. I WAS.")

This cynicism is perhaps "natural" for a meca, for mecas are creatures of imprinting and programming. David comes to love his "mother" when she repeats the magic words, "sealing" his emotions in a manner suggestive of Freud. Didn't the sainted Sigmund state that we cannot help but respond to certain cues – of language, of posture, of appearance – in conditioned ways? *CIRRUS – SOCRATES – PARTICLE – DECIBEL*

– HURRICANE – DOLPHIN – TULIP. Are these words any different from the comforting voice, the nurturing breast, that teach us orgas to love?

And what is love, in the language of this movie?

Love is protection. The demand is to “Keep me safe.” In return is the assurance that you’re “one of a kind,” “unique,” “special.”

Poor David learns the lie behind that assurance. This is where David’s odyssey through the film leads him – past the agony of maternal abandonment and the sadism of the Flesh Fairs, themselves a searing simile for rejection (“Any old iron?”), past the sensuous escapist haunts of Rouge City, to the place “where the lions weep” and dreams end. Certainly David’s dreams of love end there. When he finds his creator, William Hurt, David discovers that he has been built in the image of a dead son, that he is the prototype of a robot race advertised as “At Last a Love of Your Own”. He is anything but one of a kind or unique. Loneliness and lovelessness demand a cure. David finds he has been made to provide it. He flees this terrible knowledge back into the illusion that has sustained his search all along: the Blue Fairy.

Here is how David gets his wish. Here is how love makes him real. He is drawn into eternal illusion. The film seems to say that he becomes as real – as enraptured by illusion – as you or I. The search for love is a quest for comforting illusion. Waiting at its end is only a Blue Fairy, who will, if you’re as lucky as David, bring that illusion to life, and once that life ends, let you follow it into oblivion.

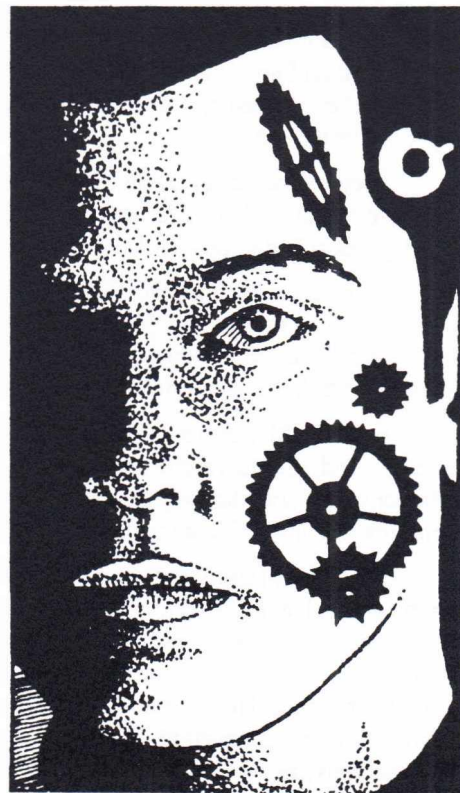
Love remains, at *A.I.*’s wistful ending, what it was in the beginning, the empty heart in the mobile, the empty arms of the child left by the side of the road, a universal need, the call of one being – orga or meca – for another. And if love resists the movie’s attempts to explain it, if it must remain part of “the inner world of dreams,” then so be it, and David’s day of perfect love ends therefore with triumph, as he “goes to that place where dreams are born.” But it’s a pitiful triumph. Love is a transitory illusion, and only illusion brings happiness.

Here is the film’s fundamental failure. The moral question of responsibility asked at the outset of the film goes unanswered. *A.I.* deals only with the *needful* part of love. It doesn’t touch at all on *giving* it. The Wizard of Oz told the Tin Man that the measure of lives is not how much they love, but how much they are loved in return. I always thought that a distorted point of view. Someone asks in the film, “Didn’t God make Adam to love Him?” I’d say yes ... but I don’t read the sentence the way the script does. I’d say God created Adam not so He would have someone to give Him love, but simply so He would have someone on which to *bestow* love. *Being* loved isn’t the whole point of the emotion. *Giving* love is just as big a need.

Everyone in *A.I.* *needs* love. Who in the film *gives* it? William Hurt’s doctor creates David, his “mother” programs David, to love *them*. David’s search is for someone who will love *him*. Who teaches David that the point of life is not to gather love, like money in an account, but to *spend* it? The only way to know love is to bestow it. The empty heart in the mobile is not filled from without, but from within. I don’t think David ever learns that. I don’t think *A.I.*, for all its admirable ambition, has that lesson to teach.



Illus by Charlie Williams



Remembering Fred Hoyle

Gregory Benford

When one of the most prominent scientists in the world turned to writing strict genre science fiction the realms of both literature and science took notice. It is difficult now to recapture the startled remarks of both reviewers and scientists when Fred Hoyle published **The Black Cloud** in 1957, apparently not noticing that he had linked science fiction and real, hard science in a way no one had before.

Even before I met Hoyle in 1963, I had wondered if this novel's Chris Kingsley was a stand-in for the author. The novel had affected me strongly, because for the first time it united my growing interest in science with the zest of speculation I enjoyed in science fiction. When I arrived in La Jolla, to register for graduate study in physics, I was startled to see a notice announcing a seminar by Hoyle that very week. I arrived early, and saw a walnut of a man, tanned and rugged, who spoke with straightforward assertion, his manner and accent quite different from the studied styles of Oxford and Cambridge. His seminar was a brilliant argument in favor of a new cosmology, and he quickly covered the green writing boards with tensor equations. He was at his best in the give-and-take of questions afterward, when he attacked the conventional wisdom of the big-bang cosmology. That was the clue. Physically Hoyle didn't resemble Kingsley, but there was that air: "I'm only really comfortable as an underdog," Kingsley remarks in the novel, and indeed Hoyle has played that role throughout his career.

I saw much of Hoyle during my graduate career and on visits to England, and came to see his novels as expressions of a more general attitude toward Establishment science and power. As his Kingsley remarks, "Don't I keep telling everyone that our whole social system is archaic, with the real knowledge at the bottom and a whole crowd of hobbledehoy's at the top?" This, too, paralleled C.P. Snow's famous Two Cultures speech in 1959, which pointed out that lack of integration between humanistic and scientific world views damaged society. Indeed, Hoyle went further than Snow. He felt that the scientifically trained are better suited to govern than the arts-educated, since technical studies are less tied to emotional questions, and thus such people could bring a certain coolness of judgment to hotly contested issues.

These views echo John W. Campbell, and Hoyle led a life Campbell would have liked: an original, speculative scientist, "hard" sf author, maverick. We might think of Hoyle as the first to do what so many science-fiction figures ached to do, all the while keeping his sardonic distanced from the conventional wisdom.

Many consider **The Black Cloud** to be Hoyle's best fiction, and indeed as his most enduring work. As *The (London) Times Literary Supplement* remarked, "What gives probability to the story is the author's command of a wide range of scientific reference...The reader follows diagrams and stumbles through equations and begins to feel quite a scientist himself by the end of the story."

Exactly. All this was qualitatively different from standard science fiction. Certainly scientists had been major characters, and, indeed, ornate technical talk festooned even the early pulp magazines. But never before had science fiction conveyed convincingly the life logic of scientists at work. Writers had pressed their noses against the glass, peering inward at the Technicolor glow of science, but none had participated at the highest levels.

Hoyle had followed C.P. Snow's earlier forays into the world of science and power. Both used minimal dramatic skills, leaning heavily on occasionally cumbersome authorial voice. (Chapter Three opens, "It is necessary now to describe the consternation that Kingsley's cablegram produced in Pasadena.") Both gave us yards of talk, deliberately avoiding any taint of melodrama. But Hoyle's crucial change was to introduce, without apology, a speculative premise. He had seen that an incisive way to show scientists at work lay in making them solve a problem that was new and important. This was clearly more interesting than recounting the history of discoveries in crystallography, as Snow had done in **The Search**.

What's more, Hoyle believed there was merit to his speculations. His preface flatly says, "After all, there is very little here that could not conceivably happen." To underline this, Hoyle did not set his story a comfortable few

decades ahead. He placed it smack in his own time, waving away the fact that this would date the story superficially within a few years. This minor loss was offset by the verisimilitude of using England as it was in 1956, warts and all. We don't mind that computers use "valves" (electronic tubes, replaced by transistors in the late 1950s) and are programmed by holes punched in paper tape. What matters is the excitement of watching people struggle with large problems.

Not that these are fully rounded people. Hoyle devoted little space to "humanizing" his characters, perhaps because he has always felt that there are types of people whose thinking is more important than any other facet. Like many untutored authors, he ends up portraying himself. He seems to have realized this, and in his Preface warily sidesteps identification of his characters with real people. But the central figure of **The Black Cloud** is clearly much like Hoyle, the outsider.

His first major break with convention came with the Steady-State theory, which imposes in one bold stroke the requirement that the universe look the same at all times. (This paralleled the condition already invoked in existing theories, that the universe look the same in all directions, from any point. That immediately means the universe must appear to be expanding no matter where you are. This imposes certain strong conditions on theory.) Demanding that the universe not change with time means that matter must be created at a steady rate, to force the expansion. The Steady-State theory was a lovely idea, but the story of science is that of the brutal murder of beautiful theories by ugly facts. The nasty fact that the universe had an earlier, hotter phase (producing the microwave hiss known as three-degree, cosmic background radiation) finally killed the Steady-State model.

While he made major contributions to many fields, from stellar evolution to cosmology, Hoyle became best known for his more speculative ideas. He proposed that Earthly life could have begun from molecules delivered by in falling comets. He wrote two novels exploring the idea that communication between interstellar civilizations would proceed by sending instructions for building special computers. He fought a long rearguard action in favor of the Steady-State theory, often inventing ingenious ways to conjure up the microwave background radiation and keep the essentials of the theory.

The Black Cloud sets forth perhaps his best known wild idea. It makes plausible the notion of a purely physical origin for life, with no necessity for biological processes. In principle this is possible, since life at its most general demands only a flow of energy through a system which can spontaneously organize itself into more complex forms. I suspect that Hoyle wanted to shake up his colleagues with this novel, rather than propose an idea which could be studied immediately. However, he has since published papers about the formation of complex chemical forms in interstellar clouds, and the possibility that life could arise there. The papers have been attacked, and Hoyle has replied with pointed and witty rejoinders.

21

All through his varied career he often seemed to enjoy playing the underdog, or taking up similar causes. When fellow Cambridge scientists Martin Ryle and Anthony Hewish won the Nobel prize, principally for the discovery of pulsars, Hoyle strongly protested in the Times that Hewish's graduate student, Jocelyn Bell, had been wrongly ignored. She had in fact spotted the regular radio pulses that led to the discovery. Omitting her from the prize was a spectacular example of Establishment stupidity.

I recall asking Hoyle if Chris Kingsley's name hinted at Kingsley Amis, one of the Angry Young Men who were coming to prominence then (and also an early herald of science fiction as significant literature, in his **New Maps of Hell**, 1960). He answered that he could not recall, that details about his fiction faded quickly after the work was done. What has not faded is the importance of **The Black Cloud**, with its grand ideas cast in a plain, flat style. The novel's opening chapters often catch the characters in motion, traveling (as jet-set scientists do) to keep on top of a fast-breaking idea.

Hoyle's simple demand that science fiction not yield incessantly to melodrama, that it render with fidelity how scientists think and talk and struggle for power: these facets have persisted in science fiction. I can see clearly that its influence stayed with me. I used Hoyle as a real figure in my novel **Timescape**, and mined my memories of his seminar style for fictional characters in it, too.

I named my English astronomer in my novel **Eater Kingsley**, in homage to him. And though Fred became grumpy and distant from the Big Science world after 1970 he was happy to discuss his fiction, and his latest wild scientific ideas. He thought SF was the way to reach the public, going around the stuffed shirts.

ॐ

*Says the great Jeeves: "Soggies have been cavorting around the place for many a long year, so it seems a good idea to devote some space to the little critters." **Challenger** concurs, and listens closely as the creator of one of fanzines' classic cartoons asks*

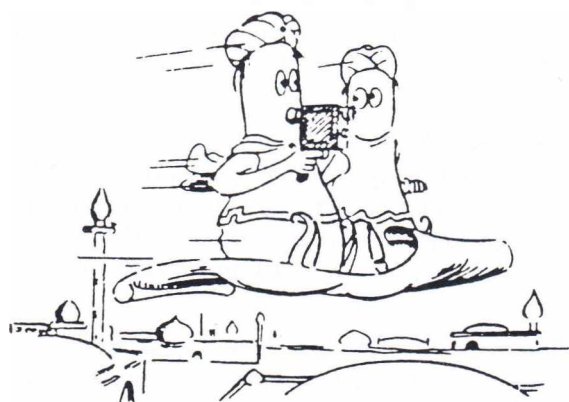
HOW MUCH IS THAT SOGGY IN THE INK WELL?

Terry Jeeves

As far as I can recall, the first Soggy (The Mark 1) appeared in Alan Dodd's **Camber** in 1953. It was the result of two forces, pressure of work and my rotten figure drawing. To solve the problem, I evolved a simple, easily-drawn shape. A few modifications and the basic Soggy was born: a pear-shaped body, boneless arms, thin hair and no mouth, nose or legs. The only clothes were shoes and a pair of trousers supported by a single strap. (The latter quickly evolved into more suitable clothing.) Eyes were simply two ovals holding black dots. It's amazing how much expression you can get into such a simple face. (Very occasionally, for a special reason, a Soggy would acquire a nose or mouth – Soggies normally communicate by telepathy and gain sustenance by absorbing solar energy.)

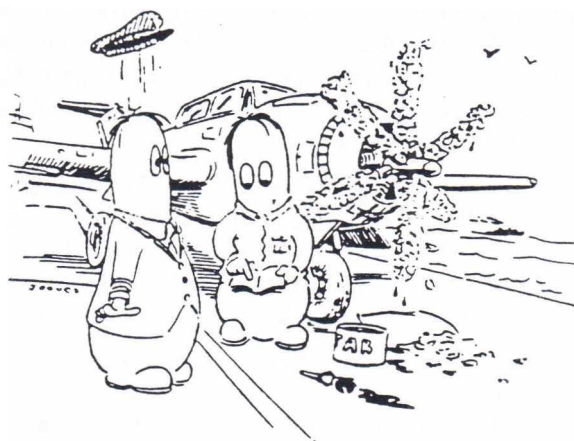
I'd always been a bit dubious about characters taking over from authors, but the Soggies

bumbling, good-hearted and a bit dim. Soggies have an appeal about them, their wide-eyed expression of brainless idiocy can be very touching. This would vanish if they had normal features. The critters made this obvious: this was dictum number 1. It also followed that no Soggy could be cruel or malicious. Try as I might, I couldn't create a situation where the fellow wasn't more to be pitied than censured. This means that finding a way to express variety of expression had to be found. Lacking mouth, nose, cheeks or eyebrows, they demand that this be done by the positioning of eyes, hair and body posture. It seems to have worked out pretty well.



"I think this is what they call a 'travelling matte' shot".

seem to have done just that with me. Very early on it became apparent that they were the cartoon version of Mister Average – the chap next door who is



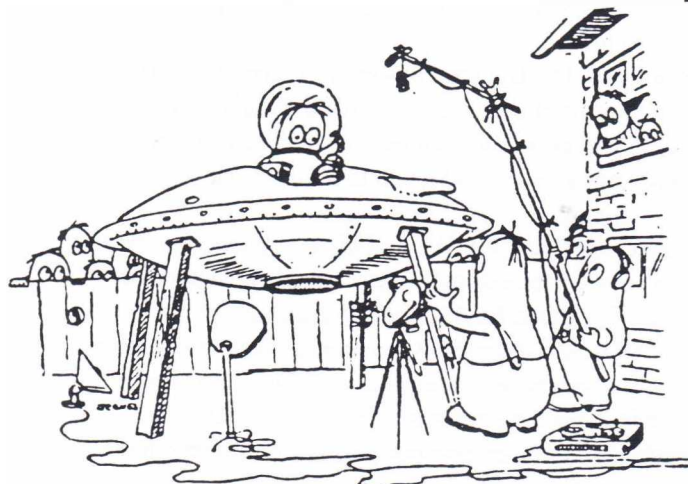
"It says it here, 'All windows are to be fully feathered during ground test'".

For many moons, the little creatures romped happily through the pages of many a fanzine. Then one day some horribly drawn cartoons appeared in **The Tape Recording Magazine**. I took one look, said "I can do better than that" and bunged off half a dozen. They were accepted, more demanded, and I was away. Soggies even made it to the cover for a special edition. For that, I had to do a montage of a

Commissionaire, a queue and two Soggies standing outside the Hotel Russell.

However, the cartoon of which I'm the most proud was the year Eric Bentcliffe ran for TAFF and I sold the magazine a cartoon plugging the event. I wonder how many SF fans were amazed to see a *Bentcliffe for TAFF* slogan in a commercial magazine.

Emboldened by this success, I began to try other markets. Soggy cartoons appeared all over the place. *Sea Cadet*, *Banjo Mandolin & Guitar*, *Angling*, *Quiet Please*, *Teacher's World*, *Hi-Fi News*, *Audio-Visual Magazine* and even as a regular strip in the *Sheffield Children's Telegraph*.

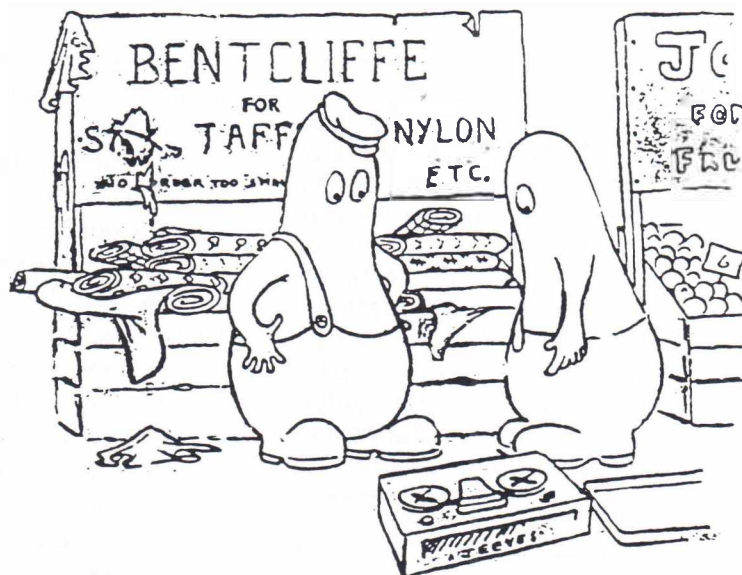


"Now I want you to imagine that you're absolutely lost in the vast immensity of inter-galactic space."

A Soggy cartoon featuring a crystal microphone was reprinted in the *Cosmocord Magazine*. During the drought of '76, the Yorkshire Water Board used one of my cartoons in several advertisements – only stopping when I wrote asking for payment – typically, they never replied to my letter. A city centre camera shop had Soggies in their advertising brochure, and they also featured in two of Industrial Safety cartoons, one for Monsanto, the other for I.C.I. Soggies also appeared in a book, *Tape Recording and the Law*, as well as a handbook of helpful advice for the disabled, and one was even used in *The Billy Graham Hymn Book*. They also illustrated a story I sold to *Nursery World*.

The longest-running sales started in 1960 when I began a regular cartoon in *Amateur Cin*

World, which was then a monthly. For a time it went weekly, which meant a lot of work, but also increased lolly. The mag changed its title to *Movie Maker*, then to *Making Better Movies*, and finally



"I'd like a piece of felt, about a quarter of an inch square—for a new pressure pad."

to *Video Maker*, before they went bankrupt owing me 120 pounds.

That run alone lasted over thirty years, and highlights included the use of Soggies (by Alan Cleave, with my permission) in a short animated film advertising the Ten Best Competition. One year, they even appeared on the official Christmas card from *Movie Maker*. Not bad going for something that started out to be a labour saver.

In addition, the little critters have often appeared in the pages of *Erg* and in many another fanzine, but sadly, a collection of children's stories featuring Sam Soggy, still remain unsold – so if you know a friendly publisher ... ?

Meanwhile, I hope you hope you like the samples given here, but if you ever come visiting, I have two thick albums full of clippings.

MY DAD

Charles Williams, Jr.

24 WILLIAMS, CHARLES EDWARD SR., age 71, passed away Monday June 25, 2001 after a long and brave battle with kidney and heart disease. He was of the Methodist faith. He was born in Paducah Kentucky; a graduate of Knoxville Central High School in 1947, Charlie went to work for Union Carbide/ Martin-Marietta in the early '50s, and retired after 37 years of service. His lifelong interest in history led him to co-found the Pellissippi Genealogical Society, and he was past-president of the Tennessee Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. He was the author of numerous genealogical books and surveys. Preceded in death by parents Robert Edward Williams in 1966 and Edna Alice Williams in 1992, and sister Peggy Louise in 1927. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Mary Edna Jones Williams, sons and daughters-in-law Charles Jr. and Sylvia Williams and David A. and Lisa Williams, grandchildren Anna Marie Whisett, Charles E. Williams III, and Olivia Lynn Williams, and a host of friends. Special thanks to Dr. Jack Benhayon. Graveside service at 11 a.m. Thursday at Lynnhurst Cemetery with Rev. John R. Mays officiating.

About a week before he died, I called Dad about some trivial matter of family history. "I have a question," I said.

"Go ahead," he replied. "I got answers I haven't used yet."

That pretty much summarizes his character. Dad was a classic smartass.

Months after his funeral, now, I'm reflecting on how much he shaped my character, and not just the smartass part. He was a clever and imaginative cartoonist; he was an avid reader, particularly of history and science fiction.

He started me with Tom Swift and comic books (mourning the loss of his own Golden Age superhero collection in the Flood of 1960). Later he introduced me to Heinlein and Clarke and Bradbury. He bought me a copy of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* for my tenth birthday. Together we rode the New Wave of Zelazny and LeGuin and all the rest. He loved Larry Niven, hated Phil Dick.

We argued politics. The last time he voted Democrat was for Stevenson in '52. I've never met a Republican I liked. Dad's idea of music was the Grand Old Opry; he never quite understood rock and roll after Elvis, much less Frank Zappa. We found much to argue about.

I never won.

His fascination with the Civil War and his own genealogy made a historian out of a man whose professional career was in computers and programming (He hated Windows, having spent decades in the murky, monochrome world of DOS and its primitive, vacuum-tube predecessors). In the musty archives of a library or the tangled underbrush choking a forgotten cemetery we found common ground. Working together we discovered a patriotism we shared despite our politics, as officers in the local chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Dad knew his kidneys would fail one day; he was 4-F during the Korean War, and knew the disease was progressive. He went on dialysis in '92 and stayed relatively healthy. Eventually, though, aortic sclerosis clogged up his heart. He submitted to a cardiac catheterization to check the extent of the damage, and this simple diagnostic procedure killed him.

I was the last family member to see him. I accompanied Dad as the orderly took him down from his hospital room to the cardiac cath lab. As he lay on the gurney he observed his reflection in the mirrored ceiling: "I look pretty goddam good for such a sick man." We wheeled him into a curtained alcove and the orderly left us.

"Be sure to get a good view of the monitor," I reminded him.

"Not often do you get to see yourself from the inside-out, so take notes."

He waved the back of his hand at me. "G'wan outta here," he growled.

So I left. I didn't say "good luck" or "I love you". I went upstairs to the cardiac care lounge and waited with my mother and brother and others while thirty feet away Dad's heart simply gave out. After the surgeon and a nun came out to break the news and the melodramatic scene played itself out, I went up to his hospital room to collect his stuff. On his bedside table was a copy of *VALIS* by Phil Dick.

If Dad had one regret, it was that he hadn't been an archaeologist. He loved to dig stuff up. You all know his favorite sport was to climb around in the Family Tree, shake the branches, and see who fell out. History was a passion for him. But more on that in a moment...

Dad's life had both quality and quantity: he enjoyed the Biblical "threescore and ten", and all those years were rich with family and friends. His advice to me was "Do what you want to do, but do it right." *He* did it right.

He was the bravest man any of you ever knew. In the face of an illness that killed most people in a couple of years, he did what he had to do with grace and good humor, and extended his life another decade. He never considered his disabilities to be crippling—just inconvenient. To fall back on a terrible cliché, his glass was always half-full, never half-empty. And even when it was down to the last sip, he was still sucking on the rim of that glass, loving every minute of it.

And while he looked to uncertain future with hope and confidence, he also looked to the past, examining the lives of his ancestors, trying to understand the choices that *they* had made, that made *us* possible...

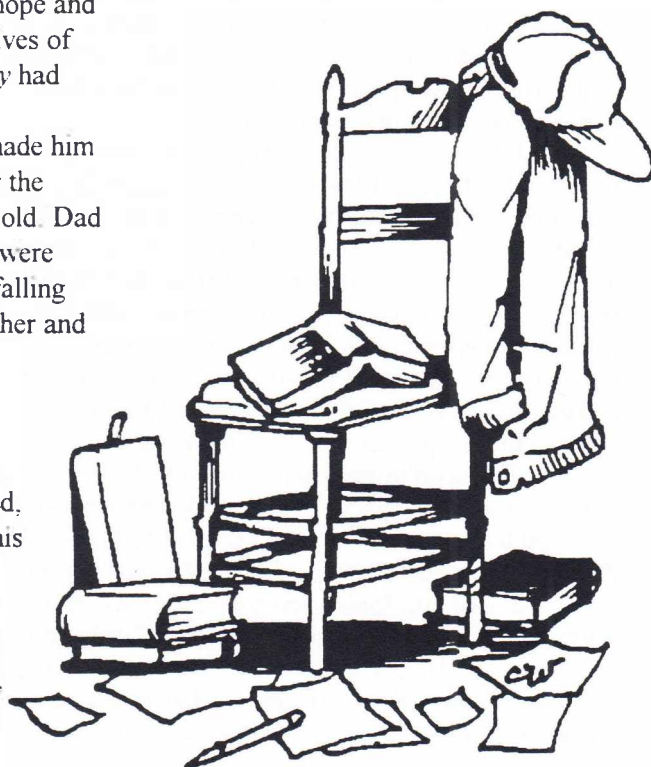
I think there was one moment in his life that made him the man he was, that infected him with this passion for the past. It was August 7, 1945, and he was sixteen years old. Dad and his parents were up home in Paducah, where they were tearing down the old Home Place. The old house was falling apart and was a dangerous eyesore, so Dad and his father and a couple of uncles were taking it to pieces.

Two things happened that day. First, as they dragged the old cabin's logs to a bonfire, Dad was struck at how no one seemed to care about the history they were destroying. The people who'd lived and loved, born and died in that house were gone, and here was this modern generation just throwing the past away. Dad said they found embedded in one of the old logs a musketball and a broken indian arrowhead, and at that moment he felt all those past lives close in around him, and he resolved that someday he'd *tell* their stories, so that his own grandchildren in the distant 21st Century would have an answer when they asked, "Gran'daddy, where did I come from?"

But the other thing that happened that day. While they were knocking that house down they learned of the bombing of Hiroshima, and suddenly Dad knew that the awful war that had gone on since he was ten years old was going to end. Suddenly there was going to *be* a tomorrow, and he wouldn't be drafted and sent off to die at 18 on some unpronounceable Pacific island. Now there'd be time to grow up, to go on that hayride with Mary Edna Jones, to be her husband for half a century, to have two sons, to have grandchildren, and to live to be the man we're all richer for knowing.

It's quite a responsibility for me, bearing his name. I'll never measure up to the standard he set, but if I can be half the father he was, I'll be grateful. And if my kids measure their lives by their gran'daddy's, and live up to the quality of his life, they'll turn out fine.

Thanks, Dad.



*Ben Indick is a theatre-goer, playwright, critic, and superior fanzine fan. It is an honor to number him among **Challenger**'s contributors.*

EDD CARTIER: Evergreen Imp

Ben Indick

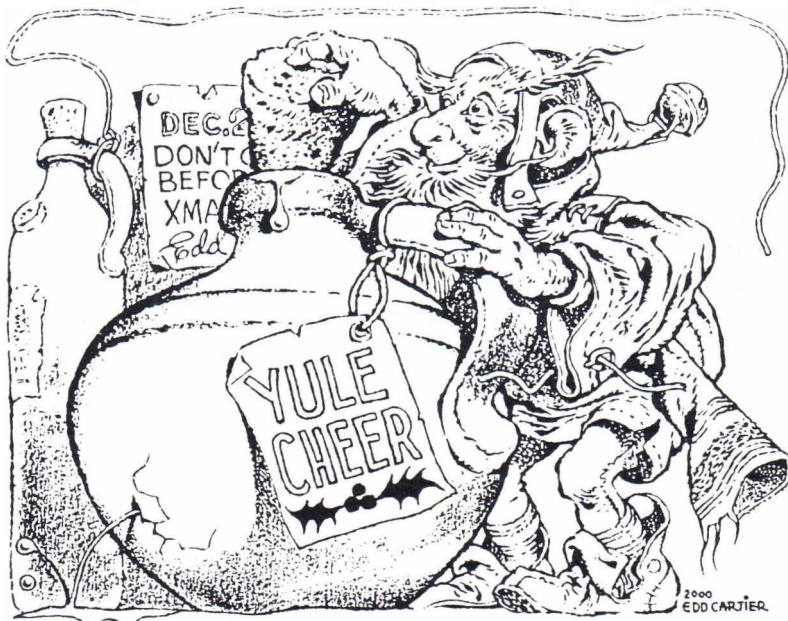
He is just 87, as of August 2001, but darned if he looks or acts like it. In fact, if anything, this spry man with a perpetual smile looks just like one of those imps whose broadly devilish smiles he used to grace the pages and covers of *Unknown Magazine*. He is quiet, shy, and immodestly modest. If a fan compliments him for giving substance to Lamont Cranston as The Shadow in years of illustrating Street and Smith magazines, he refuses to accept the credit. "That was Tom Lovell who started him," he firmly states. Lovell was indeed a great illustrator and went on to become a great Western painter, but it was Ed who polished that great slouch hat, the power in the darting eyes and the extraordinary proboscis.

Edd, who derived his unique name from his actual name, Edward Daniel, was, by happy coincidence, born in a month's time in 1914 with his two great fantasy compatriots, Virgil Finlay and Hannes Bok, a threesome unrivaled artistically by any magazine artists since the great "Red Rose Girls" of *Harper's Monthly* in the first few decades of the century. Edd's earliest years were spent helping in his father's tavern and machine shop, or flying in his brother's airplane. His other constant interest was art, particularly for Western stories. He began drawing for the popular and frequent *Shadow* pulp in 1936 after his graduation from Pratt Institute, along with western and romance pulps, and when John W. Campbell took over editorship of *Astounding Stories* in 1938, and then brought out *Unknown*, among his artistic staff was Cartier, already inimitable, but even more so in the numerous interiors and the five covers he did for the latter. In his loving tribute, **A Requiem For Astounding**, Alva Rogers describes Edd as "the one perfect artist for *Unknown*".

Going off to serve his nation in 1941 in World War II in the Army, Edd was severely wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. *Unknown*, later known as *Unknown Worlds*, was a casualty of the war, but Campbell, who is still regarded by many as the greatest of science fiction editors, brought him back in 1946 to do work for *Astounding*. As late as October 1950, Edd did a cover for L. Sprague de Camp's serial, "The Hand of Zei", his only one for the magazine. Edd still fondly, even reverentially, recalls Campbell and such authors as Theodore Sturgeon, Isaac Asimov and L. Ron Hubbard, the latter whom he knew well, and whose work he often and memorably illustrated for *Unknown*. He also did calendars, jackets and interiors for Fantasy Press and Gnome Press, as well as interiors for *Other Worlds*. His work appeared in numerous other places including the covers and interiors of Red Dragon comics and in newspaper illustrations for King Features Syndicate.

In 1954 he left science fiction and fantasy, which he loved, for graphic design, depriving his old genres of his unique skills, but leaving with little accrued income and few returned artworks. Today, not having commercially drawn for many years, Edd ruefully, if smilingly, admits to possessing only a small number of his original black and white drawings, and just one painting in oils, that being for the famous **From Unknown Worlds** anthology. The late publisher Gerry de la Ree, an intimate friend, brought out a collection of these illustrations, **The Known and the Unknown**, in 1977.

Edd, his wife Gina (Georgina)



and son Dean, named for Edd's artistic ideal. Dean Cornwell, one of the greatest of American illustrators, live in a cozy Arts and Crafts bungalow in a small New Jersey town. The ample grounds contain mysterious groupings of boulders, designed by Dean, a writer and editor who has much of his father's charm and even impish quality, of small boulders arranged to specifically highlight the sun's rays on solstice days. Friends have described them as a "small Stonehenge". Dean smiles but does not wholly disown some similarity, of purpose at any rate. Edd's other son, Kenn, also has a creative nature, being a mapmaker in Seattle for Microsoft. The cellar of the Cartier home, Pinecone Cottage, resembles a charming old tavern, with checkered tablecloths on numerous little tables, with a bar and many curious antique bar furnishings. Small wonder, for Edd inherited these objects, which he obviously treasures, from Cartier's Saloon, his father's old establishment. To join the Cartiers in their intimate home for a party, and to bask in their particular and genuine warmth is an incomparable treat.

Several years ago, Author Services Inc., which represents the estate of L. Ron Hubbard, prepared a videotape on which several people spoke on what the late author had meant to them. A video crew came to Edd's home. Edd, David Kyle, a young artist and I were invited to participate. David expounded easily. The artist I do not recall. I myself fumbled, dry-mouthed. After all, my only "personal" relationship to a favorite author was that for several years Ron had lived in my home town, Elizabeth, N.J., and I was not even been aware of it. However, Edd's own gentle warmth, as well as his personal knowledge of the author came through. Unfortunately, insofar as I know, the tape was never released. I have no objection to laughing at myself, but I would love to see Edd reminiscing again. Happily, Edd has long been a judge in the company's Writers and Illustrators of the Future Contest, a program Ron initiated, and as I did say on the tape, as far as I was concerned it was his greatest contribution to the genre. A few years ago, Edd attended one of the award ceremonies, and basked in the properly due attention.

Cartier illustrations continue to appear in print, as they should. The latest will be a reprint from *Unknown* of his drawing for Nelson S. Bond's "Occupation: Demigod." It is scheduled to be the frontispiece *The Far Side of Nowhere* for a new Arkham House collection of Bond's stories. While Edd no longer regularly draws, a treat he sends his friends annually are Christmas cards featuring brand-new illustrations, jolly and elfin, the quintessential Cartier. It is my privilege to present several of them. Also, a photograph of Edd, together with Andrew Fabian and myself (Barry Malzberg in background), three August birthday boys. Later, speaking to Barry, I said what a treat it was for my guests and me to have such luminaries at the party as himself and two top artists. Barry answered, "With due respect to Steve, whom I admire, there is only one luminary here: Edd Cartier."

Edd is usually listed, almost it appears, by rote, in the "Retro-Hugo" votes for Best Artist of a past year. Too-quickly forgetting fans have thus far ignored this modest but unique giant of the pulps. No one can quibble with those they have honored, they too deserve recognition. However, one can only hope that he will receive his just recognition next time.

References:

The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, by John Clute and Peter Nicholls. St. Martins Press 1993

Edd Cartier: The Known and the Unknown. Introduction, "Of Things Remembered" by Dean Cartier, published by Gerry de la Ree, 1977

A Requiem For Astounding, by Alva Rogers. Advent Publishers 1964

(Card illustrations used with permission and copyright ©1995 and 2000 resp. by Dean and Kenn Cartier / Cartier Studios.)



Lina, Edd and Dean

*The
Challenger
Tribute:*

*Sheila
Lightsey*



She is the very definition of free spirit, at home on the streets of New Orleans, the boudoirs of Paris, the corridors of the worldcon. I only wish I could find the photo I took of her holding up the alligator head ...



Above, at Chicon V: Sheila with her bathroom telephone. Right, at MilPhil, she shows that no mere auto wreck can best SF's rock'n'roll queen. Roll on, Sheila!

EPISTLES

WAHF: Harry Andruschak, Catharine Asaro, Gary Brown, Arthur Hlavaty, Ben Indick, Earl Kemp, Tim Marion, Marc Schirmeister (what a potsrad – I mean a potsrad – I mean a optsacdr – I mean a ...!), George Wells, plus many another fan commenting on 9-1-1.

Sheryl Birkhead
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First off – congratulations – both on the wedding and the Hugo nomination! The Hugo call that I had took me totally by surprise. I was right in the middle of figuring out a therapeutic plan. I had a difficult time making the adjustment to the news – and just like you, once I actually heard it, there was no one I could tell! A bit of irony is that, because I moved last year, I do not have much in the way of records of my artwork for the year and my zines are still all in boxes, so I can't even sort through them and take a look. Yeah, irony.

