



DELL
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HARRIS

CHALLENGER 16

A POEM ON HIMSELF

by R.A. LAFFERTY

A minstrel with a busted harp

He's sharp,

But not so varry.

Aw take him back to Tulsa

Cause he's too young to marry!

CHALLENGER

SIXTEEN

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Cover by Dell Harris

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Raphael A. Lafferty, 87

Compiled from the Tulsa World and the Los Angeles Times

Raphael A. Lafferty, prolific writer of historical fiction and science fiction known for his short stories as well as his novels, has died. He was 87. Lafferty, who spent much of his life in Oklahoma and often wrote about Native Americans, died March 18, 2002 in Broken Arrow, Okla., of undisclosed causes.



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His output included 21 novels and more than 200 short stories, among them satirical tales pondering what would happen if everybody in the world owned a gun or describing the consequences of fads that lasted a single day or of a child's camera that makes things disappear. Lafferty earned the Hugo Award from the World Science Fiction Society in 1973 for his short story "Eurema's Dam", and in 1995 won the Arell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award from the Oklahoma Department of Libraries for excellence in a body of literary work. He also received the World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1990 and was nominated multiple times for the Hugo, Nebula, and Philip K. Dick Awards for such works as **Past Master**, **Fourth Mansions**, and "Continued on Next Rock".

Among Lafferty's historical novels was the 1972 **Okla Hannali**, set among Choctaw Indians in the 19th century. "Falsehoods and cliches about Indians and the American West die sprawling all along Lafferty's path," wrote a **Times** book reviewer, "and this noble carnage is what elevates the book, makes it more than a charmingly told family chronicle."

Lafferty, a Roman Catholic, often included theological themes in his writing as well as elements of folk tales and even dreams. In the 1971 science fiction novel **The Devil Is Dead**, a reader has trouble identifying the devil in the struggle for control of humanity between the "Demons" who are descended from aliens and the "Elder Race" of pre-humans.

As **A Reader's Guide to Fantasy** once noted, "Lafferty doesn't see the world in quite the same way that most people do; his logic is rigorous, but his premises are deadpan insanity."

Born November 7, 1914 in Neola, Iowa, Raphael Aloysius Lafferty moved to Perry, Okla., with his family at age 4 and later settled in Tulsa. He attended Cascia Hall High School and the University of Tulsa for one year, but was mostly self-educated. He served in the Army during World War II and worked for many years in Tulsa's Clark Electrical Supply Co. before beginning to write at 45. His first story was published in 1959 and his first novel nine years later. In 1971, he quit his job to write full time.

Lafferty's collected papers are available at the University of Tulsa's McFarlin Library in the Special Collections Department. A bachelor, he left no immediate survivors.

Haw. A lot they know ...

Yeah ... a lot they know. Dates, places, awards, facts ... as if they meant much to the Cosmic Ray. *We* – his survivors, immediate or not – know better. For instance ...

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The scene is Suncon, the World Science Fiction Convention, 1977, Miami Beach, Florida. The time is late, late at night. Lovely and remarkable, Linda Krawecka leads a corps of fatigued party-goers through the lobby of the Fontainebleau Hotel. R.A. Lafferty, unlovely and remarkable, notes her displeasure and inquires of the blonde beauty the reason therefor.

"My friends and I," she tells the great author, "have partied the whole night long, in hopes of frolicking upon the beach to greet the dawn. But we have inquired when the sun is to rise, and been told, two hours from now. We are weary and fear that we cannot last until then."

Ray considers for a silent moment, then asks, "What about 45 minutes? Can you last 45 minutes?"

Linda avows that they can.

"Go to the beach."

They go to the beach. And the sun comes up – in 45 minutes.

What of this Lafferty? Was he a shaman whose word alone could turn the Earth faster in its revolution? Or had he seen so many dawns that he could sense one coming through the simple vibrations of the ether?



Illo by Frolich

In 1979, the Sons of the Sand, of which I was a member, hosted a Deep-SouthCon in New Orleans. There was but one possible choice as Guest of Honor, and when Ray came in for the banquet we stood and cheered the rotund old man in the skewed tie and shy smile. Who among us guessed that the speech he gave that night would roil within our brains, decades later? I reprinted that speech in *Challenger* no. 1. It appears again here. (Following the speech, a photo from his Army days. "Churce," ain't it?)

I wish I could reprint the whole of *At the Sleepy Sailor*, the chapbook I edited for the con, but bits and pieces are here: Dany Frolich's wondrous wraparound illo (name the Lafferty characters), and Fred Chappell's critical analysis of *Past Master*, and Ray's own piece on "Continued on Next Rock". Plus quotes and anecdotes and whatever-will-have-you from the glorious time we shared this ball of dirt with Raphael Aloysius Lafferty.

I hadn't seen Ray in years. He hadn't written for years before that. But though it was a comforting thing to know he was still with us, when he left us, the worlds of wisdom and sadness and lunacy and joy that were Raphael Aloysius Lafferty did *not* come to an end. The word survives. The laughter yet resounds.

Here we segue into the first of two other series. We open our pages to a working SF professional for his or her non-fictional, personal writing ... and we hail a Mentor. Nothing is more important to a man than the models on which he bases his life. In his inimitable way Ray Lafferty was one of mine. I discovered him in -- when else? -- 1969, when his first three novels, *Space Chansey*, *The Reefs of Earth* and the indescribable *Past Master* were published. I'll never forget my reaction to Lafferty's tale of Thomas More on the golden planet Astrobe. It was as if I'd stumbled into Medjugore. "Ah," I said. "I have found My Boy."

What I meant was that I'd found a writer who -- though a rock-ribbed conservative -- spoke to a scrawny Berkeley hippy used to being generously tear-gassed every spring. I'd found a poetic spirit who invested science fiction with madness and tragedy and laughter. I'd found someone to cheer for. I'd found my Ray of Hope.

I met Ray at St. Louiscon (see elsewhere). I saw him at MidAmeriCon ('76) and Suncon ('77) and Chicon V ('91), and at most of the DeepSouthCons in between. He is always a comfort to see. But we won't be seeing him at conventions anymore -- at least, none outside of his beloved Tulsa. Hear what he has to tell us:

"The last [convention] I went to was the Worldcon in Chicago. It went fine most of the time, till I had a bad fall. After a day I was around and about again. The day after Labor Day I went to the Airport to come home and I thought I was all right. Then my legs gave out (there are some awfully long walks in O'Hare Airport), so I had to order wheelchairs the rest of the way home. Since then I don't

walk much. On a good day I can hobble around a couple of blocks with my cane. On a less than good day I never go further than the front porch.

"But I've had my share of good conventions ... And as a child I was in a traveling family, and we saw everything in the United States that was worth seeing. And in WWII I saw everything in the South Pacific that was worth seeing, and all of it was worth seeing. And I've loved every mile I ever traveled. And except for my non-good legs I'm in good health for a man coming into his 80th year.

"Luck and love to everybody in New Orleans, or who has ever been there, or is ever going to be there."

Anecdote time: One time when I was at Berkeley a girl I knew -- petite, blonde, pretty, 150% L.A., and if I'm not being redundant, thoroughly charming and adorable -- came up to me in the hallways of our co-op dorm. In tears. Her new roommate had erected a literal and figurative screen between them and that was more than a sweet and naive and very vulnerable little lady could take. The poor kid sobbed, hurt to the quick of her being by the incomprehensible coldness of the world. What could I do for her? I could introduce her to Lafferty.

I sat her down and I showed her a photo of Ray with our great mutual friend, Joe Green. Then I read her the last pages of *Past Master*. Her eyes grew bright again, and a smile of wonderment grew across her lovely face, and she looked at the photograph as she heard his words: "Be quiet. We hope."

She heard him then. You hear him now, in his speech from the 1979 DeepSouthCon here in New Orleans.

Wa-wa-wa-shingay, Patrick of Tulsa.

THE DAY AFTER THE WORLD ENDED

by R.A. LAFFERTY

Notes for a speech
given at the DeepSouthCon
New Orleans, July 21, 1979

Previously published in Philosophical Speculations in Science Fiction and Fantasy, September 2001, No. 2, P.O. Box 178, Kemblesville PA 19347

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I'm going to talk about the peculiar science-fictionish circumstance and condition in which we are living. It is, unfortunately, an overworked theme and situation that has been used hundreds of times and has never been well-handled even once. It is the 'Day After the World Ended' situation, subtitled "Grubbing in the Rubble". It is the business of making out, a little bit, after a total catastrophe has hit. There are possibilities for several good stories in this situation, and I was puzzled for a long time as to why no good ones had ever been written. I myself tried and failed to write some good ones based on this set-up. And only recently have I discovered why plausible fiction cannot be based on this situation.

The reason is that fact precludes fiction. Being inside the situation, we are a little too close to it to see it clearly. Science Fiction has long been babbling about cosmic destructions and the ending of either physical or civilized worlds, but it has all been displaced babble. SF has been carrying on about near-future or far-future destructions, and its mind-set will not allow it to realize that the destruction of our world has already happened in the quite recent past, that today is "The Day After the World Ended". Science Fiction is not alone in failing to understand what has happened. There is an almost impenetrable amnesia that obstructs the examination of the actual catastrophe.

I am speaking literally about a real happening, the end of the world in which we lived till fairly recent years. The destruction of unstructuring of that world, which is still sometimes referred to as "Western Civilization" or "Modern Civilization", happened suddenly, some time in the half century between 1912 and 1962. That world, which was "The World" for a few centuries, is gone. Though it ended quite recently, the amnesia concerning its ending is general. Several historiographers have given the opinion that these amnesias are features common to all "ends of worlds". Nobody now remembers our late world

very clearly, and nobody will remember it clearly in the natural order of things. It can't be recollected because recollection is one of the things it took with it when it went.

Plato once said or wrote "Man is declared to be that creature who is constantly in search of himself. He is a being in search of meaning." But Platonic Declarations don't seem to apply on "The Day After the World Ended". Man is *not* now a being in search of meaning. He does not recollect and he does not reflect. All the looking-glasses were broken in the catastrophe that ended the world.

There is a vague memory that this late world had a large and intricate superstructure on it, and that this came crashing down. There is some dispute as to whether we gained by the sweeping away of a trashy construction or whether we lost a true and valid dimension in the unstructuring of our Old World, and whether we do not now live in Flatland. There is no way to settle this dispute since the old structure cannot be recaptured or analyzed.

There is even some evidence that "Flatlands" are the more usual conditions, and that the worlds with heights and structures are the exceptions. Even if we could go back there, a Time-Machine from Flatland and eyes from Flatland would not be able to see a dimension not contained in Flatland.

* * *

Now we come to the phenomenon or consensus named "Science Fiction". When trying to identify an object, the first question used to be "What is it good for?" But that is a value question, and values are banned under the present condition of things. Other questions that might be asked in trying to determine the function of Science Fiction are "How does it work?" and "What does it do?" An answer to "What does it do?" might be "Sometimes it designs new Worlds". This trait of SF may

be timely because our previous world is destroyed and there is presently a vacuum that can only be filled by a new world.

"Science Fiction" is an awkward survivor in the present environment because there is no "fiction" possible in this present environment, and that shoots half of it. The curious thing known as "prose fiction" was one of the things completely lost in the shipwreck of the old world.

Sometimes we hear about a contractor building a house on a wrong lot. Sometimes we hear about a man plowing a wrong field. Both of these things are hard to un-do. How do you un-plow a field? But we ourselves have been trying to plow a field that isn't there any more, and hasn't been there for between two and seven decades.



Prose fiction was a narrow thing. As a valid force it was found only in Structured Western Civilization (Europe and the Levant, and the Americas and other colonies), and for only about three hundred years: from Don Quixote in 1605 to the various "last novels" of the twentieth century. The last British novel may be Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale* in 1908 or Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* in 1915. Both of them already have strong post-fictional elements mixed in. The last Russian novel was probably Gorki's *The Bystander* in the 1920's, and the last Irish novel may have been O'Flaherty's *The Informer* about the same time. In Germany, Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, published in 1929, was plainly a post-novel in a post-fictional form. The structured world did not end everywhere at quite the same time. In the United States there was a brilliant "last hurrah" of novels for several decades after the fictional form had disappeared in Europe: and Cozzens' *By Love Possessed*, published in 1957, might still be considered as a valid fictional work.