There are a lot of fan artists who should have gotten a Hugo – the one that immediately comes to mind is Grant Canfield – but that may be more of the time in which I entered fandom and when he was contributing reams of such beautiful work. He was multiply nominated, but never won. I wish there was some way to publically recognize appreciation for a list instead of only one, but I guess that is sort of what happens with the Hugo ballot. Those names are being honored ... but there are always so many more that should be made to realize how their work is appreciated. Okay, I'll get off my soapbox!

Feel free to stay on it, since you're obviously right.

Nice seeing you at the Hugo ceremony, by the way – it won't be the last you'll attend as a nominee.

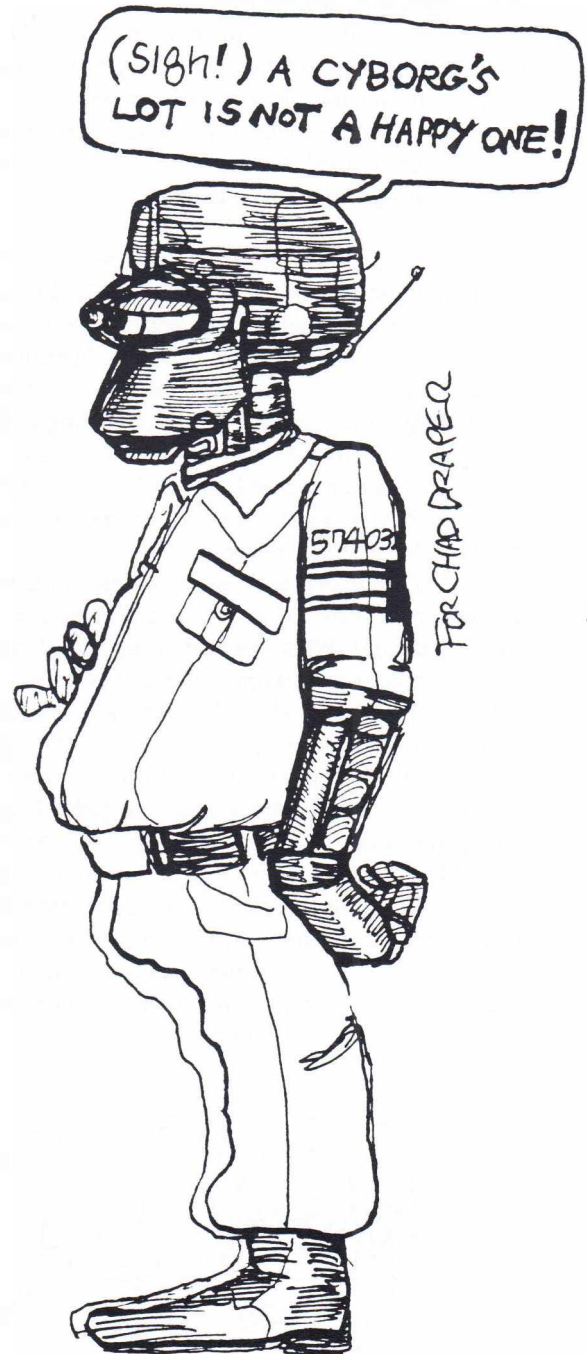
I hadn't seen much of anything by Marc Schirmeister over the past years until recently – now I see you double covers – nice ... And thank you, Lloyd Penney, for the information on Linda Michaels and Joe Maraglino – I really miss Linda's art.

WOW what a fanzine listing – quite a lot of the names are new to me – which is good thing for fandom – means we are still alive and kicking!

Using movie coupons I got for Christmas, I went to see both **A.I.** and **Shrek**. I was very disappointed with **A.I.** for many reasons – the darkness of the film (on at least several levels, the film coloration alone merely being one of them), lack of character

development for the, ahem, human actors, and the rush for closure – looking a lot like a *deus ex machina* rather than a thought out component of the plot.

On the other hand I *loved* **Shrek**. There are few movies that I get on tape, but I will be getting this



one as soon as it becomes available. If for nothing else, I saw in the credits a thank you to *Mrs. Fred Astaire* and I can't recall seeing Fred in the film – so I need to go and hunt. It is truly amazing!

I await **LoTR** and **Harry Potter**.

*Both will be onscreen soon as this issue hits the silks
... what's the word?*

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Your first encounter with Cary Guffey is hilarious – how many times do we get the chance to twig out from someone who appears only to be trying vainly to be *Stranger Than Us*, who actually turns out to have the union card, but to dress in financial analyst drag? Snoopy, humm? Truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

As a struggling-to-emerge artist I have to thank you and the author for Greg Benford's piece on Bonestell, and the contrast with eastern and western SF artists. The field of how much more the human eye can perceive than we have technology to express is fascinating – and comforting to me, dabbling with color studies and coming up with simple to complex items that could never be reduplicated, even when I'm painting from a model or image of something real and solid on the table before me.

To Eugene R Stewart on the efficacy and admirable qualities of print zines. Thank you, thank you, thank you! What you write is so true. I pitched a class to an after-school program here, to teach a course entitled "Pub Your Ish!" Beginning the week after Labor Day, we'll be leading 15 6th-to-8th graders through the delights of writing exercises, art explorations, and book-art forms to publishing their own print zines. The program organizers sounded so jazzed by the idea I expect they'll want to take it too!

I plan to throw a lot of information at them while they're playing with the art, to let them know they're entering into a longstanding tradition. If this flies as well as I'm expecting it to, I may see what other venues I can offer similar delights in.



The other week I joined a zine swap that evolved out of an online artists exchange, and noted in the archives that someone thought the zine movement grew out of the punk movement of the '80s. Rather short-sighted, but an interesting take, if just for the glimpse at another "subculture" where self-publishing one's communications, ideas, ideals took off – the sharing of ideas and culture being after all one of the things zine fandom is all about ...

Congratulations on your wedding, an entire 27 days after mine to the delightful Lise Dyckman! May your pleasures be as profound, your life together as sweet, and with an everyday sacredness suffusing all you do and where you are, as ours. Now by the old saw about all wishes coming back threefold, this recursion ought to set us up for ecstasy over the rest of our lives – and after that, as the feller says, the laundry.

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What a festive wraparound cover! Celebrating your Hugo nomination, huh?

And other matters.

I enjoyed your DeepSouthCon report, including your encounter with the yuppie abductee.

Great ad for "U.K. in 2005". (Is it an armadillo?) Fun article on comic-collecting; I loved the illos. I didn't know that Cyrano de Bergerac was a real person – great background – an interesting man.

Mike Resnick's Chicon 2000 report was a lot of fun. And I always enjoy the fingerprint expert's articles about his old cases. Also, the reminiscences by jurors. I agree with Gene Stewart about the differences between print and e-zines. There are some excellent e-zines, however. (I hope someone is printing them up.)

Interesting, though unpleasant, article on "The Empty Man". I hope you'll tell us if the case goes to trial.

Probably not. See below.

Thanks for all those zine reviews, the great illos and the photos from Mardi Gras. And then came the Nolacon report reprint with original Lee Hoffman illos. (Why don't we make drunks clean up after themselves!?)

Because they'll do such a bad job!

I loved Mike Resnick's "Nolacon II Toastmaster Gig". It was very funny and interesting – all that con background. I enjoyed Dennis Dolbear's "Tales from the Stumble Inn". What great opportunities to meet all those exciting people.

As usual, a wonderful variety of articles and illustrations.

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To start at the back, you can send fanzines to
Professor George Slusser
Eaton Collection
Dept. of Special Collections, Library
University of California
Riverside CA 92517-5900

with some assurance that they will be preserved. They have Terry Carr's collection, and Rick Sneary's, and are getting mine piecemeal whenever I have enough time to checklist a box or more and get it to them.

I've heard from this enthused gentleman and am grateful to you both. Maybe my precious but space-consuming fanzine collection will find a home where it will be cherished and preserved.

Re: [Dave] Robicheaux: I read a couple of the early ones (around **In the Electric Mist with the Confederate Dead**-time). I liked them, but not enough to assiduously keep up with them. I've been dithering with the idea of starting from the beginning and reading the whole set. And what does it matter that the cross-examination in **Cimarron Rose** wouldn't be allowed in any *American* court? You know very well it takes place in Texas, not in ~~America~~ Louisiana, since it isn't a Robicheaux but a Billy Bob Holland.

I have no answer to your high school environment question. I never had any real problems in HS. ROTC got me out of PhysEd, the usual venue for picking on overweight swots. I went to a 40th HS reunion a few years ago – only one I've been to, as I didn't do much to keep in touch once I moved to California. Comparing my 40 years with the others, I was about where I was in school: upper-upper middle. Our Valedictorian had embarked on a new career as a lawyer and was running for Judge. (I never found out if she got the post.) One of the very attractive girls (who still was) brought her drop-dead-gorgeous daughter as a kind of show-and-tell; the "tell" included such things as going on tour with her equestrian group to such places as Brunei (where they were guests of the Sultan). It rather made my travel record picayune. Others had stayed local, joined their fathers' businesses, married their local sweethearts, were at least surface-happy, etc. The World, it go 'long, and it go 'long.

Whose "Last Morning"?

Rosy's poem concerned the spreading of ashes for Dick Donovan, her late husband, a photographer and newspaperman.

Sorry, we didn't get to Rick's in Casablanca. We did get to the Kasbah – but that's in Rabat. And we

did see Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. The Blue Mosque is prettier. Topkapi is bigger, and the Spice Market is more interesting. But Hagia Sophia is *Older*.

Congratulations – on the wedding, the second **Chall** nomination, and **Chall** itself!

Thanks for the good company and the head-swelling offer at the worldcon

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More Hugo nominations than you know what to do with, plunge into marriage, your life is certainly taking off, my friend!

That's another amazingly gorgeous Steven Fox piece you found to run [on Greg Benford's article]. I do so miss seeing Steve's stuff. Talk about your little-acknowledged fan artists. Steve contributed a huge flow of amazing pieces of work all over, but seemed to get little recognition for the work. One of the all time bests in my opinion.

I could identify with Gary Brown's "The Chase", in that I also learned about publishing schedules and release dates and such when I was younger, trying to find the next issue of **Magnus, Robot Fighter**, haunting all the odd drug stores and grocery stores that had comic racks, finally figuring out there was a method and rhythm to it all, not just the odd comic showing up now and then. Part of the thrill of the hunt. Of course now, I can scan a huge catalogue listing just about every little frickin' comic scheduled to come out a few months away, put down my list of the ones I'd like to see, and have them waiting for me when I arrive. Nice to be able to do, but too bad I can't afford the prices they go for these days.

And here are still more fun tales of jury-time from Robert Kennedy. I've done my duty over a dozen times now, showing up when called to serve down to the courthouse, but have yet to make it onto an actual jury. I got close twice, at least being in the pool called up to be interviewed. Maybe it's the black tee-shirt? Or maybe that when they ask if anyone has any questions, I usually do. For instance, we were being interviewed for a child abuse case, and at one point one of the attorneys (I don't recall which, there seemed to be a different one for every person in the room) pointed out that the accused did not speak English very well, and would anyone be prejudiced if they gave their testimony in Spanish. After a moment of silence, I raised my hand with what I thought would be a stupid question, but since it had gone unsaid, felt I should ask: "Will there be someone to interpret into English for us what

they say?" The judge looked at the lawyers, the lawyers looked at the judge and each other, and then someone kind of shrugged and said something about "we'll have to look into that." At which point most of them all started scribbling notes on their pads. My hope is it was something like "Make sure the jurors can actually understand all the testimony," though my paranoia has me feeling it was actually "no way the troublemaker in the tee is going to sit on this jury!"



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In your review of **The Knarley Knews** you ask "Is that *really* Brad Foster's first computer art? ... I like the old style better." Well, that really was my first computer art, also kind of a joke. I mean, how many people actually have their honest-to-God *first* drawing from being a kid? Sp. when I sat down and opened the drawing program on this computer, and started "scribbling," when I'd done, instead of just deleting it. I realized this was a personal historical moment, so printed it out. And thus, my *first* computer art, looking very much like most firsts would look! I think it's kind of interesting how trying to draw with this thing makes my stuff look like a kid's scrawl again. I've not much interest right now in trying to do more on the computer, have enough drawing using the pens, but fun to play now and then.

Oh, and a very minor correction to the Mike Resnick "Nolacon II Toastmaster Gig" article: he didn't actually present the Fan Artist Award to me, but to a friend of mine who stepped in at the last minute to

represent me. While the ceremony was going on, I was sound asleep in the hotel across the street, getting over a mild case of what I feel was food poisoning I got from dinner earlier that evening. Not that I think there was anything wrong with the food, it was probably too good for me. That was back in my bachelor days, when my diet consisted mostly of a steady run of burgers and fries. But to celebrate being on the Hugo ballot together, my friends Dennis Virzi and Pat Mueller (editor then of **Texas SF Inquirer**) took me out to dinner at one of the nice restaurants in the area. I don't recall what I had, but it wasn't a burger and fries. I enjoyed it, but I think actually having good food was such a shock to my system it shut down on me! Later that evening someone came and banged on the hotel door to tell me I'd won, and I'd better drag my sorry ass over to the party, and I think there are photos around here somewhere of Pat and I with dueling Hugo rockets. (The Nolacon rockets are *huge*, looked like you were carrying around a rocker launcher!)

The Nolacon rockets are normal-sized, it's the base that was twice as tall as most. The heaviest Hugo base came from Confederation - Atlanta's solid granite pyramid.

Getting married in 1991 to a woman who can cook and actually enjoys a variety of foods has slowly widened my horizons so that now I have even ventured into such odd areas as sushi. Back then, a California roll probably would have killed me for good!

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My thanks for #14. Fantastic wrap-around cover by Marc Schirmeister. Now I have another person to add for Best Fan Artist. This gives me more than five, so whom do I cut. Decisions, decisions. Be assured that I voted for **Challenger** as #1 Best Fanzine. Good luck!

We'll get 'em next year!

"The Chase" by Gary Brown covering his years of comic book collecting and the incredible effort he had to expend in the chase was quite enjoyable. The Fan Art that was included (apparently by Kurt Erichsen) fit the article to a "T."

"Cyrano de Bergerac was A Real Person And He Wrote Science Fiction" by Richard Dengrove was informative and much appreciated.

"But I Really Believed Him!" by John Berry was another incredible story of his fingerprint career.

"Tales From The Stumble Inn" by Dennis Dolbear was very interesting coverage of a time in

fandom. And what is the real secret of Bessie Harvey's apparent ability to teleport? Was it really "the thunder," or was it something else?

One suggestion—How about a listing of art contributors identified by page number?

Fine photos from Mardi Gras 2001. However, the female on page 75 should have left her top on. The opposite can be said for the one on page 77. And, yes, Laura Modine (p. 79) is a fine looking woman. But, compared to the previous two, she's overdressed.

The beautiful lady is now gafia, alas, but when I saw Roberta Morris at MilPhil (see my photo pages) I exulted: "Laura Modine lives!"

E. B. Frohvet: If you don't understand the thrill of finding names and information on progenitors of whom you were not previously aware (not to say people of which you were aware), then I guess you just don't understand. Then there are the photos. For two of my great-grandparents, the only pictures I had were of them as older persons, she in her 90's. In going through some of my Mother's things last year I found two small items. On opening them there were photos of a man and woman in their 20's along with notes in my Grandmother's handwriting saying these were her parents "at time of wedding July 23, 1864." It was an incredible thrill and almost brought tears to my eyes. I have nephews, a niece, and cousins who are interested despite the fact that they never knew these people. Oh well, if you're not interested you're not interested. But, you never know when the bug will strike. Often it's after everyone who could furnish information has died.

Great photo of Rose-Marie and you in 1986 (page 112). 15 years ago and you both look about the same as now, especially Rose-Marie. So, you went to Florida to get married did you? Tell the truth now. Unlike Juan Ponce de León you found it, right? Where is it? I want to know. Do I have to beat it out of you? ☺

Terry Jeeves
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I've been having a very enjoyable read of C.14 and have already typed up a precis comment on it for ERG 156 due out in January. Herewith a print of it: --- CHALLENGER.14, Guy H. Lillian III, PO BOX 53092, New Orleans, LA 70153, USA No less than 114 pages crammed with goodies such as Benford on Bonestell and SF art, an excellent piece on comic hunting (it reminded me of my own mag hunting days in the thirties). There are articles on Cyrano de Bergerac, a Chicon report, John Berry on fingerprint cases, Gene Stewart claiming paper

zines are better than e-ones, two items on legal cases, some excellent fmz reviews, a dollop of New Orleans Con photos, a hefty LOCcol and oddles of artwork and other goodies. Get it for \$6.00, trade or faunching. It's a great zine. Guy married in June, so belated but hearty best wishes

I really enjoyed the comics article as it so well followed similar ground to my own sf mag hunting days of the thirties when every Saturday I would make a circular tour of all the magazine shops and market stalls in Sheffield for the latest remaindered issues. Being a Bonestell fan, I also got great pleasure from Greg Benford's piece on AF art... and having visited Carmel I made me wonder if I might have rubbed shoulders with Bonestell without knowing it!

In the fanzine reviews where you said such nice things about ERG, you ask if I have visited the Space Museum—I haven't been to Kennedy, but I had a real buzz from a half day spent in the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio in 1980. The two legal pieces were also very interesting and gave an insight into some of the goings on in your courts. I don't know, but I think it is true to say that we don't have that witness vetting before a case, that you have. Happily, I am now well beyond the legal cut off age of 70 years for jury duty.

Gene Stewart echoed my own feeling in his attack on e-mail zines versus paper ones. I much prefer holding a zine in my hand whilst sitting in an easy chair to read it.



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Another great issue, as ever I particularly appreciate the photographs. Every item has some detail to pique my interest. I simply haven't time to comment on every one so will mention first Gene R Stewart's A Battle of Words because I so heartily agree with him, every point he makes is valid. Mind as I can't spell I wish he hadn't dwelt so on that particular point.

Secondly I must say thank you to Richard A Dengrove for the information on Cyrano de Bergerac, the man is fascinating. However I will regard him as something apart from the fictional man (a different reality) whom I first came across in film when I was still an impressionable teenager. As I'm practising getting old (just in case I do some time) disgracefully, I have decided to unlearn disillusion and cherish some of passions of my early years.

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Nuptials vs. Marriage vs. Being Married. I really hope the ceremonies and celebrations went well on June 30th. Like Lloyd Penney said, it's great spending life with the one you love. October 18, 2001 will be I and I's 21st. Nobody asked and heaven knows you won't need it, but here's Brant's Recipe for Marital Bliss for free: Keep talking (the faster the better) and always cover your flanks.

The Chase. I went through a comic binge when I was 10 or 11. Superduperman, et. al. Bought them used, too, and had stacks of the things. But all of a sudden I lost my taste for comics, like I lost it for Coke and Pepsi at about 12 or 13, and I've never gotten it back. I went on another spree – Sherlock Holmes, and then David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, Tale of Two Cities etc.

You little dickens!

Electronic fen. The Briton who did **Slubberdegullion** [*Is that a zine title?*] said that the Net is where prose goes to die. I'm on only one listserv and that's related to work, so the level of discourse and control over language are pretty high. I always avoid the posted opinions of The Public, whether they be about movies, consumer ups, webpage design suggestions, whatever. For one, I don't trust the advice

of people who have dozens of e-mail addresses or use pen-names. For another, I can't abide the routine goofs of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. I'm too elitist to look beyond the sloppiness. i'm sorry, kinda, youknowwhati'm sayin'.

LOL, ROTL, PAOM!

Civic duty. Earlier this year, I got summoned for jury duty for a day. The suit I was interviewed for involved an ordinary person versus power and money, but since my job regularly involves me taking the role of the little guy against authority, I explained to the two lawyers that I wasn't sure I could leave that professional reaction of me outside, taking the side of the underdog was almost a reflex. The lawyers said if I had a doubt about my ability to be impartial, they had to excuse me and they did so. I was kind of bummed at missing out on this experience, because I was extremely impressed by the serious talk a senior judge gave us about forgetting all the stuff about the justice system that we'd seen on TV.

The judge's talk balanced the offhand bullying tone of the cops who herded us would-be jurors through metal detectors, having us men take off our belts so as not to set off alarms, talking to us like we were inmates getting on the prison bus. Cops pulling easy duty like herding jurors – such loudmouths, such lard-asses, they talk to citizens doing their civic duty like they're crap and then wonder said citizens hold the cops in little regard.

Empty Man. Wow, on top of being spoken to like I was an inmate by cops, I have another reason to keep as far as possible from their investigative techniques as well. Good to know, as the current idiom says.

Enough vows to keep my nose clean. Remember Heraclitus: "The basis of judgment and discernment is the nose."

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Challenger #14 received and read. I couldn't help thinking of the differences between Mardi Gras and the Calgary Stampede. We have more horses in the streets, which always leads to complaints from commuters who just washed their SUVs. Businesses and malls have free flapjack breakfasts but no doubloons. We listen to country music instead of jazz. Cowgirls keep their shirts on, at least in public places, and the only beads in sight are those of Italian grandmothers saying the rosary.

Do the Italian grandmothers take off their shirts?

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Marc Schirmeister's cover on **Challenger** #14 is an outstanding piece of whimsy. I presume it depicts a Mardi Gras in a dimension not very close to here.

In your editorial, you ask why some teenagers run amok while most don't. I suspect it is because some people are softer in the head than others. Everyone has gone through periods in their life when the present sucked. Most people can imagine a future in which the present may not suck as much or may not suck at all. I don't think this is a mental process that is unique to fans. Just about everybody can hope for better times. The people who go off the deep end are victims of a failure of imagination.

As I recall, there were a fair number of times in junior high school when I felt that the present sucked. Puberty doesn't do a heck of a lot for emotional stability. Also, there is a lot more social friction in junior high school because kids are still socially undifferentiated for the most part. They all take the same courses and haven't yet split off between academic and non-academic tracks. From ninth grade onward, students increasingly cluster into like-minded groups. I've met people in later life who graduated in the same class I did in high school, but I didn't know them, and we didn't know any people in common. I hung out with the journalism/theater arts group, and I didn't much care what other groups were doing. This social clustering did a lot to reduce social friction, and I liked high school a lot better than I had liked junior high school.

The idea of social clustering relates to what Greg Benford was talking about in his article. C.P. Snow

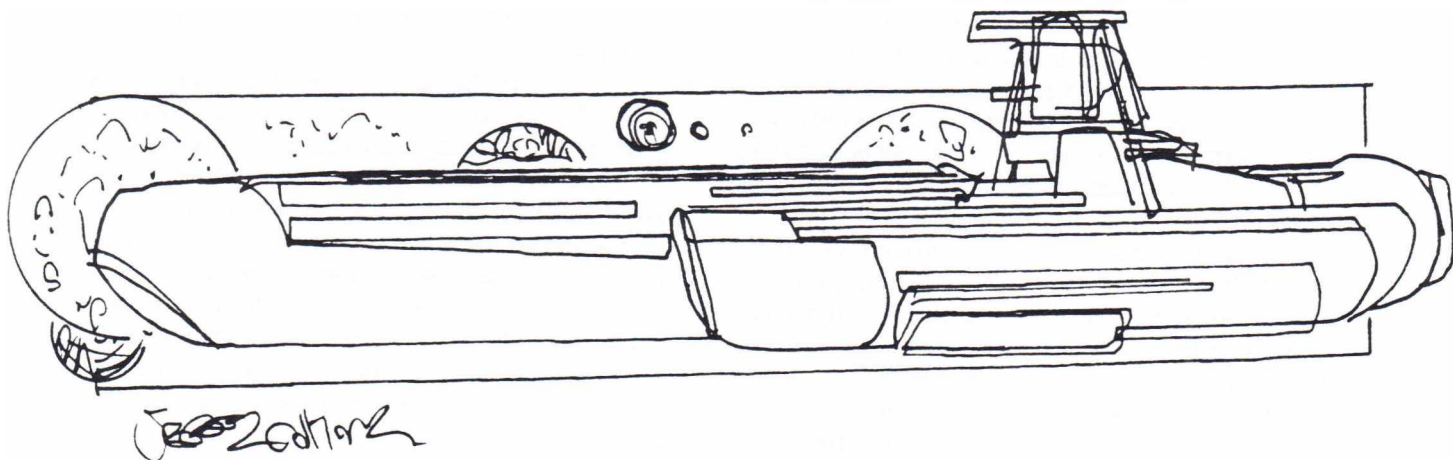
wasn't wrong in the basic idea of a scientific culture and an artistic culture, but he was wrong in assuming there were only two cultures. I suspect there are hundreds if not thousands of cultures in the United States.

There are so many things in the modern that any group of people can pay attention to only so many of them. Fandom is one of those cultures, and we can observe our own tendency to break into even smaller groups, because we can't pay attention to the entire field. This is the age of fragmentation, and I can't see anything that will ever create one majority culture again.

While I wasn't a comics collector in my teenage years (and have only been a bit of an accumulator since then) some parts of Gary Brown's experience ring a bell. I do seem to recall new SF magazines arrived on Tuesdays and Thursdays. While I hunted all sorts of places to feed my SF habit, I had the advantage of having a very large newsstand on my way home from school. They carried all the American prozines and some British as well. The guys who ran the newsstand were also bookmakers. I'm not really sure whether most newsstands did a little bookmaking on the side, or most bookmakers sold a few magazines on the side. When the California Lotto came in most of the newsstands I patronized went out of business, and I found it impossible to buy prozines other than by subscription.

In "The Empty Man", you ask if the sort of interrogation that is recorded is fair. In an absolute sense, no. The detective is using psychological plots on a person with limited intelligence and disordered mental processes. In police work, you need all the help you can get. It appears that [the detective] did get to get to the truth. The truth interests me more than the fairness of the interrogation. If I were the captain he worked for, I would be very pleased with his work.

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*The Empty Man wrote out a **second** confession some time later, a statement untarnished by a "hypnotic, manipulative" interrogation. Thus my advice to him to plead guilty and accept (another) life term. In late October, he signed the piece of paper.*

Roger Sims did much to de-mystify the [Nolacon] party in Room 770. It doesn't really sound like a party I would have wanted to attend even I had been more than 8 years old at the time it occurred. I once wrote an article titled "Cleaning Up on Fandom" in which I describe some of my own experiences doing janitorial duty in fandom. From the morning-after perspective, you can sometimes wonder whether fans created all this mess or whether there was an unreported stampede of hogs.



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Challenger 14 was a great issue. Not the least, of course, because you carried my ingenious article on Cyrano de Bergerac. You had a number of other great articles as well.

About teenagers, not only does each teenager ridicule and persecute every other teenager, some more effectively than others: but they take things too seriously. We have had enough experience to know that one half the world laughs at the other half. Being laughed at is no big deal. We would know that love shouldn't be 100%. That we won't die if we don't meet some unrealistic expectation. But teenagers wouldn't know. It's a wonder every teenager doesn't commit suicide or go postal. God must give special protection for the young and naive.

While teenagers are wrong, I'm not certain that the Russian space artists weren't right. The American space artists and Greg Benford less so. The facts are boring. We want something that hits our heart, and hopefully our soul. That stimulates our wonder. Some symbol from within. Facts only reach this nirvana by hit or miss. They are OK in their place – which is not as art.

Gary Brown is right too. I may not be nostalgic for the comic book hunt, like he is, but I am nostalgic for the pre-web days of finding out-of-print books. I know what nostalgia means. You had to go to used bookstores filled with tomes of forgotten lore. Looking through dusty covers, if not at ancient symbols, then at ancient styles and ways of thinking. And ancient could mean 1983. By chance, you might alight on the used book you needed. Or even a better one. That was always a possibility. While there was a national network for

finding used books, it was slow and cumbersome. Now, all we have to do is go to Bookfinder.com and do a search. And deal with the same bookstore – but from afar. I cannot help but wax nostalgic for the contact with real books in a real store that we've lost. Of course, I wouldn't trade it for what I've got now. But I am certainly willing to wax nostalgic.

My favorite book-finding stories involve completing collections of Hugo winners and John D.

*MacDonald paperbacks. Mark Clifton and Frank Riley won the second Hugo ever given for Best Novel for **They'd Rather Be Right**, but when I was first amassing my collection, their book had not yet been published in popular paperback form. It **had** been a *Galaxy* novel (with cover by Wally Wood) – only, under another title. When, as a teenager, I found **The Forever Machine** on the ramshackle shelves of a used bookstore in Berkeley, I cursed my luck at coming so close... and then opened to the title page and found the magic words, "formerly published as..." That euphoria was dwarfed by the moment when I found **Weep for Me**, the still-unreprinted John D I'd sought for years in the late '70s and early '80s. I was at a Baton Rouge book fair, shortly after my divorce, and when I saw the tome propped up against the sign reading "Mysteries", my gasp actually frightened the old lady next to me. But my MacDonald collection is still not complete: there's a collection of his correspondence with Dan Rowan that has eluded me for decades. (Speaking of mysteries, why would anyone publish such a thing?)*

John Berry is really right that people believe they can look at a person and tell whether he is honest or guilty. A person's eyes, handshake or smile is more accurate than fingerprints or even money in the bank. In actuality, we have no idea whether anyone is telling the truth or a lie. Our intuitive telepathy fails us all the time. That's how con men make it. And advertisers and politicians.

But you can tell by sight whether a person is acting decently or not. The cop, in the transcript Guy printed, was appealing to the [the Empty Man's] sense of right. What sense of right there was left. He talked about what [the prisoner's] mother would have him do. He tried to tell the man deep down he was a decent individual. Who knows whether the cop believed this, or considered BS to get DB from A to the B of a confession. You could not make a more decent argument and one less intimidating. I hope the attempt to get the confession thrown out of court was a failure.

In his first trial, The Empty Man was pursuing the alleged illegality of his confession as an issue, but gave it up when he decided to plead guilty. No appellate court has ever ruled as to the constitutional fairness of the interrogation.

While the cop was right, Dennis Dolbear is wrong. Is he trying to tell us that it is more probable that a cow-like beast flew Bessie Harvey from New Orleans to Tennessee than a kindhearted truckdriver took pity on that insulin-shocked elderly black woman? That's hard to swallow. I know Dennis brings up the principle of eliminating possibilities until we get to the truth, no matter how improbable. Conan Doyle's principle for Sherlock Holmes. However, Conan Doyle is no poster boy for rationality. He used that principle to reach some rather odd conclusions. About spirits of the dead, about fairies.

In another sense, I am not so certain Dennis is wrong. We really want to believe magic happens in the world. In our hearts. By believing, we may or may not be true to the facts, but we are certainly being true to ourselves. And that is a truth of sorts, isn't it? Just like the facts are a truth of sorts.

Less ambiguously, Alexis Gilliland is right about the 2000 election. It was so close anyone who stole it would be committing petty larceny. It may yet turn out that the Supreme Court has done George Bush, Jr., no favors. And, in effect, it provided the means for Al Gore to become the savior of the nation. Not only have stranger things happened in politics, if that happened, it would almost be politics as usual.

All moot at the moment, but (sounding like Criswell) I predict that the fact that W obliterated the budget surplus and stunted our economy will still come back to haunt him. The American people may even stop quivering with fright and learn to resist the government's present assault on the Constitution. Of course, if Osama bin Laden attacks again, no one will care about such minor matters.

I disagree with M. Lee Rogers on the Fox Moonshot hoax show. For which I have a lot of chutzpah, because I didn't see it. The skeptics were incensed by it and they claimed there were scientific explanations for the seemingly impossible lighting angles and the waving flag in the airless sky. For myself, I am perfectly willing to believe the film was faked without the Moonshot being faked. Few would know if the film was faked while too many would know that the Moonshot was. And public relations people are always looking to improve on nature.



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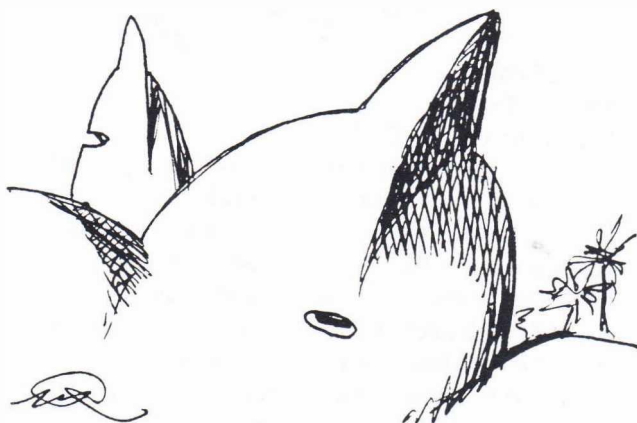
I never collected comic books ... I had very little money when I was young, and besides, as many mothers do, my mother would throw out my comics about a month after I'd gotten them, and there were more than a few tears shed when that happened. (I figured much later on that she thought they could be thrown out if I hadn't read them again and again.) For some reason, she was much more tolerant of paperback books, and I had amassed respectable collections of **Mad**, **B.C.** and **Ripley's Believe it or Not** books, as well as a small collection of the **Star Trek** books Bantam produced before Pocket got the license.

Whenever fans communicate with each other, there is the opportunity for good ideas, misunderstandings, valuable networking and feuds. Given my background and training, I prefer print communications, like fanzines. There is the time to think, compose, consider and use a little sober second thought, especially when the topic is controversial, and the people you're conversing with short-tempered and eager to quarrel. However, there is little or no time on-line. What's required here in reaction, not considered response. So, on the listservs I am on, I see feuds, misunderstandings, and a gigantic game of one-upmanship on any number of picayune disagreements. Certainly, there is information and news, which is why I stay on the listservs, but I am not there to argue and create enemies where friends are possible. I know Gene Stewart's piece in **Chall** #14 is coloured by his negative experiences on the listservs, so some may suspect his motives, but give me print any day; each fanzine I get is another chapter in just such a conversation, so I need the time to form a response for

so many zines.

I remember a breakfast of eggs and debris at Mother's on Tchoupitoulas when we were in New Orleans for Nolacon II. We found the city great fun, wonderful to explore and friendly. You say that NOSFA was full of people who like fanzines; are there any more fanzines coming out of New Orleans these days?

Fella named Mike Whelan – no relation – produced a zine out of Metairie, a suburb, several years back, but that was ... several years back. John Guidry is the founder of ERB-apa and still produces zines for it, but other than him and me, I don't think a single zine emits from NOLA anymore.



38

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Thanks for another exciting issue of **Challenger**, and good luck in Philadelphia. Philly is right around the corner, and part of me would really love to be there Labor Day weekend. I haven't been to a worldcon since Boston in '81 which ended a string of a dozen years of going to nearly every worldcon (except west coast cons for which I could not afford the airfare in those poorer years). But unfortunately I am totally unlike Mike Resnick, whose wonderful pair of articles reveal him to be a self-confident, outgoing person who seemingly knows everybody at a worldcon and is very comfortable around people. For me the social side of a worldcon was always a struggle, and after mostly avoiding cons for 20 years I don't know if I'm willing to undergo that struggle anymore.

If you have a cadre or a mate to hang with, a worldcon can be a wonderful experience. If you're alone, it can suck like an Electrolux. My favorite worldcons have been Chicon 2000, Confederation, Iguanacon, and MagiCon – precisely because I had people with whom

I could share the experience (respectively, Rose-Marie, the New Orleans bid, LASFAPA, and the [Joe & Patti] Green Party). I was more or less alone at Boston in '81, the previous Chicon, and – until I hooked up with Inge Glass -- LACon, and felt overwhelmed. But you're part of a larger whole now yourself – fanzine fandom – and nowadays you'd have people to share the convention with. Come to '04. Besides, I want to meet you.

I particularly enjoyed Gary Brown's "The Chase", since comic books were an important part of my childhood as well. I could relate to much of what he said, although, in my case, **Green Lantern** was the hero whose every appearance I sought as anxiously as he sought **Flash** #106. My most outstanding "comic book" memory was not too dissimilar to Gary's adventure either. Every Tuesday evening, when my father arrived home from work, he gave me 12 cents and I immediately rushed to the "candy store" to buy one of that week's new shipment of comics. I was only allowed one comic per week though, nor did I have any money of my own to augment that paternal largesse.

One week though, I happened to be at the store on a Thursday when I realized they got a second weekly shipment of comics on that day (*not* Tuesday!), and on their shelf was the most wonderful-looking **Action Comics** I had ever seen. A green-skinned alien had somehow stolen a Kryptonian city named Kandor and trapped it and all its inhabitants in a bottle! Although I did not realize it at that time, that villain named Brainiac was destined to become one of the leading villains in **Superman** history!

I rushed home and awaited my father's return from work whereupon I begged him for an additional 12 cents just this one time to go back and buy that comic. He refused. One comic a week, one allowance a week, were sufficient, and that was all I was getting! So I waited anxiously until the following Tuesday when, hot coins in my sweaty hands, I ran back to the candy store to buy **Action Comics**, only to find – wouldn't you know it? – the issue was gone! Sold out, never to be seen again! *sigh* So Gary Brown's article brought back fond – and some not-so-fond – memories of my own childhood.

*That generation had a blind spot when it came to comics. At one point during my kidhood my own dear mother got it into her skull that comics glorified violence and so restricted me to buying just **one more comic**. The first **Giant Superman Annual** was due soon, so I waited and waited for it – passing up the premiere appearance of *The Trickster* in *The**

Flash. Well, she recovered her wits in time. By the way, if you still want to read that first Kandor story, I'm sure Mr. Brown can help you ...

I enjoyed both of Mike Resnick's articles. They provided me a bit of living through worldcons from somebody else's eyes. I do envy his personality and large circle of friends. I was also fascinated by all the business deals he made at Chicon. I guess I envy his talent too. He should not complain about all the "work" he endured as a popular writer at the con. All the years I attended worldcons I dreamed of someday being a participant on a single panel at any con (never happened) or conducting one "business" conversation with one editor or publisher (ditto) or even attending one room party without leaving early feeling like a total outsider even among fellow fans (ditto again). I hope Mike appreciates all the talents he has going for him as both fan and writer!

Loved "The Zine Dump" and am somewhat in awe as to how you find the time to lavish such individual attention on so many zines. One of the reasons I only review one zine per issue of **Visions of Paradise** (and even missing that in some issues) is that I just don't have the time to do any more. Of course, the fact that I maintain a faithful quarterly schedule might be partly to blame for that.

Undoubtedly. Sometimes I review zines as they come in, sometimes I wait until a substantial stack has built up and then knock off several at a sitting, but I enjoy your in-depth analyses of the zines you touch on. You were overly generous to Challenger.

Concerning your comments on **VoP**: I teach in Parsippany High School, which is one of two high schools in a town of 50,000 people which the county paper describes as "the center of the Asian population in Morris County." Approximately 20-25% of both high schools' student populations are either Asian immigrants or second-generation Asians. There are differences between the two though, my school is dominated by Chinese while Parsippany Hills High School is dominated by Indians.

Interestingly, Mount Olive, where I live, currently has the 4th highest population of Asians in the county, and growing.

Fei Fei was my calculus student in 1993-94 when she was a junior, one year immigrating to Parsippany from Chengdu, China. She became my first independent study student as a senior, attended Princeton after graduation, then spent a year doing independent research in Tibet (hence her "Letters from Tibet" in **VoP**), and is currently a graduate student at Cal Tech. Somewhere in there she became very friendly with my family and has become my "Chinese daughter" since she

spends time with my family whenever she is home. She and I both worked on the Princeton University Nanking conference in 1997 (she was founder and co-chair of it. I was her secretary) and the subsequent book which is due for publication in October.

Oh yeah, gotta say it, loved those Mardi Gras pictures! Makes me almost wanna go visit N'Orleans again myself.

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First of all, congratulations! May your lives together be blessed and more than you both could wish for. Second, congrats on the Hugo nomination.

Third, I can't believe that I didn't send a LOC on the last **Challenger**! But, since I'm not even WAHFed ...

Interesting about Classmates.com. I'll have to check it out and see if my own little high school (Upper Dublin - Fort Washington, Pennsylvania) is in there. It was especially apropos because I started reading **Chall** on my recent trip to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri for a conference. I was checking out the vendor exhibit area when a voice I didn't recognize called me by name. It turned out to be someone who graduated high school with me whom I hadn't seen since leaving for college. In fact, we both moved into the same neighborhood at the same time (it was a brand new development back then). Very strange. Perhaps even stranger is the fact that I don't run into more people that I used to know from high school and college.

A much-beloved high school friend, contacted through Classmates, recently showed in New Orleans with her husband. First time I'd seen Kathy (now Kathleen) since their wedding! We ate breakfast at Brennan's and caught up on the last third of a century and ... well, it was wonderful. Classmates.com affects a perspective of high school straight out of Max Shulman, but it certainly did me a favor.

I knew quite a bit about Cyrano de Bergerac already, but did not realize he was not really from Bergerac. There's always something new to learn.

Okay, here comes the meat of the zine - "The Empty Man". Now Guy, you and I have disagreed on a number of matters. And you know that I am not the most "liberal" of people when it comes to issues of crime and punishment and prisoner rights. But I think (hope) that we both have respect for each other's grasp of principles and that we have agreed to disagree.

This time, however, I agree with you. *gasp!* While the techniques used during this examination don't necessarily distort the truth, I think it certainly does pervert it. The routine used appears somewhat hypnotic in nature, and certainly very little of it actually deals with the case at hand.

But what are we to do with the hollow man? I gather from the article that he actually is guilty. Perhaps we are fortunate in that he has already been found guilty of at least one other related crime. Are the situations similar? Were the same techniques used in those convictions? I hope not. The hollow man needs to be put away, for long-long-long time, life might be appropriate. Frankly, the death sentence might be appropriate as well. We don't have enough data here to go by. I certainly hope you aren't saying there should be no punishment at all. And I hope that the investigator, T.H., has his backside kicked over this. I hope that they could have found the hollow man guilty without that little episode.

*It's my understanding that the interrogation of "The Empty Man" followed classic police techniques to break down a suspect. This one interview produced confessions in all of his cases. It's my further understanding that there's no independent forensic evidence against him in two of the murder charges against him, including the one I've drawn to defend. So indeed, without his confession, he couldn't be held on these charges. But, the confession has been ruled admissible by at least two district courts. He gave a second confession in my case, one whose voluntariness has not been questioned. The issue is perhaps, then, moot ... but **should** it be moot? Are such interrogation techniques acceptable? I have only questions.*

Back to something a little lighter. "The Zine Dump". You know, I still look in the review sections of zines searching for reviews of my PhiloSfY, and it's been two years! You're the only zine editor who still lists it. Maybe I need to do another issue just to justify your fortitude.

If you do, it worked!

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I'm so glad I never developed the addiction to comic books that Gary Brown describes. As soon as the business world figures out that anyone is collecting a particular item, they produce as much trash as possible to take advantage of the collector. You see the same kind

of thing in the NASCAR world. I admit to being a stock car racing fan, but have been able to resist buying any of the schlock the teams foist on their supporters.

The transcript of the murderer's interrogation does bother me some, but I suspect it's the sort of thing the detectives on cop shows would do if we saw all of it. I'm much more concerned about a case I just read about in Massachusetts. A guy was stopped on the road and interrogated. The guy believes it was because of his long hair. The officers eventually let him go. The guy had a pocket tape recorder on and got the whole thing, after which he filed a complaint with the local police. They arrested him for illegal wiretapping, he was convicted, and the Massachusetts Supreme Court has upheld the conviction. Those police seem to believe they can do anything.

Wild! I'd like a cite on that case.

On the street, I'll respect a policeman and certainly obey his/her orders short of confessing to something I did not do. But if I ever have to go into an interrogation room, I will refuse to talk without a lawyer's presence even if they put enormous pressure on me to waive my rights, which I presume they will do. In that room, the police are not your friend. They're trying to bust you for something. It should not be that way, but it is.

Hopefully no one reading this publication will ever be in a situation which culminates in their arrest. Should that happen, the first and only word out of their mouths should be "Lawyer!"

While there is much to recommend this zine, I must respond to your opinions about conservatives. You're entitled to think we're a bunch of whores lustng to impose a fascist police state on the country. There are a few social conservatives who even scare me at times. Gary Bauer comes to mind after a few statements he made during the 2000 campaign. But I see a much greater threat of dictatorship if the Left ever comes back to power. If you want to know what will happen, just look at today's college campuses and the goosestepping tone that political correctness has taken.

As an unrelenting foe of political correctness, I agree. I've gotten the impression that "compulsory chapel," as P.C. became known, has faded as a threat, but fear that this is simply a loss of public attention to the problem. Is that chancre of an idea still around? As for a police state, it's coming: those dumb bastards in the Congress didn't hesitate to destroy due process for aliens; it won't be long for the rest of us.

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Challenger #14 arrived in the usual way, with its fine Schirmeister (wraparound?) cover. Alas, at 118 pages [114 - Ed.] - stacking 3/8 of an inch deep - your zine can't really accommodate a wrap-around. Indeed, it can barely accommodate the staples you are using. I had to use tape to secure the back cover. [There should be no such problems in the future. One of my birthday presents, courtesy of my neighbor Cindy, was a heavy-duty Swingline, and I've a box of 1/2-inch staples to go into it and come out of it. More to the point, Rose-Marie is after me to shorten the issues.] Which led me to read "The Peter's Pencil Principle" early on. By the time this reaches you, you and Rosy should be well and truly wed. Marriage is not a zero-sum game; by taking care of her happiness you will best secure your own. Congratulations and good luck, not to mention felicitations and approbation.

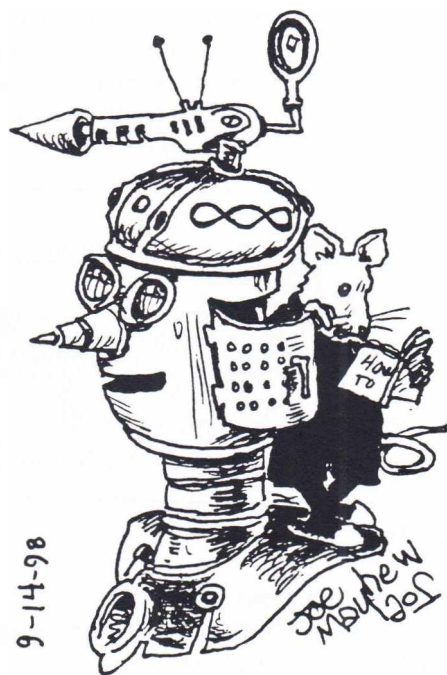
I quite enjoyed Richard Dengrove on Cyrano de Bergerac, the swordsman and satirist, whose legend was largely informed by his enemies - and who never challenged any of those slander slingers to a duel. Nevertheless, Rostand has provided our culture with the definitive Cyrano, much as Shakespeare has provided the definitive Richard III. The real men are enclosed in their theatrical personae like the grain of sand at the heart of a pearl.

Your own "The Empty Man" is disturbing, in that it gives the appearance of psychosynthesis, an interrogator (inquisitor?) imposing false memories on the interrogatee, who is then coerced into accepting them. Perhaps such chicanery closes the case, but it does not actually solve the crime. Which, for some reason, puts me in mind of the LAPD being charged with framing L.A. gang members. The gang members were guilty of all sorts of evil deeds, yes, and putting them in jail was in the interests of society, *but* There is enough sleaze and corner-cutting in big city police departments the way it is, without letting the cops slide by on a criminal conspiracy against selected victims. That is a nasty practice combining the sins of sloth and pride, not to mention bearing false witness, and ought to be strongly discouraged. To be tough on crime shouldn't mean being squishy sort to justice - but you knew that already. That said, it must be noted that the intensity of the challenge to the police is also a factor: Israel's use of political assassination against the Palestinian leadership being a case in point. What was the challenge facing the LAPD, chronic understaffing?

Dennis Dolbear's "Tales of the Stumble Inn"

was outstanding, and "The Thunder Did It" was hackle-raising, raising them hackles even higher on re-reading. Probably the best thing in the issue, despite the entertaining Mike Resnick Worldcon pieces. Resnick for best fan writer? Why not?

Mike's been wonderful to Challenger, as have Greg Benford and our other professional contributors, and their stuff is brilliant. But they are professionals, and it wouldn't be fair to place them in competition with amateur writers, a message I hope the award-winning professional writer Dave Langford takes to heart.



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Your comments about Columbine really made me stop and think ... I was thinking about this yesterday, when I was feeding my [twin] babies (who are now 9 months old and extremely cute), thinking about Dylan Klebold's mother. When he was a little baby in a high-chair, being spoon-fed Gerber baby food, what was he like then? Were there any warning signs when he started to crawl? Did he smile and coo and babble like normal babies? Was there some critical element missing in his infancy that drove him to mass murder? Maybe his mother didn't read him **Green Eggs & Ham**, or change his diapers often enough. What separates a future Columbine murderer

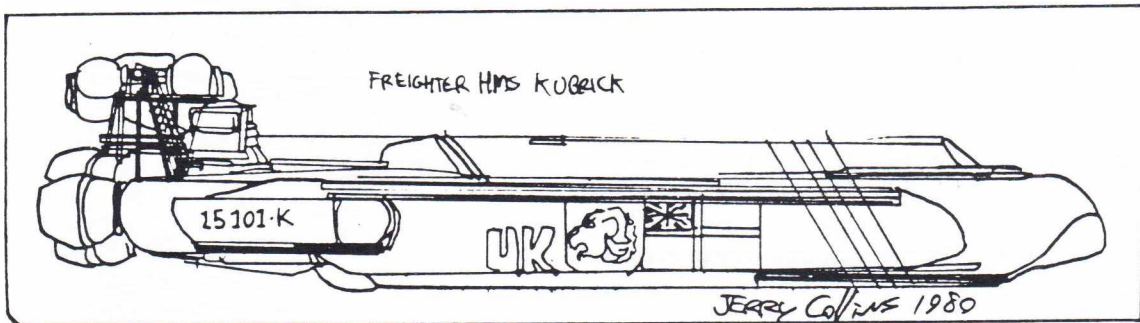
from other infants? I am reassured that none of the school shooters (so far anyway) have been twins. Have you ever known of a murderer who was a twin? Does the twin bond protect a person from sociopathic behaviors?

Is there anything that I (or any mother) can do to assure our child will not grow up to be a sociopath?

*I doubt it. The most we can ask of any parent is that they love their kids, give them consistent and humane guidance, **be there** for them (my father said that was what he always valued about his dad), and keep an eye on their development. I don't know, but I suspect, that Klebold and Harris had busy and distracted parents who ignored their sons' growing frustration and alienation, or else didn't realize how badly off they were. Perhaps every kid should get some therapy when they're in adolescence – or at least, an evaluation – or parents should simply learn that they can't forget their kids for an instant.*

about postal supervisors, and made the point that postal workers are micromanaged to an extent that even bureaucrats would find aggravating. Another, from **The Spectator**, made the case that many jobs in the British Royal Mail were as dull and boring as their American counterparts. What I learned from these articles is that the people who sort and deliver mail essentially have non-automated repetitive jobs, and have bosses who impose petty commands and customers who are either (a) nasty or (b) have a limited command of English and tie up the line endlessly. Plus the Postal Service is a business which responds to declining volume by raising rates, thus ensuring that customers seek cheaper alternatives. I'm very glad I'm not a postal worker!

The pieces on New Orleans were all interesting. I certainly enjoyed my one visit during the 1988 worldcon (save for the day I was sick because of



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Thanks for **Challenger** #14. Great Schirmeister cover. Where's he been all these years?

I'll let him answer that. Marc?

I second your praise of Gordon Dickson. He was certainly one of the nicest and most pleasant pros around. I remember at a Disclave in the late 1970s that he invited me up to his room and let me watch other pros sit, talk, listen to folk songs, and drink. I was just a geeky neo-fan, but Dickson was very friendly and cordial, even to a teenage geek like me. I'll never forget his kindness.

That decency was endemic to his era of SF professionals. Dickson's pal and contemporary Poul Anderson was another pro whose generosity, openness and humility matches his accomplishments. Arrogance towards fandom belongs to a later, less civilized generation of writers.

Lloyd Penney's comparison of Canadian and American post offices reminds me of several articles I read recently. One, from **The Wall Street Journal**, was

some nasty Thai-Cajun food I ate in Algiers). I remember Mike Resnick's toastmaster speech well, but Resnick omits that he started very late because First Fandom took an hour-and-a-half giving each other five prizes, each one of which was accompanied by a very long acceptance speech. Thankfully, First Fandom did not try that particular trick again.

Gregory Benford's look at Chesley Bonestell was a thoughtful piece which deserved to be reprinted. But I wish that Benford had told us where the article had originally appeared. If he did similar profiles from this period, I'd certainly like to read them. (And I wonder if any of Bonestell's work on the San Francisco Opera House survives?)

But the best news of all in the issue is Guy Lillian's wedding. I hope you and Rose-Marie have a wonderful marriage!

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Editorial: James Gifford was all over the Net

within hours after he had been told, informing all & sundry that his **Robert A. Heinlein: A Reader's Companion** had been nominated [for the Hugo]. So not to worry. Good luck, too.

Much enjoyed our dinner at the worldcon!

"Getting It Right": In spite of de-Stalinization, the guiding influence of Soviet art was Socialist Realism. This produced the sort of Heroic Proletarians Advancing Towards the Communist Future figures that P.J. O'Rourke describes as standing around trying to ignore the fart. In space no one (else) can hear you cut the cheese. H.P.A.T.T.C.F. look about as wooden in spacesuits as they do in Proletarian Work Garb.

Russian art always struck me as a little static, somewhat dull. I find little excitement and energy even in Faberge eggs.

The Chase: And the most dispiriting part of it is that nowadays the list of upcoming books is available on the Internet. Everything gets discussed to death before you can buy it. It used to be that going to the store was an adventure. "What would be out?" Nowadays ... When I mentioned this to a very elderly relative, she said that that had been all right when I was reading comic books. Well, no, but the same thing holds.

"But I Really Believed Him!": And right now I am in the middle of a book arguing that since fingerprint identification isn't perfect, it is a means of social control used to keep down the lower orders. John Berry must be relieved to know that he is a member of the ruling class.

Human vs. Robot: The problem with e-mail is that it lacks the reflexive time of print and the nonverbal cues of conversation.

My Times in the Box: I was summoned for jury duty exactly once. I wish it had been as interesting as the times Robert was called. I was called for an actual jury once in that month. The special prosecutor was my mother's lawyer. Dismissed.

I was called for incapacity hearings. Never saw any of them challenged, it was always the unsupported statement of the lawyer. I tremble for the mental health care system.

The woman Not Voting in the assault case has a point. There is now some concern about gang retaliation against jurors.

That was a fear in the reprehensible jury we had in the Harvey Tunnel case, a story I may someday work up the stomach to tell. Is there any evidence that it has ever happened?

The Empty Man: Reviewing one of John Douglas' books on forensic psychological profiling, I came across his "everyone has a rock" idea. The case in

question involved a man who had allegedly committed a murder using a rock. The interrogator placed a rock of similar size and shape in the interrogation room. During the questioning the prisoner kept staring at it, after a while he confessed.

Douglas heralded that as an example of being able to find the key that would open up the resistance of the accused. There are, however, other factors that can be involved.

John Dillman, a New Orleans detective who has also written some true crime books [and whom I consulted when I hoped to sell such a tome], observed that he has been regularly accused of brutality during trials. Once, for example, a defendant claimed that Dillman had beaten him with a telephone book. When it came his turn to testify, the defense lawyer asked Dillman if there had been a telephone book in the interrogation room, and as it happened there had been.

So putting a rock in the interrogation room would do great in interrogations, but when the case came to trial, well ...

The original exclusionary rule case, as I recall, involved the nonstop interrogation of a man who had influenza and colitis. I don't think he could have put together a coherent confession, even.

Also, the NKVD used to do wonderfully well in getting confessions by the "conveyer" system - nonstop questioning of prisoners around the clock. This method dates back to the Inquisition, which called it the "Awaken", and is used today by investigators in child-abuse cases, who, thanks to the comparative youth of the people being questioned usually only have to work a normal day at it. (They quit taping the questioning of children being asked about having been sexually abused in day care centers after the video tapes showed kids lying on the floor barely able to stay awake being asked over and over again "Did he throw you out of the balloon and molest you on the way down like all the other kids told me he did?")

The Zine Dump: Pulpdom: Yes, I remember **Argosy - True** was another one - in those "sweaty, unshaven men's magazines". But those were the weak brothers, as it were. The really hot ones were **Men** and **Stag and For Men Only** which had real pictures of naked women and stories about getting it on and ... Sex was a lot more fun in the '60s.

What wasn't?

As for decline, the example that came to mind was far more so. If you read **Beyond This Horizon** carefully, you would be aware of the reputation of **American Mercury** in the '20s as the cutting-edge.

radical, progressive literary magazine. It went downhill. After the resignation of Mencken and the dismissal of Hazlitt, **AM** was sold and became a cut-rate **Reader's Digest**. Then in the '60s, the editor sold it to some radical-right outfit and the highlight of the new management was their confident prediction that Goldwater would win the 1964 election. Well, after that, **American Mercury** ended up being sold to the Liberty Lobby, which turned it into what WFB called "a smut sheet of full-witted anti-Semitism."

Lisa gave up on the **Left Behind** series after about five volumes. This somewhat appalled us when we saw Volume 9 on the stands at Books-a-Million. I remember when enthusiastic but unskilled adaptations of the Revelation of St. John were one volume.

Saturday Night Party in Room 770: One of the things this demonstrates is the sheer "The Past is Another World" feeling.

If Mel Korshak had a pair of aces and drew another pair of aces. I can understand he might come to think himself invincible. Hence the financial gamble of Shasta on the self-improvement book, which led to Philip Jose Farmer getting short-changed for **You Owe for the Flesh**. Which is why **To Your Scattered Bodies Go** has a dishonest publisher named "Lem Sharkko." Anagrams have their own unique interest.

Nolacon II Toastmaster Gig: The 1954 Best Novel Hugo went to Adolf Hitler for **Lords of the Swastika**. Everybody knows that!

*I saw Norman Spinrad, author of **The Iron Dream**, at the worldcon.*

Mardi Gras 2001: The problem is that I am closer to the relatives in Sulphur than Nawlins, so would be faced with a long commute.

That's if you ever attended Carnival. Why commute? Nobody sleeps during Mardi Gras, you eat out of hot dog carts and ... showers? Wait till it rains!

Tales from the Stumble Inn: Galadriel was 6'4" and athletic. She would bring home the gold medals in the Women's Javelin toss for Valinor easily. (And from 1904 on, too.)

*I'm rereading **LotR** – having just finished a first reading of **The Hobbit**. Somehow I visualize Galadriel differently ...*



Epistles: "Our war against communism [is seen] as won, and [communism's] sins as passe." Yet our war against Naziism was also won, and its sins don't seem to be passe.

*I think our friend Poul Anderson – and don't we all miss him – was on the beam when he maintained that we generally hate fascism more than we do communism because the Nazis were "sexier" ... but it wasn't a sexual sexiness he was talking about. It was their sense of unbridled psychotic evil. Reds are and always have been dull bureaucrats. Nazis were torturers, murderers, psychopaths, freaks. Did the communists employ similar tactics as the Nazis? Sure – totalitarians are all alike under the skin. But the Nazis had **panache** – which made them much more satisfying to hate and kill.*

George VI was a combat veteran (Jutland) and a licensed pilot. For someone put into a job he hadn't really anticipated getting, he had rather a diverse preparation.

While Sir Arthur C. Clarke deserves some recognition, it's hard to say in what. The Peace Prize has been, I fear, compromised. Literature faces the problem that he is a European white male. Physics is not quite the perfect fit but will have to do.

I stand by my suggestion that he win the Nobel Prize for Literature, even though his has been writing of ideas and not character or style. "Real" writers of immense stature have been neglected by the Nobel committee since the prize's inception – James Joyce,

Marcel Proust, Tolstoy for God's sake, Tennessee Williams, Robert Penn Warren on a somewhat lesser level, and this year's incredible loss, Eudora Welty. It would be a real boost to our genre to have our top gun win it.

Not only did the children of Hillary and Tenzing reach the top of Everest, but one of Peary's grandchildren reached the North Pole. Twice. (Now what should have happened was that Sir Peter Scott, Lord Shackleton, and Richard E. Byrd, Jr. should have been invited to the 75th anniversary celebration at Amundsen-Scott, but apparently not.) So it looks as if the Chinese climber did find Sandy Irvine.

Perhaps Neil Armstrong's grandchildren will follow someday in his dusty footsteps.

The "waving flags" on the moon landings were shimmies of a wire-supported flag being wiggled as its post was pushed into lunar soil. The "lighting angles" are the results of shadows on irregular surfaces. A very good debunking of this whole mess can be found on Phil Plait's Bad Astronomy page (<http://www.badastronomy.com>)

I note the Copelands were shaken but not stirred [by the Seattle earthquake]. Were they straight up with a twist?

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I like to think of myself as having a fairly resilient mind, but I'm sure than interrogation experts [*"The Empty Man"*] could probably wear me down into confessing to just about anything. The difference in the long run may be that I'm not guilty whereas your client seems to be. Don't get me wrong. I fully embrace the protections afforded by our Constitution, but I cannot work up excessive sympathy for those guilty of dreadful crimes. I have mixed feelings on the death penalty since it is rarely employed as swift punishment, but rather becomes an unending saga of appeals, etc. I also have a bit of a sadistic streak in that I think people like Timothy McVeigh should not have advance warning of when their sentence will be carried out until one day they are executed without the opportunity to prepare themselves. This is the notice he gave his dozens of victims and I don't believe he deserves much compassion. On the other hand there are many death row inmates who are not as wealthy as O.J. and are thus getting the very short end of our legal stick. You obviously try to balance the scales so they don't tip too far the wrong way.

I understand the French used to give their condemned prisoners no notice of their execution date, as a "humane" gesture: allegedly the prisoner would worry less until the morning when he was actually introduced to Madame Guillotine. Of course, my understanding also is that in France you're considered guilty until you prove yourself innocent. We look at justice differently.

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Holy moley, what an ish! Congrats on your nuptials – hope all went as planned.

Roger Weddington: I do hope you try C.J. Cherryh's works again, and I'm happy that my article has persuaded you to at least consider doing so. I recommend starting with the Chanur series; it's space opera but on a very different level. I used to shy off from politically-heavy novels, but the Chanur books make it sound so *fun*! Some will say "Oh, come on, cats in space? Are you

serious?" You betcha I'm serious. So are the hani. The series' first book is **The Pride of Chanur**. Cherryh has a dry wit and a dark sense of humor. I've re-read most of her books several times, because they are indeed densely written (as were the Gormenghast books by Mervyn Peake), but also because I admire her style and ability to create characters I would love to meet.

Joseph Major: When, if ever, was the last time you spoke to a police officer? You might consider calling your city's police department and asking if they have a citizen's ride-along program. If they do, I suggest you sign up and find out what your local police officers face on a daily basis.

I don't deny that there are bad cops (13 of them were recently indicted in Miami, current and former officers), or that search warrant services that are based on false information can result in property and reputation damage, or that there are cases where no apologies were offered to those people who were innocent of wrongdoing at the time their property was searched.



You seem to be whitewashing all police departments with the same gung-ho-attitude brush and paint. This is unfair. Taking the actions of some group members and concluding that all the group's members act the same does not produce an accurate assessment of the entire group. Do you get irritated when you read about newspaper or TV reporters who want to attend an SF convention just so they can report on "all those weird people" who do "funny stuff" and are all "Star Trek fans" or "Trekkies," and then take "amusing" photos of them? That's generalizing the acts of a few groups members into an overall picture of all the group members, too.

I can't *make* you understand my point of view. I'm just asking you to try and see what a cop's life looks like from his or her perspective. If you worked at a job where your life was potentially in danger every time you went to work, could you handle the stress? For how long? Walk a mile in *their* shoes, sir, before you cast aspersions on them all. Fandom is supposedly known for its tolerance. Your recent statements make me doubt that.

Harry Warner Jr.: Thank you for your considerate attitude toward police officers, despite your apparently odious experience with being pulled over for allegedly speeding.

Guy Lillian III: I've been tear-gassed and clouted with something similar to a billy club – but not by a cop. Does that make you happy now?

No, it makes me disgusted. What happened? Unprofessional police conduct should not be forgiven just because being a cop is an often dangerous job. But if a person has no experience of what the daily working routine is like for a cop, they should not presume to impose 100 percent perfection standards on them. There are no perfect cops, no perfect police departments, and no perfect *people*. Not all lawyers are money-grubbing sharks, either. The legal system isn't perfect, and neither is the government. I believe that most people do the best they can as often as they can, and that they do make mistakes, and when those mistakes happen, they should admit them. And if we lived in a perfect world, we'd all eventually die of boredom and you'd be out of a job.

William Lott
address withheld

A wonderful wraparound cover on **Challenger's** 14th issue. Marc Schirmeister has a splendid comic touch. But tell me, what's the babe in the bikini throwing? Bubblegum?

Well, actually ... Let me put it this way. When I commissioned this illustration from Marc, I asked for, and described, a Mardi Gras parade scene. Part of what I requested was a sexy girl throwing ... beads. I

neglected to inform Marc – who lives, remember, in Los Angeles – that Mardi Gras beads come in necklaces. They aren't thrown loose. He didn't know that. So, the lady in question is throwing ... bubblegum, right!

You have a lot of fine art this time. The "negative" effect in Steven Fox's illo is striking, since your printer ably performed the difficult task of picking up solid blacks. His alien landscape is not at all like Chesley Bonestell's awesome space-scapes, but somehow evocative of their power. Good choice to illustrate an article about him. Other art stars of the issue: Kurt Erichsen and Charlie Williams, and I love Bryan Norris' Krazy Kat take-off atop Dennis Dolbear's piece. Is that you throwing the brick?

And Dolbear receiving it. You could fill a Hugo ballot just from this one issue!

A fine Mardi Gras photo spread, but I must admit that my eye lingered less on the brilliant costumes and more on Laura Modine's navel.

I said my bit about dealing with Republicans in my letter this issue. I hope that you and the other Democrats who are still infuriated over the election will focus that energy on stopping George W. Bush's truly unspeakable agenda and eventually undoing his election. In other words, don't forget 2000, but look ahead to the next battle. Name-calling just makes you look bad.

All such mud-wallowing is on hold while the country refocuses itself after 9-1-1. There will be time to underscore W's miserable domestic record once Osama bin Laden is dead and we have found the balance to return to politics.

Your "Thank you" ad for the Hugo nomination is attractive, the illo being excellent (as is usual for **Challenger** art), but I have some qualms. I get the impression that the Hugo is like the girl who wants to be courted, but not stalked; in other words, you can't seem to want her too much. Such overt overtures as your advertisement could drive voters away.

My gratitude was and is sincere. Hopefully fandom understands and forgives excessive enthusiasm.

I hope Roger Sims, if I ever meet the gentleman, will forgive me, but the "fabled party" in Room 770 sounds like more like a fraternity initiation than a gathering of SF fans. A bunch of silly drunks tossing chunks all over the place: who needs that?

The following is the only LOC we've received written about 9-1-1.

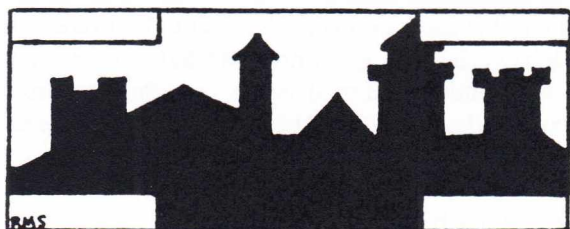
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Due reflection on the situation makes me pray the nation and its leaders will have patience to Follow The Money. Osama bin Laden's influence with the terrorist groups in his loose Al Quida federation is his ability to fund their activities – pay for training, arms, equipment, and other operational costs. If we track down and cut off his money, his influence will quickly dwindle – *and* we'll be able to track expenditures, identifying individuals and groups who have carried out terrorist operations he's funded or planned. That would let us make simultaneous strikes at many parts of the network, reducing risks of reprisals – and they'd be much less likely to avenge somebody who can't pay their way anymore. Without the hope of further funding, they'd be less likely to avenge him or shelter him, and might even hand him over to "prove" their innocence. Unfortunately, things are moving so rapidly that there may be too little patience to follow that more sure course – in which case, God help us.

A coordinated set of strikes by all members of the growing international coalition would begin to root out these vermin – but that coalition will fall apart (if no "normal" war follows) the minute the "war on terrorism" goes after terrorists like those in Northern Ireland or conducting Israeli attacks on the Palestinian territories. Even going after the Basque separatist movement – responsible for a lot of recent terrorist activity – would weaken that coalition, since it's such a fine line between "legitimate" revolutionary/separatist/political-opinion groups and "terrorists" of the sort all can be comfortable opposing. We must use this coalition wisely, or we'll lose both the ability to crush the terrorist core and the ability to form future similar coalitions.

May our leaders and people have the wisdom and strength to act patiently and effectively, instead of throwing away such a promising start. So that's my 2-cents worth. Best to you both and God Bless America.
So say we all.

Illustrating this section: Jerry Collins, Victor Hess, Joe Mayhew, Bill Rotsler, Cara Sherman, Alexis Gilliland, Ruth Shields.



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Plus works by Jerry Collins, Dave Birdsong, Victor Hess, heaven knows where, and Bill Rotsler, Dave Ryan and Joe Mayhew, in that better place.

CCC

THE ZINE DUMP

*Publications received (or picked up at worldcon) between June 15, and November 3, 2001; italicized titles mentioned to shame the editors into publishing again. This section of **Challenger** #15 is dedicated to the late C.-for-Cliff Fairn Kennedy.*

Aces / Paul McCall, 5801 W. Henry St., Indianapolis IN 46241 / pmccall@indy.net / www.paulmccall.com / \$10, no subs

The Accidental Fanzine / Sheila Lightsey, 263 Elm St., Cambridge MA 02139 / sheilalightsey@yahoo.com

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

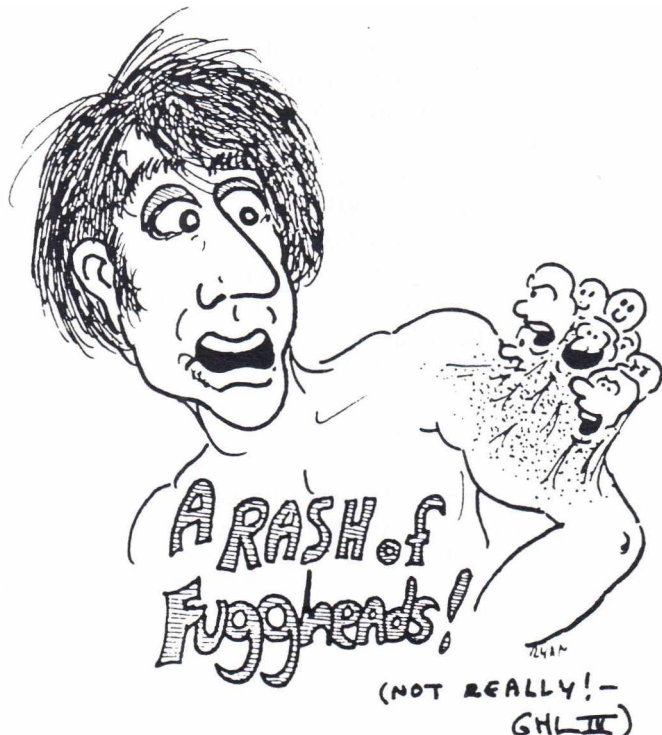
after/shock/thoughts / Sabina E. Becker, 670 King St. E., Cobourg, Ont. K9A 4J8 Canada / coldfire@sympatico.ca / \$2.50@ Cdn/US / Now available on-line.

Angry Thoreauan / Rev. Randall Tin-ear, P.O. Box 3478, Los Angeles CA 90028 / revtinear@angrythoreauan.com / www.angrythoreauan.com / \$3

Ansible #167-170 / 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. / *The* monthly newsletter for British fandom is forever informative and enjoyable, covering such items in this span as Douglas Adams' death and the worldcon, where Dave won a professional writing Hugo (and should therefore, IMO, abandon his stranglehold on an award meant for amateurs). Dave's usual departments – Thog's Masterclass, Outraged Letters, and general news about the SF community – are ever delightful.

Argentus issue One / Steven H Silver, 707 Spaling Lane, Deerfield IL 60015-3969 / shsilver@sfsite.com / \$3 or. / A new entry into the genzine community, editor Silver is a Hugo nominee who brings erudition and exceptional contributors to the page. Articles are eclectic, including a rundown of magazine sales (*really* good to see Dave Truesdale's words again.), an account of a try-out for **Who Wants to be a Millionaire?** by Rick Horton. (the show sounds almost as unappetizing as the proto-fascist **Weakest Link: give me my Battlebots!**), a visit to the Kennedy Space Center, Tom Whitmore on ConJose, announcement of the formation of a new midwest convention, Mike Resnick on "The Best African Movies" (**Zulu** is #1, **African Queen** #5, **Lawrence of Arabia** off the charts ... hmm, that's close to right) and my favorite piece, reviews of movies not yet – and best never – made. (**The Stars My Destination** starring a digitized John Wayne ... could be good!). There's much more, including a super-quick response to September 11th, advising caution. Grades for this initial outing: "A" for the contents, "A++" for the contributors, only a "C" for the art – what there is is OK, but there isn't enough – and a "B" overall. As Rich Lynch has so aptly critiqued **Chall**, such a variety needs a unifying editorial vision, and that isn't to be found in this first issue. The potential, however, is ace.