That special form of fiction, the

Short Story, was of even shorter duration, beginning with Hoffman in Germany and Washington Irving in the United States both writing real short stories from about 1819, and continuing to the *Last Tales* of Isaac Dinesen in 1955.

There are apparent exceptions to all this, but they are only apparent.

The thesis is that prose fiction was a structured form and that it became impossible in a society that had become unstructured, that prose fiction was a reflection of an intricate construct and that it ceased when it no longer had anything to reflect. A shadow simply can't last long after the object that has cast it has disappeared.

Well, if a thing is clearly dead, and yet it seems to walk about, what is it? Maybe it's a Zombie. And we do presently have quite a bit of stuff that might be called zombie-fiction. This is the personal posing and peacock posturing, this is the pornography and gadgetry, this is charades and set-scene formalities. There are pretty good things in the "new journalism" and in the "non-fictional novels". There is plain truculence. But there isn't any fiction any more. There is the lingering smell of fiction in some of the branches of nostalgia. But fiction itself is gone.

--- except misnamed Science Fiction, the exception that proves only the exception. And SF was never a properly-fashioned fiction. It didn't reflect the world it lived in. It has always been more of a pre-world or a post-world campfire story than a defined fiction. But it still walks a little, and it isn't a Zombie in the regular sense.

The ghost of some other fiction might say in truth to Science Fiction, "You're not very good, are you?" But Science Fiction can answer "Maybe not, but I'm alive and you're dead."

* * *

We are now in an unstructured era of post-musical music, post-artistic art, post-fictional fiction, and post-experiential

experience. We are, partly at least, in a post-conscious world. Most of the people seem to prefer to live in this world that has lost a dimension. I don't know whether the condition is permanent or transitory.

We really are marooned. The world really has been chopped off behind us. Just how the old world ended isn't clear. There is a group amnesia that blocks us from the details. It *didn't* end in Armageddon. The two world wars were only minor side-lights to a powerful main catastrophe. The so-called revolutionary movements did not bring anything to an end. The world had already ended. Those things were only the grubbiest of brainless grubblings in the ruins.

There is nothing analogous or allegorical about what I'm saying. I'm talking about the real conditions that prevail in the real present. At the worst, we've lost our last world. At the best, we're between worlds. We're living in Flatland, and we're not even curious about the paradoxes to be found here. Life here in Flatland is like life in a photographic negative. Or it is life in the cellar of a world that has blown away. It is life in a limbo that has taken the irrational form of a Collective Unconscious. And we do not even know whether there is to be found somewhere the clear picture in whose negative we are living, or whether the negative is all there is.

But, for technical reasons, we can't stay here. Somebody has better be remembering fragments of either a past or a future. We can't stay here because the ground we are standing on is sinking.



Well then, does Science Fiction have any place in this post-world world? It seems to be a semi-secret society so confused that it can't even remember its own passwords. And yet it does have cryptic memories and elements that extend back through several worlds. It is a club of antiquarians and it contains a lot of old lore in buried form. It is a pleasant and non-restrictive club to belong to. It provides varied entertainment for its

members. It offers real fun now and then, and fun in the post-world period seems to be more scarce than it was when we still had a world.

With the rest of the marooned persons-and-things, Science Fiction today is trapped in a dismal science-fictionish situation. It is right in the middle of the "Day After the World Ended" plot. But SF turns this into the duller of themes, and never applies it to the present time when it is really happening. Someday people might want to travel back to this era by some device to see just what it was like between worlds, to see what it was really like in a "dark age". We do not have detailed eyewitness accounts of life in any other of the dark ages. Doubt has even been thrown on the existence of dark ages in the past. And we ourselves today do not consider the present hiatus (or the present death if it proves to be that) as worthy of the attention of Science Fiction.

"Science fiction as Survivor" does carry, in a few sealed ritual jars, some sparks that may kindle fires again, but it is unsure that it is carrying any such things. There is some amnesia or taboo that prevents SF (and the rest of the post-world also) from looking at the present state of things generally.

And the present state of things generally is that we are in the condition of creatures who have just made a traumatic passage out of an old life form, out of a tadpole state, out of a chrysalis stage. Such creatures are dozey. They are half asleep and less than half conscious.

Well, what does happen after the death of a world or a civilization? The historian Toynbee in grubbing into the deaths of twenty-four separate civilizations or worlds that he studied, kept running into the "Phoenix Syndrome", into the "Fire in the Ashes Phenomenon". So far, the Phoenix, the fire-bird that is born out of its own ashes, has been a bigger bird after each rebirth, but maybe not a better one. It may have been as big as it could get during its latest manifestation; and there's a dim

memory that it crashed at the end of that life because it had become so large and unwieldy that it could flop only and could no longer fly.

If the world is reborn Phoenix-like (and it isn't certain or automatic that it will be reborn at all), what form will it take next? No dead form is ever revived. But something entirely unexpected has, so far, been born on each site of an old world after a decent interval of time. Some of these intervals have been several centuries. But others have been only a few decades, and they have been getting shorter. There are no long-lived vacuums in this areas of happenings, but there has never been as wide and deep a vacuum as there is right now.



f one thing is plenty: there is almost total freedom for anyone to do whatever he wishes. There is almost complete liberty of both action and thought. We live in a wide-

open "People's Republic" to end all "People's Republics", and it probably will. But at the same time we are living in rubble and remnant. We are living in a series of cluttered non-governments, but the clutter isn't attached to anything. It is easily moved out of the way.

By every definition, this is Utopia. Of course some of us have always regarded Utopia as a calamity, but most of you have not. In its flexibility and in its wide-open opportunities, our situation offers total Utopia. Anything that you can conceive of, you can do in this non-world. Nothing can stop you except a total bankruptcy of creativity. The seedbed is waiting. All the circumstances stand ready. The fructifying minerals are literally jumping out of the ground.

And nothing grows. And nothing grows. And nothing grows. Well, why doesn't it?

Back to Science Fiction. The "If only" premise is at the beginning of every Science Fiction flight of fancy. But in

actuality we are all at the "If only" nexus right now. All the conditions have come together. All the "If onlies" are more than possible now; they are wide open. They are fulfilled. There are no manacles on anybody or anything; or else they are as easily broken as pieces of thread. But people still hobble about as if they were fettered in hand and foot and mind.

There has never been a place swept as clear of accumulation and super-structure as ours. There's an opportunity here that doesn't come every century, for not every century has the room to be creative. There is the room and the opportunity, but nothing is moving at all.

I'm not proposing right choices or wrong choices. I'm not even pushing transcendence over gosh-awful secularism. I'm saying that we do have choices and opportunities to the extent that nobody has ever had them before. There are fine building stones all around us, whatever ruins they are from. But nobody is building.

The question to be asked of everyone is "If you are not right now making a world, why aren't you?" Group ingenuity, on an unconscious level at first perhaps, and then on a conscious level, *can* bring it about. It can be done by a small elite of only a few million geniuses. Declare yourself to be one of them! You can now set up your own rules for being a genius, and then you can be one. You can set up your own rules for being anything at all.

There *will* be, happily, a new world, a new civilization-culture to follow on the recent termination of the Structured Western World. All it's waiting for is ideas to germinate and a few sparks to kindle. Several of the survivor-groups of the old world-shipwreck have sparking machines, but they may not realize what they are.

But if we can't somehow bring about the sparking, the reanimation trick, then we're really dead.

"Forget the reanimation," some of you say. "What's the matter with the way it is now?"

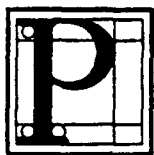
"Nobody's driving the contraption. That's one thing that's the matter with it."

"That's all right too," some say. "It isn't going anywhere. It doesn't need a driver. We've even taken the wheels off it. We like it that way."

"But even the ruins we are grubbing in are sinking into a slough. We'll be drowned in foul muck if we don't start to move. It's up to our mouths now, and that is why we are babbling and bubbling. Soon it will be over our noses, and we can only hold our breaths for so long."

"That's all right," some still say. "We like the way it tickles our noses. Leave it the way it is."

Well, that's one choice, but it isn't the only one.



Possibly, if we don't drown in the present muck, there will be a new world. As a condition to its coming into being, it will have its new arts, new ideas, new categories of thought, new happinesses. It may even have successors to old musics and fictions and peak experiences and immediacies. It isn't easy to predict what it will be, but it may be no more difficult to build it than to predict it.

When was the last time we had a world? What, judging from its bones and stones lying around, was it like? No, we can't reconstruct it the way it was. All we have is a wide-open opportunity to make something new. A couple of hundred people here, a couple of billion there, working with uneasy brilliance, may come up with a stunning and unpredicted creation. The best way to be in on a new movement or a new world is to be one of the inventors of it.

Here is the condition that prevails in our non-world now. We are all of us characters in a Science Fiction Story named "The Day After the World Ended". Well, more likely it is an animated story or comic strip in which we find ourselves to be the characters. The continuity has now arrived

a "crux point", the make-or-break place where brilliant strokes are called for. Somehow the characters have been given the opportunity of determining what happens next, an opportunity that is absolutely unprecedented,



Meanwhile the calendar is stuck. It comes up "The Day After the World Ended" day after day, year after year. These should be the Green Years.

But, unless you use an inflated way of appraising things, these last few decades have *not* been at all creative. And if nothing grows in the Green Years, what will grow in the dry?

Peoples much less gifted than ourselves have invented worlds in the past and have set them to run for their five or fifteen centuries. But *we* do not make a move yet. There is a large silence occupying the present time. Is it the silence just before a great stirring and banging? Or is a terminal silence?

Well, what does happen now?

Can't any of us characters in this "do-it-yourself" Science Fiction Story come up with any sort of next episode? Would it help to change the name of the story from "The Day After the World Ended" to "The First Day on a New Planet"?

Any character may take any liberty he wishes with this post-world story. It is a game without rules. But apparently he will not be able to climb clear out of the story.

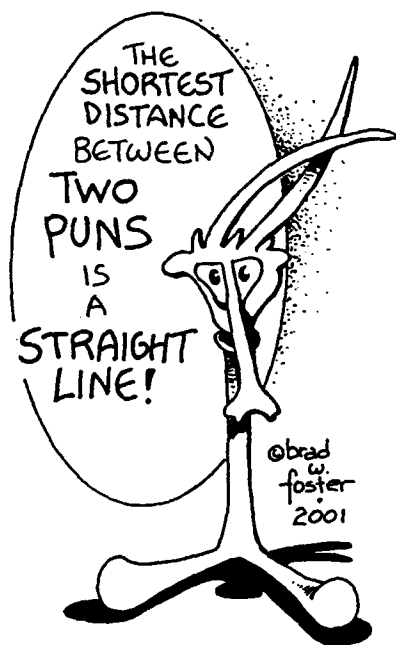
I refrain from saying "The End" to this piece.

It must not end. ■

Special thanks to Chris Drumm, P.O. Box 445, Polk City IA 50226, (515)984-6749, who originally reprinted this piece. Book collectors are advised to write for Chris' catalog and be prepared to spend money. He doesn't ask for postage but send him a buck or so anyway.



R. A. Lefferty



About this issue ...

The death of R.A. Lafferty is such an epic personal moment for me that I could not have begun this **Challenger** in any other way, nor mentioned the man any less. But I know he wouldn't want his passing to dominate a publication blessed in many other ways.

In addition to the new and reprinted material about Ray, check out the wonderful pieces from regular **Chall** pals *Greg Benford*, *Mike Resnick*, *Terry Jeeves*, *Binker Hughes*, *Rich Dengrove*, and so on. We're lucky in such friends. These gems are joined in the **Challenger** chest by the earthen clods of my own work, but I hope you find the whole mix diverting.