As the Crow Flies / Frank Denton, 14654 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle WA 98166-1953 / trade



Aztec Blue Nos. 4-5 / Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Street, Mississauga Ontario L4Y 1C8 Canada / mmoore@pathcom.com / Sure enough, the covers are blue ... and backed by a most pleasant publication by one of fandom's best if erstwhile letterhacks. In #4 Murray features con reports on the 18th Corflu, by Nic Farey and himself, and a oneshot from the convention itself. I'll have to get to a Corflu or Ditto one of these. Ahrvid Engholm eulogizes Douglas Adams. Jan Stinson reviews Bruce Sterling's **Distraction**. #5 is his annish, showing that MM keeps to an admirable quarterly schedule (remember, he's Canadian, so that word is pronounced "shed" instead of "sked"). Knarley Welch defines "annish." Howard DeVore describes his career as a printer, and the bulk of the issue is devoted to a tribute to the revered Canadian fanwriter, Boyd Raeburn. A long trip report by the fellow shows why he was so appreciated. Great letter columns in both issues, though Murray commits the cardinal sin of not printing his letter writers' addresses. Good art from Foster, Stiles, Erichsen and others, and the most readable font in fanzines.

Baloney / *The Tumbler Twins, a.k.a. Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas NV 89107, & Tom Springer, 15515 NE First Circle, Vancouver WA 98684* / LOCs to Tomsprung@aol.com / *contributions or trade*

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 / Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpey, Worcs., DY12 1NP UK / yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk / *trade / Where y'at, girl?*

Baryon Magazine 81-82 / Barry R. Hunter, P.O. Box 3314, Rome GA 30164-3314 / baryon@bellsouth.net / www.geocities.com/BaryonMag / \$1

Batteries Not Included Vol. VIII #7-10 / Richard Freeman, 513 N. Central Ave., Fairborn OH 45324 NEW / \$3 @ / Among the excellent writers in every issue of this, the premiere zine about video porn, are David Steinberg, who writes evocatively about photographing couples having at it, and Richard Pacheco, who used to be on the other end of the camera. It's always a worthwhile and evocative read. Steinberg's denunciation of Muslim sexual mores dates from July; that was a topic well-guessed. Pacheco's interview with babyfaced Tom Byron is only the first

item of interest in the August issue. I appreciate Pacheco enough that I'll let Byron call what he does "acting." (In September he interviews John T. Bone and his inamorata, Misty Regan.) Freeman lists his 101 favorite tapes, admitting that watching so much on-screen sex has turned his brain to guacamole. Jeff Jarvis describes finding Kylie Ireland tapes during a woodlands search for Bigfoot poo. Interesting zine. **BNI**.

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

Ben's Beat 63-64 / Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave., Teaneck NJ 07666-2626 / The first of these issues of Ben's redoubtable FAPazine includes a touching family memoir, his usual "Broadway Beat" (I'll be glad to avoid **Eat the Runt**), a great photo of Tolkein, with an autograph, and the sorriest cover I've seen on a fanzine in years (Ben drew it himself). Much improvement is shown in the next issue, with a gorgeous cover by Marc Schirmeister (on vellum paper, no less). Within, photos of Ben and pals (including Stephen Fabian and Laurraine Tutihasi), a memoir, a parody by Peter Cannon of **This Sporting Life**, and a reprinted piece from a Shavian magazine. But it's Ben's natter – some on a separate sheet – about September 11th that really packs power. This is a man who really knows and truly loves the city of New York. The assault on its people and its property offends him, yet he still sees NYC as "defiant, loving, never despairing," and overwhelms grief with pride.

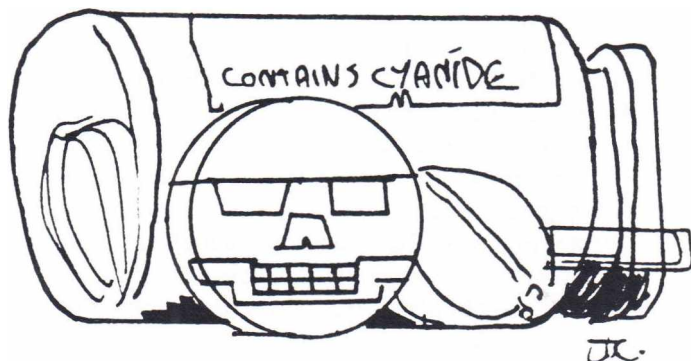
Binnacle / Victor A. Gonzalez, 9238 4th Ave. SW, Seattle WA 98106; Randy Byers, 1013 N. 36th St., Seattle WA 98103 / Nice to see Victor at the worldcon.

Bogus 5 / Sandra Bond, 46 Stirling Road, London N22 5BP, U.K. / the usual sandra@ho-street.demon.co.uk / Blessings on Sandra for distributing **Chall** to many of my British readers, via an M-bag delayed en route by 9-1-1.

Brooklyn! No. 33-34 / Fred Argoff, 1800 Ocean Pkwy #B-12, Brooklyn NY 11223-3037 new address / \$10 per 4 quarterly issues / One of my favorite "mundane" zines (that only means it's not devoted to science fiction) examines its home borough like it was a work of sculpture, constantly turning it this way and that to find a new perspective. #3 features photos of Brooklyn landmarks, which include a diner and a supermarket. In #34 Fred concentrates on new or renovated buildings and neighborhoods, depicting some really choice real

estate, but I must admit that my favorite photo depicts Junior's, to which Chuck Spanier and I once took a two-hour subway ride for the best cheesecake this side of Andromeda.

Conferring with Earthquakes / Brin-Marie McLaughlin, 247 19th Avenue Apt. 6, San Francisco CA 94121-2353 / brininsf@aol.com / <http://members.aol.com/brininsf/index.html>



ConJose Offline / P.O. Box 61363, Sunnyvale CA 94088-1363 / <http://www.conjose.org> / ConJose has at long last given me the high sign about my attempt to convert to attending membership through their installment agreement; it worked, but by the time I heard from them I'd overpaid next year's worldcon \$40. Will they let us apply that amount towards Rosy's membership? Stay tuned.

ConNotations Vol. 11 Issues 3-5 / Stephanie Bannon, c/o CASFS, P.O. Box 62613, Phoenix AZ 85082-2613 / leigh@casfs.org or dver@maricopa.edu / six issues for \$12 mailed bulk rate, \$18 first class / Comprehensive professional information in this tabloid, which clearly does not restrict its attentions to the gilas and cacti of the Arizona desert. Most is media, ranging from **LotR** news to **Enterprise** and the many series abounding on the Sci-Fi Channel. Anime gets its due, but so does Douglas Adams, given a fine eulogy, and Shane Shellenbarger's three-part tour of amusement parks and lunacy-provoking roller coasters is great secondhand fun. By which I mean, this zine is as close as you'll ever get me to one of those things.

Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi / Andrew C. Murdoch, 508-6800 Westminster Hwy, Richmond B.C. V7C 1C5 Canada / raven@wolf.spydernet.com / t.u. or S2'a

Data Dump / Steve Sneyd, Hilltop Press, Almondbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 8PB U.K. / \$4 / A handwritten directory to poetry in SF fanzines, these two attractive issues don't reprint verse, which might have been valuable, but review their subject with exuberance.

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

De Profundis 342-5 / Marty Cantor, c/o LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood CA 91601 / The first of this batch of LASFS newsletters comes attached to an invaluable club directory, with hundreds of members' names and addresses. I think I'm the only one from Louisiana. #343 contains a moving eulogy for Jack Harness. In every issue, the usual mass of information about meetings, activities, parties, books for the club's incredible library, and of course, the Menace of the LASFS, exemplifying the joy of a club that exists for the joy of its members and no other purpose whatsoever.

The Devniad / Bob Devney, 25 Johnson Street, N. Attleboro MA 02760 / The 75th installment of Bob's ace e-zine proves his worthiness for yet more Hugo nominations in the future. His MilPhil report fills all three parts, and is composed of quotations from many fans and various on topics ranging from the hopelessness of being a nominee in the category owned by Dave Langford to the shame of missing a GHLIII reading. Forgiven, Bob!

Diary of a Dafiite / Harry Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309 / phone (310) 835-9202 / Harryandruschak@aol.com / Harry says "Please make a note in your list of fanzines that my LASFAPazine **Diary of a Dafiite** is available free to anyone who asks, either by e-mail or snail mail." Done! Harry's zine is autobiographical, with the emphasis on graphic, as he details medical problems I wouldn't wish on Osama ... and certainly not on Harry.

DSAFax Vol. 33, No. 6-7 / Rick Helmich, 16245 E. Purdue Pl., Aurora CO 80013 / whelmich@abwam.com / All right, all right, it's **DASFax**, the monthly newsletter of the Denver club, the editor typoed the title in the cover logo to #7. He is appropriately embarrassed in #8. Each of these issues sports a cute Sheryl Birkhead drawing, book reviews, club stuff, and at least once, the blessed name of Dana Cain, who was Dana Longo when she graced New Orleans fandom much too long ago. #10 was written after September 11th, and how sad the change in the fans' attitudes.

Erg 154-5 / Terry Jeeves, 66 Red Scar Dr., Scarborough, N. Yorks. YO12 5RQ U.K. / erg40@madasafish.com / The usual attractions to this evocative marvel: charming old-fashioned covers, cool musings on antique airplanes (Terry should meet Harold, my stepfather-in-law). #154 features Terry's fiction, a piece on early Brit fanzines, and a musing on electric cars. #155 goes on with a delightful column by Penelope Fandergaste, plus a long reminiscence of postwar – that's World War II – British conventioning and thoughts on asteroid bombardments. Fans of P.T. O'Leary should take heart from Terry's pooh-pooing of any threat from cloning, and fans of our hobby should cleave to **Erg** as a model of The Real Thing.

Ethel the Aardvark No. 97-8 / Paul Lewis, Melbourne S.F. Club, P.O. Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Vic 3005, Australia / MSFC_Ethel@eGroups.com / \$15 (for Australia), \$25 (overseas) for 6 issues / Here's a great clubzine from the other side of the Earth, lots of personality and club photos, well-written reviews and a pretty good variety of articles. #97 has strong reaction to the death of Douglas Adams – and a friendly lettercol. #98 sports a new logo by Alan White – SF owes that guy a Hugo – and mentions that this is the MSFC's 50th year. Amidst budgetary matters and the usual features, a sharp and critical review of Multiverse, a mediacon flawed by greed and egotism (**Farscape**'s Virginia Hey is apparently okay, as well as easy on the eyes, but Anthony Daniels is a dork), that makes for good reading. Hey, here's a review by onetime NOLA visitor Paula McGrath!

Fanzine Fanatique Quarterly / Keith & Rosemary Walker, 6 Vine St., Greaves, Lancaster LA1 9WF U.K. / FanzineFanatique@aol.com

File 770 / Mike Glyer, 705 Valley View Drive, Monrovia CA 91016 / MGlyer@compuserve.com / \$8 for 5 issues / We anxiously await the worldcon issue of Mike's superb Hugo winner.

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

For the Clerisy Vol. 8 No. 44 / Brant Kresovich, P.O. Box 404, Getzville NY 14068-0404 / kresovich@hotmail.com / \$2 or trade / A self-described "bouncy" issue devoted to comedy – illustrated by anatomical sketches! Giving new truth to the phrase, "bust a gut," one supposes. Brant hits on the Addams Family (or, specifically, Cousin It, a

reference with resonance in New Orleans fandom), Dick van Dyke, Thurber, W.C. Fields (how I crave a tape of his Oscar-winning masterpiece among masterpieces, "The Fatal Glass of Beer"), Hunter Thompson (his anger never became clear to me until that deeply disturbing Johnny Depp movie), H.L. Mencken, Peter DeVries, even a textbook on anatomy from which the illos are drawn. Some will find his review of **Challenger** #14 hilarious, but I found it kind and I'm quite grateful. Only one complaint about this literate, focused, enlightening publication: no addresses in the lettercol.

For Dickheads Only / Dave Hyde, P.O. Box 611, Kokomo IN 46903

Fosfax #203-4 / Timothy Lane c/o FOSFA, P.O. Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281 / \$3 or / Don't let the obsessive conservatism of the editor drive you away from this extraordinarily provocative and interesting publication. Search out Joseph Major's voluminous book reviews and – specifically – Tim's piece on alternate history, Dale Speirs' "History of Mail Bombs", and much, much else. Good writers, mostly conservative, throng to the lettercol. 9-1-1 has erased for the moment most of the partisan bitterness that has poisoned American dialectic in the past year; even though that moment will not last, it'd be heartening to find and remember our common ground.



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Grecian Odd Essays / John Berry, 4 Chilterns, S. Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 8J4 U.K. / Didn't hear from John recently.

Idea / Geri Sullivan, Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315 / idea@toad-hall.com

International Revolutionary Gardener / Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU U.K. / jehanna@gn.apc.org, josephn@globalnet.co.uk

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

The Kessel Run 1-10 / Samuel Lubell, Mary Morman,
and others / Official daily newsletter of the Millennium
Philcon, distributed hither and thither throughout the
con. The usual news, program changes, restaurant
recommendations, awards and masquerade news,
given a big boost in entertainment value by Teddy
Harvia's "Xenophillie" strip.

The Knarley Knews #89-90 / Henry Welch, 1525
16th Ave., Grafton WI 53024-2017 / welch@msoe.edu
or LethaWelch@aol.com / \$1.50 a / Is it my
imagination or is this issue – sporting a distinctive
Sean Russel Friend cover – thicker than the norm?
Certainly there's a lot here. His "spuming" editorial
wanders through his busy summer – remember last
summer? when cats and mulberry bushes and county
fairs were still the topics of the day? Rodney Leighton
reflects on mundane vs. fannish zines. Gene Stewart
on the success – or lack thereof – of **A.L.** My favorite
piece is Lysa DeThomas' Israel visit, which includes a
float about the Dead Sea. I had a similar experience in
Salt Lake; you can't help but float, but God help you if
that water works its way through your bathing suit.
#90 aches with unintended irony, as DeThomas
reflects on terrorism – from Israel, long before 9-1-1.
"[T]here are things that we [Americans] can never,
ever relate to," she says. Oh yeah? I enjoyed her
caving tales. Charlotte Proctor's comment in this
issue – "how peaceful and prosperous are the times in
which we now live" – is heartbreaking. Well, Knarl's
"spume" not only hits on MilPhil (did we see each
other?) but also vows revenge for the WTC: "They
have whacked the hornets' nest one too many times
with a stick."

Light's List 2001 / John Light, The Light House, 37
The Meadows, Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland
TD15 1NY, U.K. / photon.press@cwcom.net / 2
pounds / John lists hundreds of zines of varying sorts
with excellent info about their frequency and costs. I
wish he'd somehow differentiate the genres, though;
no one would know **Challenger** is fundamentally
aimed at SF fandom from his otherwise succinct
description. 16th annual issue, and despite my minor
gripe, invaluable.

Lofgeornost #64 / Fred Lerner, 81 Worcester Ave.,
White River Junction VT 05001 /
fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu / FAPA and trade / The
August issue of Fred's FAPazine takes him and his –

and us – to Iceland, of all places, and Denmark, and
Sweden, birthplace of one set of my great-grandparents.
He hits a hundred cities with names impossible to spell,
and a zillion cool museums, including one where
"Louisiana" has a unique meaning. Lerner shares his
life of knowledge and intellectual adventure without
making slugabed brains like mine feel dumb.
Lofgeornost is a treat. But what's the name mean?

Memphen 272-3 / Greg Bridges, P.O. Box 820534,
Memphis TN 38182-0534 / Trade / Neat Tom Foster
"funny animal" covers front these issues of the
Memphis clubzine. Slide shows, the Darrell Awards,
a long account of Memphis area writers ... where's that
DeepSouthCon bid?

Millennium Philcon Daily Frefanzine No. 1 / Sam
Konkin, sek3@frefan.org / I never saw a second issue
at MilPhil, but the Libertarians have apparently
produced 23 issues of this one-sheeter at various
worldcons. This one headlines the loss of Poul
Anderson, whom they call the Dean of Libertarian SF,
including an appreciation of Poul as a filker by Erwin
"Filthy Pierre" Strauss. Many Libby events are touted
for the convention, and some cute photos run. Who's
the girl in the "I Like Your Boyfriend" tee shirt?

Mimosa / Richard & Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 1350,
Gaithersburg MD 20885 / e-mail:
jophan@znetonebox.com / website: <http://www.Jophan.org>
mimosa \$4 or / The finest genzine
rolling didn't show this season. C'mon, krewes!

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

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

News from Crime and Space / Sara Felix, 609A W 6th
St., Austin TX 78701 / www.crimeandspace.com / I
must visit this bookstore!

Niekas Ed Meskys, RR#2, Box 63, 322 Whittier Hwy.,
Center Harbor NH 03226-9708
edmeskys@worldpath.net / \$4.95, 4 for \$19

No Award 10 / Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore St. #105,
N. Hollywood CA 91606 / martyhoohah@netzero.net &
louisshoohah@netzero.net / A clever Plergh bit winds

through and through this issue, bedecked with a neat Schirmeister cover and blessed with many of Marty's usual contributors. Milt Stevens' parody of **A Storm of Swords** is righteous – sardonic as ever. Milt – and Ed Green's account of the L.A. riots continues to grip through its 5th installment (especially when Green catches a couple of National Guardsmen goofing off outside a topless bar). Good lettercol – hard to have a *bad* lettercol with the correspondents we have – and Joe Major's criticism of **Niekas** is strong stuff. However, the punctuation here is *weird* – “=” for apostrophes, “@” for end quotes. It's clear Marty copied Joe's piece directly from e-mail and never proofread it, tsk. The most striking part of the issue, however, is Earl Kemp's angry and disturbing “Heinlein Happens”, an ugly account of the disintegration of his friendship with the great author. I was offered the piece myself, and I wasn't the first fanned to pass on publishing it. I respect Kemp a great deal but this sort of invective, this long after the subject's death, seems unnecessary and vindictive. Anyway, everything is out in the open, now, and we'll see what comes of it.

Nonstop Fun is Hard on the Heart · Dwain Kaiser, P.O. Box 1074, Claremont CA 91711-1074 / dgkaiser@hotmail.com (NEW) “the faanish ‘Usual’”

Nova Express · Lawrence Person, P.O. Box 27231, Austin TX 78755-2231 / e-mail: lawrence@bga.com / \$12 U.S.; \$16 Canada & Mexico; \$22 International

On East Broadway 11-12 / Tim Marion / see **Terminal Eyes** / Slanapa zine with another great fillo by Andy MacDonald and mailing comments. #12 is rich in movie and TV reviews. To answer a question Tim proffers in #11, the strategically scarf-clad Dr. Who (with scarf) at the masquerade was Rick Norwood, and he showed what he was made of at the '79 worldcon in Boston. I borrowed my immediate response from David Niven.

Opuntia #48 1A.B. 5A. 5B / Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7 Canada / \$3 @ or. / Dale's numbering system has been explained but still has me stupefied. The issue #s read like statutes. (Our number 48 deals with libelous publications. Hmm.) Anyway, here we have hilarious Harvia covers (with cactus, of course), zine and “mail art” listings, and natter of all sorts. Dale joins **International Revolutionary Gardener** in dissing fan history, as being unconnected with the “context” of the day. I think both gents miss the point. True, it is required of

any man to share in the passions and controversies of his time, at danger of being known not to have lived, to misquote Lincoln, but fandom, to properly quote Hemingway, is our separate peace, our place on earth which the occasional obscenity of modern life – need I explain – cannot foul. So while it may seem silly, even insane, to hail or bewail the Hugo victory of **Harry Potter** in a month where the World Trade Center came crashing down, I'm grateful for the distraction. In .5, Dale writes terrifyingly (is that a word? Should be) about his hospitalization for “traumatic laparoscopic cholecstitis”: the poor guy left the hospital only to discover the death of Cliff Kennedy. 5B is even worse in a way – like all of us, he had to go through 9-1-1. His thoughts and his horror reflect mine, as I'm sure they reflect many of yours. Dale is writing a history of mail bombs: the anthrax scare has been forcing him to update it daily.

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

PhiloSFy · Alexander R. Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Rd., San Antonio TX 78239-4022 / alex_slate@hotmail.com

Peregrine Nations Vol. One, No. Two / J.G. Stinson, P.O. Box 430314, Big Pine Key FL 33043-0314 / tropicsf@aol.com / \$1 or t.u. / Second issue of a righteous new genzine featuring a gorgeous Alan White masthead. Like Murray Moore, Jan was – and still is – a consistent and articulate letterhack who has decided to take the plunge and publish herself. Her own lettercol – which runs first in this issue, an innovation – is juicy, and shows how much the move is appreciated. Frohvet contributes some book reviews, Jan reviews fanzines (in her deliciously titled “Pub Crawl”), then offers a jolly con report on Tropicon (which Rosy used to attend) and an account of her miseries with Meniere's Disease. The last column was written on 9-1-1, and the human decency this fine lady shares with us helps.

Plokta Volume 6 No. 3 / 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 / Here's the August issue of Britain's foremost perzine, which placed second in the Philly Hugo race and constantly amazes me with its creativity and joy. “Ready Plok” deals with collapsible tents for visitors, the impossibility of making bread (they studied the efficacy of chocolate teapots a while back – they don't hold tea but are tasty when they

fall apart), mice (I had one living in my sink during my first bachelorhood), Citroens, and lost items in general, which shows that Sue Mason can fill pages with clever writing as well as clever cartooning. I envy their bike ride, and avoid cruel jealousy of the wedding they attended and photographed only because I had one myself in June. Manoshevitz, these people have fun, and produce the most creative oddball fanzine there is to celebrate and continue it.



Probe 112-113 / Liz Simmonds, P.O. Box 781401, Sandton 2146, South Africa / sfsa@newhorizons.co.za / "for sale and exchange" / Is it #112? The gorgeous cover by Roberta Schima reads 113. Ah, but here's the real #113, with another gorgeous Schima cover, a new editor, and the usual excellent contents. The Nova Awards are announced – and rather delightfully explained – by judge Gerard Hope. Lee Modesitt is interviewed. LOCs come in from all over, Hope reviews the undervalued **Pitch Black** and the icky **Bicentennial Man**, and there's even a piece on Johannes Kepler. Very handsome, professional-looking work.

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

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

Quasiquote Sandra Bond, 46 Stirling Road, London N22 5BP, U.K. / the usual, "1 pound limey or \$2 yankee" / sandra@ho-street.demon.co.uk

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

Rag Soup Susan Higgins, P.O. Box 925711, Houston TX 77292-5711 / Ragsoup@aol.com / <http://hometown.aol.com/ragsoup/RAGSOUIndex->

html

The Reluctant Famulus 57 / Thomas D. Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian MI 49221-1627 / E-mail: tomfamulus@dmci.net / \$3 / A great genzine from one of the neglected masters of this hobby, with a variety of well-composed articles and beautifully – and colorfully! – illustrated throughout. Steve Stiles' "Coloring Book of Doom" cover – depicting, among other disasters, a burning city – is perhaps *too* relevant, but that's simple ill luck: forget the headlines and it's hilarious. Tom's editorial, continuing his account of his family genealogy, is a blast from the past indeed: I love the antique studio photos. His later piece describes meeting a for-real robot, and in addition to being richly entertaining, sports what may be the last original art by Joe Mayhew. Bob Sabella critiques the work of Kate Wilhelm – what a high surprise when she won the Suncon Hugo for **When Late the Sweet Birds Sang**. Gene Stewart weighs in on Pop Music and Philosophy. Ken Cheslin contributes a memoir of his early SF-reading career. Sheryl Birkhead describes her travails with a new mailbox. Mark Bovard continues his account of life on the farm – much more enthralling than it sounds. A strong lettercol concludes things – except for the bacover illo, dated September 11th, an American flag, and that's even stronger.

The Rhizome Factor Vol. 1 No. 5 / Cathy Cupitt, P.O. Box 915, Nedlands, Western Australia, 6909, Australia / \$4.4 per. Extra overseas

Rommeldam Dwight R. Decker, 20003 N. 23rd Ave. #193, Phoenix AZ 85027-4160 / deklane@aol.com

Scavenger's Newsletter Janet Fox, 833 Main, Osage City KS 66523-1241 / foxscav1@jc.net / \$2.50 per sample copy / "The monthly marketletter for SF/fantasy/horror/Mystery writers and artists with an interest in the small press."

The Sci-File / Science Fiction Weekly / <http://www.scifiweekly.com> / Phooey on these guys: their ongoing poll had me convinced I had a real shot at the Hugo this year. No kidding: **Chall** was the only fanzine to receive more than 100 votes, and no one came within half of that total except for the servant of Sauron known as No Award (and I do *not* mean Marty Cantor's genzine). Their poll failed to predict the actual Hugo winner in most of the races, including Best Novel. I suppose I should thank them for the dream, but it was nasty to feel it drain away as MilPhil went on.

scopus:3007 Alexander J. L. Bouchard, P.O. Box 573,

Hazel Park MI 48030-0573 / ajlbouchard@juno.com
the usual

SF Commentary / Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street,
Collingwood, Vict. 3066 Australia gandc@mira.net
\$A5, SUS15 the single copy

SFSFS Shuttle #143-4 / Karen and Cynthia Warmuth,
c/o South Florida SF Society, P.O. Box 70143, Ft.
Lauderdale FL 33307-0143 / Disaster struck the
SFSFS in June, when they lost the use of their
clubhouse. The membership stripped the place to the
walls, put books, shelves, copier, everything into
storage and plows on, meeting since July at a local
library. Wish I could have been there to help them
"thrash out" the Hugo nominees. Chairman Carlos
Perez tries to rally the troops, editor Karen Warmuth
introduces herself to the readership. Adam Troy-Castro
and Perez review books, and Tropicon XX is
advertised. In the gross issue that follows – get it?
#144? "gross"? Hahaha – directions are given to the
club's new abode, "resident SFSFS curmudgeon" Jack
Weaver is sent get-well wishes, the membership
salutes local success Castro on his **Analog** cover
appearance, and there are even some photos from the
club picnic. Obviously things hang in there in
paradise.

Skel's Trove / Bill Bowers / 4651 Glenway Ave.,
Cincinnati OH 45238-4503 / eWorlds@Outworlds.net
/ Lots of goodies for sale on-line. If you love old
fanzines, check it out.

Skug Gary S. Mattingly, 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin CA
94568 gsmattingly@home.com t.u.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin Vol. 7 No.
10 / Julie Wall, 470 Ridge Road, B'ham AL 35206-
2816 / jlwall@usit.net / SFC membership or. / The
rebel region struts its stuff in this summer bulletin,
thick with con reports by Naomi Fisher, Randy Cleary
and Tom Feller, listings of future events, zines
received, e-mail addresses of regional interest, and a
bibliography of Joy V. Smith, who obviously writes
more than LOCs to **Challenger**. Also in this issue, a
valuable roster to paid members. I advise the curious to
request #11, which will feature a tribute to Meade
Frierson, the genial trufan who guided the SFC
through its tender years and whose spirit yet suffuses
this friendly, enthusiastic celebration of SF and the
South.

The Space Cadet Gazette R. Graeme Cameron, 1855
West 2nd Ave. #110, Vancouver BC V6J 1J1 Canada

graeme_cameron@mindlink.bc.ca

Speculations September, 2001 / Kent Brewster, PMB
400, 1111 W. El Camino Real #109, Sunnyvale CA
94087-1057 / kent@speculations.com / \$20/year /
Picked up at the MilPhil Green Room. A bimonthly
market report on various paying publishers, with news
of contests, grants, workshops and so forth. A listing of
agents who handle neo-pros would make a valuable
edition, methinks; what's here is a keeper for new
writers.

Spirits of Things Past No. 2-3 / Dick & Leah Smith,
410 W. Willow Rd., Prospect Heights IL 60070-1250
/ rhes@enteract.com / The August and September PRs
for Ditto 14/FanHistoriCon 11. A nifty zine in its own
right. **Spirits** not only gives news about the
convention(s), but entertaining squibs on Rick Sneary
(by Bob Tucker), Bob Tucker (by Earl Kemp), and cool
LOCs by Roy Lavender and David Bratman. Photo
illustrated, too. No. 3, appearing after MilPhil, features
the classic "How the Grinch Stole Worldcon" by Bill
Fesselmeyer, and a rundown and righteous criticism of
the Australian ballot system. Leah's piece, "Who's
Voting No Award?" echoes her dismay after the totals
were announced this year, putting that emptiness on the
ballot ahead of both **Stet** and **Chall** in first place votes.
Her cry "How do we stop them?" finds echo here, but I
re-emphasize my reaction, voiced at MilPhil: "These
[voters] are *not* people who read the fanzines!" The
voters for No Award were either misguided souls who
don't believe fan honors should clutter up the Hugo
ballot, or people who thought they were expressing No
Preference. *Cue rant*: Only twice has No Award
triumphed in the entire history of the Hugo Awards,
once about 40 years ago in a Best New Writer category
and once in '77 for dramatic presentation. It's
unnecessary and it's ugly and I say get rid of it. Neos:
be sure to ask for a copy of the Smiths' **What Everyfan
Should Know About Fanzines**, an invaluable one-sheet
guide to the hobby.

Spunk no. 7 / Violet Jones, P.O. Box 55336, Hayward
CA 94545 / at editor's discretion / The most original
and the most beautiful eco-zine I've seen yet,
silkscreened (she tells us how) hand-written pages on
recycled brown paper, and is replete with radical
ecological philosophy. I keyed on the editor's "time
capsules" of zines she buries in the wilderness; I sent
the last two **Challengers** to join the next packet in
Death Valley. If this **Spunk** goes with them, they're in
righteous company; I envy Violet's creative, passionate
anger.

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

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

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

Terminal Eyes #3 / Tim Marion, c/o Kleinbard, 266 E. Broadway, Apt. 1201B, New York NY 10002 / Tim's covers, color shots of the beautiful girl group Destiny's Angels, drew a lot of notice in New Orleans traffic court when I pulled this zine from its envelope. Somehow such subject matter is of more immediate interest to the casual onlooker than spaceships. Tim spends a good deal of space in this FAPazine discussing this group of hot patooties. I haven't heard the music, but their publicity shots beat the poop out of H.W.A.'s. There's also a lot of TV talk, a lettercol, and FAPA mailing comments. Good illos by Steve Stiles, Andy MacDonald, and more.

Things on My Desk / Peter Motte, Abdystaat 33, B-Q 500 Geraardsbergen, Belgium / Trade, it seems / Notes on zines received by the editor from around the globe, with some apt commentary. Cleverest Joycean title: **De Groote Beer**. All right, Peter, here's **Challenger**: whacha think?

This Here ... / Nic Farey, P.O. Box 178, St. Leonard MD 20685 / nicandhobbie@aol.com (NEW); LOCs to thisherefanzone@aol.com / trade

Thyme #131-2 / Alan Stewart, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia / a.stewart@ppgrad.unimelb.edu.au / The or \$A 3; subscription \$A 15 / July 2000 edition of Australia's pivotal newszine, both sides of the ocean have got to find a more efficient system of distribution. Anyway, **Thyme** is a comprehensive look at Aussie fandom, replete with reviews, interviews (Sarah Douglas), a long local social calendar, and the delightful "Faces of Fandom", printing pictures sent downunder from fans upover. Large, inclusive. Australians should have

boosted **Thyme** to a Hugo at the last Aussiecon. Let's hope it's still around for the next one.

Timebound / David Sooby, 12325 Pinehurst Dr., Kansas City MS 66109 / lensman@planetkc.com / Clubzine of the Kansas City SF&F Society, silent lately.

Torcon 3 PR #1 / P.O. Box 3, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1A2 Canada / Info@torcon3.on.ca / www.torcon3.on.ca / First progress report for the '03 worldcon, with a questionnaire, a plea for volunteers, short bios of the GOHs ... the usual. A small layout complaint: running a Harvia toon side by side with a Mayhew piece distracts from both. My membership number is S 1708; time to upgrade! But ... \$90?

Tortoise No. 12 / Sue Jones, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury SY1 2BQ U.K. / sue.tortoise@talk21.com / trade / *It's about time!* No, the issue isn't particularly late ... but it is about time. One of the most interesting of the U.K.'s awesome clutch of perzines sports a theme to every issue, and this time, it's time. The pub opens (and fans pour in) with an interesting squib about an antique "hook & spike" clock belonging to Sue's dad, then goes on to examine the genesis of Dick Whittington, subject of a great pantomime in which the editor once took part. Her article on "The First Time Ever" is not what you're thinking, but the tale of her first SF read, a Simak. (Mine was **Star Born**.) A column on Rebus Dates loses me, but Sue's natter on the Festival at the Edge, featuring quilt-making, harp music, and lots of delightful Celtic business, is engrossing. At the last, she (and Siberia, her cat) speak with hope about the world unity evident after September 11th; short-lived, but that's the thing about time - it keeps on keepin' on.

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

Tripe Reportcard 50-51 / Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills CA 91344 / *Stately plump Bruce Pelz rose from the stairwell, bearing a bowl of lather on which lays this postcard from Trinity College, Dublin, alma mater of Ulysses author James Joyce, whom Bruce evokes on the reverse. Good for the traveling Pelzes for knowing their Sunny Jim! A way a lone a last a loved a long the ... Uh ... here's #51, from the Cayman Islands. Pelz complains that he's spent a full fourth of the year on cruises. Our tears flow like wine, Bruce.*

Twink #22-23 / E.B. Frohvet, 4716 Dorsey Hall Dr.

#506. Ellicott City MD 21042 / The u. / The evocative fantasy cover (it has a dagger and a dragon) to #22 fronts an exceptional publication, centered on Steve Sneyd's provocative "Other Christs for Other Skies", on "excarnation," reminding me of the obscure novel **Jesus Christs**. Jesus and Judas in alternate universes. Frohvet himself chimes in with a funny piece on unconsciousness-producing weapons in SF, and several fans chime in with their "Best Moments in Fandom". A Finlayesque Julia Morgan-Scott illo fronts the latest number, slim at 28 pages, but what's here is fine. Frohvet was not at MilPhil (and was missed, believe me), but keeps his hand in fannish controversy, ending one feud with Dick and Leah Smith (with an apology) while taking up another (with Andy Hooper). I'm more interested in his excellent article on Religion in SF (grand illos by Margaret Simon). Sheryl Birkhead's literally moving story. New Zealand's Lyn McConchie's nightmarish travel adventures bridging the Pacific, and Eeb's sharp fanzine and book reviews. Zine reviews, too - he's far too nice to **Challenger**.

Vamp till Ready No. One / Alexander J. L. Bouchard, P.O. Box 573, Hazel Park MI 48030-0573 / ajlbouchard@juno.com / the usual / Letter substitute from the author of **scopus:3007**, picked up at the worldcon. Bad news - a dying uncle - is alleviated by good news - Alex is back to work.

Vanamonde Nos. 403-422 / John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St. No. 409, L.A. CA 90057 / Trade / Apa-L one-sheeters rich with wit and smarts, mostly from the beginning of the year. I'd like to hear John's take on the worldcon ... and September 11th.

Visions of Paradise no. 88 / Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake NJ 07828-1023 / bobsabella@nac.net / Received with **Halcyon Days**, a separately-bound lettercol (with a cute Trinlay Khadro teddy bear illo). The cover's by Sheryl Birkhead, who seems to be everywhere these days. (Saw her briefly at the worldcon.) Bob's "Passing Scene" takes us through the first three months of 2001 - it'll probably be awhile till we read of 9-1-1 here - which include much school stuff (Bob explains his career in our "Epistles" this issue) and a bit of annoyance at **Locus** for ignoring his **Who Shaped SF?** I'm hoping some witty soul will review it for *these* pages. Sabella's own reviews are always thoughtful, but particularly delightful this time, since they concentrate on **Chall** pal Greg Benford's *Galactic Center* series before hitting on works by Silverberg (on Conrad) and Josephine Tey (on Richard III). He always reviews one fanzine in each issue, and this time **Fantasy**

Commentator is lucky.

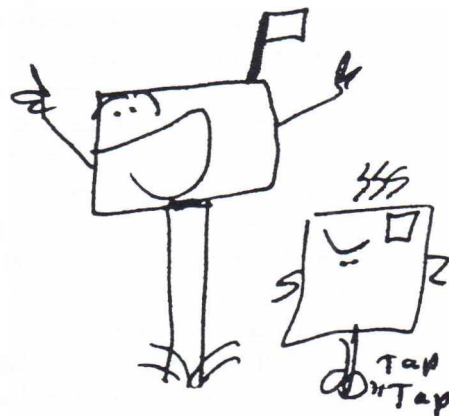
Wabe Jae Leslie Adams, 621 Spruce St., Madison WI 53715; Tracy Benton, 108 Grand Canyon Drive, Madison WI 53705; Bill Bodden, P.O. Box 762, Madison WI 53701-0762 / jaeleslie@aol.com; billzilla@mailbag.com; benton@uwalumni.com / t.u.