The divers art in this issue should also amuse. **Chall 15** cover artist *Alan White* delineates the process by which he created last issue's stunning illo. *Teddy Harvia* and *Brad Foster* have smuggled sterling spots across the Texas/Louisiana border, and you will find them here. *Charlie Williams* and *Bryan Norris* delight this issue as they have graced so many others, and *Trinlay Khadro* joins the throng of talents who add sparkle to the aforementioned mix. I hurl myself to their feet in gratitude.

All is fronted by *Dell Harris*' awesome cover— and where *is* Dell these days? You may have seen it before. It was originally a contribution to *Nolacon II*. The only reason it didn't front one of our progress reports was because higher-ups feared feminists would find this fabulous harlequin sexist. Political correctness meant as little to me then as it does now, but then what wield the checkbook wield the veto, so Dell's elaborate beauty ended up relegated to the deep interior of the *Nolacon II* souvenir book. It's well past time for it to shine in the light. I was just the slightest bit hesitant to feature a Babe on another cover, because there *are* people offended by such art, but all I can argue is that there is a difference between fantasy beauty and crudity, and that this drawing definitely celebrates the former. Besides, I always run the best illo I have atop **Challenger**, and no other drawing in my collection grips me in quite the way this one does. No kidding, I really *do* like the elaborate detail. And isn't a harlequin appropriate to a zine so abundant with thoughts of Lafferty?

Next issue – **Chall**'s informal (and rather accidental) series on SF's greatest parties reaches its apex. #17 truly will be a *family* affair! (Speaking of which, everyone check out www.ideomancer.com for a story and an article by my father-in-law, *Joseph Green*). Also on deck is a magnificent article by a magnificent artist on a magnificent artifact: *Marc Schirmeister* on the earliest of animated films, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*. Marc sent me a copy of the movie (along with some most appreciated cartoon rarities), and it is indeed a unique, original masterpiece.

With continued and eternal thanks to my beloved Rose-Marie for assistance in mastering computer challenges, as well as answering the ultimate challenge of life on this planet, I welcome you to **Challenger** #16. Let the LOCs flow like water ...

HIS REVIEW

Guy Lillian

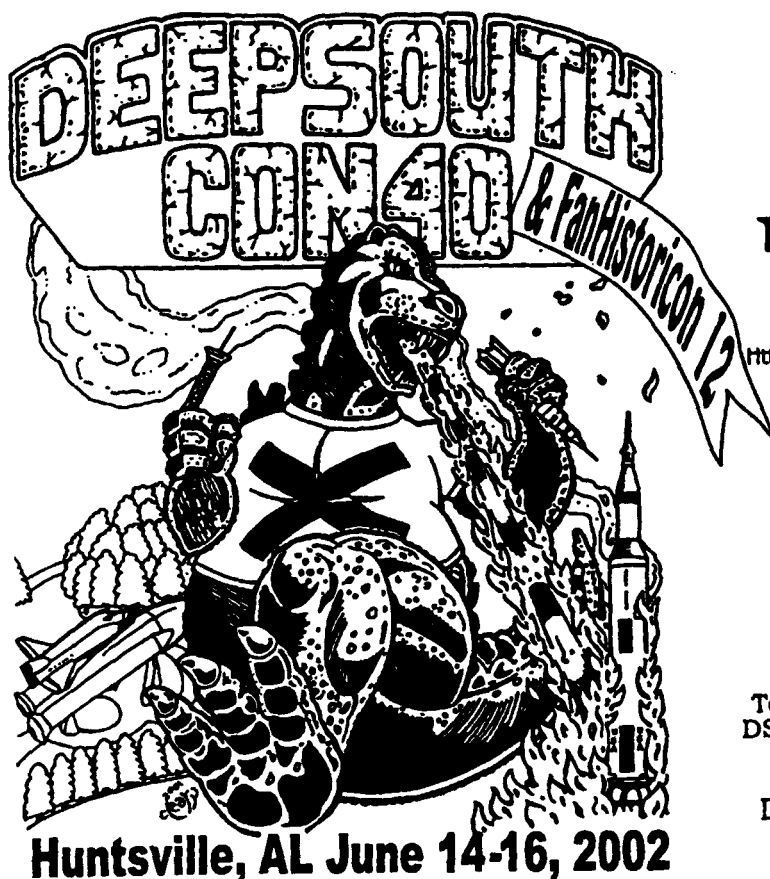
I think the truest compliment I can pay Mike Resnick's *The Outpost* is in keeping with the theme of this issue: it reminds me of R.A. Lafferty. In fact, it reminds me of the best Lafferty, *Space Chantey*. The tavern at the center of the galaxy which gives the book its title is also the center of a series of ripe stories about rich and improbable characters – characters from the same store of blarney and mayhem as Lafferty's Roadstrum, like Hurricane Smith and the Reverend Billy Karma, Bet-a-World O'Grady and Nicodemus Mayflower. Their separate adventures and joined quest make for a book rich in humor and excitement, two qualities Mike exemplifies more than almost any other SF writer working. I usually prefer Mike's short stories to his novels – the same preference held true of Lafferty's work – but here we have the best qualities of both, a sustained and satisfying space opera with some mighty strange voices. From Tor, in hardback.

HER REVIEW

Rose-Marie Lillian

Is nothing sacred? The manly world of pirating has been invaded by author Darlene Marshall in her funny, sexy romp about a marriage of convenience gone awry, *Pirate's Price*. In 1820 St. Augustine, young Christine Sanders finds her union to Justin, Earl Smithton, less than convenient after his loutish behavior the evening of their nuptials. After Christine flees the marital bed, Smithton scurries to business in England upon the news that his bride is presumed drowned. But it is not the last he will hear of her, for tall Christine has a tall plan to avenge herself: she will disguise herself as a man, turn pirate, and seize back the fortune that is no longer legally hers. Marshall's sex scenes are lusty, her heroine lively and her hero determined. The historical background of *Pirate's Price* adds depth to the story, from the practice of pirating in early Florida, to the laws of marital property rights, to the high seas trade between England and America, to the ticklish business of swordplay. From LTD Books, at www.LTDBooks.com.

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Guests:

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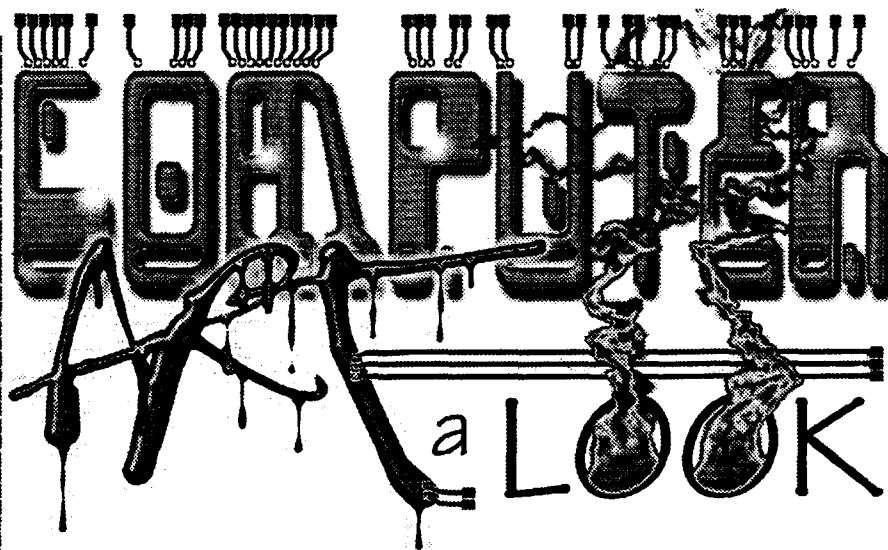
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How the cover for Challenger 15 was created.

by Alan White

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The cover art for Challenger 15 was done as an experiment in photo manipulation and my never-ending-struggle to master a computer program known as Adobe Photoshop. Every professional magazine or published piece you see today has, in some way, been created or altered using Photoshop. Everyone's heard of airbrushing various parts of models for one reason or another; now, all of that can be done in the computer, quicker, cheaper and with little fear of destroying your original art.

What Photoshop Is...

- 1) a computer program allowing a scanned or imported photograph to be altered in many ways, such as opacity, hue, replacing colors, applying textures and distortions. It also allows an artist to work on any number of layers, much like using animation cels. For example, you can virtually "cut out" a figure from a landscape, place it on a separate layer while changing the background to another of your choice and by blending the two together, give the appearance of authenticity. Using still another layer, you can add a photo or, with the use of virtual art tools, draw, airbrush, create as you may. The program is also used to improve photographed subjects by removing shadows, facial lines, wrinkles, body hair and other icky business.
- 2) By using a number of geometric shapes, type, virtual brushes, airbrushes and pens, you may also create art from scratch. Importing textures from nature or other programs allow you to create any environment. By placing pieces of art on separate layers you gain the ability to alter each piece individually and should you blow it, you needn't redo the entire piece. All the tools you would find in an artist's studio are available "virtually" in Photoshop.

Here is how the Challenger cover was created...

From a CD of royalty free nudes I got off E-Bay, I selected a suitable model. Importing her into Photoshop, I removed the background and softened her outline to make it less obvious she had been "cut out". Her skin tones were altered more hair was added and her eyes, lips, and teeth were highlighted. On another layer, her ruggedly sporty outfit was drawn-on and imported textures replaced the nasty bits. Using the virtual airbrush, shading was applied to simulate folds, creases and that certain (ahem) roundness. Shadows were likewise applied to enhance the figure's 3D quality. The rings holding up her top were shaded geometric shapes. Likewise, her headpiece and baubles were filled with color, shaded and highlighted.

The planets were hand painted and texturized along with the stars in the background using the virtual airbrush. Likewise the background flames and foreground smoke.

The perimeter of the poster was then distressed to appear old and torn. Placing a shadow behind brought it off the background a bit. Photoshop has an assortment of available textures; one of which is a "Brick Wall". This I applied, colored and altered light direction to stay consistent with human figures on the sidewalk. To imply the wall texture was

showing through the poster, I duplicated the brick wall and brought it forward above the poster. By reducing the opacity way . . . way down (as Roald Dahl would say), just the highlights are left.

That's me holding a janitor's broom to the garage door while my wife DeDee took the picture with a digital camera. I removed the background, shrunk the size of the broom, shortened the actual brush, placed it in the scene and added a shadow.

- An impromptu visit from femmefan Stacy and son Jadon prompted their addition to the scene.
- Another benefit of Photoshop is allowing spur-of-the-moment changes like this.

The Challenger masthead was created in Tpestyler 3 and imported onto its own layer in Photoshop. The type was then "deteriorated" and given both glow and shadow to make it pop of of the background.

This entire piece probably used 20 layers at any one time and took around 6 hours to create.



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Thoughts:

I can see a lot of flaws and things I would have done differently - but that's for another time. Anyone wishing details, comparing notes, ideas, concepts and general nattering, I'm at: vegasite@aol.com

Soapbox:

I consider myself lucky to be living in a time when art and technology have collided, allowing artists to go crazy and blur the lines between fan and pro art. Technology has opened fantastic doors of artistic opportunity too all-consuming to comprehend. Fans mastered pen and ink, the typewriter, the mimeo and the computer in the name of Fan Art. Computer art is the next level; and while, by its very nature you can improve your skills, you can never master it. This is truly the age of experimentation.

Doing my first fan art in 1960, who could have guessed where this was going? While SF Fandom as a whole has been lagging in technological advancements, this couldn't be a more opportune time to tackle the future of Fan Art.

Appreciation:

Thanks to Guy's spirit of adventure (and cash) for printing this cover in color. May other faneds follow his lead.

Tools:

Mac G4/900mg ram and 40gig hard drive
Adobe Photoshop (ver. 6) available for PC/MAC
Tpestyler 3

Check out:

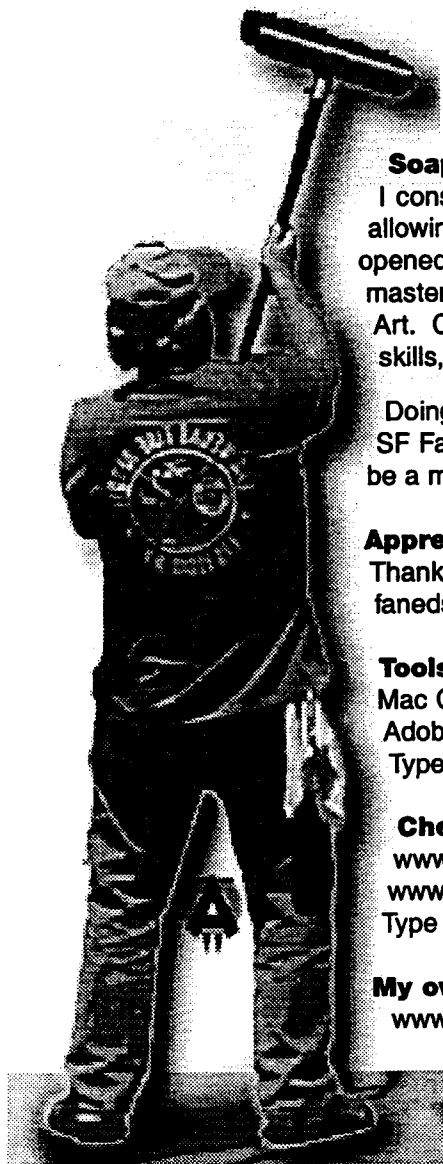
www.adobe.com
www.tpestyler.com
Type "Photoshop" into a search engine and you'll just be amazed at what comes up.

My own website:

www.fansite1.com

Interested parties:

Photoshop ain't cheap. Various versions of Photoshop and manuals are available on E-Bay. It runs on lots and lots of memory, so be prepared. ■





Stephen Hawking on black holes, unified field theory, and Marilyn Monroe

*Contributing Editor Gregory Benford is a professor of physics at the University of California, Irvine. His most recent nonfiction book is **Deep Time** (Avon).*

Illustration by Charlie Williams

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Stephen Hawking seemed slightly worse, as always. It is a miracle that he has clung to life for over twenty years with Lou Gehrig's disease. Each time I see him I feel that this will be the last, that he cannot hold on to such a thin thread for much longer.

Hawking turned 60 in January. Over the course of his brilliant career, he has worked out many of the basics of black hole physics, including, most strikingly, his prediction that black holes aren't entirely black. Instead, if they have masses equivalent to a mountain's, they radiate particles of all kinds. Smaller holes would disappear in a fizz of radiation – a signature that astronomers have searched for but so far not found.

The enormous success of Hawking's 1988 book, **A Brief History of Time**, has made him a curious kind of cultural icon. He wonders how many of the starlets and rock stars who mentioned the book on talk shows actually read it.

With his latest book, **The Universe in a Nutshell** (Bantam), he aims to remedy the situation with a plethora of friendly illustrations to help readers decipher such complex topics as superstring theory and the nature of time. The trick is translating equations into sentences, no mean feat. The pictures help enormously, though purists deplore them as oversimplified. I feel that any device is justified to span such an abyss of incomprehension.

When I entered Stephen's office at the University of Cambridge, his staff was wary of me, plainly suspecting I was a "civilian" harboring a crank theory of the universe. But I'd called beforehand, and then his secretary recognized me from years past. (I am an astrophysicist and have known Stephen since the 1970s.) When I entered the familiar office his shrunken form lolled in the motorized chair, as he stared out, rendered goggle-eyed by his thick glasses--but a strong spirit animated all he said.

Hawking had lost his vocal cords years ago, to an emergency tracheotomy. His gnarled, feeble hands could not hold a pen. For a while after the operation he was completely cut off from the world, an unsettling analogy with the fate of those mathematical observers who plunge into black holes, their signals to the outside red-shifted and slowed by gravity's grip to dim, whispering oblivion.

A Silicon Valley firm came to the rescue. Engineers devised tailored, user-friendly software and a special keyboard for Hawking. Now his frail hand moved across it with crablike speed. The software is deft, and he could build sentences quickly. I watched him flit through the menu of often-used words on his liquid crystal display, which hung before him in his wheelchair. The invention has been such a success that the Silicon Valley folk now supply units to similarly afflicted people worldwide.

"Please excuse my American accent," the speaker mounted behind the wheelchair said with a California inflection. He coded this entire remark by two keystrokes.

Although I had been here before, I was again struck that a man who had suffered such an agonizing physical decline had on his walls several large posters of a person very nearly his opposite: Marilyn Monroe. I mentioned her and Stephen responded instantly, tapping one-handed on his keyboard, so that his transduced voice replied, "Yes, she's wonderful. Cosmological. I wanted to put a picture of her in my latest book, as a celestial object." I remarked that to me the book was like a French Impressionist painting of a cow, meant to give a glancing essence, not the real, smelly animal. Few would care to savor the details. Stephen took off from this to discuss some ideas currently booting around the physics community about the origin of the universe, the moment just after the Big Bang.

Hawking's great politeness paradoxically put me ill at ease; I was acutely aware of the many demands on his time, and after all, I had just stopped by to talk shop.

"For years my early work with Roger Penrose seemed to be a disaster for science," Stephen said. "It showed that the universe must have begun with a singularity, if Einstein's general theory of relativity is correct. That appeared to indicate that science could not predict how the universe would begin. The laws would break down at the point of singularity, of infinite density." Mathematics cannot handle physical quantities like density that literally go to infinity. Indeed, the history of 20th century physics was in large measure about how to avoid the infinities that crop up in particle theory and cosmology. The idea of point particles is convenient but leads to profound, puzzling troubles.

I recalled that I had spoken to Stephen about mathematical methods of getting around this problem one evening at a party in King's College. There were analogies to methods in elementary quantum mechanics, methods he was trying to carry over into this surrealistic terrain.

"It now appears that the way the universe began can indeed be determined, using imaginary time," Stephen said. We discussed this a bit. Stephen had been using a mathematical device in which time is replaced, as a notational convenience, by something called imaginary time. This changes the nature of the equations, so he could use some ideas from the tiny quantum world. In the new equations, a kind of tunneling occurs in which the universe, before the Big Bang, has many different ways to pass through the singularity. With imaginary time, one can calculate the chances for a given tunneling path into our early universe after the beginning of time as we know it.

"Sure, the equations can be interpreted that way," I argued, "but it's really a trick, isn't it?"

Stephen said, "Yes, but perhaps an insightful trick."

"We don't have a truly deep understanding of time," I replied, "so replacing real time with imaginary time doesn't mean much to us."

"Imaginary time is a new dimension, at right angles to ordinary, real time," Stephen explained. "Along this axis, if the universe satisfies the 'no boundary' condition, we can do our calculations. This condition says that the universe has no singularities or boundaries in the imaginary direction of time. With the 'no boundary' condition, there will be no beginning or end to imaginary time, just as there is no beginning or end to a path on the surface of the Earth."

"If the path goes all the way around the Earth," I said. "But of course, we don't know that in imaginary time there won't be a boundary."

"My intuition says there will be no blocking in that special coordinate, so our calculations make sense."

"Sense is just the problem, isn't it? Imaginary time is just a mathematical convenience." I shrugged in exasperation at the span between cool mathematical spaces and the immediacy of the raw world; this is a common tension in doing physics. "It's unrelated to how we feel time. The seconds sliding by. Birth and death."

"True. Our minds work in real time, which begins at the Big Bang and will end, if there is a Big Crunch – which seems unlikely, now, from the latest data showing accelerating expansion. Consciousness would come to an end at a singularity."

"Not a great consolation," I said.

He grinned. "No, but I like the 'no boundary' condition. It seems to imply that the universe will be in a state of high order at one end of real time but will be disordered at the other end of time, so that disorder increases in one direction of time. We define this to be the direction of increasing time. When we record something in our memory, the disorder of the universe will increase. This explains why we remember events only in what we call the past, and not in the future."

"Remember what you predicted in 1980 about final theories like this?" I chided him.

"I suggested we might find a complete unified theory by the end of the century." Stephen made the transponder laugh dryly. "OK, I was wrong. At that time, the best candidate seemed to be $N=8$ supergravity. Now it appears that this theory may be an approximation to a more fundamental theory, of superstrings. I was a bit optimistic to hope that we would have solved the problem by the end of the century. But I still think there's a 50-50 chance that we will find a complete unified theory in the next 20

years."

"I've always suspected that the structure never ends as we look to smaller and smaller scales – and neither will the theories," I offered.

"It is possible that there is no ultimate theory of physics at all. Instead, we will keep on discovering new layers of structure. But it seems that physics gets simpler, and more unified, the smaller the scale on which we look. There is an ultimate length scale, the Planck length, below which space-time may just not be defined. So I think there will be a limit to the number of layers of structure, and there will be some ultimate theory, which we will discover if we are smart enough."

"Does it seem likely that we are smart enough?" I asked.

Another grin. "You will have to get your faith elsewhere."

"I can't keep up with the torrent of work on superstrings." Mathematical physics is like music, which a young and zesty spirit can best seize and use, as did Mozart.

"I try," he said modestly.

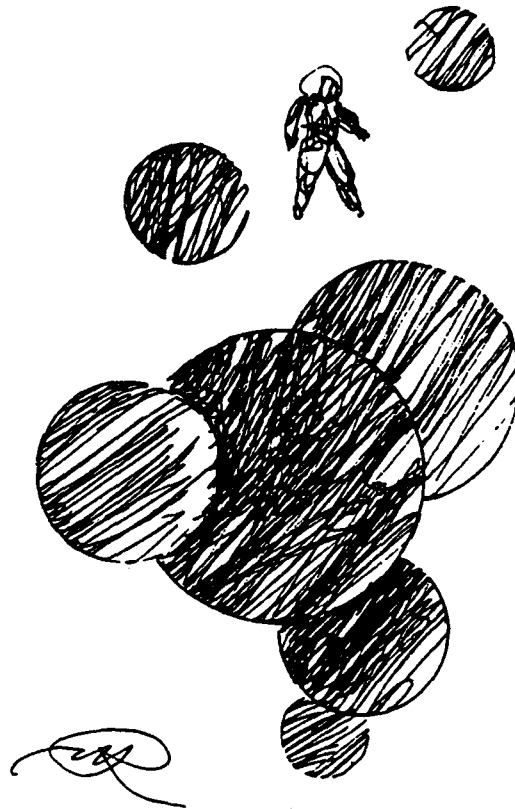
We began discussing recent work on "baby universes" – bubbles in space-time. To us large creatures, space-time is like the sea seen from an ocean liner, smooth and serene. Up close, though, on tiny scales, it's waves and bubbles. At extremely fine scales, pockets and bubbles of space-time can form at random, sputtering into being, then dissolving. Arcane details of particle physics suggest that sometimes – rarely, but inevitably – these bubbles could grow into a full-fledged universe.

This might have happened a lot at the instant just immediately after the Big Bang. Indeed, some properties of our universe may have been created by the space-time foam that roiled through those infinitesimally split seconds. Studying this possibility uses the "wormhole calculus," which samples the myriad possible frothing bubbles (and their connections, called wormholes).

Averaging over this foam in a mathematical sense, smoothing its properties a bit, Hawking and others have tried to find out whether a final, rather benign universe like ours was an inevitable outcome of that early turbulence. The jury isn't in on this point, and it may be out forever – the calculations are tough, guided by intuition rather than facts. Deciding whether they meaningfully predict anything is a matter of taste. This recalls Oscar Wilde's aphorism that in matters of great import, style is always more important than substance.

If this picture of the first split second is remotely right, much depends on the energy content of the foam. The energy to blow up these bubbles would be countered by an opposite, negative energy, which comes from the gravitational attraction of all the matter in the bubble. If the outward pressure just balances the inward attraction (a pressure, really) of the mass, then you could get a universe much like ours: rather mild, with space-time not suffering any severe curvature – what astronomers call "flat." This seems to be so on such relatively tiny scales as our solar system, and flatness prevails even on the size range of our galaxy. Indeed, flatness holds on immense scales, as far as we can yet see.