Westwind #259-260 / George Nyhen, NWSFS, P.O. Box 24207, Seattle WA 98124 / mwsfs-info@sfnorthwest.org / free to members; dues \$20/year / The "Nizzfizzies" took a train ride through their gorgeous state in June, and a righteous time was had by all. Photos of the event adorn the cover and an inside article. Con announcements, another Burt Webb UFO installment, book reviews, and an invitation to praise one's favorite restaurant fill sue #259. Its successor features another trip, to Mt. St. Helens ("Volcano Trek"), but most of the pictures accompanying the article just show various SF fans standing around parking lots, and we must turn to the bacover for a view of the devastated mountain. Despite the invitation to the club's September Social and birthday list - this must be an enormous group - the issue saddens through its fact-filled eulogies for Poul Anderson and Fred Hoyle ... and Laurie Koon, a young, beautiful local lady. Her passing hits hard, even for someone who never met her.

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

Xerox Debt Davida Gypsy Breier, P.O. Box 963, Havre de Grace MD 21078 / leekinginc@hotmail.com

Illustrators: Dave Ryan (I didn't mean it!), Jerry Collins, Bryan Norris, Bill Rotsler, Nola Frame-Gray.



"And the rock said, 'Osama bin Laden is hiding behind me; come kill him...'"

SOME NOTES ON THE WAR AGAINST CIVILIZATION

Joseph T Major

Marty Cantor called the incidents of September 11 the beginning of the "The War Against Civilization". Let us consider what some of its creators and defenders have had to say.

The first of our Dead White European Males to speak could be considered uninspiring. After all, he lived openly with a mistress, was associated with financial speculations, and never went to church in his life. At least there were no stained chitons involved.

At the beginning of the Peloponnesian War the Athenians held a memorial ceremony for those who had died. And Thucydides the historian reported it like this:

Meanwhile these were the first that had fallen, and Pericles, son of Xanthippus, was chosen to pronounce their eulogium. When the proper time arrived, he advanced from the sepulchre to an elevated platform in order to be heard by as many of the crowd as possible, and spoke as follows:

58 "Most of my predecessors in this place have commended him who made this speech part of the law, telling us that it is well that it should be delivered at the burial of those who fall in battle. For myself, I should have thought that the worth which had displayed itself in deeds would be sufficiently rewarded by honours also shown by deeds; such as you now see in this funeral prepared at the people's cost. And I could have wished that the reputations of many brave men were not to be imperilled in the mouth of a single individual, to stand or fall according as he spoke well or ill. . . . That part of our history which tells of the military achievements which gave us our several possessions, or of the ready valour with which either we or our fathers stemmed the tide of Hellenic or foreign aggression, is a theme too familiar to my hearers for me to dilate on, and I shall therefore pass it by. But what was the road by which we reached our position, what the form of government under which our greatness grew, what the national habits out of which it sprang; these are questions which I may try to solve before I proceed to my panegyric upon these men; since I think this to be a subject upon which on the present occasion a speaker may properly dwell, and to which the whole assemblage, whether citizens or foreigners, may listen with advantage.

"Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences, if no social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace. . . .

"If we turn to our military policy, there also we differ from our antagonists. We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of

learning or observing, although the eyes of an enemy may occasionally profit by our liberality; trusting less in system and policy than to the native spirit of our citizens; while in education, where our rivals from their very cradles by a painful discipline seek after manliness, at Athens we live exactly as we please, and yet are just as ready to encounter every legitimate danger.

... holding that vengeance upon their enemies was more to be desired than any personal blessings, and reckoning this to be the most glorious of hazards, they joyfully determined to accept the risk, to make sure of their vengeance, and to let their wishes wait; and while committing to hope the uncertainty of final success, in the business before them they thought fit to act boldly and trust in themselves. Thus choosing to die resisting, rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonour, but met danger face to face, and after one brief moment, while at the summit of their fortune, escaped, not from their fear, but from their glory."

— Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Book Two

Many sophists believe that only a dictatorship can effectively wage a total war; that only an absolute government can channel the powers of the nation and can most efficiently direct its efforts. Whittaker Chambers once repeated a quote to this effect and then pointed out that it was said by Adolf Hitler. And in fact, to further emphasize the Witness's point, far from being a super-efficient superpower, the Nazi government was the epitome of chaos, with competing organizations devoting more time and effort to acquiring power than to defeating their enemy.

Whereas, while the democracies often seemed to be as chaotic, their efforts were less unfocused. This was because it was possible to resort to orderly methods to communicate differences. A complainant could have input into the formation of the authority to which he reported. He could vote for his leader, in other words. As a result, it was possible to influence that authority. Consider that Roosevelt ran for President during the war, and Churchill faced votes of confidence. As a result, the inherent chaos and inefficiency of war was ameliorated. As Perikles pointed out, democracies are better at enforcing laws.

It is noteworthy that there is considerable concern about the abridgement of civil liberties stemming from security measures. The fact that this concern is so widespread and openly displayed can be considered proof of its negatively prophetic value. While this concern is not surety against its warnings coming true, the fact that there is so much concern makes it all the less likely. As Perikles said, we do not feel the need to snoop. (Not counting the people who had noted how he would detour to kiss that *metic* Aspasia. In public! The nerve of him!)

In his *Americans At War*, the historian Stephen Ambrose comments on the initiative of the American soldier. By way of contrast, one can look at the remarkable lack of initiative demonstrated by the Germans at Normandy; see *Panzer Commander: The Memoirs of Hans von Luck* for an example. We can assume that has not changed, and that the people involved will display a similar level of initiative.

Al-Qaeda uses the techniques of Civilization. Its orders are transmitted over the Internet; its footsoldiers learn their skills in private flying schools, sharpening them with professional-level simulation programs. The most brutal opponents in the War Against Civilization have learned the methods of their brutality in the very civilization they intend to destroy. For example, the engineers of the Cambodian autogenocide learned their Marxism and deep ecology in France, and took this knowledge home to thoroughly deconstruct their society.

Yet it fails to understand the purpose of it. Their intent is to purge the Dar al-Islam of the corrupting influences of Western power. When Saddam Husayn invaded Kuwait, 'Usama bin Laden offered to send al-Qaeda fighters to Sa'ūdī Arabia — the Baath Party was too Western. (Ironically, since the Baath is an organization theoretically devoted to the unification of the Arab nation.) He bears an animus against the al-Sa'ūd for the crime of being connected to the West, though their Wahabi forebears are among the most Islamic of Islamic peoples.

And worse yet, they are sustained by their faith. This is a problem for many commentators, who seeing in themselves a lack of faith imagine this to be a universal reality; they have no religion, therefore no one else has either. But the leaders of al-Qaeda speak warmly of those who are willing to die for their faith — and nineteen of them have done so.

But perhaps not entirely. Meanwhile, as their leaders preached vengeance, the brave al-Qaeda fighters who would martyr themselves for Allah prepared themselves for their jihad by getting drunk, getting lap dances, and

playing video games. Perhaps the Islamicist Revolution is suffering from inherent contradictions. (One thinks with some pleasure of the sarcastic item in the satirical publication *The Onion*: "Hijackers Surprised to Find Selves in Hell".) Perikles's proud statement about openness is not an admission of weakness, but a demonstration of strength.

Some of the voices raised against this response have uttered items singularly devoid of context. Some, for example, decry the lawlessness, and suggest that the ordinary processes of law be used to punish 'Usama bin Laden; that the U.S. request of the Afghan government that he be extradited, tried in a regular court, and allowed to speak as freely as other prisoners.

They don't understand the context. The Taliban has already exonerated 'Usama bin Laden. Meanwhile, other Arabic voices pin the crime on the Israelis. They can't get the rule of law where the rule of law doesn't exist.

Others call for negotiations. Again, they fail to get the context. 'Usama bin Laden and al-Qaeda have no deal for their enemies. Again, the key lies in the terminology. Those in the West, in their view, are hypocrites – they have been exposed to Islam and have rejected it, and therefore are ultimately and utterly evil, worthy of slaughter. There are no "civilians". It is our belief in a rule of law and of international relations, by way of contrast, that makes the actions a crime, and provides the framework in which these actions can be declared evil.

Our opponents are firmly against progress and modernity, and for all their use of the most up-to-date Western technical means, understand that the means come with the entire package of modern ideas. They want all this gone, and all America, all the West, gone; they stand firmly against progress and modernity.

Our next Dead White European Male stood firmly against Progress and Modernity. While the bulk of the French population was preparing for the new age of revival, reinvigoration, and modernity under the beneficent governance of le Marechal Petain, a soreheaded junior minister fled the country. Three years, two months, and one week later, he entered Paris in triumph, undoubted ruler of tout la France, while an evil miasma of collaboration and shame seeped away. Back then he had said:

"But has the last word been said? Must hope vanish? Is the defeat final? *No!*

"Believe me, for I know what I am talking about and I tell you that nothing is lost for France. The same means that beat us may one day bring victory.

"For France is not alone! She is not alone! She is not alone! She has an immense Empire behind her. She can unite with the British Empire, which commands the sea and which is carrying on the struggle. Like England, she can make an unlimited use of the vast industries of the United States.

"This war is not confined to the unhappy territory of our country. This war has not been decided by the Battle of France. This war is a world war. All the faults, all the delays, all the sufferings do not do away with the fact that in the universe there are all the means for one day crushing our enemies."

— Charles de Gaulle, speech of June 18, 1940

In the universe there are all the means for crushing our enemies. Our enemy has declared that there is no negotiation. In a sense, therefore, we are all as bad off as de Gaulle was vis-a-vis the Nazis, who outlawed him, in practice if not in official declaration. But we are striking back with the means available to us, from quite open bombing, to stealthy special warfare, to the crawling means of data tracking. Already the trail of the terrorists has been established. The means that enabled them to strike at us are means by which we can strike back.

The scorned security measures are not without use. Admittedly, all too soon the airlines and the consumers of their services will tire of having nail files confiscated and copies of **Hayduke Returns** deemed sufficient cause for incarceration. Moreover, the closest of body searches can't prevent hijacker 'Abd al-Bulbul Amir from bribing maintenance worker Ivan S. Slavar to plant a box cutter, or a gun, on board the plane he means to crash into the Empire State Building.

Will there be another hijacking? This is a condition which has created the means of its opposition. Unlike thrillers, where the forces of order and the masses of commoners stand by passively while the lone scorned hero tackles the villains, the targets have reacted to the attackers' attacks. A terrorist with a box cutter will no longer receive passive acquiescence to his fatal will. If most of the passengers are fat gluttonous slobs with a pathological

fear of death, a few can still make a difference, knowing they can make a difference.

Our next Dead White European Male has been pungently described by Robert Heinlein as "a fat gluttonous slob who was pursued all his life by a pathological fear of death." [see **Expanded Universe**, p. 562]. When not eating or trembling, he once averred:

Patriotism having become one of our topicks, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong determined tone, an apophthegm, at which many will start: 'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.' But let it be considered, that he did not mean a real and generous love of our country, but that pretended patriotism which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self interest.

— James Boswell, **The Life of Johnson**, Friday, April 7, 1775

Not too far from here, a man drove his automobile into the local Islamic Cultural Center. Other such facilities have been vandalized with threats. American citizens of Middle Eastern and Southern Asian descent have been personally insulted, even assaulted. More general death threats against American inhabitants of these ethnicities have been observed.

The perpetrators of these, if asked, would proudly assert that they were being patriotic. Which explains why Dr. Johnson said that, two hundred twenty-six years, five months, and four days beforehand. The self-interest Boswell cites here is ethnocentrism, the belief that other ethosos are contemptible.

This last can be said to be the dogma of al-Qaeda and the Taliban, of 'Usama bin Laden and Omar alike. Being no better than they is not the solution.

Which was so obvious. The events described above are scorned. In the social dimension, the great concern is whether the need for increased security will be at the cost of civil liberty, an attitude shared across the political spectrum. Those who hold all followers of Islam, all inhabitants of that unhappy region, to blame are universally scorned.

The Japanese-Americans of California could point out that once this was not the case. The scoundrels taking refuge in patriotism then had promoted their self-interest all too well.

Yet, ironically, many of those who oppose action can be equally scoundrelly: the "patriotism" which is their refuge is a cloak for a different sort of self-interest. How quickly the anti-globalization movement transformed itself into an anti-war movement.

But it in turn marginalized itself all the more. Already there were urgings for the anti-globalization protestors to not marginalize themselves by attacks on the majority: urgings that ignored the elite nature of the protestors, who (like the al-Qaeda) used the fruits of globalization, not only its technology but its wealth, to attack it. And now they are defenders of those who would destroy them. (So many of those who changed "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, the NLF is going to win," would have been liquidated by Ho Chi Minh as Trotskyist deviationists had they been under his rule – and the NLF was itself thrown on the ash-heap of history by its northern allies.)

The last of our Dead White European Males at least managed to subdue the tumultuous people of Afghanistan. After the Battle of Issus, Alexander followed up his spears and arrows by dispatching a letter to Darius. In that missive, he cited a long list of terroristic and destabilizing actions taken by the Persians against Greece and then informed him:

“Καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ ὅταν πέμπης παρ’ ἐμέ, ὡς πρὸς βασιλέα τῆς Ἀσίας πέμπε, μηδὲ ἅ ἐξ ἴσου ἐπίστελλε, ἀλλ’ ὡς κυρίῳ ὄντι πάντων τῶν σῶν φράζε εἰ τοῦ δέη· εἰ δὲ μή, ἐγὼ βουλευσομαι περὶ σοῦ ὡς ἀδικούνος. Εἰ δ’ ἀντιλέγεις περὶ τῆς βασιλείας, ὑπομείνας ἔτι ἀγώνισαι περὶ αὐτῆς καὶ μὴ φεῦγε, ὡς ἐπὶ σὲ πορεύσομαι οὐ ἂν ἦς.”

“And in future let any communication you wish to make to me be addressed to the King of all Asia. Do not write to me as to an equal. Everything you possess is now mine; so, if you should want anything, let me know in the proper terms, or I shall take steps to deal with you as a criminal. If on the other hand, you wish to dispute your throne, stand and fight for it and do not

run away. Wherever you may hide yourself, be sure I shall seek you out."

— Arrian (Flavius Arrianus Xenophon), *The Anabasis of Alexander*, Book Two, Chapter 14.9

As a symbol, after the embassy bombings, 'Usama bin Laden was placed on the Ten Most Wanted Men list. Whatever his faults in the area of civil liberties, J. Edgar Hoover was faced with a serious problem when he began, a society where criminals were local heroes. He realized that the best answer to publicity was publicity (why, for example, he opposed the execution of Ethel Rosenberg; it was bad publicity to put a mother to death, and besides he knew that the VENONA cables said that "Agent LIBERAL's wife, first name ETHEL, does not work"), and began presenting criminals not as local heroes, but Public Enemies, and then, Most Wanted Men.

The idea, therefore, is to make the hue and cry the public's need, to make the criminal see every hand turned against him, every other person a potential betrayer. And such people will also make slips under strain.

Now there are Special Forces of the U.S. and the U.K. operating in Afghanistan. We are taking steps to deal with a war criminal: wherever he may hide himself, we will seek him out.

Personally . . .

September 11 was a catch-up day for me. I had to take care of almost two weeks' worth of work that had been accumulating while I viewed Philadelphia, Washington, Virginia Beach, Kitty Hawk, and so on. About ten, while I was struggling through the last of the accumulation, one of the engineering supervisors came on the intercom and announced the dread news, of airplanes turned into cruise missiles. I called Lisa.

For hours thereafter we at work relived the horror of the fall of the towers. I had to leave, to find some sort of reassurance at work. But what of my relatives, the ones we had stayed with? What of the other kinfolks in Washington, in New York?

I made calls, sent out e-mails. By whatever God you may be thankful to, none of them were harmed, though some had come far too close. There is enough pain in the destruction of our peace, in the deaths of those innocents; if I am selfishly happy that those of my family were spared, please do not blame me. After all, the fans of the great network that makes up the City of Jophanburg, that coalesces in knots across the breadth of Mundania, which had just dispersed from its great accumulation, cried out in fear that theirs might have been hurt, and sobbed in relief when they were spared. As Bloch said in "A Way of Life", our community has its coherence, ties that make us stronger.

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Note

Lisa Major

Tuesday September 11 I was scheduled to go back to work. Shortly before ten a.m. Joe called me to say that the World Trade Center had been attacked. In shock and in disbelief I turned on the television and saw the horrible images. I understood instantly that this meant my country was now at war. Suddenly the political labels we attach to ourselves seemed unimportant in the face of the fact that we Americans are hated enough that terrorists are willing to die to kill us. I don't think the terrorists cared if the Americans they killed voted Republican or Democrat. I am reminded of the scene in *Independence Day* where the President tries to negotiate with an alien captive and is told that all the aliens want is the death of humanity. Well, the terrorists have told us that all they want is for Americans to die. I have started a crash course of reading about Islam in order to find answers. So far all I've found is that the terrorists are about as representative of Islam as Aryan Nation is of Christianity.

Somehow I got dressed and drove to work.



N'AWLINS

Gene Stewart

This happened a while back. I was writing on a laptop on a balcony in New Orleans on a cool night. Dead quiet side street, no strolling tourists, few passing cars. As I worked, an IM window popped open on my screen and someone began pestering me.

I asked who they were and they said, "The Devil."

Naturally I began baiting this person, and torturing them, mocking such ridiculous and grandiose claims. They became increasingly angry and less coherent. At one point I recall they typed, over and over, some Latinesque word as if trying to block out what I was saying. "Exocit" or "equasit" or something like that. Maybe it's Enochian, who knows.

They then wrote, "I know where you are," and so I wrote something like, "Well, fair's fair: where are you?" Bantering tone, don'tcha know.

Just as I wrote this a convertible drove by: old tail-fin Cadillac, with four or five people in it, young folks, and one screamed something up at me. "Look out!" or maybe "Look here!"

I lanced down, flipped them off, and looked back at my screen, and the answer to the question “Where are you?” hung there, glowing in the dark.

"On the other side of the door."

I was sitting with my left shoulder to the balcony door, and it wasn't a sliding glass door either but a regular hotel door, opaque wood with a locking doorknob and no peephole. That's how that place had it set up. I'd left it shut to preserve the weak air conditioning for when I decided to try to sleep.

So I smirked and wrote "What door?" and that's when something thumped the door from the inside.

I'll admit my pulse increased. However, I grabbed the doorknob, twisted it, and shoved the door open hard, yelling as I did so. Just a yell, no holler, no words.

Nothing there of course. I figured the thump could have come from another floor. Acoustics can fool you.

Still, I got up and poked my head into the room. No one there, nothing disturbed. Sat back down, and that's when I got chills. Because it was only then that it sunk in to me that I was working on a laptop, and that it wasn't even plugged in for power, let alone linked to any line out. *No Internet connection was possible.*

The IM box was gone, of course, and I've no clue to this day what the hell happened or how. Dream? Doubt it.

If it was a funny little time-bomb program, then circumstances sure conspired to help bring off the joke in grand style.

And it was only in retrospect that I realized what I'd done. I'd shouted at the Devil. Just like the old folk advice tells you to do. Just like that old heavy metal song insists, too. Did it quite naturally and unconsciously.

So what do I think now, after a good deal of time has passed? I think it was just another New Orleans shout echoing in the party-mad night.

Varley and Verne

Gregory Benford

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Illo by Randy Cleary

Recently I had the unusual experience of reading two novels separated by 127 years in publication, both dealing with the moon. Yet how alike they are, in an odd way.

I had been asked to write an introduction to a new translation of Jules Verne's **From the Earth to the Moon**. Arguably, this novel announced the invention of modern *science* fiction – stories with the scientific content foregrounded, as much a character as any person.

John Varley's **Steel Beach** is a rich sprawl of a novel, about five times longer than Verne's and the latest word in the technophilia Verne pioneered. And there are odd connections.

Verne wrote over a hundred "extraordinary voyage" novels, while Varley has fewer than five. Verne celebrated machines and admired engineers, yet gave us rapt descriptions of natural wonders. Listen as Varley's first-person, wisecracking point of view, Hildy, views his world:

I took a deep breath and smelled freshly-poured concrete. I drank the sights and sounds and scents of a newborn world: the sharp primary colors of wire bundles sprouting from unfinished walls like the first buds on a bare bough, the untarnished gleam of copper, silver, gold, aluminum, titanium, the whistle of air through virgin ducts, undeflected, unmuffled, bringing with it the crisp sharpness of the light machine oil that for centuries has coated new machinery, fresh from the factory...all these things had an effect on me. They meant warmth, security, safety from the eternal vacuum, the victory of humanity over the hostile forces that never slept. In a word, progress.

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Witty, colorful, a jab at our present environmental sensitivities, a technophile's casual brushoff to uninspected naturalism.

This moon is humanity's in a way that the Earth cannot be, for we made it. Indeed, Varley's future history (which he points out in an afterword isn't exactly compatible with this novel) turns about the armature of a great tragedy: aliens arrive, kick us off our planet, and we scavenge and scabble for a living throughout the rest of the solar system. We are a species forced out of our evolutionary niche, hurried along to our destiny, cast up on a steel beach of our own making.

And it's glorious. Varley has obviously spent a long while assembling this novel, and it shows some structural signs of that. The plot follows a deftly polished smartass "newspad" reporter, sprinting around his/her (yes, sex change as fashion statement) rapid-fire world.

Tech wonders sprout before the eye. Sudden, juicy, newsworthy events unfold, with Hildy always at the center. She hustles stories for her newspad, **The News Nipple**, in perpetual competition with **The Straight Shit**. It's *A Year in the Lunar Life*, with rather tenuous superstructure to keep one turning the pages.

Hildy has a nagging bit of a problem with suicide. Why this should be occupies much musing, much of it interesting, though without any profound conclusion. He/she passes the hundred-birthday mark, and we become aware that this person has accumulated strikingly few close emotional ties in all that time. Her intimates are fascinating, the best job Varley has ever done at secondary characterization – but there's plainly something seriously

wrong with Hildy if these are all she has in her life.

This is broader, fresher ground for Varley. He burst upon our scene with crackling energy in the mid-1970s and has been working up to this fat novel ever since.

It's refreshing, not only in its meticulously thought-through technodazzle, but in its absolute confidence that we can save ourselves through our own crafts. I recalled several times Verne's offhand remark in **From the Earth to the Moon**, "The Yankees, the world's best mechanics, are engineers the way Italians are musicians and Germans are metaphysicians, by birth."

One could write a telling history of American sf over the last three decades titled "The Sons of Heinlein." From Alexei Panshin through Joe Haldeman to Varley and beyond, many of the most innovative of us have stood squarely in Heinlein's shadow. Varley knows this and, as his novel darkens and wanders, he turns explicitly to what this tradition means in modern sf. The last third of the work circles around the Heinleiners, a small, self-selected elite who want to rebuild and launch the wrecked starship named for...guess who?

Varley is at his witty best when describing this band of malcontents. "A lot of ship's captains were Heinleiners, a lot of solitary miners. *None* of them were happy -- possibly that type of person can never be happy -- but at least they were away from the masses of humanity and less likely to get into trouble if offered an intolerable insult -- like bad breath, or inappropriate laughter."

Still, Varley harbors few illusions about the celebrated can-do style. Their tech works, all right, but "it still had the look of Heinleiner engineering, wherein nothing is ever any better than it has to be. Maybe if they get time to mover beyond prototypes they'll get more elegant and more careful, but in the meantime it's 'Don't bend that wrench. Get a bigger hammer.' Heinleiner toolboxes must be filled with bubble gum and bobby pins."

They brusquely advertise the familiar social libertarianism, too. (Yet how fresh it still seems, in a 1993 where we seem mired in the circular logics of the past.) Describing our age, the leader of the Heinleiners lectures: "Any drug that dulled the senses, or heightened them, or altered the consciousness in any way was viewed as sinful -- except for the two most physically harmful drugs: alcohol and nicotine. Something relatively harmless, like heroin, was completely illegal, because it was addictive, as if alcohol was not. No one had the right to determine when he put into his own body, they had no medical bill of rights. Barbaric, agreed?"

And Hildy does, steeped in the tradition and ethos of hard-nosed, crackerbarrel, hard sf.

Where did that spirit come from? The USA midwest, surely -- but also from France.

Varley's moon as a steel beach descends straight from Verne's. He gives us an almost hallucinogenic urban landscape, with cavernous bubbles devoted to immense feats of nostalgia: the Disneylands replicating Texas (where Varley grew up, well described here) and other lost Earthly paradises. But the restless, meandering energy of the novel is plainly seeking something.

We're more subtle now, of course. Urban preoccupations are the stuff of sitcoms and the soaps, no longer the province of Kafka and Camus. Thoughts of mortality and the world's passing wonders sit in the frontal lobes, but something's simmering in the back.

Consider Verne.

In 1865 there were five other interplanetary adventure books published in French, with titles like **Voyage to Venus**, **An Inhabitant of the Planet Mars**, **Voyage to the Moon**, and even a survey by an astronomer, **Imaginary Moons and Real Moons**. They featured balloons. One writer did have a dim idea of using rockets -- but his squirted water out the end, not fiery gas. Then he ruined the effect, though, by thriftily collecting the ejected water to use again. Elementary common sense should have told him that such a ship would gain no momentum that way. The water's push would be cancelled when the water was caught.

Verne made fun of the invention, saying that his own method, a cannon, would certainly work. (The squirter that recycles its water idea had a puzzling appeal: it was proposed as late as 1927 by an engineer.)

He invented the expansive sense in fantastic literature, but he did it by dreaming exactly. That's what gave his work the headlong confidence those other volumes of 1865 lacked -- which doomed them.

His method gave many of the telling little details which now strike us as so right. Since the USA was the



most likely nation to undertake so bold a venture, where would his veterans place the cannon? Verne matters on about getting into the right "plane of the ecliptic", which is a reasonable motivation, but side-steps the more detailed issue. He knew that to artillery gunners, earth's rotation was important in predicting where a shell would land -- while it is in flight, the land moves beneath it.

In aiming for the moon, there's an even bigger effect. Think of the earth as a huge merry-go-round. If you stand at the north pole, the earth spins under your feet, but you won't move at all. Stand on the equator, though, and the earth swings you around at a speed of about a thousand miles an hour. You don't feel it, because the air is moving, too.

But that speed matters a lot if you're aiming to leap into orbit. Verne had the crucial idea right -- that *escape velocity* is the essential in getting away from Earth's gravitational pull. The added boost from the Earth's rotation led him to believe that the American adventurers would seek a spot as close to the equator as possible, while still keeping it within their nation. A glance at the map told him that the obvious sites were in Texas or Florida.

This is exactly what happened in the American space program of nearly a century later, when the launch site of the Apollo program became a political football between Texas and Florida. Florida won, as Verne predicted. Not for political reasons, though. NASA engineers wanted their rocket stages to fall harmlessly into the ocean. He even picked Stone Hill, on almost the exact latitude as Cape Kennedy, the Apollo launch site.

Similarly, he got correctly the shape of the capsule, the number of astronauts (three), weightlessness in space, a splash-down at sea picked up by the American Navy, and even the use of rockets to change orbit and return to earth.

To give his technology authority, his characters were cool dudes of geometry: "Here and there he wrote a pi or an x^2 . He even appeared to extract a certain cube root with the greatest of ease."

This is the birth of "hard" science fiction (sf) -- that variety which stays loyal to the facts, as nearly as the author knows them. Hard sf also sticks to the way engineers and scientists work. No lonely experimenters on mountaintops, inventing Franksteins out of dead body parts. No easy improvising around tough problems. Verne's tinkers work in groups, argue, make hard choices. Audiences of his time found such detail gripping and convincing.

Writers followed in this tradition, such as Arthur C. Clarke, Robert A. Heinlein -- and, of course, the other master sf writer of the nineteenth century, H.G. Wells.

He influenced even those who didn't quite know who he was. Isaac Asimov once told me a story about when he was still a young science fiction fan, and found himself listening to a lecture about a great foreign writer, a master of fantastic literature. But Asimov couldn't recognize the name. Giving the French pronunciation, the lecturer said, "Surely you must know Zueel Pfern," and described **From the Earth to the Moon**. Asimov replied in his Brooklyn accent, "Oh, you mean Jewels Voine!"

I had a similar experience, not realizing for years that Verne was not an American. After all, he set so many of his stories in the USA. In tribute, I named a character in my first hard sf novel, **Jupiter Project**, after one of his.

He had intended to work in this scrupulous way all along, when he was a struggling writer. In 1856 he wrote in his journal, thinking about his ambitions, "Not mere poetry, but analytic fantasy. Something monomaniacal. Things playing a more important part than people, love giving way to deduction and other sources of ideas, style, subject, interest. The basis of the novel transferred from the heart to the head..."

And what dreams Verne had! We can grasp how much he changed the world by recalling real events which appeared first as acts of imagination, in his novels. The American submarine *Nautilus*, its name taken from his novel, surfaced at the north pole and talked by radio with the President of the United States, less than a century after the novel was published. The explorer Haroun Tazieff, a Verne fan who had read **Journey to the Center of the Earth**, climbed down into the rumbling throat of a volcano in Africa, seeking secrets of the earth's core. An Italian venturer coasted over the icy Arctic wastes in a dirigible, just as Verne proposed. A French explorer crawled into the caves of southern Europe, stumbling upon the ancient campgrounds of early man, standing before underground lakes where mammoths once roasted over crackling fires -- as Verne had envisioned. In 1877 Verne foresaw a journey through the entire solar system, a feat accomplished by NASA's robot voyagers a century later.

Varley's future tech is equally sophisticated for our age, and far more self-aware. All the latest techs are here -- nano-, bio-, compu-tech, with some interesting blends and cross-fertilization. Horses you can hold on your hand. Dentistry done by micro-agents in the drinking water. There are even some new sexual kinks, though alas, it seems a fundamentally limited medium.

More to the point, the ideas and inventions cohere. Today we of the hard sf school have evolved a code of play which Varley used to fine advantage. Memorably, at the big battle scene marking the closing movements of the novel, he presents us with a problem. The Heinleiners have invented a special "null-suit" which protects against everything -- vacuum, radiation, bullets. But in an assault, people shot with machine guns emerge from their null-suits a bright lobster color, and dead. How come?

Warning: I'm going to give away the secret here. Avert your eyes if you want to preserve the suspense.

Varley lets us stew in this a bit, then unfurls the answer: conservation of energy. Sure you can block bullets, but their kinetic energy has to go somewhere. A sizable fraction reappears inside the null-suit as thermal, infrared emission, cooking the hapless folk it was supposed to protect.

It's a nice trick. This reader felt pleased that he had figured it out. To me, this is as much as a hard sf writer needs to do.

I'll admit that as a physicist I was interested enough to actually work out the numbers, and I found, as I suspected, that it's a good notion -- but a dud. There isn't enough energy in a burst of machine-gun slugs to cook a person. At most you might raise body temperature by a fraction of a degree. This is pretty obvious, once you think about it. How many gunshot victims suffer sudden fevers from the spent slug energy?

My point, though, is that Varley has done all the homework a reader can expect. Foreground delights like this are an essential to the hard sf strategy, which typically slides its deeper themes in while you are distracted.

Verne did this, too. He ladled in so many calculations about his cannon and shell that the reader of 1865 apparently didn't mind the underlying embarrassment. His moon-launching cannon would have squashed its crew at the firing. Their author does give them some relief with a water shock absorber, discussed in detail. But he must have known that it would not have helped much.

It is a bit curious why Verne chose this brute force method, when the rocket was known to him -- though only as a minor military weapon and as fireworks. In **Around the Moon**, the sequel published five years later (imagine having to wait that long to find out what happened to the expedition! -- readers were more tolerant then) he showed that he understood the principles of rocketry, since he let his capsule fire several, to return their ship to earth.

Probably Verne wanted the luscious specifics of artillery to light up his story -- to ground it in reality. People knew that cannons worked with awful efficiency. Rockets would have seemed to his audience rather odd, speculative and unlikely.

But in another sense, Verne was not wrong at all about artillery and outer space. Maybe he just saw further than our time. Though rockets opened the space frontier, through the inventions of the American Robert Goddard (an ardent Verne fan), cannon are making their comeback.

In 1991 the US government began a research program aiming to deliver payloads into orbit around the earth at a low price -- by using guns. The project has an uncanny resemblance to Verne's. The barrel, reinforced by steel and concrete, is a narrow pipe about three hundred feet long. An explosion starts the process, driving hydrogen gas against the underside of a bullet-shaped capsule. The goal is to place a capsule in orbit within three years. Once there, it will use rockets to maneuver itself into a proper, nearly circular orbit about the earth -- just as Verne predicted.

Why now, nearly 130 years after **From the Earth to the Moon**? Finally our engineering can deal with the massive acceleration -- thousands of times earth's "gee".

We know how to make tiny circuits in rock-solid silicon. We have rockets with hard-packed chemical fuel. In fact, Iraq was developing a super-cannon to bombard Israel just two years ago -- until the Israelis killed the inventor...

Nothing in the capsule will be free to break loose and smash into the rest of the extremely compact "spaceship". Its instruments will be fitted together at extremely fine tolerances, with not a hair's-width of misalignment or wasted space.

This is so that the engineers can pack into a few pounds the capability to look down and monitor the earth's environment, take readings of the conditions in orbit, and even gaze outward through fine-ground lenses to study other worlds. Such capability must be crammed into a short tube that can pass through a narrow barrel, about an inch wide.

With further engineering, it seems possible to send these solid ambassadors to probe other planets, including the moon. They would be much cheaper than present spacecraft. Firing them into orbit (with a huge bang that would have gratified Verne) will cost about one percent per pound of the price for putting a pound in orbit, using our present shuttle craft.

So in the end, Verne may well prove right. In this novel, the Baltimore Gun Club starts out with their dream of simply putting a capsule somewhere near the moon – shooting for the stars. Only as the plot advances do soft, easily damaged humans come into the picture. Our space program has focused on human astronauts from the beginning. Perhaps it is time to go back to the original idea.

We can fulfill Verne's great dream. In the perspective of a century, whether people are aboard is a detail. In this way, his astronauts by gaslight are with us still. It's an appropriate time to reissue his novel.

I rather like such resonances across the 127 years. But predicting the future is not the main arena of hard sf. Surface detail hides the grave issues which emerge from science as a lived experience, and I suspect form a deep portion of the world view of its practitioners.

By divorcing ourselves mentally from the workings of the world, we see ourselves in stark contrast with its eternal laws, slow movements and grand time scales. We are mayflies compared with the swing of planets, the lifetimes of stars. Even now, exploring missions to the outer solar system take the meat out of a whole career to plan, design, build, launch the vehicle and gather in its data. So in the end, many hard sf works return to human mortality and its implications as their profound theme.

Varley warily prowls around the expansive spirit in this novel, nudging it, drawn like a moth to a flame it desires but cannot quite trust. Suicide echoes in **Steel Beach**, a somber questioning of all exuberance.

Camus meets Verne, two Frenchmen who would not have recognized each other. To a man who says "Why remain alive?" there is only the answer "Because it's fun – and the alternative is boring." Or so I feel. That's the point – ultimately, emotions drive our selves, our technology, our dreams.

And Varley? After showing in great detail Hildy's emotional isolation, I came to expect a rather sentimental – though wise – finish: she finds deep personal connections, and begins anew.

Not so. Her new romance dies in a single telephone call – the lover hangs up, thinking it's not really important, and there's a newsy crisis abuilding, after all. Her accidental but overpowering pregnancy does not lead to happy motherhood. As a writer, I savored Varley setting these fat ducks up in an obliging row, then shooting them down.

But what's a cynic to do? Despite all the wisecracking – and here Varley is second to none, including Heinlein and Haldeman – in the end he is drawn back to the same emotional ground that animated Verne. To me, it is a true surprise ending, because I thought Hildy was far too, well, distanced from her world, to ever enter it so whole-heartedly.

Hildy volunteers to help put the starship **Robert A. Heinlein** back together with the proverbial string and glue. She'll be the publicity hound for the Good Ol' Up and Out, a role Heinlein fulfilled, indirectly, for decades. Heinlein's trouble as a novelist was endings, and Varley knows that, too.

"I promised you no neat conclusion, and I think I've delivered on that. I warned you of loose ends, and I can see a whole tangle of them. "A novel which aspires to be about a year in a life can be a bit lumpy and malformed, in the cause of art that resembles life. But the book ends by voting for the great up-and-out, the horizon, the frontier. "What will we find out there? I don't know either, and that's why I'm going along. Alien intelligences? I wouldn't bet

against it. Strange worlds? I'd say that's a lock. Vast empty spaces, human tragedy and hope. ... Think what a story it'll be."

Very Heinlein. Very Verne.

Verne died only a few months before the Wright brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina – but he had seen such flights in his mind's eye decades before, and the brothers had read his novels.

We can get a feeling for his faith in the long range possibilities of humanity from the remarkable memorial his son placed over his father's grave. It shows Verne with hair streaming, as if he is in flight, breaking free of his shroud and tomb, rising up magnificently from the dead. Above it are simply his name and the words, *Onward to immortality and eternal youth*. It's hard to be more optimistic than that.

And Varley expresses, in suitably technohip garb, something that strikes from the same deep ground. Sophisticated, but not cynical. After so much sf-noir about burned-out louts with improbable tech skills, tropes copied from the hard-boiled detectives of a half century back, Varley's vision seems refreshingly new, though warmly old.

Imagine!

The only reasonable response to terrorism is to permeate the regions of our Earth that harbor hatred and intolerance with enormous infusions of tolerance and love: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, house the homeless, treat the sick, clothe the naked, bury the dead, visit those in prison.

Tolerance and understanding can only be taught, and more importantly accepted, by example.

Imagine the response from our enemies if, instead of dropping the bombs they're expecting, we dropped food, medical supplies, temporary housing and clothing sufficient to remedy their profound need. (There a thousands of hungry civilians in Afganistan and Iraq who sleep out of doors, on the ground, in freezing cold mountain valleys and the high desert, with no cover.)

The hatred and intolerance which they preach against Us in their countries would be totally overwhelmed by these acts of mercy freely showered upon these countries which presently are expecting bombs.

Congress has already passed a bill allowing the expenditure of many billions of dollars for the war effort. Imagine the reaction in every Nation, all over the Earth if, instead of using this money to make war, We performed the seven acts of mercy mentioned above for the countries which are harboring terrorists and which are our sworn enemies!

Imagine what would happen! Imagine how dumbfounded everyone, all over the Earth, would be! Imagine how astonished and how profoundly ashamed and discredited the terrorists would become before their own people. These governments and terrorists have taught their people that We are exactly as We are preparing to act. BUT by these actions, instead of what is expected, they would loose all credibility with their people!

If the United States could somehow find Her way to use this opportunity to demonstrate to the Earth that She is indeed the nation She purports to be, I can only imagine but that we would need have no fear of further terrorist attacks. All of Our past hypocrisy and underhandedness would be wiped out by these grand gestures of mercy and humanity. No one could rise to say a word against Us!

Such an action would loudly resonate through History as the single most uniquely remarkable response a Nation has ever made to such a profoundly unique and horrific attack!

Imagine it!

Rev. Kenneth M. Kafoed

Here comes our main man again, fresh from another worldcon and rarin' for the next!

MILLENNIUM PHILCON DIARY

Mike Resnick

Tuesday, August 28: We landed at the less-than-impressive Philadelphia airport at 1:15 p.m. and actually made it to the Marriott by 2:00, an hour before we thought we'd get there. We got a corner room on the 9th floor, and while Carol was unpacking I went down one flight to the room directly below us to meet Janis Ian, the world-famous singer who had collaborated with me on a short story. (She'd dedicated an album to me because she loved my work – obviously a woman of exquisite taste – I wrote to thank her, she wrote back, I wrote, she wrote, and before long I suggested we write a story together. Which seems to be what I always suggest to people: she is my 27th collaborator.)

We hit it off immediately (but we knew we would: we'd been corresponding for months), and she was floating on air because our story, "Water-Skiing Down the Styx", had just knocked off Ursula Le Guin to become Fictionwise.com's current best-selling story. She had shipped about a five-foot shelf of hardcovers to the hotel so she could get them signed. It was a really strange experience, reassuring a woman who has millions upon millions of fans that these writers, most of whom haven't sold 100,000 copies of anything in their lives, would not be offended if she asked for their autographs, and that some would be out-and-out thrilled.

Janis has been a heavy SF reader all her life. In fact, she's probably better-read in the field than I am. A huge grin spread over her face when I introduced her to her first pro, and it was still hovering there between her nose and her chin when we parted six days later.

I work like hell at worldcons. I do panels, readings, kaffeeklatches, autograph sessions, fan history tours, anything I'm asked to do. I meet with my agent, with every book and magazine editor who's ever bought from me or even expressed any interest in



Charlie Williams

me, with every foreign agent and publisher, with every small press, with every audio publisher – and the fact that I thoroughly enjoy every minute of it doesn't make it any the less necessary or any the less exhausting. I try to line up the next year's work at worldcon so I don't have to make any trips to New York. (Even Carol's not free of these professional obligations; she has about a dozen duty dances each worldcon.)

The conventions officially begin on Thursday, and from Thursday to Monday I'm wearing my professional hat, so I always reserve Tuesday and Wednesday for my fannish friends (as well as any time I can spend with them after the con ends.) So on Tuesday night, we introduced Janis to fandom (well, SMOFdom, to be honest), and were joined for dinner by Tony and Suford Lewis, Dick Spelman, and Rick Katze. We went to a Moroccan place called The Fez; fine food, though when we were told that we would be eating with our hands, I took a quick look at my fastidious friend Dick's face and realized that this would not be his most memorable gustatory experience (or at least not for the right reason).

When we got back to the hotel we sat at the circular bar – a huge raised area built around a bar in the lobby – and as the various pros began checking in and passing by, I introduced Janis to each of them – Bob Silverberg, Fred Pohl, Lois McMaster Bujold. That was when she got her first major shock: before she could ask them for autographed books, most of them asked her for autographed CDs.

While I was speaking to Silverberg, a couple of girls came up and shyly asked for Mr. Resnick's autograph. I explained that my name was Mike and not Mister, and expressed the hope that they would enjoy the books. As they left, Bob turned to me and said, "You do the humble bit very well." Pause. Then, "Personally, I flunked it." If you know Silverberg, you'll be laughing too hard to read this line.

Gardner Dozois and George R. R. Martin showed up around 11:00, so Janis and I joined them for drinks. Mine was water, as usual. (Carol, who stays up until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. at home, comes to cons to relax, and is rarely up after midnight.) Janis went to bed around 1:30, and I spent another couple of hours talking to old fannish friends.

Wednesday, August 29: Carol and our old friend Josepha Sherman, yet another of my multitude of collaborators (and the only pro who knows as much about horse racing as I do), spent the day shopping at Lord & Taylor. I got up, met Janis for coffee about 10:30, and then we went to the hucksters' room. It was closed to non-dealers, but after 38 years of attending worldcons I am not without my resources and I got us in. We shopped and visited with dealers and fans, and I introduced her to some more pros.

We registered and got our badges and program books in late afternoon, and then I noticed that my left foot felt kind of strange and that I was limping, so I went back to the room and found I had a broken blister the size of an old-fashioned silver dollar. Carol had just come back from shopping and immediately treated it with all kinds of stuff. I kept explaining that it was just a blister and nothing to get excited about, and she kept saying that I was now a diabetic and if they cut my foot off all that money we spent on dancing lessons would be wasted (which at least shows where her priorities were). She won, as usual.

We had another fannish dinner, this time with a pair of CFG (Cincinnati Fantasy Group) members, Debbie Oakes and octogenarian surgeon Mary Martin (who won the 1966 worldcon masquerade as A. Merritt's "The Snake Mother" and whom I plan to marry just as soon as I work Carol to death), and Robyn Herrington from Calgary, another collaborator. B.J. Galler-Smith, still another Canadian collaborator, was supposed to join us, but she called about five minutes before we left to say she'd just arrived at the airport and couldn't possibly make it. We went to

Kabul, an Afghan restaurant, and had the best of the meals that we paid for ourselves. (I stop paying for meals when worldcon starts.)

Then it was back to the hotel for the first of the Boston and Charlotte parties, and a very private single-malt Scotch tasting party up on the 19th floor. (I don't drink, but I accompanied Janis, just in case she got so heavily into it that she forgot her room number. Didn't happen... and it turned out to be a very enjoyable party.)

Thursday, August 30: I injected a little coffee into a vein, then mosied over to the hucksters' room, where Walter Jon Williams and I signed autographs at the Asimov's table from 11:00 to noon. My line never let up, so I found an empty area and signed for a few more minutes when noon rolled around. By then I'd already lost most of my voice, which happens to me every worldcon, but usually not til Sunday or Monday.

I was distressed to find out that the Asimov's people had brought copies of the forthcoming October issue rather than the current September issue, which carries my story "Old MacDonald Had A Farm." No, it wasn't egomania. You see, last year a new husband won a fannish auction for DUFF (the Down Under Fan Fun, which flies an Australian here or an American there, depending on the year) and paid \$650 for me to write his bride into a story. I had sold this story to Gardner for Asimov's that very morning, and there was no problem changing the main female's name to Julie Balch, the name of the bride. I wanted to surprise her by getting an issue signed by Gardner, managing editor Sheila Williams, and myself.

(The ever-competent Sheila arranged for me to get a copy on Friday, and I went a little overboard. I got signatures, all personalized "To Julie", not just from the Asimov's folk, but Bob Silverberg, Connie Willis, Lois McMaster Bujold, Nancy Kress, David Brin, Greg Benford, Greg Bear, Larry Niven, George R.R. Martin, Charles Sheffield, Pat Cadigan, James Patrick Kelly, and perhaps 75 others. I figure that particular copy of the magazine is probably worth three times what her husband paid to get her in it.)

I wasn't hungry – noon is a little early in the day for me – so I hung around the hucksters' room for a couple of hours, then went off to do a rather dull panel on "Rediscovered Authors". Jack Chalker and I were on it, and have done this panel many times. We wanted to speak about Fred Brown and Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore and Stanley Weinbaum... but because

we had done the intro and afterward for NESFA's Eric Frank Russell tome, and the moderator was a NESFAn, every time we discussed any other author we kept getting dragged back to Russell.

Barry Malzberg showed up as the panel ended. This was his first worldcon in 18 years, and I wanted to show him around, but I only had a few minutes to help him get registered, and then I was doing an autographing at John Betancourt's table. My latest "how-to" book, **I Have This Nifty Idea...Now What Do I Do With It?** was out, and selling very rapidly (as well it should have, since it contains 33 outlines and synopses that sold, including some by Silverberg, Joe Haldeman, Kevin Anderson, and others of that ilk. John told me that by the end of the con he'd sold over 120 copies, and it is not an inexpensive book.) John had also published this year's Hugo nominee for Best Related Book, **Putting It Together**, the first print-on-demand book ever to make the Hugo ballot, and I signed a batch of both, plus a collection of mine he'd published the prior year. A grinning Janis, now making dozens of contacts on her own, stopped by to tell me that she'd checked on her computer and we were still #1 at Fictionwise.

At 5:00 I did a repeat of last year's Fan History Tour. We had a big crowd, and since everything was so spread out, I stuck to the Hugo display and told 60 minutes of funny stories about each of them and the cons they represented. I think of all the gigs I do at worldcon, this is the one I enjoy most, and I certainly plan to volunteer to do it again next year.

Since worldcon had started, tonight was a pro dinner, and a large one. We went to Rangoon, a Burmese restaurant, with Janis, Barry and Joyce Malzberg, Greg Benford and his lady, Nick DiChario, Susan Schwartz, Josepha Sherman, and Robyn Herrington. (And I want to apologize again to Robyn. I've known her for close to ten years, and I kept forgetting this was only her second worldcon, so I kept assuming she knew all the people I was introducing Janis to. I got better – I think; I *hope* – as the con went on.)

We went back to the hotel and helped open the CFG suite – Cincinnati never bids, but has a 5-night hospitality suite for old and new friends almost every worldcon. We don't advertise or list ourselves with all the other parties, but anyone who wants us can find us just by asking around a bit.

Then Carol and I went up to Gordie Meyer's (Mr. Obscura Press) suite, for the Resnick Listserv

Party, now officially known as the Babes For Bwana Party II. The Babes were out in force this year, with maybe a dozen of them wearing their Babes For Bwana t-shirts (Along with the photo of me and a rhino, and the big "Babes For Bwana" logo, each has a little personal inscription. Carol's says "President and Founding Member." Kris Rusch's is "Director, Orgeon Chapter," and so on. The newest member, Janis Ian, is "Choral Director.")

John Teehan was there, and Donna Drapeau and Adrienne Gormley and just about all the Listserv members who were at the con. Christy Harden Smith, surely the sexiest lawyer in or out of fandom, made chocolate fondue and all kinds of goodies. Fictionwise also supplied us with a bunch of stuff to give away – t-shirts, boxer shorts, hats, coffee mugs, mouse pads, each displaying a cover of one of the books or stories I'd sold to Fictionwise. (I brought home a **Bully** mousepad and an **Adventures** coffee cup. I don't know who wound up with the boxer shorts, but one of them had the cover to **Encounters**, which under certain circumstances might well be viewed as a promissary note.)

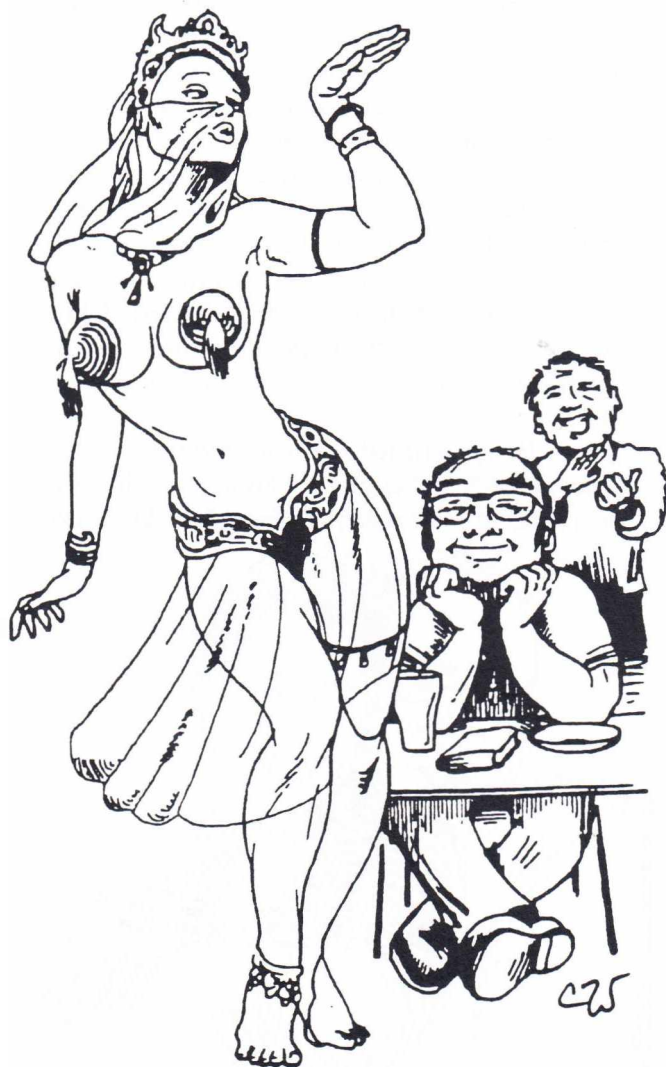
Barry managed to lose the room number and never showed up, but Susan Schwartz, Jo Sherman, Greg Benford, Walter Jon Williams, Nick DiChario,



and half a dozen other pros were there. So were two of my Clarion kids that I'd collaborated with – Tom Gerencer and Toby Buckell – and a few CFG members, and some NESFA friends, and some sff.net

members, and Guy Lillian and Rosy, his new bride. (I hadn't realized that I've known her father, fellow sf writer and longtime NASA bigwig Joe Green, for years. With that pedigree, their kid will probably chair a worldcon and win the Best Novel Hugo at it.)

And just when we were all having a wonderful time and it seemed like the party couldn't possibly get any better, Kent Brewster (publisher of *Speculations*, which runs my "Ask Bwana" column every issue) brought three gorgeous belly dancers to



the suite. Evidently they had offered to perform in the SFWA suite and been turned down (my daughter suggests that the music would have kept the writers from talking for whole minutes at a time, a fate worse than death). We were happy to have them. They brought their own music and spent the next half hour entertaining us. At one point they draped their veils around my head, and Adrienne Gormley took some

"Bwana of Arabia" photos that are running on her web page.

As they were jiggling a few inches away from me, a thought occurred, so I asked them what they were doing Saturday afternoon. They were free, so I asked them to show up at Larry Smith's table at 2:00, when I was scheduled to autograph, and see if they could generate a little extra traffic.

(And I was teased mercilessly the rest of the con by various of the Babes, who claim that only I could talk about book promotion with three gorgeous bosoms shaking in my face.)

The party broke up about 3:00 in the morning, though Scott Pendergrast (co-owner of Fictionwise.com) stayed a little later to talk some business, and then Gordie and I talked a little more business until about 4:30.

The party really and truly was the talk of the con for the rest of the weekend. I must have been asked about it by at least two hundred non-attendees, each more bitter than the last about missing it.

Friday, August 31: Carol and Debbie Oakes went off to see the major art museum, and came back in late afternoon singing its praises.

I began the day by having coffee with Marty Greenberg, and we did some business – I sold him a couple of collections and together we sold a pair of anthologies. Sheila Gilbert, editor and co-publisher of DAW Books, joined us because she had heard Janis was at the con with me and wanted me to introduce her. (It seems to me that I spent most of the weekend explaining that I hadn't brought Janis to the con, that she wasn't with me but was a free agent, and that I'd never even seen her before Tuesday.) Marty, who has the most commercial mind of anyone I know, came up with half a dozen Janis Ian projects in the next five minutes, and I agreed to put Janis (who knew nothing of this at the time) together with Marty and DAW on Saturday to see what we could accomplish.

(Sheila had been my editor at Signet in the early 1980s, and bought 13 novels from me, including such totally offbeat stuff as *Adventures* and *The Branch*. We stayed at her house on one of our trips to New York, and she and her late husband Mike – a pair of devoted orchid growers – are the reason Carol fell so in love with orchids that we eventually built our current house, with a huge greenhouse, to accommodate them.)

I was supposed to have lunch with Bob

Silverberg and Barry Malzberg at noon, but Barry never showed up at the right spot. We searched for him and waited as long as we could, but we both had obligations at 2:00, so at 12:20 we left without him. (We could have stayed. Bob had been touted onto the Famous Deli, quite a cab ride away. Within 30 seconds of arriving he found out they didn't serve beer, I found out they didn't serve chopped liver, and we both found out that the place hadn't been painted or redecorated since World War II. It got worse. For whatever reason, I'd have to say that Barry came out ahead on the deal.)

Barry and I did our official autograph sessions from 2:00 to 3:00 (I say official, because all the ones I do at the request of dealers and publishers are unofficial, and not listed in the pocket program). I was thrilled to see that Barry, who was sure he'd been forgotten by fandom and would sign perhaps three books at the entire con, had a line of worshipful readers that lasted the entire hour. It's comforting to know that nobody that good gets forgotten.

At 3:00 I raced over to the program area for a panel on "Under-Plundered Mythologies", with Jo Sherman and some others. Nice panel, nothing special.

From 4:00 to 5:00 I cruised the hucksters' room, finally finding a pair of books to buy. It gets harder each year, since I have such a large collection and get so many freebies from publishers.

At 5:00 I was on another panel, "The First MacDonald's on Epsilon V", with Cory Doctorow, Severna Park (a/k/a Suze Feldman), Jim Morrow, and Ellen Kushner. Sounded dull as hell to me when the committee told me I'd be on it, but it turned out to be more interesting than I'd anticipated.

At 6:00 Carol and I went to the Eos reception (I gather they're not Avon Eos anymore) with my agent, Eleanor Wood, at the Museum of Natural History. Very nice party, tasty tidbits to eat, champagne to drink (except for me, I had water), a wonderful dinosaur exhibit including one area where if you stood in the right spot you could be menaced by T. Rex on a huge television screen. I could be mistaken, but I don't think I saw a single fan there, just writers, editors and agents. I had an appointment with Eos editor Jennifer Brehl the next day, and since I'd never seen her and I'd be meeting her alone, I needed Eleanor to point her out and introduce us.

Then we were out of there, because Eleanor, who was Robert A. Heinlein's agent and still represents the estate, had to be at the Retro Hugos to

pick up the awards in case he won. So we grabbed a less-than-memorable Italian meal somewhere, and hurried back to the hotel. It was an odd meal, because usually Eleanor tries to eat with me at the end of the worldcon, so I can report on all my meetings; this time I still hadn't met any of the book editors, so we spent most of our time talking about the Broadway theatre season.

The Retros were held at 8:30, and if your name was Heinlein you did pretty well – Hugos for Best Novel, Best Novella, and Best Movie.

I think the results were the best argument against having any more Retro Hugos. Not the Heinlein wins; I would never argue that he didn't deserve everything he got and more. But there were two brilliant short stories, Fritz Leiber's "Coming Attractions" and Richard Matheson's "Born of Man and Woman", that lost to Damon Knight's one-punch humor story, "To Serve Man", probably because it was on **Twilight Zone** and gets reprinted all the time. Similarly, no one will argue that Bob Silverberg is one of our finest writers, but the 15-year-old Silverberg who won the Fan Writer Retro over Bob Tucker and Walt Willis won it only because he was the only name most fans recognized: clearly none of them had read any of the fannish writings from 1950, or the legendary Willis, the Dave Langford of his day, would never have come in 4th out of 5. By the same token, this was the only chance most fans ever had to vote for Virgil Finlay, Hannes Bok, or Edd Cartier, three of the all-time greats, for Best Pro Artist, but they're all long dead or retired, and they all lost, quite possibly for that reason.

Then it was off to the parties, but they were too crowded – though I did run into Michelle Sagara, who I hadn't seen in years – and by midnight I was ensconced in the CFG suite, which never seemed to have more than 25 people. Debbie Oakes, Mary Martin, and Pat and Roger Sims had the adjoining bedrooms and ran the suite, and Debbie in particular did yeoman work. Each night seemed to begin and end with people playing Wizards, a card game – the suite wasn't big enough for Mah Jong too, so they played that in another room – and by 2:00 every night all non-SMOFish conversation seemed to have vanished. And as I've said for 38 years now (*ghod*, that long???) there is no better, more pleasant way to end the night at worldcon than in the CFG suite, surrounded by old friends, old fans, and the few remaining pros who came from fandom.

Saturday, September 1: Another day in which I didn't see Carol from when I left the room until dinner. (She had thoughtfully found a drug store on Friday and got some ointments and painkillers for my foot – the one with the huge broken blister. I was so sleepy – I'd been getting about 4 hours each of the last three nights – that she managed to cut all the dead skin off my foot without waking me up.)

Asimov's and **Analog** were having an award breakfast at 10:00. I'd gotten an invite for Janis, so I picked her up in the lobby and we took a cab over to the Imperial Inn, where I had to face Chinese food at 10 in the morning. (Talk about an appetite suppressant!) They handed out certificates and bonus checks to the winners of the **Asimov's** poll and the **Anlab** (this was my third win in the last four years), and when I went up to accept the award for "The Elephants on Neptune", I explained that of all the many stories, well over 20 by now, that I had sold to Gardner Dozois, this was the first he'd ever returned for revisions. He didn't mind that there were elephants on Neptune, or that they breathed oxygen, or that they could speak English, or that they could forage and find food – but it bothered the hell out of him that I'd given Neptune a solid surface when everyone knows it's a gas giant, so I had to insert a sentence explaining that. I then thanked Gardner for turning me into a hard science writer.

I left Janis surrounded by adoring writers and cabbied back to the Marriott in time to make a lunch appointment with Tom and Toby, my two Clarion kids. Barry was supposed to join us, but he got lost again.

At 1:00 I had my kaffeeeklatsch – my third scheduled meal without a break – but fortunately the con committee was so tight-fisted that we had neither weak coffee nor stale donuts nor indeed anything else to eat or drink. I gave away cover flats and color Xeroxes of some no-longer-valid **Santiago-the-movie** matte paintings, and we did the usual question-and-answer for a pleasant hour.

Then it was 2:00, and I went to Larry Smith's table to sign for an hour, as I always do at worldcons – and my belly dancers were there waiting for me. They started dancing, and drawing a crowd, and instead of using feathered fans as they had at the party they used Resnick books, posing for hundreds of photographs. Whenever one of their songs was over, they stopped dancing and we explained that they would start again when someone bought a Resnick book.

Did it work? Well, one party bought the seven

African Adventure and three **Worldwide Adventure** titles that Larry had on display – a tidy expenditure of about \$175. Two different guys bought both the 4-in-1 hardcover **Velvet Comet** and the 4-in-1 hardcover **Galactic Midway** books, a quick \$75 expenditure apiece. Deb Wunder bought the same, and another \$75. Others made more reasonable purchases. I think Larry did about \$500 in Resnick books that hour, and I've already "contracted" the belly dancers for next year's **Babes For Bwana Party** and next year's autograph sessions. (They even joined the **Babes**, and have formed their own branch of **Babes For Bwana**, officially known as **Bwana's Harem**.)

At 3:00 I reluctantly left the dancers and wandered over to the bar for a meeting with Jennifer Brehl. It was congenial, we discussed the proposal I'd had Eleanor send her, I told her I'd expand it a bit to cover some points she had questioned, and we'll see if we can do some business.

At 4:00, I introduced Janis to Eleanor Wood, another of her fans. Not to make her a client, that's up to them. But I knew I was taking Janis to DAW to hear a ton of proposals and deals, some of them quite complex, and I wanted Eleanor to give her a primer of what she would hear, what it meant, what she should watch out for, and so on.

Then, while Eleanor was educating Janis, I met with Scott and Steve Pendergrast, the brothers who own the phenomenally- successful **Fictionwise.com**. They came up with an interesting offer for me that I have accepted – this has nothing to do with buying more of my books and stories, which they will also do – and when we sort out the details, we'll make it public.

Betsy Wollheim and Sheila Gilbert showed up at 5:00 – Marty had been in the bar all day, schmoozing one editor after another – and when we decided it was too crowded and there were too many prying ears, we all went up to the DAW suite, four old friends and one confused newcomer. There's one deal Marty and I had worked out that Eleanor had approved, the DAW ladies agreed to it, and they'll be arguing money with Marty on it this month, but it's as good as done. There's another much more complex one where they will have to make an offer, and Janis will have to bring it to me or, better still, to Eleanor to see where the crouching tigers and hidden dragons are.

We just had a few minutes to clean up for dinner, and then Carol and I – and Janis, for whom I had finagled an invite (well, it didn't take much. Anne

Groell, my Bantam editor, has all her CDs) – went off to the Bantam dinner. Bantam decided years ago that they didn't want fans or rivals crashing their expensive parties, so they hit upon the notion of taking their writers – even agents weren't invited this year – off the premises to a fancy dinner.

This one was at Spasso's, which Charles Sheffield still doesn't believe exists since it's not listed in his *Zagat's* guide. Nonetheless, we sat with Charles and Nancy Kress and Roger McBride Allen, and at one point Janis asked a totally innocent question about Harlan Ellison, and that was it – we were off to the races, the five of us taking turns telling hilarious Harlan stories for the rest of the meal and then equally hilarious stories about other writers and editors all through dessert and coffee.

We went to the CFG suite when we returned, and got to see the end of the masquerade – and the winners – on closed-circuit TV. The costumes were a hell of a lot better this year than last, and much deeper in quality. We also learned that Boston – our choice any time they run – had just won the right to put on Noreascon IV in 2004.

I tried getting into the Tor party a couple of times, but the room was so crowded it spit me out. So, as happens most years, I wandered down the corridor until I found Tom Doherty (Mr. Tor) hiding from his own party and breathing in cool fresh air, and we had our annual chat.

I made it into the SFWA Suite for about 10 minutes – about my usual limit – and left. The Japan and Minneapolis parties weren't much better – *everything* seemed crowded – and I never did make it to Chicago or Los Angeles. I managed to introduce the Clarion kids to some agents and editors, and I remember introducing Robyn to a number of writers and editors as well, but I couldn't take the crowds, and I was back relaxing in the CFG suite by 2:00 – but not before I'd picked up assignments to write four stories for anthologies and sold some foreign rights to other stories. I spent another hour there, and went to bed at 3:30, much the earliest night of the con for me.

Sunday, September 2: Carol woke me at 10:15, after my longest sleep in a week – almost seven hours. I got dressed, re-bandaged my foot, and went over to "The Resnick/Malzberg Dialogue – Live!" panel at 11:00. I love being on panels with Barry – we've done some at Lunacon, and did a pair in 1983 at his last worldcon – because his wit always shows through, and we kept

the audience informed and laughing for an hour while agreeing on nothing except the fact that God outdid Himself when He made Sophia Loren. A number of audience members came up to me later to tell me that was their favorite panel of the con. It certainly was mine.

At noon I went off to lunch with Beth Meacham (my Tor editor), Gardner Dozois (my Asimov's editor), and Pat Cadigan (who was to have been my first collaborator before she moved to England and forgot to give me her e-mail address for years). It was just four old friends visiting for an hour. Then Pat and Gardner had to go to perform on panels, and Beth and I got down to business and agreed on the next novel I'll write for her, after I hand in *The Return of Santiago* this fall.

After lunch I finally made it to the art show, just before they started dismantling it. There were far more top artists than at Chicon last year, including Bob Eggleton, Don Maitz, Kelly Freas, Michael Whelan, Donato Giancola (who is fast becoming my favorite among the current batch), Stephen Youll, Ron Wolatsky, and a host of others.

I did a reading at 3:00. This year for reasons unknown to me (or anyone else) they held the readings to 30 minutes, thereby making it impossible to read a novelette or even a longish short story. So I brought a bunch of 4-and-5-pagers and read as many as I could before the time was up. As always, I signed each one and handed it to an audience member when I was done.

Then Janis and I did a TV interview with Donna Drapeau (who sent me a tape of the show that contained her Chicon interview with me, and I can attest to the fact that she and her partners do a wonderful job). We finished by 4:30, and made arrangements to meet in the lobby at 6:30 (she was our guest at the Hugo reception). Then I went to my room, kissed Carol hello, kissed Carol good-night, and took a 90-minute nap.

She woke me in time for me to get dressed in a jacket and tie (and my first pair of socks since last year's Hugo ceremony), informed me she had spent the last day and a half line-editing the first 400 pages of *The Return of Santiago* (which should answer all the people who asked where she was Saturday and Sunday), planned to reward herself with a little wine at the Hugo reception, and then off we went to it. This was the one place the con hadn't stinted on the money, and the spread was remarkable, clearly better than any since LACon back in 1996. We spent about 90 minutes

there, and then went off to our seats to find out who won the Hugos.

You've all seen the results by now. I managed to lose all three for which I was nominated, none of them by close margins. (Which I prefer, if I must lose. The three times I've lost by two or three votes, I've spent the rest of the con wondering which of my friends was too lazy to vote and thinking of various ways to dismember them.) The real surprise was Harry Potter beating legitimate SF novels, and the real triumph was my friend Jack Williamson, the unquestioned Dean of Science Fiction, winning his first fiction Hugo at the age of 93.

I stopped by the Hugo Losers party for a couple of minutes, mainly to prove I'm a good loser, but it was like Tor and SFWA, just too damned crowded. I also tried the Baen party, which was emptier, and I spent a few minutes there, but eventually I wound up back at CFG, where I belong, and spent most of the night there visiting with old friends. I did make one excursion to the Kansas City party – they've decided to bid against Los Angeles in 2006 – and another to Boston to congratulate them.

About 3:15 I decided to see if they'd posted the Hugo vote totals yet, and Christy Harden Smith, dressed in her sexiest Marilyn Monroe white satin dress (which she had promised to wear for me, and which was worth the price of admission), accompanied me while we looked all the hell over. Never found it, and I finally toddled off to bed around 4:30.

Monday, September 3: One last piece of business. I met Anne Groell, my Bantam editor, for breakfast while Carol was packing, and we've agreed on my next Bantam novel, if the contract details are acceptable. Nancy Kress and Connie Willis were at the next table, and since there aren't two sharper wits in science fiction, it kind of forced me to wake up fast, since they love throwing barbs at me, a sweet gentle unassuming self-effacing Bwana who would never harm or insult a fly.

Then I went back to the room, gathered up Carol and the luggage, and flew home, where I found one contract, three checks, a pile of bills, and 394 e-mail messages waiting for me.

I just hate it when the real world intrudes on worldcons.

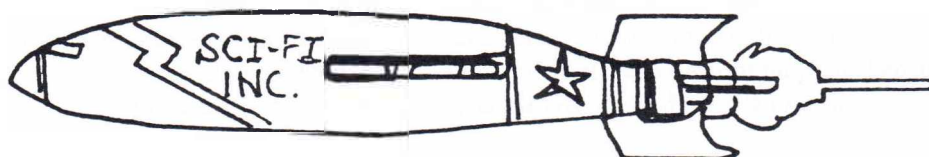
BOOKS

GHLIII

I should mention some interesting books that have come our way. I'm currently reading a fantasy series that I heartily recommend. Seldom have I read a tale as enthralling, exciting, romantic, heroic, and irresistible. I scanned it once before, in 1977, and when I exulted about it to my New Orleans fan group, John Guidry rejoined, "Tell me, Guy, do you think this book may become *popular*?" Maybe. It's called **The Lord of the Rings**. (The films are having an effect even before the first one opens – Saruman's words *sounded* like Christopher Lee to me.)

Jawn (note Cajun pronunciation) himself is responsible for another fascinating tome. Along with his lifelong friend and professional fantasy author Patrick H. Adkins, he has edited **Forgotten Tales of Love and Murder**, by a writer you may have heard of: **Edgar Rice Burroughs**. It's a definite treasure, "all of ERB's non-Tarzan short stories and mystery puzzles," most of which have never been printed and none of which have ever been collected. Cover and interior illustrations are by Danny – to me he'll always be "Dany" – Frolich. Pat's introduction is worth whatever price they charge, but of course, this handsome hardbound tome is a necessity for all Burroughs collectors. Website is www.sstar.com/~treasure/tarzana.htm, snail mail is P.O. Box 24442, NOLa 70184-4442, or you can just call me and I'll put you in touch with them. *Buy this book!*

Also, there is **The Long Prison Journey of Leslie Van Houten**, by Karlene Faith. When I visited Van Houten in 1996, I urged her to write a book, and here is the closest thing to an autobiography I bet we'll ever see. Most of it deals with the former Mansonite's rehabilitation (a section is titled, "Doing Prison Positively") and is unabashedly in favor of her parole. I liked Leslie, and agree that there would be no harm in her release, but this book is almost an apologia, presenting a sublimely reformed inmate not nearly as saucy and neat as the mantrap I talked to.





MIL PHIL ... worldcon 2001

Philadelphia 8-31/9-2

A photo-essay by GHLIII

Above ... If there was a special joy to the Millennium Philcon, it came from the company of **Rose-Marie**, my beloved bride. In return, I gave her the world ...

Getting me onto an airplane has always been a challenge. I met this one by imbibing myself into stupefaction, which made the first day of the Millennium Philcon a blur of faux pax. I didn't recognize **Alexis Gilliland**. I thanked **Janice Gelb** profusely for the wrong wedding gift. If you & I spoke, I undoubtedly offended you. All I can say is, forgive me. Next year we're *driving*.

Right: **Megan Bouchard** as the Liberty Belle.

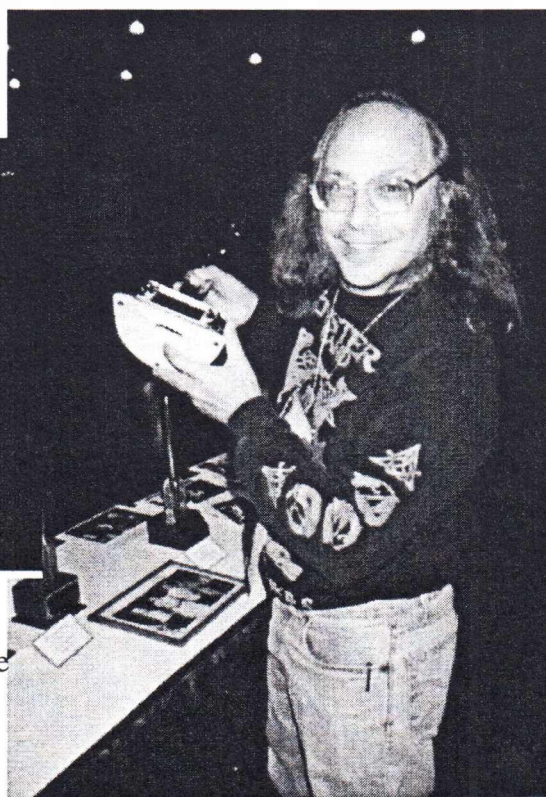
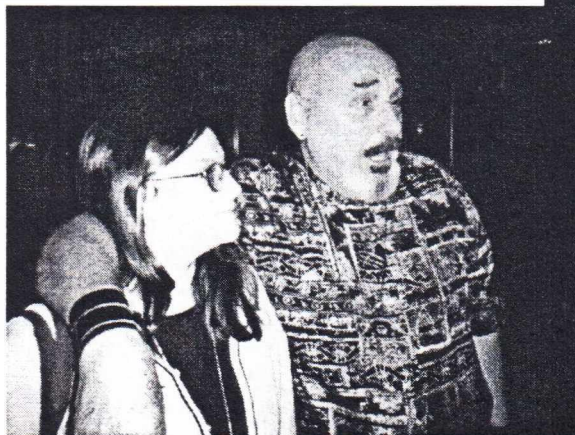




An alien campaigns for Charlotte NC in its race against Boston for the 2004 worldcon. No luck for the spaceman: Boston won. When we went by Boston's party after the vote was announced, they looked like they'd survived a hurricane and were facing another.