It turns out that such bubbles could even form right now. An entirely separate space-time could pop into existence in your living room, say. It would start unimaginably small, then balloon to the size of



a cantaloupe – but not before your very eyes, because, for quite fundamental reasons, you couldn't see it.

"They don't form in space, of course," Stephen said. "It doesn't mean anything to ask where in space these things occur." They don't take up room in our universe but rather are their own universes, expanding into spaces that did not exist before.

"They're cut off from us after we make them," I said. "No relics, no fossil?"

"I do not think there could be."

"Like an ungrateful child who doesn't write home." When talking about immensities, I sometimes grasp for something human.

"It would not form in our space, but rather as another space-time."

We discussed for a while some speculations about this that I had put into two novels, *Cosm* and *Timescape*. I had used Cambridge and the British scientific style in *Timescape*, published in 1980, before these ideas became current. I had arrived at them in part from some wide-ranging talks I had enjoyed with Stephen – all suitably disguised in the books, of course. Such enclosed space-times I had termed "onion universes," since in principle they could have further locked-away space-times inside them, and so on. It is an odd sensation when a guess turns out to have some substance – as much as anything as gossamer as these ideas can be said to be substantial.

"So they form and go," I mused. "Vanish. Between us and these other universes lies absolute nothingness, in the exact sense – no space or time, no matter, no energy."

"There can be no way to reach them," his flat voice said. "The gulf between us and them is unbridgeable. It is beyond physics because it is truly nothing, not physical at all."

The mechanical laugh resounded. Stephen likes the tug of the philosophical, and he seemed amused by the notion that universes are simply one of those things that happen from time to time.

His nurse appeared for a bit of physical cleanup, and I left him. Inert confinement to a wheelchair exacts a demeaning toll on one's dignity, but he showed no reaction to the daily round of being cared for by another in the most intimate way. Perhaps for him, it even helps the mind to slip free of the world's rub.

I sat in the common room outside his office, having tea and talking to some of his post-doctoral students. They were working on similarly wild ideas and were quick, witty, and keenly observant as they sipped their strong, dark Ceylonese tea. A sharp crew, perhaps a bit jealous of Stephen's time. They were no doubt wondering who this guy was, nobody they had ever heard of, a Californian with an accent tainted by Southern nuances, somebody who worked in astrophysics and plasma physics – which, in our age of remorseless specialization, is a province quite remote from theirs. I didn't explain; after all, I really had no formal reason to be there, except that Stephen and I were friends.

Stephen's secretary quietly came out and asked if I would join Stephen for dinner at Caius College. I had intended to eat in my favorite Indian restaurant, where the chicken vindaloo is a purging experience, and then simply rove the walks of Cambridge alone, because I love the atmosphere – but I instantly assented. Dinner at college high table is one of the legendary experiences of England. I could remember keenly each one I had attended; the repartee is sharper than the cutlery.

We made our way through the cool, atmospheric turns of the colleges, the worn wood and gray stones reflecting the piping of voices and squeaks of rusty bicycles. In misty twilight, student shouts echoing, Stephen's wheelchair jouncing over cobbled streets. He insisted on steering it himself, though his nurse hovered rather nervously. It had never occurred to me just how much of a strain on everyone there can be in round-the-clock care. A few people drifted along behind us, just watching him. "Take no notice," his mechanical voice said. "Many of them come here just to stare at me."

We wound among the ancient stone and manicured gardens, into Caius College. Students entering the dining hall made an eager rumpus. Stephen took the elevator, and I ascended the creaking stairs. The faculty entered after the students, me following with the nurse.

The high table is literally so. They carefully placed Stephen with his back to the long, broad tables of undergraduates. I soon realized that this is because watching him eat, with virtually no lip control, is not appetizing. He follows a set diet that requires no chewing. His nurse must chop up his food and spoon-feed

him.

The dinner was noisy, with the year's new undergraduates staring at the famous Hawking's back. Stephen carried on a matter-of-fact, steady flow of conversation through his keyboard.

He had concerns about the physicists' Holy Grail, a unified theory of everything. Even if we could thrash our way through a thicket of mathematics to glimpse its outlines, it might not be specific enough – that is, we would still have a range of choices. Physics could end up dithering over arcane points, undecided, perhaps far from our particular primate experience. Here is where aesthetics might enter.

"If such a theory is not unique," he said, "one would have to appeal to some outside principle, which one might call God." I frowned. "Not as the Creator, but as a referee?"

"He would decide which theory was more than just a set of equations, but described a universe that actually exists."

"This one."

"Or maybe all possible theories describe universes that exist!" he said with glee. "It is unclear what it means to say that something exists. In questions like, 'Does there exist a man with two left feet in Cambridge?', one can answer this by examining every man in Cambridge. But there is no way that one can decide if a universe exists, if one is not inside it."

"The space-time Catch-22."

"So it is not easy to see what meaning can be given to the question, 'Why does the universe exist?' But it is a question that one can't help asking."

As usual, the ability to pose a question simply and clearly in no way implied a similar answer – or that an answer even existed. After the dining hall, high table moved to the senior common room upstairs. We relaxed along a long, polished table in comfortable padded chairs, enjoying the traditional crisp walnuts and ancient aromatic port, Cuban cigars, and arch conversation, occasionally skewered by a witty interjection from Stephen.

Someone mentioned American physicist Stephen Weinberg's statement, in *The First Three Minutes*, that the more we comprehend the universe, the more meaningless it seems. Stephen doesn't agree, and neither do I, but he has a better reason. "I think it is not meaningful in the first place to say that the universe is pointless, or that it is designed for some purpose."

I asked, "No meaning, then, to the pursuit of meaning?"

"To do that would require one to stand outside the universe, which is not possible."

Again the image of the gulf between the observer and the object of study. "Still," I persisted, "there is amazing structure we can see from inside."

"The overwhelming impression is of order. The more we discover about the universe, the more we find that it is governed by rational laws. If one liked, one could say that this order was the work of God. Einstein thought so."

One of the college fellows asked, "Rational faith?"

Stephen tapped quickly. "We shouldn't be surprised that conditions in the universe are suitable for life, but this is not evidence that the universe was designed to allow for life. We could call order by the name of God, but it would be an impersonal God. There's not much personal about the laws of physics."

Walnuts eaten, port drunk, cigars smoked, it was time to go. When we left, Stephen guided his wheelchair through the shadowy reaches of the college, indulging my curiosity about a time-honored undergraduate sport: climbing Cambridge.

At night, young men sometimes scramble among the upper reaches of the steeped old buildings, scaling the most difficult points. They risk their necks for the glory of it. Quite out of bounds, of course. Part of the thrill is eluding the proctors who scan the rooftops late at night, listening for the scrape of heels. There is even a booklet about roof climbing, describing its triumphs and centuries-long history.

Stephen took me to a passageway I had been through many times, a shortcut to the Cam River between high, peaked buildings of undergraduate rooms. He said that it was one of the tough events, jumping across that and then scaling a steep, often slick roof beyond.

The passage looked to be about three meters across. I couldn't imagine leaping that gap from the slate-dark roofs. And at night, too. "All that distance?" I asked. My voice echoed in the fog.

"Yes," he said.

"Anybody ever miss?"

"Yes."

"Injured?"

"Yes."

"Killed?"

His eyes twinkled and he gave us a broad smile. "Yes." These Cambridge sorts have the real stuff, all right.

In the cool night Stephen recalled some of his favorite science fiction stories. He rarely read any fiction other than science fiction past the age of 12, he said. "It's really the only fiction that is realistic about our true position in the universe as a whole."

And how much stranger the universe was turning out than even those writers had imagined. Even when they discussed the next billion years, they could not guess the odd theories that would spring up within the next generation of physicists. Now there are speculations that our universe might have 11 dimensions, all told, all but three of space and one of time rolled up to tiny sizes. Will this change cosmology? So far, nobody knows. But the ideas are fun in and of themselves.

A week after my evening at Cambridge, I got from Stephen's secretary a transcript of all his remarks. I have used it here to reproduce his style of conversation. Printed out on his wheelchair computer, his sole link with us, the lines seem to come from a great distance. Across an abyss.

Portraying the flinty faces of science – daunting complexity twinned with numbing wonder – demands both craft and art. Some of us paint with fiction. Stephen paints with his impressionistic views of vast, cool mathematical landscapes. To knit together our fraying times, to span the cultural abyss, demands all these approaches – and more, if we can but invent them.

Stephen has faced daunting physical constrictions with a renewed attack on the large issues, on great sweeps of space and time. Daily he struggles without much fuss against the narrowing that is perhaps the worst element of infirmity. I recalled him rapt with Marilyn, still deeply engaged with life, holding firmly against tides of entropy.

I had learned a good deal from those few days, I realized, and most of it was not at all about cosmology.



From an interview with R.A. Lafferty by Robert Whitaker-Sirignano

*I'm told that you wrote yourself into **Fourth Mansions**. Which character are you?*

Yes, I've been accused of writing myself into **Fourth Mansions**, and I always say it's a lie. I've been accused of being Bertigrew Bagley, the Patrick of Tulsa. Well, maybe I looked like him about then, but I've since taken off fifty pound to a skinny two hundred. I've got a good-looking set of artificial teeth. I've sweetened up my disposition. And we were never really the same person.

Bagley is thus described in **Fourth Mansions**: "fat and ungainly, grown old ungracefully, balded and shaggy at the same time, rheumy of eyes and with his mouth full of rotten teeth, discreted, violent and vulgar; an earthen pot, and a cracked one at that."

Editor's outraged note: Who could say such things about the Cosmic Ray?

THE FLYING SAUCER'S 18th CENTURY PRECURSORS

23

Richard Dengrove

What idea is more central to flying saucers than that there are extraterrestrials superior to us? It was very popular in the 18th Century too.

Sound too futuristic for the 18th Century? The idea of extraterrestrial superiors may not be a futuristic idea at all but an idea several centuries old. The 18th Century was certainly ready for it. The educated had accepted Copernicus by then, that the Earth revolved around the Sun rather than the Sun the Earth. And in England they had accepted the Newtonian finding and in France that of various disciples of Descartes, that the celestial followed the same natural laws as we on Earth.

Also, the educated accepted a philosophical doctrine which came down from antiquity, the Plurality of Worlds. By the 18th Century, this meant that the stars had worlds orbiting them like our Sun had. And there was an infinity number and an infinite diversity of them. This diversity sometimes contradicted Newton and the Cartesians. The planets were so diverse that they sometimes had different laws of nature.

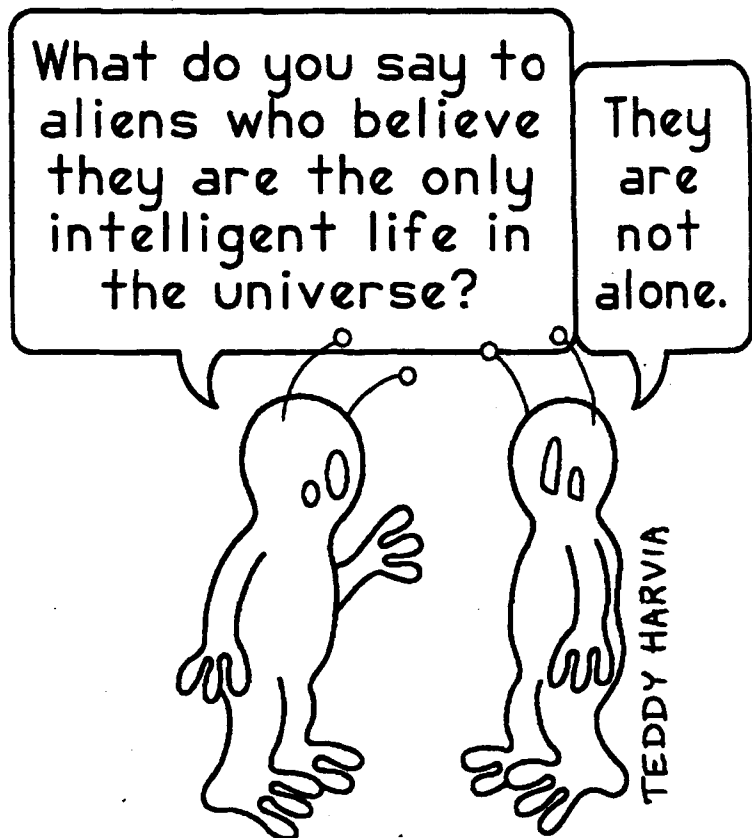
This in turn was based on another doctrine from antiquity widely accepted then: that God was so tolerant he had created an infinite diversity of creatures. And things. The infinite number of worlds were to have a place for them. There was life in the air, on the ground, under the ground, under the water. And on other planets.