Above and to right, my reading entralls throngs of spectators. Below, **Toni Weisskopf** and **Hank Reinhardt**, enthralled with each other.

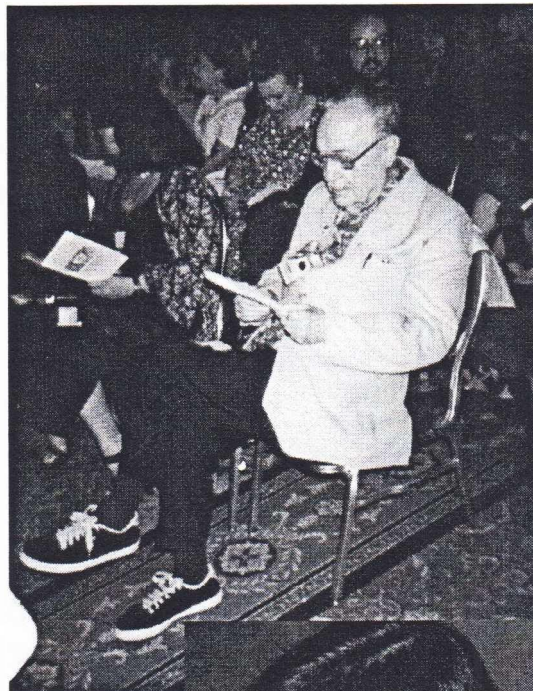


To right, **Tom Whitmore** describes weighting the Reynolds Rat Hugo base with putty and buckshot.

MILPHIL FOLK

We missed a lot of people at this convention: **Inge Glass** and **E.B. Frohvet**, just for two. But there were a lot of other great folks there ...

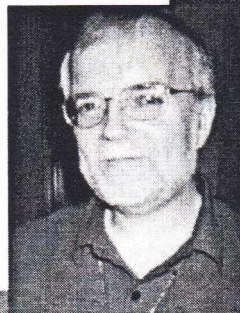
Forry Ackerman sports his tennies as he awaits the Hugo Award ceremonies.



Lovely **Catharine Asaro** gave out free copies of her Hugo-nominated novella.



Bob Devney made the short trip from Boston.



On a fanzine panel, **Brad Foster**, **Nicki Lynch**, **Leah Smith** critique the current crop.





PARTY TIME

It almost figures that in a convention full of parties **Mike Resnick's** would shine like the sun. Here's Mike in the midst of his **Bwana Babes**, including his guest and collaborator, singer-songwriter **Janis Ian**.

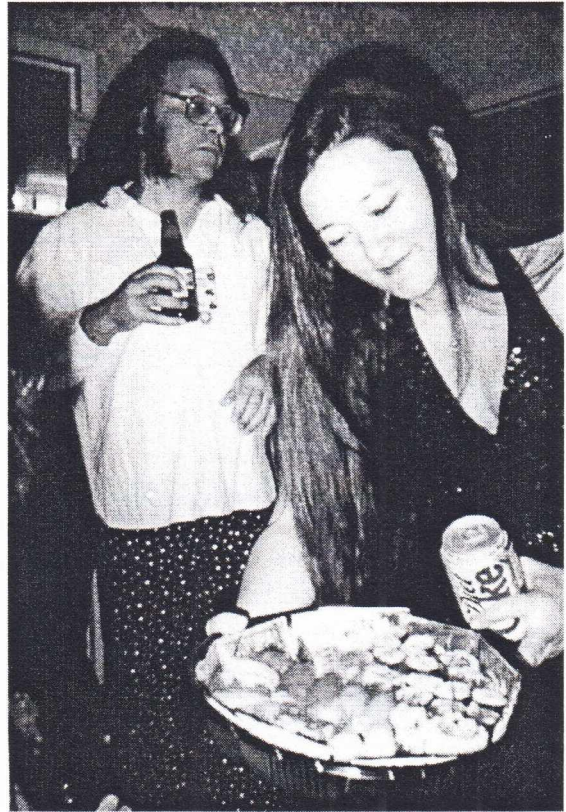
Below: a redheaded bellydancer: *the real thing*.



Photo by Rose-Marie Lillian



We didn't catch this fine lady's name, and the MilPhil nametags were impossible to read, but (1) she had published a story in **Analog**, (2) she had been to an **Analog** party which served a cake depicting the cover to that issue, and (3) she'd saved the piece with her name on it.



There were indeed parties aplenty at the Millennium Philcon, all dedicated to the proposition that science fiction fans *do not weigh enough*. Middle left, **Eve Ackerman** doles out sticky buns in the Green Room (while celebrating the success of her first novel). Above, **Naomi Fisher** feeds the multitudes, including **Tom Whitmore**. Above left, **Geri Sullivan** (with **Craig Miller**) lays on the chow for the Hugo nominees' party, and below left, **Dave Kyle** and **Jack Speer** eye the goodies. *burp*



"EAT! EAT!"

ON THE TOWN

Rose-Marie and I went touring to mark the first anniversary of our excursion away from the worldcon in Chicago last year ... during which we became engaged. Here she stands before **Independence Hall**.



To right ... aw, you guessed. We didn't like the tacky pavilion in which the **Liberty Bell** is housed, but the Bell itself was cool ... literally. "Go for your cuffs!" I told the guards when I reached out to touch it, but touching the Bell is still our right as Americans.



In the Assembly Room, where the Declaration was signed and the Constitution born. I lingered behind, alone, for just a moment, to commune with the spirits of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.



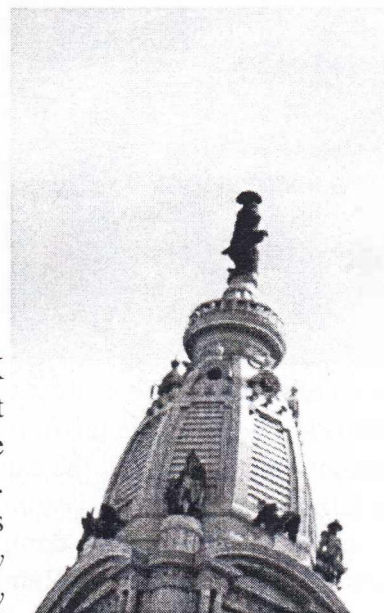
Right, **Rich Lynch** confronts modern art. What the hell is it?



Left, Ben Franklin at his press.



From JFK Plaza it seems like Mrs. Wm. Penn was a very lucky lady



SCULPTURE

Philadelphia abounded in it. Left, I photo one of fandom's lovey-doviest couples, **Pat & Roger Sims**, at the famous LOVE design.

The Mil-Phil Masquerade



Also of note was the costume of **Rebecca Morris**, above. Note the intricate needlework design on the cape and the careful attention to detail elsewhere in the costume. Rebecca's "change mail" suit made completely of quarters was also a big hit, and as Randy Cleary observed, that made cents.



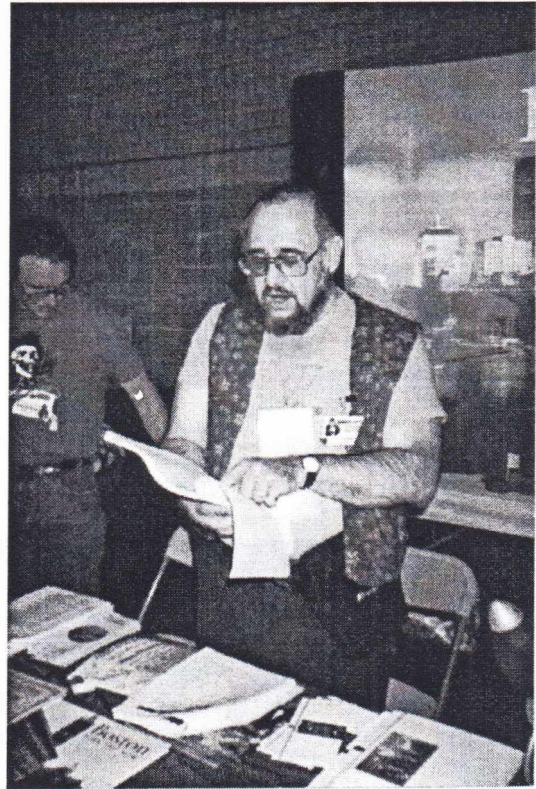
Above: The Best of Show: "Fridays at 10", celebrating **The Twilight Zone**



It's 2001, all right.



Joe Grillot snoozes the con away; below, Tony Lewis mans the Boston in '04 table.



Guess which famous pro and **Chall** pal has 11 Hugo nominee rockets to pin to his nametag? Right, **Rusty Hevelin** with the **Sim**ses.



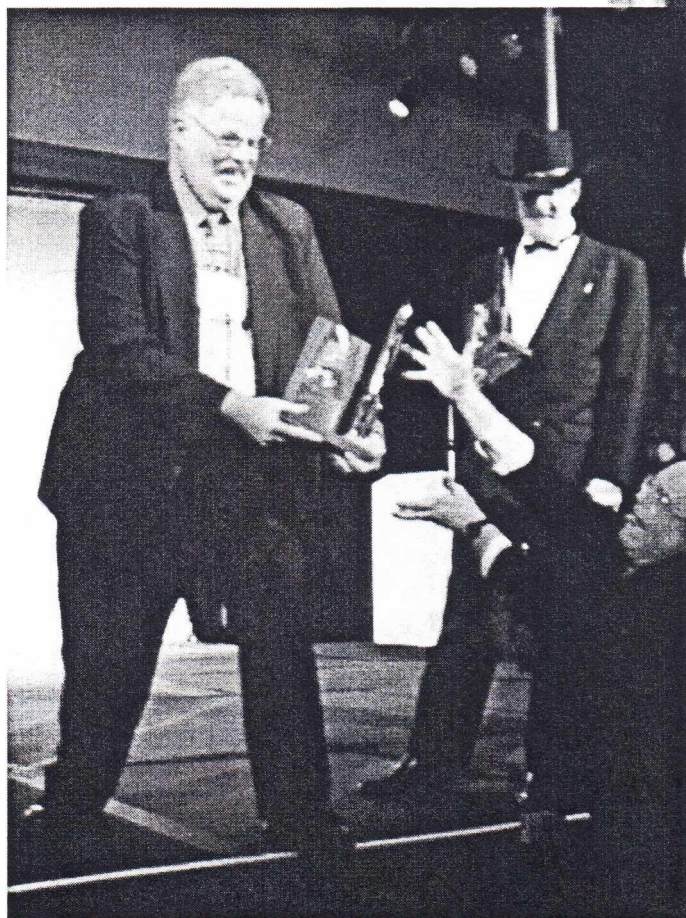


HUGO HUNGER

Sci Fi Weekly's on-line Hugo voters poll put **Challenger** up two-to-one over its nearest competitors, so I actually believed I had a chance at MilPhil to take home one of SF's fabled rockets. Haha on me.



The fanzine nominees gather for a panel the day before the awards. Mike Scott (**Plokta**), yhos, Dick Smith (**Stet**), Rich Lynch (**Mimosa**), Mike Glycer (**File:770**).

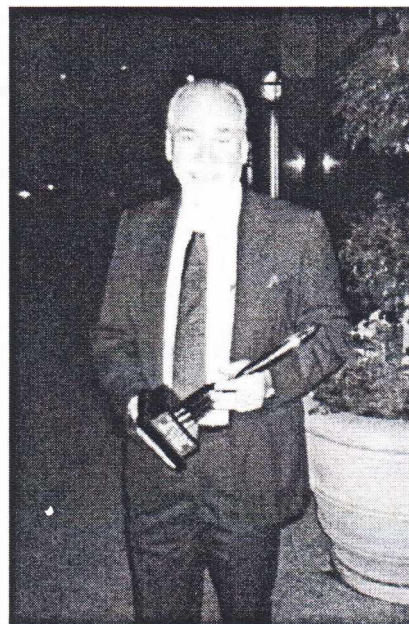


Above, Hugo victor Mike Glycer tempts our hero with the token he has so long craved, while Teddy Harvia looks on. Here's Mike with this year's design – note the electrified Franklin kite! Hope **Harry Potter** likes his!



In Summation:

The problems I had with Millennium Philcon were problems of my own making. I was too silly about flying to stay sober for the trips and thus lost the first day of the con to alcohol poisoning. I actually thought I might win the Hugo, so I let that worry eclipse good times. Here's **Robert Silverberg** with his Best Fan Writer 1950 Retro-Hugo, by the way; I hope he won't object to my saying that Retro-Hugos remain a stupid idea.



What was great about MilPhil was what is great about every worldcon – like-minded mates. We had a great dinner with **Joe & Lisa Majors**, shown here, and a cheese- steak sandwich with **Rich Lynch**. (Provolone wit'.) What could be better than that?



So in conclusion, a lesson or two. *Go to the worldcon for the folks.* Forget about winning the Hugo; it'll probably never happen. But being nominated is grand fun, and never forget to dream. As **Rodin** would tell us, a man's reach should always exceed his grasp.

*



SPIDERS & SNAKES

Guy Lillian

The parking lot was flooded.

We shouldn't have been surprised. A few weeks before, Rose-Marie and I had spent a day in Abbeville, in the heart of Louisiana's Cajun country – and thunderheads had broiled overhead like angry titans. Now we had returned, for the trial of Marcus Brignac, and the threat hanging over Louisiana's most weather-vulnerable region had come to pass. There was over ten inches of water in the motel parking lot.

Rosy's SUV was high off the road, so there was no danger of stalling as we shlooshed through the pond towards the SunBelt Lodge. Our reserved suite was on its second floor, too, so we would have no soggy carpets to contend with. But how would we get ourselves and our luggage inside?

The first challenge was to get our room keys. Rose-Marie piloted the SUV parallel to the curb, which was moreorless dry. I hopped out to seek the office, and found that I was not alone.

The floodwaters had driven all before them, and the sidewalk was alive with spiders in a multitude of sizes, and tiny, worm-sized snakes, curling and writhing as I high-stepped past. As a rule, I don't mind the serpentine, but these pale-bellied slinkers made the skin try to crawl off my scalp. Certainly they were harmless – or were they? Moccasins thrive in the bayous, and even moccasins have to be babies first. I was grateful to reach the office, and more grateful yet to convey wife and dog and belongings to our suite.

Where the toilet didn't work. I had to go forth once more into the morass, to find a local Wal-Mart and buy a plunger.

Add to this that I was sick. MilPhil had given me a righteous yankee catarrh, and I would spend the span of our endeavors in Abbeville hacking and crouping and spreading contagion. As my boss at the St. John Parish public defender's office and I tried to defend a condemned man on a charge of 2nd Degree Murder.

Ω

Normal morning, December 22, 1997, at ABC Seafood. It was a small retail outfit which occupied its own building, McDonald's size, on the main drag of LaPlace, Louisiana. Ellen Sadler had been a counter worker there for 15 years, a third of her life. Ellen was by all accounts a pleasant woman, but the coroner, from the stand, would describe her clinically, as "morbidly obese." I have never understood that adjective, although in this case it made a repulsive kind of sense. Ellen weighed 333 pounds, and in the latest photo I had of her, she looked like a gigantic mound of bread dough..

But her face wasn't unattractive, and few were those with ill to say about her. On the morning of December 22, 1997, Ellen stopped at her daughter's house on her way to work. She had lost her cell phone. On she went to ABC.

In the police photographs ABC looks like an ordinary retail store – lots of stainless steel counters and tables and scales, computer-generated signs here and there announcing prices and specials. The only sign of the season was a small metal Christmas tree on one of the counters, right next to Ellen's upended purse and a box of pralines for sale. This being Louisiana, where seafood is year-round fare, Ms. Sadler had a busy morning despite the closeness of Christmas. When a friend of her daughter came in to chat during Ellen's lunch, they were interrupted several times by customers. Ellen gave this girl, whose name was Cheryl, a hundred dollar bill to change for her at the bank, and she brought back a hundred singles. Ms. Sadler was by then finished with her red beans'n'rice, and when the girl left, she was alone.

Not too long afterwards, the owner, whose name was Brett and who was Ellen Sadler's cousin, drove up to the store. He found the front filled with annoyed customers. No one was behind the counter and they'd been kept waiting for several minutes. Brett went back into the store looking for his cousin. He found the screen door in the back latched; he

could see cars parked out back. He found dark fluid drying on the floor. He found the door to the cooler closed. He opened it.

The customers saw him run out. They said his face held an expression none of them had ever seen before.

"She's in the cooler. *She's in the cooler*," he said, over and over, like he'd never be able to say anything else no matter how long he lived.

Ms. Sadler's throat had been slashed – a cut six inches long and a good half-inch deep. Because she had bled so profusely, the cops assumed she'd died from the grotesque injury, and it wasn't until the pretty, petite pathologist from neighboring Jefferson Parish examined her on the autopsy table that the true cause of death was found: a gunshot wound to the back of her head. That sent the police scurrying back to ABC.

One of the understood forensic truths is "Something in, something out", meaning that a criminal always brings something *into* a crime scene and always takes something *out*. There is always evidence he's been there, either at the site or on him. Always? The cops swarmed through the store seeking fingerprints, fibres, DNA, anything. They found nothing. No fingerprints, despite the many stainless steel surfaces. No fibres or hair or sweat stains or blood, except from Ms. Sadler. There was only one item. In plain view, in a corner of the ABC cooler where Ms. Sadler had been found face-down, was a brass cartridge. It was a .380 calibre, marked R-P, for Remington-Peters, on its base. The ballistics boys said it *could* have held the slug the pretty, petite parish pathologist dug from Ellen Sadler's head.

Nothing else.

There matters rested as Christmas came, 1997, and New Year's Day, 1998.

The St. John Parish cops conducted dozens of interviews with possible witnesses and potential suspects. They thought they had something with the boyfriend of Cheryl, the girl who had seen Ellen Sadler at lunchtime. She was a friend of her daughter's and information came in that they did not get along. They had argued about the daughter's lifestyle. The boyfriend told the police that, when he brought Cheryl back to ABC, he'd heard a gunshot before she emerged.

Cheryl's own statement gave this story some

left-handed credibility. She reported as how she'd watched Ellen eat her red beans'n'rice, a Louisiana standard. (Horribly, the autopsy reported that she'd never gotten to digest her lunch.) When she'd left, she claimed, Ellen had put her arms about her and told her to take care of her daughter if anything happened to her – mawkish horseshit that shrieked its phoniness.

But the boyfriend gave *another* statement the same day, taking back the first one, *denying* that he'd heard a gunshot. Why he would say such a thing in the first place was a mystery, but there's a lot mysterious about human nature ...

While the St. John police were interviewing buyers of seafood and LaPlace's Usual Suspects, the ABC case was being solved by events unfolding elsewhere in the parish.

The videotape was taken automatically at a convenience store called the Kwik'n'Out. The scene switches every few seconds from camera to camera. It's enthralling.

It opens with a bleary black&white shot of the sales counter, clicking to views outside the front door and of the back of the store. Behind the counter, the middle-aged Vietnamese clerk makes inane small talk about the weather. The scenes flips once or twice. Enter, stage right, Marcus Brignac and Rodney Wallace.

Marcus is a tall (6'3") black guy, rather skinny at that time, with wild unkempt hair. You don't see much of Wallace on the tape; he goes to the back of the store – with the knife. Marcus comes to the counter – with the gun.

He holds it high, and sideways, angled down. He mutters something like, *Give it up*.

The Vietnamese guy shoots him.

A melee ensues. Marcus ends up curled into a fetal ball in front of the counter. Rodney had cut the throat of another employee, off screen. He runs. Between shots of the parking lot, the best we see of him on the tape is his rapidly receding back. Marcus, shot in the shoulder, regains his feet and follows. So does the Viet, yammering Hell & High Water at his assailants as they run for their lives. He says later that had he remembered the shotgun he'd had behind the counter, Marcus would never have come to trial.

Marcus drops his gun as they leave. It is a Bryco .380 automatic pistol.

Wallace and Brignac did not stay free for long. That same day they were arrested and interrogated far into the night. The officers concentrated at first on Kwik'n'Out, but the generosity and self-interest of Rodney Wallace took them in other directions.

The October before ABC and Kwik'n'Out, a man had been murdered in his office at Pearl Boats, a push-boat outfit operating in St. James Parish, north of St. John. A tall black man had come into the office, asked for a job application, had produced a pistol and used it on the manager and his assistant – who lived to tell the tale. The killer left behind a cigarette pack with fingerprints on the cellophane. *Guess what?* Rodney said. *That was Marcus!*

Rodney also admitted to Kwik'n'Out ... and gave a detailed confession to the ABC murder. In both cases, he said, he'd handled the knife and Marcus had handled the gun. In other words, after he had slashed Ellen Sadler across the throat, Marcus had taken her into the cooler for the *coup de grace*.

Marcus admitted to Kwik'n'Out -- what could he do? He was on the tape. But he only shook his head and chuckled ruefully when asked about ABC. "I'm going to give it up," he allowed ... but never explained what he meant.

Time passed. On the basis of the cigarette pack – and Rodney Wallace' testimony – Marcus was convicted of the Pearl Boats killing in St. James Parish. He received the death penalty. In St. John, Wallace entered a plea to being a *principal* to first degree murder. In that way he avoided the possibility of lethal injection, and got life ... if he agreed to testify against Brignac when time came for the ABC trial.

On October 20, 2000, Brignac was brought before Judge John Sterling at the St. John Parish courthouse, to begin the process of trying him for ABC. Now he would *really* be in trouble. I was named as his lawyer.



You may wonder why the District Attorney of St. John Parish chose to try Marcus, when he was already on Death Row for another crime. After all, what more could they do to him? I put the question to Lee Ann Gregoire, the assistant D.A. in charge of the case, even though I already knew what she would say. She said, as I expected, that the prosecutors felt they owed a duty to Ellen Sadler's survivors. I should be happy, she said; they weren't interested in another Death Penalty. (St. John prosecutors rarely are. The ultimate kibosh gives common citizens a grim, gooey satisfaction, but it costs the parish big bucks and job-

secure prosecutors don't think it worth the trouble.) She did *not* say that they also wanted an insurance conviction, to keep Brignac behind bars should he win the appeal of his St. James trial. Not to mention the questionable press *not* prosecuting him would bring. So: we would be going to trial.

Getting to know Marcus was not that difficult. After all, we – myself and my boss, David Richter – knew where to find him. Twice we made the 105-mile journey from LaPlace to Angola, the Louisiana State Penitentiary, and Death Row – the same weird room (bedecked with a pastoral mural, and a clumsy drawing of Scoobie-Doo) where we'd seen The Empty Man (see **Challenger #14**).

Marcus was tall, ugly, and heavy – he'd put on a lot of weight. After all, there's little to do on Death Row except stuff your face and watch TV. He was bitter at first, but warmed to us and took an active interest in his defense. (The only argument was over his hairstyle. Richter disliked the **Uncle Tom's Cabin** look he affected behind bars.) During one meeting, Marcus produced a stack of papers relevant to his cases that we had never seen before. After being sentenced to lethal injection for Pearl Boats, he'd been taken from the courtroom – and had scooped up the D.A.'s file. No one had noticed.

I admit that I admired his *panache*.

Marcus tried to help, naming alibi witnesses who could place him elsewhere on December 22, 1997: his wife and her cousin. Back in LaPlace, I got his wife on the phone. Thanks anyway, Marcus: she'd been at work at the time of the shooting.

Despite this, unlike our talks with the Empty Man, we never tried to convince Marcus to accept a plea. For one thing, the prosecution was now only charging him with *second* degree murder, which does not carry a death penalty. He'd gain nothing by pleading. For another, *they didn't have any evidence*.

Marcus had been tried on Pearl Boats, but not on Kwik'n'Out. Under the rules of evidence, the conviction could be mentioned only if he took the stand and testified; it's regarded as unfair at trial to judge a guy by his past record, but you *can* consider that record if you're evaluating his credibility in the witness box. So no word of Pearl Boats could pass the prosecution's lips. Kwik'n'Out, having not been tried, was not yet part of Marcus's record; they couldn't mention that at all.

Unless ... the prosecution invoked a case called *Prieur*. Under Louisiana jurisprudence, another crime can be used as evidence against a

defendant if (1) it showed a *modus operandi* that was so close to the current crime that there could be little doubt that both were committed by the same dude and (2) there was clear & convincing evidence the guy had committed the other offense. No problem with (2); there stood, and fell, Marcus on the tape. But was the m.o. so close to Kwik'n'Out that it tended to prove that Marcus committed the murder at ABC?

Richter and I thought that we had that question licked. The St. James prosecutors had tried to introduce both ABC and Kwik'n'Out in the Pearl Boats trial, under *Prieur*. The appellate court had said no – there was no substantial identity between those cases and Pearl. *Res judicata* ... the thing has been litigated.

The reasons Lee Ann wanted Kwik'n'Out in and not out were obvious. First, that videotape would get him convicted of the *Lincoln assassination* if shown to the jury. But more realistically, it showed him with the gun ... that Bryco .380 which ballistics proved conclusively had fired the fatal bullet into Ellen Sadler's head.

Of course, Kwik'n'Out took place some 15 days after ABC, and his possession of the gun then didn't prove he had the gun on December 22nd. Besides, in the written material Lee Ann gave me as part of discovery we made an interesting discovery. The ammo for the Bryco had been found, R-P cartridges just like the empty shell found in the ABC cooler. But they had been found in *Rodney Wallace's house*.

So the prosecution had no evidence to produce against Marcus – except Rodney's testimony. No fingerprints, no eyewitnesses, no DNA, nothing except the word of a creepy co-defendant ... who had pled guilty to life imprisonment to avoid the possibility of the death penalty. Being a principal to first degree murder, the plea taken by Wallace, carries the same jolt as being the triggerman; at the time, he still had the needle in his future. We saw a way to undermine Wallace' testimony: he had given his confession, made his plea bargain, and agreed to testify against Marcus simply to save his own neck.

Not to mention the fact that he acknowledged, when he confessed, that he had wielded the knife. It was in his statement, and it was on a diagram he drew of ABC. Even in cold ink it was blood-chilling. "This is where I cut her throat," it read, near the cooler door. Why should a jury believe such a scumbag? But Richter didn't think

that was enough. If we were going to turn the accusation back on Rodney Wallace, and say that he had committed the fatal act himself, then we had to answer a key question: why had he named Marcus?

Q

Like all good defense lawyers, Richter was putting himself into the place of the jury. It's a game: the lawyers know more than the jury knows, than the jury *can* know. We knew that Marcus and Rodney had committed a hideous murder at Pearl Boats before ABC, and had attempted an armed robbery at Kwik'n'Out afterwards. The jury would not know that. Our task was to build a story of the event around *their* limited knowledge. How could we make the story more convincing?

We hired an investigator, a former N.O. cop named Cliff Donaldson, who could delve into the relationship between Rodney Wallace and Marcus Brignac. He was experienced, he was bright, and he was black – an advantage when dealing with street people. I sent Angola an affidavit verifying his professional legitimacy, and got Donaldson passed into an interview with Marcus. He struck paydirt.

Marcus said that a year before ABC, he had come home from prison, where he had met Rodney Wallace. Rodney's girlfriend was named Shelita Poole; they had had a child together. Marcus had failed to respect the sanctity of their union; in other words, he and Shelita had gotten it on. Question became, had Rodney found out? And how had he reacted? Had he expressed anger, frustration, a need for revenge?

We sent Donaldson to sound out Shelita. She was easy to find. She was in the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women, serving a life term for second degree murder.

The victim was her child by Rodney Wallace.

I took on two other tasks. First involved the venue of the case. Everybody in St. John Parish knew and liked Ellen Sadler. Our secretary at the public defender's office knew and liked Ellen Sadler. The lady where I got my eyeglasses fixed knew and liked Ellen Sadler. I saw the disadvantages of trying a case in a small town.

So I petitioned the court for a change in venue. Judge Sterling, a short, big-domed fellow of even disposition and good humor, had indicated his inclination to grant such a motion, but arguing it was rougher than I figured. I could show him dozens of

clippings about the case in the local fishwrappers, but only one usable quote from a public official, practically a prerequisite for a venue switch: the sheriff had commented that the ABC killers had no respect for human life. One of my former comrades from Jefferson Parish was in the courtroom as the D.A. and I exchanged rhetoric, and I felt embarrassed – until I won.

It then fell upon the judge's narrow shoulders to find the other venue. That meant locating an empty courtroom outside of St. John run by a judge who owed him a favor. After much shilly-shallying, we ended up in Vermillion Parish – Abbeville.

The second problem was just as significant. As I've said, there was but one piece of *physical* evidence linking Brignac to the crime – the Bryco pistol. Lee Ann wanted the right to show that Marcus had the piece at Kwik'n'Out – but, as said before, that would've hopelessly prejudiced Marcus at trial. Besides, the point had already been litigated in our favor, hadn't it?

Hadn't it?

Maybe not. The appeals court had denied the St. James prosecutors the right to introduce *Prieur* evidence in the Pearl Boats trial. But their decision was addressed to the lack of similarity between Pearl Boats and the other two cases, not the sameness between ABC and Kwik'n'Out. Both of those incidents involved retail establishments, the use of two different weapons – they looked a *lot* alike. So I argued for accepting a compromise offered by Lee Ann. She would agree not to mention Kwik'n'Out or try to show that deadly videotape – if we stipulated to a single fact, that Brignac had been in possession of the gun on the date of Kwik'n'Out. I hated giving her anything, but In'nOut was 15 days after ABC, and the stipulation was as little as we could get away with.

Cliff Donaldson returned from LCIW – and reported striking gold. We would like what Shelita Poole had to say. I arranged to return there with him, and get an affidavit from Shelita.

Joke. Guy: "You know, I like going to St. Gabriel. I get whistled at!"

A female lawyer: "Yeah, but so do I."

Not that the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women isn't nice, as prisons go. It's much cleaner, more spacious, better-kept and better-smelling than the California jail where I interviewed Van Houten. Cliff and I drove up there in August. We found manicured lawns, flowers blooming in the

flowerbeds, a functioning beauty parlor, and a squad of inmates industriously digging a goldfish pond. A blow to my ego: the girls in green jumpsuits paid me no attention whatever.

We were led to an immaculate gymnasium. Visitation was in progress at tables spaced throughout. The gym was decorated as for a high school prom, had portraits of Hollywood stars posted on the walls, and behind the stage, a fancy spangling banner beamed the names of various men's prisons to the rest of the hall. Turned out we'd just missed a highlight of the social season, the big inter-prison dance.

When Shelita appeared, I was impressed. Even with the gold highlights she'd worked into her braids, and the two gold teeth in front, she made a calm, neat appearance – as long as you could forget the child she'd killed.

Marcus himself had said it best: "Everyone I know is a killer!" I'd be damning Rodney as a vicious throat-slicing butcher to our jury. Would it reek of hypocrisy to ask the same people to believe a convicted murderess? I was half-convinced that Marcus would be better off without her.

But what she told us was so *good*!

"The first I knew that [Rodney Wallace] had discovered I was seeing Marcus was ... when Rodney dragged me out of a car ... and beat me with a tire iron."

And so *questionable*?

"When the hospital reported the beating, I made up a story about being beaten in a bar out of fear of Rodney Wallace."

Indeed, she'd filed no charges, and there was no police report. But if Shelita came through as convincingly on the stand as she did at that table ...

An aside. While at LCIW I arranged to see the girl from "The White Sustenance", in **Challenger** no. 8. I call her Denise. She was happy, fat and sassy. She sported a sparkling engagement ring from an Angola lifer; when she was released, she said, she'd devote her time to his case, and become a paralegal.

It's a bizarre world.

Ω

In addition to the Shelita angle, we probed another defense: the story of Cheryl and her boyfriend. Why, my boss figured, couldn't we imply that his first story *was* to be believed, that he *had* heard a gunshot, and so Cheryl had committed the crime? I saw no use in it: I'd subpoenaed both Cheryl and her gabby swain to

pretrial hearings, and neither had shown up. The boyfriend had rescinded his stupid story, and hopefully gone to jail for mucking up the case. The defense struck me as obviously phony, and I bet the jury would think so, too. Saying too much is the most obvious signal of a falsehood.

But the boss is the boss, so I subpoenaed the dynamic duo again – as well as Melinda, the family friend who'd revealed the tension between Cheryl and Ellen. Another dimension opened from the case – *victims*.

That word is plural. Ellen Sadler's suffering had been terrifying, but brief – and it was over just after noon on December 22, 1997. The suffering began at that moment for her friends and family, however, and it had not ended.

One son, told only that day that his mama had been injured, had to be arrested when he couldn't get his car onto the ferry across the Mississippi. He'd pitched a fit and broken windows. Everyone else simply wept.

Melinda called me after receiving her subpoena. All she asked was that I let her know at trial time if she was truly needed to testify. Her mother Claire, however, had an unusual request.

Claire had been a close friend of Ellen Sadler. She had felt her friend's death deeply. Speaking to her was intensely sobering.

Ellen Sadler was, by all accounts, a supportive daughter and mother, lending aid throughout her life to the generations on either side of her. Melinda's mother told me that one of the things her friends said for comfort was that Ellen must have been glad of rest. They'd convinced themselves that she did not suffer. Blessed foolishness.

Claire understood my job and point of view, and said she appreciated it when I assured her that I would protect Ms. Sadler's dignity. All she wanted, she said, was to speak to Marcus ... and tell him he was forgiven.

What do you do with such people?

Talk to me after the verdict, I said.

Rose-Marie and I scouted out Vermillion Parish in August. We found the one decent motel in town, the SunBelt Lodge, reserved its largest suite, took a look at Abbeville's whitewashed courthouse, wandered through the charming central park (with its statue of the founder, a monk) and located Black's, its famous seafood restaurant. Across the street was the city's largest and most impressive edifice, a Catholic

church. Its historical marker read English on one side, French on the other. Doom quivered through me. My jurors, I realized, would be Cajuns.

They have their own culture; they speak their own language: something like French, with alligator and gar thrown in. Their cooking is mankind's strongest fortress against the insidious armies of the bland. (Rosy and I visited the Tabasco plant on nearby Avery Island on our way home.) Zydeco music is envied by the choirs of Heaven. Movies such as *Southern Comfort* make Cajuns seem menacing, but that's ludicrous. What they are is salt-of-the-Earth good people – and as alien from me as *Martians*.

How would I get through to them? Fake an accent?

Q

I had one pre-trial duty left. It's always helpful to visit a crime scene and get a feel for the movements of the people involved. So I went to ABC Seafood.

It wasn't easy to find. It wasn't ABC anymore. Brett had moved that operation to another location, and the new owners of the building had reconfigured the inside and painted the outside pink. It was now a daiquiri shop, changed far too much to give a feel for Ellen Sadler and Rodney Wallace and December 22, 1997. Something of a relief.

■

Off we went to the worldcon in Philadelphia. In a paroxysm of ambition I toted along part of the Brignac file ... which went completely ignored during Millennium Philcon.

We flew back. I got too drunk to read anything on the plane but the impeccable white language of the arctic clouds. Immediately upon landing, we repacked for Abbeville, and with my sobriety barely recovered, we were off.

A 90-minute downpour preceded our arrival at the Sun-Belt Lodge by an hour. We were greeted by spiders and snakes.

The next morning the flood had drained, and the critters had retreated to their normal lairs. After we placed Rosy's yorkie in a kennel – that's Jesse she's holding on the first page of my wedding spread – other critters came forth. Lawyers, staff, potential jurors ... we had a time finding a parking spot.

The unremarkable courtroom was at the end of the long second floor hall. Framed photos of judges and local politicians circled the walls. There the *dramatis personae* gathered: Judge Sterling, his

acerbic female bailiff, the D.A.'s team, ours. David had brought his detective wife, Donna. Cliff came from the area and was invaluable anyway, and Rose-Marie vowed to practice her journalism by writing up the trial. In addition to Lee Ann, the District Attorney sent her boss, George Wilty, Clint, an investigator, and Tammy, the paralegal/office manager but for whom their office would slide gibbering into the Gulf. They carried charts and boxes and bags marked *Evidence* and grim expressions. (Marcus matched their glumness: "These country people gonna hang me!" he griped. At least he'd changed his hairstyle; it lay in neat rows along his scalp.) Plus a squad of St. John deputies who surrounded Marcus like a blue wall.

The judge took the bench and we were underway.

While the jury pool stretched the length of the corridor outside, we opened matters with last-minute motions, squawks designed more to give us something to appeal later than to accomplish anything now. Sterlings scoffed, we objected, the doors flung wide and the jury venire trooped in.

Cajuns, all right. Eleven Broussards – nine Heberts – five LeBlancs – with a few Landrys, Boudreauxes and Primeauxes thrown in. What impressed us, though, was how many showed up – a much greater percentage than I've ever seen. The bailiff read off 18 of their names, and the people took their seats in the jury box, and we got started.

I will spare you a pitch-by-pitch account of the *voir dire*. The major hurdle we had to clear was the 5th Amendment, the right to remain silent. Most of the panelists seemed to think that a defendant *should* tell his side of the story. Lee Ann ran into resistance to giving a co-defendant a good deal in exchange for testimony ... which is what she had done with Rodney Wallace. It was this issue that made me do something I'd never done before: yell at a juror. Well, her thickheadedness got to me. Is there any *real* difference between life imprisonment and the death penalty, she wondered? Ha! Ask Marcus!

(Of course, the jury wouldn't be told that our boy was already on Death Row. They could know nothing about his record.)

At any rate, we got our 14 jurors (including two alternates) seated in three panels, and I was pleased. They were a bright, independent group: teachers, people with relatives in jail, former jurors in not-guilty cases, and one mean old coot who openly

bad-mouthed the idea of a killer trading testimony for a better deal. Him I loved.

But I couldn't ignore the words of Donna, Richter's cop wife: "It's a good jury," she said, "but they're still going to burn your guy."



I felt like I had ground to make up right at the start of the trial. Losing my temper with that boob of a juror had not been the smartest thing to do. It's important that a lawyer connect with a jury, with their trust and, if possible, their liking. I was sure I had come across as a hacking, croupy prick.

Playing cuddly is not one of my talents, so I decided on a passionate approach. I had to convince this dozen-plus-two that my uptightness came from caring so deeply. I did myself the favor of believing that true. When ordinary people see a horror such as ABC, they *need* to blame someone. Perhaps I could lead their feelings – turn their rage, away from Marcus and towards Wallace.

So I began, "This is a case that cries out and demands things of you. Pity ... disgust ... rage ... and justice."

I spared a glance at the gallery. The only spectators besides our wives and Donaldson were Claire and Melinda, Ellen Sadler's friends, and an old fellow with a walker, possibly her father. The jury would be aware of them – certainly I was, too. It would hurt to have to say some of the things I would have to say.

"This is a case of pitiless murder, which ripped the life from a fine and beloved lady, took her family and her friends and left them desolate. The prosecution – "Never say "the state" or worse, "the people" in trial – "and the defense agree on these things. Where we do not agree is where that justice lies.

"The prosecution wants you to convict Marcus Brignac, and I tell you, you must not. In the name of justice, you must not."

I remembered my promise to Claire, to treat Ellen's memory with respect.

"Ms. Sadler was 45 years old. She was a resident of LaPlace. She had a daughter and a granddaughter ... She was not too tall – 5 feet 5. She was a large lady – 333 pounds. She would be no match for her killer when he walked in the door.

"By all accounts Ellen Sadler was a good and caring lady: a friend to everyone who knew her. She worked 12-hour days. She cared for her elderly parents and her struggling children.

"The world owed her a better ending."

I couldn't spare the feelings of the family at that point. I had to describe the ending that Ellen Sadler got. So I did, briefly, trying to get the jury used to the idea that Wallace was a man to despise – and not believe.

"The man who did these things ... has admitted to these things. He is not in this room. He will be soon. His name is Rodney Wallace. And his word is all the prosecution of Marcus Brignac has to go on.

"After you view the evidence and hear the testimony," I finished, "you would not trust Rodney Wallace if he told you that *the sky was blue* – " don't blanch; cliches have power – " and you cannot trust him to imprison another man for the rest of his life."

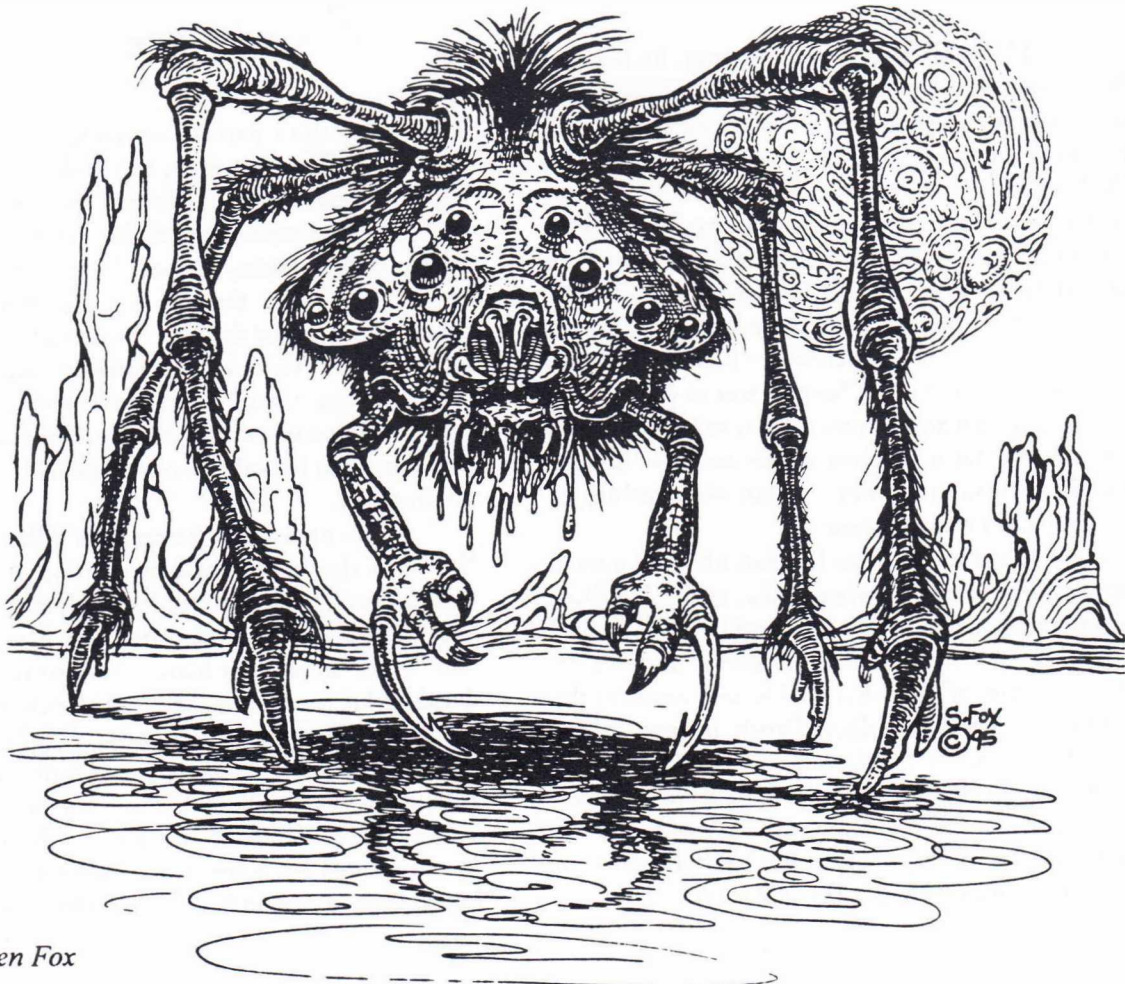
That was about all I had to say that day. The st- ... ahh, the prosecution brought a parade of cops to the stand who testified about the discovery of Ms. Sadler's body. Richter, in cross, had them emphasize the dearth of forensic evidence, and the fact that R-P .380 ammunition was found at Wallace's abode.

The day's liveliest encounter came when David faced the pretty, petite pathologist from

Jefferson Parish, whom I knew to be a pretty, petite she-beast from Hell. (She once worked in Richmond; maybe she learned Attitude from Kay Scarpetta.) She maintained that the wound to Ellen Sadler's throat was non-fatal, since it severed no "vital structures." Richter wanted her to admit that the wound was non-fatal only because poor Ellen was so fat, not because of any lack of murderous intent on Rodney's part. She *smirked* at him. 'Round and round they went – but our salient point crept through: Rodney Wallace cut Ellen Sadler's throat and he meant business.

David also struck his toe into the Cheryl-did-it defense, asking a cop why none of the witnesses he'd interviewed were read their *Miranda* rights – except Cheryl. It was a road to nowhere that went nowhere. As I thought all along, the ABC Seafood case would boil down to Rodney Wallace. If the jury didn't believe him, Marcus was safe in this case. If they did, he was toast.

There was one civilian witness – Brett, the owner of ABC and Ellen Sadler's cousin. The poor man quaked as he told his story of discovering her body. Except for establishing that ABC was full of



Steven Fox

stainless steel – which should have held fingerprints – we left him alone.

Wallace was scheduled to take the stand the next day. So was Shelita. Then, closing arguments. It was a nervous night; the next day would be the one that would count.

Listening to Rodney Wallace was a special type of experience. I'm sure I've spent more time around such men than 99.9% of the people reading this – thank God! – but I *don't* understand them. Sometimes I tell myself that to be a good criminal lawyer you should study more than the law; you should study abnormal psychology and sociology and criminology, so creatures like Wallace won't astonish you when you face them in court. I do believe that. But I also believe – after looking such men in the face, listening to their voices, and defending one or two – that nothing, and certainly no academic training, can adequately prepare you for Evil. Evil will always surprise you, it will always come at you from somewhere out of the dark. Even on a bright day like December 22, 1997, or September 7, 2001, when the prosecution called Rodney Wallace to the stand.

He was dressed in prison orange, his legs and hands shackled. He was tall and muscular and would not have been ugly had it not been for the basilisk blankness of his expression. There was a flatness to Wallace, a sullenness, a deadness of affect. Marcus had grown more and more lively the longer we'd spoken to him – and when he'd spotted Rosy he'd teased me about having a fine-looking wife. Maybe the relative isolation and absolute security of Death Row made it possible, somehow, for human attributes to resurface in him. But Rodney was in population, and the way a man survives there is to be silent, and menacing, a statue, a golem, a man you don't bother, a man you don't fuck with, a man with nothing to him but raw survival instinct.

It had been just such a man who had walked into ABC Seafood on December 22, 1997. The D.A. asked him to tell us all about it, and he did.

I stood while he talked, hands in my pockets, at a far corner of the defense table, and stared at the pictures of past Vermillion Parish judges, at the shadows on the slats of the windows, at the patterns of varnish on the pews. I avoided everyone's eyes, especially Rose-Marie's; sure, she's a grown woman and a former police reporter, but I felt ashamed to have her in a room with a being like that.

"I was standing behind her when I walk her to the back and I grab her with my left hand and slice with the right ..."

That's verbatim from his confession. His testimony was little different.

What got me – among other things – was the *stupidity* of the crime. Rodney Wallace – and Marcus Brignac – both lived in LaPlace, mere blocks from ABC. The robbery, Wallace claimed, was a spur-of-the-moment impulse while they were walking down the railroad tracks. In their own neighborhood. The robbery netted a couple of hundred dollars, in small bills (remember, Ms. Sadler had just gotten change). They fouled their own nest – and for so little. So witless, so worthless.

"She crawl – she crawl – she got on her hands and knees, she crawl."

Someone from the gallery, it may have been Claire, ran weeping from the courtroom. I leaned over to Richter and whispered, "When you gaze into the abyss ..."

"And Marcus Brignac," Lee Ann recapitulated, "fired the bullet that killed Ellen Sadler."

"Yep."

"Cross," said the judge.



There were three parts to my cross-examination of Rodney Wallace: the deed, the deal, and Shelita. I hoped to show, first, that Wallace was a monster, and shouldn't be trusted; second, that he would derive a benefit from testifying against Marcus, and shouldn't be believed; third, that he had a personal grudge against Brignac, and shouldn't be accepted. I'd like to report that this vicious, sullen criminal quailed before my mighty questioning, but this was a man who lived by intimidation in a world where intimidation was the only dignity to be had. He never quailed. Of course, neither did I.

I went through the crime at ABC, poking at Wallace's claims that the ammunition at his house was Marcus', that Marcus had urged him to rob ABC, that he had only intended to scare Ms. Sadler by cutting her throat, that Marcus had been the one to decide to kill the woman, and that Marcus had pulled the trigger. I contrasted his size – 6'2", 210 pounds, husky – with Ellen Sadler's. I had him recount her reactions – her fear, her nervous compliance with his orders. I showed him the diagram of ABC he'd drawn for the cops. I asked him if he could see the parking lot through the open back door. Yes. If the screen

was latched. Yes. I asked him to again describe cutting the poor woman. Did it kill her? No. Isn't that why he, not Marcus, had forced Ellen Sadler to crawl into the cooler, where a gunshot could not be heard? Rodney simply smiled. How much was his share? About \$180.

I turned to the question of the deal. Wasn't he charged at first with being principal to a first degree murder? Guess so. Didn't he know that carried the same possible penalty as actually committing the killing? Didn't know. Wasn't he represented by counsel? Didn't remember – until I mentioned the guy's name. Oh. Yeah. So by taking the plea – which required that he testify against Marcus – he was avoiding the risk of the death penalty, right? He'd cut a throat for less than \$200, right? Why wouldn't he lie and keep on lying to save his own life? A shrug.

I was dancing in a minefield in Bozo boots. Remember *Prieur*. The D.A. could not mention Marcus' other crimes or allow her witnesses to do so. But if I somehow brought them up, she could *wail* on the defendant's record. Therefore, I couldn't kick at Rodney's absurd statement, in the Pearl Boats trial, that he only confessed to ease his "conscious" [*sic*]. Or his throat-slitting viciousness at Kwik'n'Out.

That meant I had to toe-step like a ballerina around the question of their friendship. They'd met, after all, at Angola, when both were taking mandatory vacations on armed robbery raps. But I could still ask the witness if he knew Marcus in LaPlace, and had been enraged when he discovered his friend had been with Shelita, his lady.

Again Wallace scoffed. "How could I feel like that if I got'em together," he said.

So he *didn't* beat her with a tire iron? Here came that scoff again.

Finally, I approached Wallace as he sat in chains in the witness box. I held out a police photograph. He didn't take it – he couldn't move his hands very far, and damned if I would get within arm's length of Rodney Wallace. The photo was of Ellen Sadler's ravaged throat. It would have sickened a jackal.

"Did you do this?"

"Yeah," he replied, as if we were talking about a kleenex he'd let fall into the street. "I did that."

No more questions. I sat. The prosecution rested.

I felt exhausted and depressed. Wallace hasn't cracked. I supposed I shouldn't have been surprised. When you look into the abyss, why do you suppose there's anything there but obsidian darkness?

The defense had only one witness, Shelita Poole. She'd been nervous about testifying – she was still sacred of Rodney and wary of Lee Ann and the judge. Both had served at her own trial, when she'd been convicted of killing her infant child. Naturally, we couldn't let that hideous fact get before the jury, so we trumped the issue by having Shelita admit that she lived at LCIW and was doing life for second degree murder. Lee Ann couldn't go into any specifics.

All in all, Shelita was a pretty fair witness, telling how she'd been with Rodney when she met Marcus, how in 1995 Rodney had somehow discovered her duplicity, had taken her into the swamp, dragged her from the car and beaten her ... indeed, with a tire iron. He'd obliged Marcus' future defenders by mentioning him by name as he'd trashed Shelita. She went on to explain her failure to tell the truth about the beating at the hospital – she said she'd been attacked by strangers outside a bar – by saying that she'd been afraid of Rodney. I believed her, but I wondered: did this evocation of the eternal triangle dent Wallace's credibility, as we hoped? If the jury chose to believe a literal cutthroat who admitted to cruelty and depravity, would testimony of more cruelty and depravity make more of an impact?

We rested our case. One more thing to do.

Q

Vincent Bugliosi's **Helter Skelter** is widely seen by lawyers as a primer for construction of a successful prosecution. Likewise, his **And the Sea will Tell** is regarded as an excellent guide to putting together a winning defense. He mentions a rule, in that book, which I absolutely follow: start at the end, work backwards, *begin* prepping your case with your *closing* argument.

I had been working on my close for weeks, playing with phrases, seeking a structure. Mindful of how stilted and ineffectual reading from a text can be, I wrote in free verse, in caps, and requested a dais to stand behind so I could hide the script. This was my element. I am far, far from the brightest spark plug in the engine, but I can flat out give a speech. I flat out gave one.

"When you gaze into the abyss," I began, "the abyss gazes also." For me that phrase has always

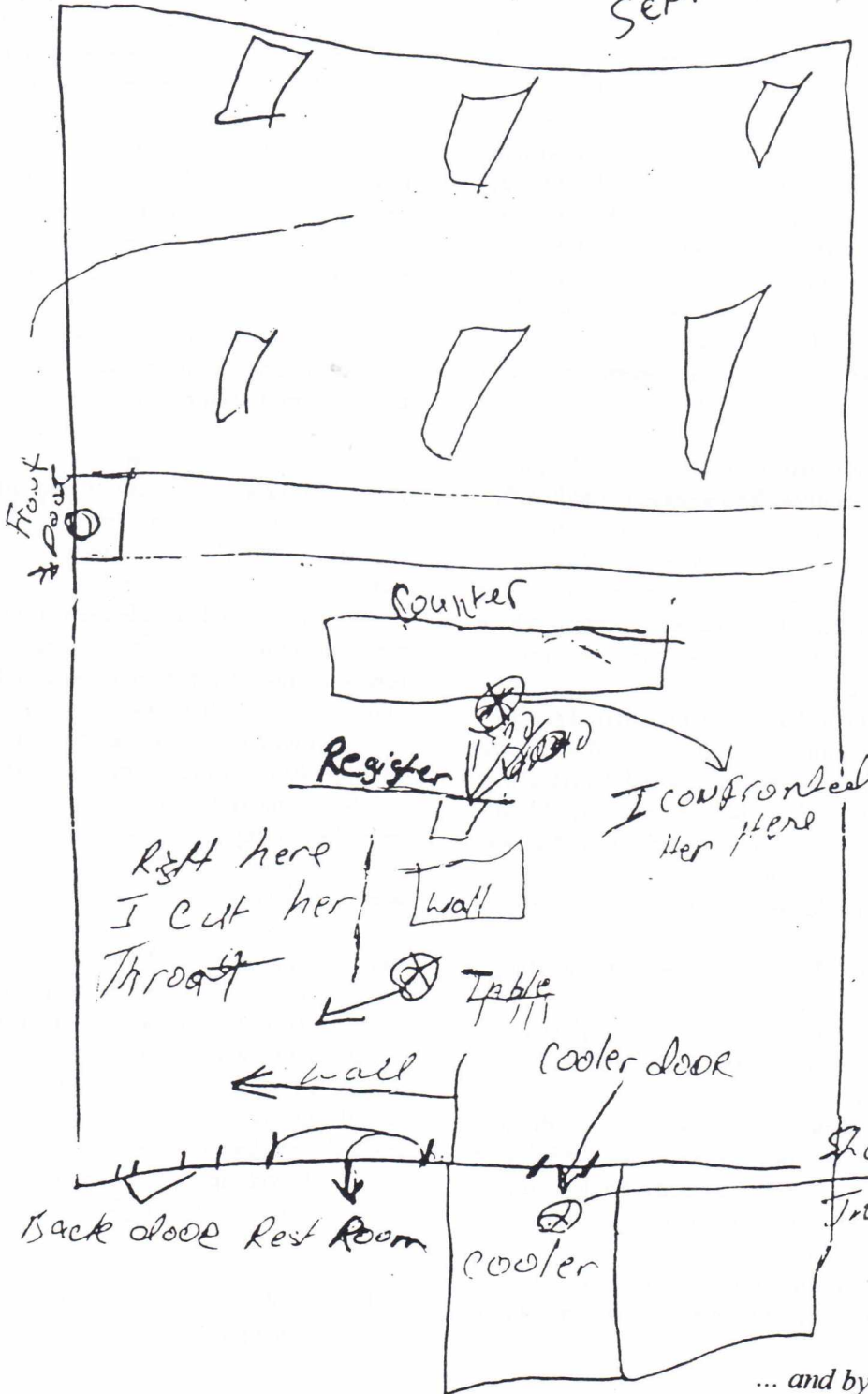
Airline Highway

ABC
Seafood

Robin Street

IOI

Pinehurst Street



... and by Rodney Wallace

meant, when you face Evil, what matters is what you show in return. In this trial we have gazed into darkness. What do we show in return?"

Before heading into the meat of the case, I thanked the jury for appearing for voir dire in such impressive numbers, and for putting up with my croup. It had been miserable throughout the trial. I then went over the background evidence, such as it wasn't. No scientific evidence. No witnesses ... except for Rodney Wallace. I pooh-poohed the pathologist's suggestion that the wound he'd left in Ellen Sadler's throat was superficial, simply meant to scare her, as insulting to their intelligence. The D.A. had argued that Wallace had been consistent with his story, and I pointed out the details he'd added for the jury's benefit. Mostly I argued that Rodney had known that police would find his knife and tie him to the crime, and that his only chance of avoiding lethal injection would be to implicate someone else. And why did he anoint Marcus? Shelita.

"I suspect I know what is uppermost in your feelings about this case. I think I know because we share those feelings.

"You want justice for Ms. Sadler. You want her soul to rest in peace. You want to say to her that her life was worth more than the few odd dollars the killer got from ABC's cash register, and her purse. You want to tell her, and the world, how sad you feel about her death, how disgusted, how sickened, how furious ... You want to vent your fury, you need to express your rage."

I told them that I knew they shared the grief of Ms. Sadler's family and friends, and even the frustration of the cops who investigated the crime and found no evidence. "You share their feelings," I said. "You do *not* share the feelings of Rodney Wallace. You do not know what he felt. Who could?

"Who could believe a man so unworthy of trust – of faith – of belief?

"Rodney Wallace is none of these things. Rodney Wallace is *rage*."

I then took a major rhetorical risk. I associated Marcus Brignac and Ellen Sadler as victims of Rodney Wallace.

"Ellen Sadler and Marcus Brignac both came under the rage of Rodney Wallace. We couldn't stop Rodney Wallace from slashing Ellen Sadler's throat and shooting her dead. But we *can* stop him from taking the life of Marcus Brignac."

(Not that there was much to take – but the jury wouldn't know that Brignac's life was measured

in appeal delays from Pearl Boats.)

"In one crime he used a knife and a gun. In this one he uses *false witness* – and the jury. It's up to you. Do you wish to take the place of the knife and the gun? Will you be the weapon in Rodney Wallace's hand?

"If you despise what Rodney Wallace did to Ellen Sadler, the despise *and reject* what he is trying to do to Marcus Brignac.

"Rodney Wallace is the abyss – the emptiness – we gaze into. How do we answer him?

"Marcus Brignac is *not guilty*."

I sat. David wrote me a laudatory note.

Throughout, Lee Ann's boss Wilty had muttered and chuckled, trying to throw me off. I resolved to compose a motion *in limine* – ahead of trial – to block such trash talk in the future. Especially since I'd accidentally referred to "the killers" instead of "the killer" once, and it bugged me.

Lee Ann gave the prosecution's rebuttal. I remember that she mentioned her family and her Louisiana roots, but nothing else.

Judge Sterling gave the jury its legal instructions. A couple of important points were floated, about uncorroborated accomplice testimony – acceptable, but watch it – and the evidence of convicted felons. Nevertheless, I could barely keep my eyes open – the croup plus the release of stress – and as soon as the jury was shooed off to deliberate, I begged to be allowed to scoot. Rosy and I returned to the motel.

Richter called at least twice as I tried to nap. The jury had a question, the jury wanted to look at exhibits in the back. David had a conniption because he failed to object to one exhibit they asked for: Wallace's diagram of ABC. What could they want with that? I wondered.

Two hours and 20 minutes went by. I got my nap. The phone rang. Verdict.

We were no more than a mile from the courthouse and I was no more than eight minutes getting there. Rosy even dropped me off in front so I didn't have the delay of parking. I rushed in – to find the jury being polled. It was over. I still have no idea why Sterling didn't wait for me.

David tapped his notepad beneath a single underscored word: GUILTY.

Ω

I didn't look at Marcus, who was silent. I heard David say, simply, "Sorry."

The vote, we learned, was 11-1, one more vote than they needed. The stubborn old guy I'd counted on to lead the fight against accomplice testimony shook my hand and told me I was "a good salesman." Maybe so; I'd done all that could be done. But these dozen souls weren't buying.

Why? Whether because they were conditioned to convict anyone the D.A. pointed them at, or they believed Wallace, or whatever, we would never know. We saw the jurors chatting one with another, as jurors will at the end of a case, but except for my geezer, none would speak to any of us.

I wasn't upset. True, had I been on that jury I would not have voted to convict. The evidence was too slim and Rodney Wallace too reprehensible. But I knew more than the jury knew, and had heard more than they had heard.

I had visited the St. John jail a few days before the trial, and had spoken to the friendly lady guard at the front. She'd known Marcus and Rodney all their lives. I told her that I didn't think the prosecution had enough evidence against Brignac.

"I'm not surprised," she nodded. "The D.A. sent investigators out into my auntee's neighborhood, where they come from, and asked everybody if they'd seen anything that day *out of the ordinary*. Everybody says no. But they had seen them two boys walking together up towards ABC Seafood. Nobody mentioned it because that was nothing unusual – they was always hanging out!"

So, Brignac and Wallace *were* together on December 22, 1997 – and people *did* see them walking together towards ABC. That, I'd never heard – and *that* meant ...

That meant I wasn't upset when the verdict came back.

Rose-Marie and I had dinner at Black's, at last – good but nothing special – and the next morning, picked up Jessie from the kennel and went home. So did the Richters, the judge, the D.A. and her people.

Shelita Poole went back to St. Gabriel. Rodney Wallace returned to Angola. So did Marcus Brignac, although he went only so far as the building right by the front gate: Death Row. We filed post-conviction motions and prepared to turn his case over to the appellate attorneys.

Ellen Sadler's friends and family returned to their lives. Claire never spoke their forgiveness to Marcus, but still I hoped they would have closure now, and the world would seem less horrid, our world

in which lunacy and evil can surge without warning or mercy onto the innocent, out of the night, or out of a peaceful December noon, or out of a cloudless September sky. But no. It was September 8, 2001. Ellen Sadler would rest in peace. The rest of us would not.

From **Paul Ranson**

<paul@ailanthus.com> Date: Wed, 26 Sep 2001 11:44:44 -0400 Hi We have memorials outside every firehouse here, you just turn a corner and there's another one. I went downtown yesterday and took some pictures. It still smells like fire. The mud and ash has almost all been cleaned up, but the planters on the street have this grey layer on top of the dirt. No cars. Lots of cops and barricades. I went to Liberty street and Broadway. Down there you realize there is something really missing, the views have all changed. Buildings on the west side are now visible, where before there was just this massive structure. I decided to take pictures of the sky where the WTC used to be. It was wet, and I got really sad again. I've been thinking of the words to Imagine alot. Especially this part: Imagine there's no countries. It isn't hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for, No religion too. Imagine all the people living life in peace. but that won't happen now. If I was asked to fight, for the first time in my life I have a reason. I would go. I would be useless, but I would go. I never thought I would say that. Paul – Paul Ranson Ailanthus, Inc.

Peggy's brother lives in New York City.

103





Guy Lillian

art by Peggy Ranson

9-1-1

I love New York. I first went there as a boy of 23, and saw in the new year 1973 on Times Square. A year later, my first job was there, when I worked for DC Comics. Julie Schwartz, who brought me to DC, is still there, and so is our beloved Ricia Mainhardt, and Chuck Spanier from NYAPA and my days in comics fandom, and so many other people I know and love. Whenever I could I've gone back to New York, to see plays and visit these friends of my youth, and to look out at the Lady – Ricia's name for her – on her island in the harbor, and smile at myself for the corny pride she has always brought. One time in 1974 I rode the Staten Island ferry and a Russian liner crossed between us and Liberty Island. When the hammer and sickle on her smokestack passed over the figure of Liberty, our whole boat muttered in outrage. I did too, although I chuckled at myself for it.

No chuckling now. When the pictures came in on 9-1-1, of that magnificent living city so obscenely violated, the Lady still stood on her island in the foreground. In her steadfastness, and in her beauty, I took heart. No cynicism, no irony. Simple heart.

A movie I admire – it was a TV series in my childhood – ended with the phrase, "There are eight million stories in the naked city." We've seen quite a few of those stories since 9-1-1. They have been powerful stories – heroic, terrible, tragic, moving, inspiring, and finally, *compelling*. What they force upon us, what they make us feel, is a human identity, a sense of commonality with all people of good will. We empathize, not just sympathize, with the victims of 9-1-1. Their stories allow no walls. They permit no haven in irony or cynicism. They force us to *feel*.



The fascination of the tapes shames us. It's an incredible rush – horrible, sickening, but a rush nonetheless – to watch those planes spear into the buildings. It's amazing, it's hypnotic, it's something we've never seen. And then the buildings fall. The collapse of all those perfect architectural angles into swirling chaos is again, something hideous and new on the face of the world. The dust of their downfall spews up and out like the eruption of Mount St. Helens, and people walk out of it like ghosts.

But they're the lucky ones.

The major networks didn't show many falling bodies, but Spanish language TV wasn't as squeamish; they followed a slew of them, all the way down. Those shots fascinate us, too, even more shamefully. People deserve privacy and dignity when they die. They don't deserve to have others, safe in their homes, gawping at their flailing arms and fluttering clothes. Just people beginning their work day. Ride the subway to the big clean building. Buy a bagel, a **Times**, or a **Wall Street Journal**. Start scanning your e-mail or taking the first phone calls of a nice September Tuesday. Spare a glance out the narrow window at the cloudless sky over Manhattan. Perhaps ... see the plane, never guessing that it holds sadism and lunacy and psychosis. Bright, educated, very good at their jobs, with families and friends and pasts and hopes. Who could imagine that all of that would be reduced, within the space of minutes, to a single decision: *burn or fall?*

My brother was in the air between Buffalo and Atlanta when the nightmare fell on 9-1-1. Stranded in Georgia – he drove home the next day – he called, anguished, haunted by the possibility that It Could Have Been Him. He also thought about the gigantic Niagara power complex providing electricity to a third of the northeast. It's only a few miles from his family. My family.

When the first word came in of a plane hitting the World Trade Center, I flashed on the World War II bomber that blundered into the Empire State Building in a fog. Rose-Marie's stepfather knew the pilot of that ill-fated bomber. He also knew Joseph Helle, the author of **Catch-22**. Snowden's secret speaks almost specifically to this tragedy: "Man is matter. Drop him out of a window and he'll fall. Set him on fire and he'll burn. Bury him and he'll rot, like other kinds of garbage. The spirit gone, man is garbage. Ripeness is all."

8

Much has changed. I'd had a consuming jealousy of the young and the successful and the competent. The suffering on 9-1-1 has made the humanity of such people clear. Consider my unworthy envy evaporated. Before, in my eyes, Rudy Giuliani was a smirking, reprehensible fascist. Now I admire the passion, the compassion, and the aplomb with which he held together his maimed city. The greasy figurehead known as "W" had been on the political ropes before 9-1-1, ineffectual and completely out-of-touch with America. My lack of respect for the man goes back to the execution of Karla Faye Tucker and had been deepened by his corrupt rise to power. Sleazed into office as a corporate stooge, he was handed the duty and opportunity for leadership on that terrible day, and he showed it. Mine was a comfortable loathing and it angered me to let it go. But when it was needed, Bush found a voice, and a purpose, and I must lend him credit and support.

To a degree. Never trust Democrats with your money or Republicans with your civil liberties. I do not like giving W's people sway over the 4th Amendment; their anti-terrorism bill reeks with potential tyranny. I pray that we will someday reverse its attempts to invade fundamental privacy rights. Also, I want to hear details about this "Office of Homeland Security" and its duties. Will its powers be delineated and supervised by Congress? How long will its measures last? What guarantees do we have that, whenever this clandestine war is done, the secret apparatus of domestic investigation will not be left in place? To protect us from drug traffickers, say ... or political troublemakers? *Those who would sacrifice essential liberties for a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety*, said Benjamin Franklin; our people deserve both, but are in danger of doing just what Franklin said.

Since 9-1-1 panic and paranoid lack of judgment have overwhelmed American justice. Men are hauled off an L.A. bus and held at gunpoint because they don't speak English. People are forced off a plane because they look Arabic and have scary eyes. An Egyptian tourist faces criminal charges for saying he hates Americans. That's a clear violation of his freedom of speech. Congress passes a reprehensible law giving the government the right to hold any foreigner it wants to without due process. Eleven hundred people are arrested, with only the vaguest of legal justification – with almost no publicity, and no guarantees of due process. It's a disgrace. You know, it's not just *who* survives, it's *what* survives, and what survives *must* be our respect for the rights of men. That *must* remain America's top priority and bottom line. Whether from fear or subterfuge, we could undercut our constitutional freedoms and cause irreparable harm to the fabric of our society ... so let's make sure we don't. Our Lady is still in her harbor. She stands until *we* take her down.

On the foreign front, we need stronger international intelligence. Pink slips should flow like lattes at the CIA; that agency needs reworking from the foundations up. Who are the terrorists? Where are the terrorists? How can we stop them? How do we become the friend of the Third World in the eyes of the Third World, instead of its enemy? We have gazed into the abyss of genocidal hatred. We must respond with strength, and purpose, and a respect for our fundamental moral

character as Americans, what Lincoln called the better angels of our nature. That means we fight not for vengeance, but for justice, and not to destroy people, but to free them.

Of course, first things first. We fight. Osama bin Laden, his fortune and his troupe must be found and forever neutralized. But how do we punish the enemies who did this atrocious thing to us, without bogging ourselves down in another Asian quagmire? Our B-52s scatter the Taliban, but they coalesce as soon as the explosions stop. We're going to have to beat them man to man. Our G.I.s are superb people, supremely well-trained and -equipped, but Afghanistan's mountains are every bit as alien to Americans as were the forests of Vietnam, and the Taliban guerrillas are the best mountain fighters on Earth. I cannot help but think it a mistake to take them on in a war of attrition.

It'd be just as big a mistake to broaden this campaign to include Saddam Hussein. Without proof that Iraq was directly involved in 9-1-1, hostilities directed that way would be seen as an attempt by Dick Cheney and Colin Powell to finish what they should have finished in the early '90s. Our mission, and our message, would be corrupted, and they must remain pure.

Best to keep our response specific: find bin Laden and kill him, cripple his operatives by taking away their money, put the diplomatic screws to any government that protects terrorists, and always, forever, keep the Boy Scout motto in mind: be prepared.

America is in this through no fault of our own, and anyone who claims our people deserved this obscene attack, or even that there was the slightest rationale for it, has some heavy explaining to do. Because one does not have to look far to find a rationale for our anger, and our action. Indeed, it is not our reason that feeds our resolve. It's that common humanity I spoke of earlier. Ripeness – life itself – is indeed all.

There's a photo in **Newsweek** of a young woman widowed on 9-1-1. She holds her infant twins, born since, and a son, about 2. His father is gone. How proud he must have been of his little guy. I don't know what kind of human being could see him, or all the others who lost loved ones – infinitely compelling phrase, that – and not be staggered. They are no one's enemies. They're just people. There is no essential difference between them and me, or anyone else on this planet. That's the great lesson of this nightmare, and finally, it's what America must stand for, and fight for, for our enemy does not. *The brotherhood of man.*

That's why the passengers on Flight 93 fought back when they found out what the hijackers had planned. They wouldn't let the killers hurt people on the ground even if it meant losing their own lives. The firemen and rescue workers of New York also know about brotherhood. For weeks, they've risked their lives clambering through a shifting labyrinth of deadly debris in the hope that in there, somewhere, someone, beloved brother or nameless stranger, might still be alive. It didn't matter who – black, white, yuppie, blue collar. All that's mattered is the hope.

In their selflessness we should find pride in human nature as well as in America. Those people knew, and know, the moral imperative behind everyday life and professional duty. That human beings are responsible for one another, and that the best idea ever voiced is the simplest: *Love thy neighbor.*

It's what this country is all about.

God Bless America. And He will. Allah-u-Akbar.





A SFPazine cover by Dave Birdsong

On September 24, 2001, cancer stole from this planet my friend and mentor **Meade Frierson**, of Birmingham, Alabama, lawyer, fan, genealogist, and poet, longtime President of the Southern Fandom Confederation, longtime member of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance, publisher of **HPL**, collector of SF radio shows, a Rebel winner at the DeepSouthCon for extraordinary service to fandom in the South, husband to Penny, father to Bill, Meade IV and Eric.

His remarkable intelligence, his poetic nature, his fertile imagination did not mask a genuine friendliness and care for people that endeared him to everyone who knew him. Meade's idea of fandom was of a community where all like-minded souls could gather and rejoice. That's the way he lived his life and that's the perspective he brought to science fiction. He was a beautiful friend. God speed him.

"And still I dream he treads the lawn

Walking ghostly in the dew

Pierced by our glad singing through."