The infinitely diverse animals, plants, metals, etc. had another trait, infinite gradations. The universe was arranged in a hierarchy. Just as the Aristotle and Plato had said. Just as was the social reality of the time if not the economic reality.

As people had their betters: the yeoman, the lord: so did nature. The lion was the king of the animals. The Sun was the king of the solar system. Gold was the king of the metals. The Moon was the equivalent of any queen ruling.

I cannot take the 18th Century too much to task for this. I am not certain we ourselves have not projected our social reality onto our

science. But that is another thing entirely. This idea was known as the Great Chain of Being. I hear that Alexander Pope coined the term, but I know the Elizabethans referred to it as a Chain. They also referred to it as the Cosmic Dance and as



Macrocosm and Microcosm, which the 18th Century didn't.

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In any event, superior extraterrestrials were just an inference waiting to be made. I have not heard about much interest in them during most of the 17th Century. Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle in 1686 mentioned the possibility of Saturnians being superior, but was not really interested in the idea. Fontenelle's book is a discussion between the narrator and a somewhat naive but highly intelligent marquise. Fontenelle liked women.

One of the Walt Disney '50s Tomorrow Land shows had Cyrano de Bergerac speaking of the planets with a woman in a most romantic vein. I think it did that because no one had ever heard of Fontenelle.

Here he is on extraterrestrial superiors.

"It's necessary," I said, "that the two worlds which are at the two extremities of this great vortex should be opposite in all things."

"Therefore," she replied, "they're very wise on Saturn, for you told me that everyone was mad on Mercury."

"If they're not very wise on Saturn," I returned, "at least by all appearances they're quite phlegmatic. These are people who don't know what it is to laugh, who always take a day to answer the slightest question asked them, and who would have found Cato of Utica too playful and frisky."

There are ideas here later developed by Immanuel Kant.

As far as I can tell, actual interest in extraterrestrial superiors. started during the 1690's and lasted until about the middle of the 18th Century. I found those who showed an interest in a number sources, particularly Crowe's book.

The earliest I have found is a Richard Bentley, a Cambridge-educated Divine. In 1692, he gave a Robert Boyle lecture to prove the Christian religion.

There he said that God

"may have made innumerable Orders and Classes of Rational Minds; some higher in natural perfections, others inferior to Human Souls. [These] Would constitute a different Species. ..."

Not a great interest.

Next is Lady Mary Chudleigh, an early feminist, in 1703. She was more emphatic. She wrote in her preface to the *Song of the Three Children*.

"Tis highly probable that as many of them are Suns, so others are habitable Worlds and fill'd with Beings infinitely superior to us; such as may have greater Perfections both of Soul and Body..."

But we get very little detail here. More than twenty years later, we get some from an individual whom you would not expect had much to do with extraterrestrial superiors, Benjamin Franklin. These quotes are part of Benjamin Franklin's private liturgy, which he wrote in 1728 at about age twenty-two. He entitled it *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*. Instead of going to church, Franklin had recourse to it when he needed religion.

"For I believe that Man is not the most perfect Being but One, rather that as there are many Degrees of Beings his inferiors, so there are many Degrees of Being superior to him."

This was the Medireview idea that man was in the middle. Only in the Middle Ages between the animals and the angels, and with the Deist Benjamin Franklin, extraterrestrials. Which he makes clear later on.

Franklin goes on to say

"I CONCEIVE then, that the INFINITE has created many Beings or Gods, vastly superior to Man, who can better conceive his Perfections than we, and return him a more rational and glorious Praise. As among Men, the Praise of the Ignorant or of Children, is not regarded by the ingenious Painter or Architect, who is rather honour'd and pleas'd with the Approbation of Wise men and Artists.

Reason was the be-all and end-all of this the Age of Reason. It was what made us human and what made superior humans superior. Of course, it was also what made superior extraterrestrials superior.

Also, Benjamin Franklin's extraterrestrials are superior in science and technology.

"It may be that these created Gods, are immortal, or it may be that after many Ages, they are changed, and Others supply their Places.

"Howbeit, I conceive that each of these is exceedingly wise, and good, and very powerful; and that Each has made for himself one glorious Sun, attended with a beautiful and admirable System of Planets."

Crowe calls this a weird concept. However, he admits Franklin was not totally original in it. According to his researches, Franklin was supposed to have heard it in London in 1725 when he was about nineteen. It had been the subject of a conversation between Sir Isaac Newton and Newton's nephew by marriage, John Conduitt.

Newton speculated that stars periodically have explosions occur on them which destroy life on nearby planets. However, he speculated that superior beings might control this process. And may even serve in the role of Angels, transmitting God's will.

In any case, this is it for Ben Franklin's liturgy. There is no more talk of extraterrestrials in it.

Alexander Pope, the next one interested in superior extraterrestrials, gives an extra detail on their superiority in his epic poem *Essay on Man* (original 1733-34).

"Superior beings, when of late they saw
 "A mortal Man unfold all Nature's law,
 "Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
 "And shew'd a Newton as we shew an Ape." (Epistle II: 31-34)

The superiors could be Angels. He talks about Angels in his poem. Although he may not have believed in them, he considered them poetic. However, the term superior connotes that he was talking about superior beings on other planets too. From the evidence of the poem, a concept he was familiar with.

"See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
 "Observe how system into system runs,
 "What vary'd being peoples ev'ry star,
 "May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are
 "But of this frame, the bearing, and the ties,
 "The strong connections, nice dependencies,
 "Gradations just, has thy pervading soul" (Epistle I: 24-31)

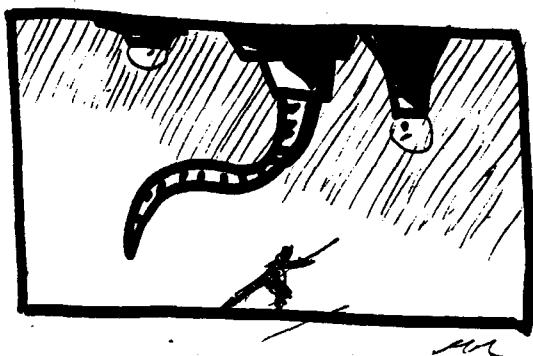
We find out in the next line to my first quote why extraterrestrials consider Newton an ape.

"Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind,
 "Describe or fix one movement of his Mind?"
 "Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
 "Explain his own beginning or his end?
 "Alas what wonder! Man's superior part

"Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art;
 "But when his own great work is but begun,
 "What reason weaves, by Passion is undone. (Epistle II: 35-42)

"Describe and fix one movement of his Mind" is similar to a quote by the ancient Roman playwright Seneca, who said that about people who had studied the 'epicycles' of Mercury.

The next person who was interested in superior extraterrestrials is the one who gives the greatest detail, Voltaire. In "Micromegas" (1752). This is a satire and yet with all its exaggeration seems to reflect what people were thinking. Anyway, how can we have contempt for imagination and whimsy when that is where nearly everyone has gotten their ideas about extraterrestrials.



In "Micromegas," Voltaire bestows the attributes of superiority with a vengeance on Micromegas, an inhabitant of a planet of Sirius. Height. He is 120,000 feet tall. Senses. He has a thousand of them. He is approaching the Medireview angels, who knew the truth of things immediately with their 'intellect.'

Life span. On his planet the life span averages 10,500,000 years. At 400, Micromegas is a rebellious young man. Someone Voltaire would look with favor on. Simple, regular shapes on his planet. At any rate his Saturnian friend complains of the irregular shapes of Earth. Shades of Plato. For the Saturnian and the people of the 18th Century, simple, regular shapes were superior.

However, one traditional attribute Micromegas and his Saturnian friend lack: happiness. Micromegas at one point says he is not completely happy and neither are any of the other beings of the universe. Even those who are superior to him.

Technology a la Franklin and Pope. Because of his knowledge of gravitation and magnetism, Micromegas travels across the star systems on sunbeams and comets. And he can get the Aurora Borealis to help him alight on Earth.

But the most important attribute of superiority is yet to come. Micromegas lands on Saturn, and meets up with a Saturnian only 6,000 feet tall with only seventy-two senses. Saturnians only average a 15,000 year life span. This particular one is the Secretary of the Academy of Saturn, whose purview included science, like some French academies then.

The two perceive a faint glimmer from Earth and go there. It is 1737. They have to use microscopes to see savant/philosophers from an Arctic expedition who had alighted on the Saturnian's fingers. Using monster trumpets they could hear them speak. By a certain, technique they speak to them.

Here is where we come to the attribute that makes Micromegas' most superior 'reason'. The two are impressed by the microscopic humans' scientific knowledge, just as Pope's extraterrestrials. That the geometer could know Micromegas' height. Also, about smaller creatures than themselves, the Earth's circumference and the weight of air.

However, like Pope as well, the two are not impressed by the humans' self-knowledge. They are appalled by war. Next, they listen to the Aristotelian, Cartesian, Malebrancheian, Lockian, Leibnizian and Thomist savant/philosophers. And their superior reason allows them to see how very foolish the philosophies of the human 'atoms' are.

Ultimately, Micromegas makes fools out of them to themselves.

Another person interested in superior extraterrestrials was Immanuel Kant. While he as very circumspect about giving details, he had a theory. Which adds a new dimension to 18th Century belief.

Kant was more restrained than most believers. He admitted that any planet may be devoid of intelligent life or may only be inhabited in the future. But he basically favored that planets are inhabited. And that it is only human vanity that says Nay. His evidence is the belief of the time in the Great Chain of Being. He differs in that all areas may not have life; some lands, and whole planets, may be barren. But since there are an infinite number species, there must be some place to park them.

Finally, Kant gets into his theory. He discusses life on the different planets. They do not include Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, which had yet to be discovered. To his credit, however, he makes room for undiscovered planets.

He speculates that man's reason is not as strong as it might be because man is encased in gross matter more powerful than his reason. It has to be gross to protect against the Sun's rays, and need not be sensitive or agile because the Sun illuminates everything sufficiently. For that reason, matter on Venus and Mercury would be grosser still and need even less sensitivity. On the other hand, the matter of the inhabitants of Jupiter and Saturn would be finer, lighter and more elastic; and their reason more powerful. The Sun being farther away, they need less protection from it and more sensitivity to detect things.

Furthermore, the greater refinement of their matter would allow the Jupiterians and Saturnians to live longer.

There is another reason why Jupiterians and Saturnians are superior: their day is so short. Ten hours on Jupiter. It takes more quickness to rush through the affairs of the day: e.g., to awaken, dress, eat and sleep. And would take more alert beings.

In addition, the greater number of Moons of Jupiter and Saturn are an advantage too. But I have not been able to figure out how, except that Kant finds them beautiful.

Finally, Kant is ready for his conclusion. He speculates that the Jupiterians and Saturnians may be without sin. He admits that this is unprovable.

All of this may sound strange today, but Kant was reasoning from an ancient tradition. The grossness of matter had been a doctrine since the ancient Greeks. Aristotle believed in it. Fine, light matter was more spiritual.

In addition, there was another precedent for Kant to follow. The philosopher Christian Wolff had earlier, in 1735, determined the height and size of the eyes of Jupiterians, exact to sizable fractions, from facts about their planet. While some ridiculed this, others took this quite seriously. Kant was far from being as specific.

After his 1755 book, Kant's suspicion, which is present there, took over that this was pure fantasy. And he repudiated the notion we could have any specific ideas about extraterrestrials. He criticized Johann Gottfried Herder in 1785, when Herder advocated the same doctrine, in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, that Kant had.

Kant is the last interested person I am going to discuss. How do they compare with flying saucer believers of today? There is at least one difference. The 18th Century claimed to arrive at these notions by reasoning from the Great Chain of Being.

We, on the other hand, claim to arrive at our notions by science. Like the study of flying saucers sightings. Which was biggest from the '40s to the '60s. And we arrive at our notions by personal experience, like the contactees have. Which can include dreams and visions. Personal experience has been big since the '70s.

Remaining shards of the Great Chain, we presume have to be by observation or experience. Like that the lion is king of beasts. Because of that, the phrase is puzzling to us. Still, the adage seems to be true that behind each idea is an emotion. And even though the scaffolding of reason has been dismantled, the emotion of the Great Chain of Being remains. It is the exhilaration that there are countless possibilities in the universe. An infinite number? Yes, an infinite number. And any who subtract even one possibility, especially an exciting one, is a killjoy. Which is why skeptics get no respect.

That many moderns are ambiguous about reason right now makes another difference. This attitude is responsible for some of the bad saucer men. They are without emotions, and cannot love. They have no compunction about experimenting on us humans. Or killing or enslaving us. Often the alien greys, with their large heads and spindly bodies, are like this. And the reptile-like and insect-like saucer men, the reptoids and the insectoids.

Too much reason has done that to them.

On the other hand, a saucer man who is good because he is rational is not unknown today. A Brazilian flying saucer cult, which, I heard, approaches the Mormons in size, still worships the "Rational Superior."

Usually, though, when saucer men are good, they are because they have a great deal of love as well as a great deal of reason. These saucer people are often called the Space Brothers. Who came from ethically higher planes as well as other planets. They give us rides on their saucers and warn against atomic war. If they are not without sin, they have very little of it.

They are very much like Kant's Jupiterians and Saturnians.

However, they are often beautiful, blond women and handsome, longhaired blond men. Which is why some call them Nordics. Kant, in his reasoned extraterrestrial, would not have been so specific. If he deigned a detail, I would imagine that, being the fastidious philosopher he was, he would have followed Wolff and given his extraterrestrials bodies adapted to their home planets.

In ending, I have another similarity between flying saucers and the 18th Century. This comes from Richard Blackmore's poem *Creation* (1712).

"We may pronounce each orb sustains a race
 "Of living things adapted to the place...
 "Were all the stars, those beauteous realms of light,
 "At distance only hung to shine by night,
 "And with their twinkling beams to please our sight?...
 "Are all those glorious empires made in vain?"

In short, WE ARE NOT ALONE.

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LAFFERTY'S FIRST BEST

NOVEL or, *Past Master* Passes Muster

29

Fred Chappell

It would be hard for a critic -- and I'm no critic -- to decide whether R. A. Lafferty's *Past Master* is a Good novel or a Bad one. There is a way in which this common, all-too-common, judgment has little relevance. It is not hard to find faults with the book: the pace is uneven, stopping dead still at times and at other times whooshing down like a tumbling chimney; the characters are rarely fully drawn; motivation is often murky; and the story-line never quite makes sense. Etc. etc. etc. These faults would be enough to sink most novels, and, Lord knows, they have indeed sunk many a well-intentioned sf novel.

But with all these faults, and others, *Past Master* never goes under. It succeeds in the way that it succeeds because it is daring. Let's face it; with all the hype about "adventurous ideas" and "bold new concepts" and so forth, most sf novels are essentially timid. Most sf novels are built upon notions, and not ideas, and at those points where notions may actually develop into ideas, the writer is likely to pull back and give us mindless action instead of following his thought. I observe this habit even in Bester and Heinlein. When he does present his notions more thoroughly, the sf writer is wont to present them rather joylessly, eschewing the advantages of prose style, metaphor, perspective, and humor.

Past Master is not nerveless, whatever it is. Neither is it really a novel of ideas. It is a headlong melee of fancies, loosely tied to a couple of central notions. There is a streak of bizarre humor in it, an intermittent word-play, and a current of crazy poetry that never gets securely directed. In many books these qualities might be faults; in Lafferty's they are strengths.

The central idea is one of the best there is, as it is one of the oldest. We remember that Odysseus and Aeneas, needing advice in their present predicaments, raise up and speak to the ghosts of dead sages. Arthur Leo Zagat's *Seven Out of Time* is an early sf example. In *Past Master* the golden world Astrobe, facing its own dissolution and perhaps the entire dissolution of Time, calls by means of time travel the person of Sir Thomas More to rescue it. Lafferty's fine irony is that Astrobe is not merely a utopia; it is the Utopia of More's own devising, the one his famous book depicts.

Now that's a fair thought, and I can't help wishing that Lafferty had gone on to treat it more directly, with a kind of Dialogue of the Dead between More's two selves.

The novelist takes another tack, though, having More describe his *Utopia* as an elaborate joke, a satire, rather than as a possible blueprint for the future. This is perhaps a legitimate interpretation -- other writers have held it -- but it avoids

becoming something I would like to see: a criticism of More's ideas in modern sf terms And if someone wished to object that it is Lafferty's purpose to write stories and not criticism, I would reply that criticism is, or should be, the main purpose of sf novels. When it is not those books become a species of Saturday morning TV.

The utopian Astrobe is a sister Earth, tied to its faraway older sibling by a kind of interstellar dream-subway. It is wealthy, civilized, largely peaceful, and seems to offer almost unbounded scope to individual freedoms. Nor is it entirely urban; this world offers Feral Strips of dense forests and towering mountains complete with exotic and furious predators, all for the hardier and more primitive pleasures of men. Yet this Arcadia is coming apart at the seams. Great numbers of the populace are deserting to Cathead. Cathead is Funk City with a vengeance; its best enticements are like those found in the grubbier pages of Zola. The professions there available are ill-paid, filthy, dangerous to mind and body; and the recreations are no less noisome and scary. But Cathead attracts, the people are drawn to it, and More is deployed to understand the situation and to reform it.

Putting it in the plainest terms: Sir Thomas More is recalled from the past that he may cure what is perceived as a basic disorder of the human spirit. Once we see the bare bones of the problem, we recognize it as insoluble; and in the novel it is not solved. Or if it is indeed solved — the ending is mystically ambiguous — it is not solved without recourse to the Absolute.

As a consistent literary construction *Past Master* fails completely. Lafferty poses, by positing our *nostalgie de la boue* as an inherent impulse, a tough ethical problem, which he then surrounds with impenetrable political intrigue, sociological speculation, exciting odysseys and nightmare biologies — all of which are irrelevant to the problem. His resolution, which suddenly becomes an abstruse speculation on the nature of time, does not leave his narrative hanging, but neither does it truly resolve it.

But again, I'm not sure that consistent construction is importantly at stake here. When I think of *Past Master* from a kind of mind's-eye distance, I do not think of it in terms of cleanly-made sf novel like *Starship Troopers* or even in terms of a mystical sf novel like *Childhood's End*. To me it seems to lie almost within the tradition of the perfervid illogical Romantic poems like Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* or *Laon and Cythna* or in the tradition of the early Gothic novel like *Vathek*. Which is to say that its narrative progression is not likely to be controlled by internal logic, but by the writer's obsessions, fancies, dreams, and impulses. The writer feels that he has something important to say, and he dresses it out in splendid and exotic images; or conversely, he is haunted by burning but ill-defined shapes in his imagination, and he must give them voice, *whatever* they mean, and maybe even if they have no definable meaning.

In this book, Lafferty has a Vision, and *Past Master* fails as a novel the more it tries to become a novel, the more it tries to keep that Vision curbed. That word, *novel*, predicates a kind of discipline to which Lafferty's Vision is radically opposed. It is for this reason that I believe *Past Master* should be much longer than it is, that it should explain less (for finally it explains nothing at all), and exhibit more. That it should *move* more, be even freer in time and space and

language...My shot-in-the-dark guess is that once upon a time it did these things, either in outline or in Lafferty's head, and I suspect the presence of the paperback editor's leaden hand: "Whoa up here now. We gotta make sense!"

The hell with sense. Sometimes it is no more than a fetter.

His central figure, More himself, Lafferty draws rather curiously. He is not much a man of his own time, of the sixteenth century, because he has visited the future on other occasions; yet neither is he at all comfortable in the year 2535. He regards the civilization of Astrobe with a mixture of admiration, contempt, and fatigue. Often he is acerbic, more a pissed mister than a past master. Even so, he undertakes the task that is set before him, finding himself both well- and ill-equipped for it. He fails; he is of course betrayed by one of his own men. (This character, Fabian Foreman — Lafferty's name for English socialism? — we are never properly introduced to.)

More's ultimate fate on Astrobe, though unclearly rendered, has the right feeling about it; this is the kind of fate which will always dog a figure with More's determined intent. And it has just enough similarity to his historical fate to convince us. But it is disappointing too, because it comes so quickly. Nine days is the whole amount of time in which More is allowed to set things right. The time is short partly because Lafferty has boxed himself in by giving the political leaders of Astrobe accurate insights into the future, but also partly because — and this is a nifty point — if More were given time enough to fully understand the situation, he would be powerless to change it.

I have concentrated too thoroughly on the main strands of Lafferty's book, and have not allowed myself space to celebrate its ornamentation. It is filled with puns, proverbs, jokes, anecdotes, fables, witty retorts, and neat formulations; maybe none of them is smoothly introduced, but they are there to startle and delight. He loves to invent animals too: ansels, lazarus-lions, hydras, porche's-panthers, brainsnakes; one longish passage in the book is a Weinbaumian odyssey. And he is very good with dreams and with distorted memories.

Past Master is finally a big shiny delirious clutter of impulse. Anywhere you poke into it you will find something bright and interesting. If you try to put it all together, you will lose more than you are able to keep. It's a glorious mess, and I for one am willing to put up with the mess for the sake of the glory.

Fred Chappell is the author of numerous novels and works of poetry. In his youth he was a science fiction fan, and in your editor's youth was his advisor in the Master of Fine Arts Program at UNC-Greensboro, where Fred still teaches. He has won the Bollingen Prize for Poetry, and the World Fantasy Award for his short stories "The Somewhere Doors" and "The Lodger". For the past several years he has been Poet Laureate of North Carolina. This piece was originally written for At the Sleepy Sailor.



A life as rich as Mike Resnick's has touched on many things, past, present, and future. Here he regales us with the joys of the past ...

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my favorite museums

Mike Resnick

I've been to France five times in the past three years. And although I've always been there as a guest of some convention committee or other that was hundreds of miles out of Paris, I've managed to spend a few days sampling the joys of Paris on each trip.

The most fabulous building I've ever seen in my life is the Louvre. I think it must be about a mile from one end to the other, and it has four – and, in places, five – levels. And it does have the Mona Lisa, and the Venus de Milo, and the Winged Victory, and more famous art than any other museum in the world. But what it most has are 4,000 or 5,000 paintings of the crucifixion, and I am first, partially color-blind, and second, an atheist. Which is a roundabout way of saying that I love the building, but I'm not especially enamoured with what's inside it.

A few weeks ago (I'm writing this in November of 2001) I went to the Orsay, a nearby Parisian museum, with Gardner Dozois, Susan Casper and Kristine Kathryn Rusch. It boasts the greatest collection of French impressionists ever assembled. After an hour I stopped pretending I cared about French impressionists, left my companions, and took a long walk through the Tuilleries, the exquisite gardens behind the Louvre. It was time to admit to myself that, for whatever reason, these world-famous museums simply don't appeal to me. And that, of course, suggested an article about the museums that *do* appeal to me. So here are my favorites, in order. I don't expect anyone who doesn't share my tastes, A to Z, to agree with me.

1. THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF RACING. This is horse racing's Hall of Fame, and I have been a horse racing fanatic for half a century (and at one point a weekly columnist for well over a decade). There are brilliant paintings by Richard Stone Reeves and others, all kinds of memorabilia, and names that are evocative of equine greatness – Kelso, Man o' War, Ruffian, Citation, Seattle Slew, Native Dancer, Secretariat. There are films and videotapes of the great races, silks of the great farms like Calumet and Claiborne, no end of things to look at. And the Hall of Fame isn't just for horses. Every year a trainer and a jockey are also inducted. The last time I was there they were building an addition so visitors could see exactly how a race horse is cared for.

2. THE NAIROBI MUSEUM. Not a huge museum, but then, Kenya's not a huge country. The museum has the stuffed remains of Ahmed of Marsabit, the magnificent elephant who's shown up in a few of my stories. It's got a rifle that was used by John Boyes – and Boyes appears in three of my stories, and I've also brought his two classic books back into print in the Resnick Library of African Adventure. There are stuffed (taxidermied?) animals of every species that occurs in Kenya. There is a huge display of the Emergency (yclept the Mau Mau) and the opening days of Independence. There are displays of tools, weapons, and tribal insignia of almost all the Kenyan tribes. There's even a large snake and reptile park right across the street. Fascinating place for anyone interested in Kenya's history (especially from 1890 to about 1970) and fauna.

3. THE ROYAL TYRELL MUSEUM. The finest prehistory museum in the world. The museum is run by Dr. Phil Currie, a former science fiction fan and now one of the world's two or three preeminent paleontologists. They've got more than 20,000 dinosaurs that they're still cataloging prior to assembling. The Tyrell is located in the middle of Canada's Alberta Province, a treasure trove of dinosaur fossils, but they're not limited to Alberta. Phil was part of the group that found the feathered dinosaur in China, which essentially ended all the bickering and finally proved that dinosaurs did indeed evolve into birds. He was

also in the expedition that discovered the largest carnivorous dinosaur of them all, one that dwarfs T. Rex, down in South America. Phil's specialty is carnosaurs, so the museum has an exceptional collection of them. Also, most of the great museums are just huge rectangular buildings that were erected and then filled with whatever they decided to specialize in. Not the Tyrell — they *knew* what their exhibits would be, and the museum, which is only about 20 years old, was designed and created expressly for the exhibits it holds.

4. THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. I'll be honest. I don't know if this is any better than the American Museum of Natural History in New York, but it's the one that I grew up with and probably visited over 300 times before we finally moved from Chicago to Cincinnati. (My only job prior to freelancing full-time was a 5-minute walk from it; I spent almost every lunch hour there.) It's always had a fine African exhibit. Carl Akeley Hall, named after the great hunter, naturalist and taxidermist, is unsurpassed. There are a pair of battling bull elephants in the main entry foyer that never fail to inspire awe — and these days Sue the Tyrannosaur, the most complete Tyrannosaur ever found, stands about 60 feet away from them. The dinosaur exhibits have always been outstanding, ditto the Indian and Ocean exhibits, and they've reproduced the waterfront avenue of a shabby South Pacific town, circa 1930, that's wildly evocative. And as a man who spent hundreds of hours in their library (on the not-open-to-the-public third floor), I'll vouch that I've never seen a more thorough one.

5. THE GENE AUTRY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AMERICANA. When we first heard of this place, during a Guest of Honor stint at Loscon, we thought it would be a little storefront with a few posters from Autry movies and maybe a 45 rpm record of Gene singing "South of the Border" in his distinctly nasal voice. Boy, were we wrong! The Autry Museum is an \$80 million dollar building that seems like Valhalla to a couple of grown-up kids (Carol and me) who were raised on cowboy movies. The permanent exhibits include stagecoaches, saddles and outfits that look almost too fancy for Roy Rogers and Trigger (the fashion plates of all B-movie cowboys and horses). There's a display of every variety of Colt ever manufactured, including a Buntline Special. There are some life-sized Disney animatrons that re-enact the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral every few minutes. There is a lot of space devoted to Western movies, from William S. Hart through Clint Eastwood. It takes most of a day to go through the place. Each month there's a new featured display — one month it was the fabulous furniture created by cowboy actor George Montgomery; another time it was illustrated literature — magazines, comic books, paintings — devoted to the civil war; one month there was a huge collection of John Wayne memorabilia. And they have a *great* gift shop with books and CDs I've never seen anywhere else.

6. THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. Almost a sister to Chicago's Field Museum, with one major difference — they have a section devoted to Theodore Roosevelt, who, as Resnick readers know, happens to be my hero. Roosevelt and his family were generous with his memorabilia, and it's a very impressive display. Their taxidermy sections are fine, though I think the Field's are better. Their tribal exhibits from around the world are probably better than the Field's. They've refurbished their dinosaur exhibit, and it's very impressive (but the Field has Sue). Excellent evening programs, and a very thorough gift shop.

7. THE CAIRO MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES. A one-of-a-kind museum. Other museums around the world present Egyptian exhibits, but they fade into insignificance next to this one. It's got the first painting in history. It's got most of the King Tut collection. It's got pillars and carvings, sphinxes and stone pharaohs, it's got *everything*. You'll need an interpreter when you go through it — most of the cards and labels are not in English — and last year you needed a bodyguard just to approach it, though hopefully that situation has improved. There are so many large and small Egyptian artifacts on exhibit that even a non-museum type could easily spend a week there. And there's a lovely fountain and pond just outside the entrance.

8. THE KENTUCKY DERBY MUSEUM. A museum devoted to a single race — one that the man of the street thinks is the most important on the calendar, whereas horsemen will tell you that winning the Breeders Cup Classic or the Belmont Stakes will do far more to enhance a horse's value. Still, to the public at large, the Derby is the Big One. There are videos of the past 75 or 80 Derbies. Silks of the winning jockeys. A few of the golden trophies that have been returned to the museum (which is on the grounds of Churchill Downs, just a 5-minute drive from the annual Rivercon site, and 10 minutes from Rivercon's

successor, ConGlomeration). There are winners' bridles, saddles, saddle blankets, horseshoes, everything you can think of relating to the Derby. You can do the place thoroughly in 90 minutes (double that if you watch the videos, which I always do), and when you leave you'll know more than you'll ever need to know about the Run for the Roses.

9. **THE MARTIN & OSA JOHNSON SAFARI MUSEUM.** Martin and Osa Johnson were the first documentary filmmaker superstars. Martin began by going to the South Seas with Jack London, but soon married the teen-aged Osa and set up shop in Africa, bringing back the first legitimate footage anyone had ever seen of African animals in the wild, or African tribes at home. Their first film, *Simba*, followed them on a safari to Lake Paradise, the Mount Marsabit location that would be their home for four years. It contained a lot of footage of elephants and antelope, and ended with the Maasai's rite of passage to adulthood: a lion hunt in which the young warriors were armed only with spears. The museum displays most of the artifacts Martin and Osa brought back from Africa. It contains not only *their* bestsellers (both were authors, writing of their adventures), but also possesses a library of over 10,000 volumes – and it sells videotapes of almost all their movies. Its unlikely location is in Osa's home town of Chanute, Kansas.

10. **THE SMITHSONIAN** (especially its Natural History Museum). This is the big one -- the history and future of the United States in a number of impressive buildings. The aeronautical exhibits are fascinating -- hell, *all* the exhibits are fascinating -- but the one that most interests me is the Natural History museum. Not up to the Field or the American, but nonetheless an excellent display.

11. **THE BRITISH MUSEUM.** A fascinating museum. If an object of worth existed anywhere in the Empire and wasn't nailed down, the Brits found a way to bring it back and put it on display in the British Museum. There's an Egyptian galley, a Roman temple, you name it and they've got it. I think the only reason the pyramids are still in Egypt is because they couldn't figure out how to ship them to London. It goes on forever, and it endlessly fascinating, but there's actually very little *British* on display.

12. **THE LOUVRE.** OK, I'm not moved by crucifixions, and I suspect Venus looks better with arms, and I think Mona Lisa is a plain-looking and totally uninteresting woman -- but this is still the most fascinating building in the world, with enough stuff so even color-blind atheistic art-haters like me can find something to admire (I liked the room with all the Reubens paintings, and of course I liked the Egyptian exhibit). If you're in Paris, then even if you are no more impressed with traditional art than I am, you owe it to yourself to visit the Louvre for one day at least.

13. **THE SALVADOR DALI MUSEUM.** So who are my favorite artists? Well, at the top there are Simon Combes and David Shepard, two of the premiere wildlife artists in Africa. I persist in thinking that Walt Kelly's *Pogo* was not only the best-written comic strip in history but the best-drawn as well, and I love Kelly's artwork, *Pogo* and non-*Pogo* alike. And I like Dali. I discovered him in high school back in the 1950s, and while Picasso was (and remains) incomprehensible to me, Dali struck a responsive chord. The museum, down in St. Petersburg, Florida, has maybe 50 of his paintings on display, a nice gift shop, and a fascinating tour that tells you enough about his totally strange life and marriage that you want to run right home and write a novel about it.

14. **THE LA BREA TAR PITS.** It's not up to the Tyrell, but then, nothing is. This Los Angeles museum is situated over the tar pits, and that means it tends to specialize in what gets pulled out of the pits -- mammoths, sabre-tooths, and other mammals that lived from 10,000 to 25,000 years ago. The displays aren't numerous, but they *are* interesting, it's easy to reach if you're in the L.A. area, you can go through the thing in an hour or so, and as all the Bantam writers who attended the 1996 Worldcon will attest, they put on one hell of a banquet.

There are a few museums we haven't been to yet that I have a feeling would surely make my list. Right off the bat, there's Dr. Jack Horner's **MUSEUM OF THE ROCKIES**, which is said to be the greatest paleontological museum in the United States (the Tyrell's in Canada). I've never been to **THE PRO BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME**, and since it's the only sport besides horse racing that I'm truly passionate about, I plan to get up to Springfield, Massachusetts and see it one of these days. There's the **EXOTIC WORLD BURLESQUE MUSEUM AND HALL OF FAME** out in Helendale, California that I'd love to see now that I'm a Dirty Old Man. Finally, I'm on the track of a **DOC HOLLIDAY MUSEUM**, another character who keeps showing up in my books and stories; this particular museum is supposed

to be run by his family members in the Deep South, rather than out West where he laid his claim to immortality.

There's one that *should* make the list, but probably never will, and that's THE BRITISH MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. They have everything it takes to make the Top Ten – except intelligence. I went there in 1984 to examine the tusks of the Kilimanjaro Elephant, prior to writing *Ivory*. They were not on public display, and I had to write ahead to make arrangements to see them. When I got there I spent two hours looking around the museum, and I found that its African fauna collection, which I'd looked forward to seeing, was much less interesting than I'd anticipated. Then I met the official who was to escort me to the tusks. We went down to the basement, and suddenly I was surrounded by literally hundreds of the most impressive African trophies I'd ever seen. I asked why they weren't on display. Same reason as the ivory. They weren't shot on license; therefore they were poached, and the Politically Correct museum refused to display anything that was poached. Makes sense – *except* that this entire collection was shot and donated by F. C. Selous, generally considered to be the greatest African hunter of all time (my own choice would be W.D.M. "Karamojo" Bell, but that has nothing to do with this story), and Selous, who died fighting the Germans in Tanganyika in 1917, brought back the vast majority of his trophies before there *were* hunting licenses. Go figure.

* * * Without going into raptures, I suppose I might as well rank the zoos, too: 1. San Diego Zoo 2. Cincinnati Zoo 3. Brookfield Zoo (Chicago) 4. New Orleans Zoo 5. Bronx Zoo 6. Lincoln Park Zoo (Chicago) 7. San Diego Zoo Park 8. St. Louis Zoo 9. Miami Zoo 10. Calgary Zoo # – and the aquariums: 1. Tampa Aquarium 2. Shedd Aquarium (Chicago) 3. Newport/Cincinnati Aquarium # And, finally, the African game parks: 1. Ngorongoro Crater (Tanzania) 2. Hwange (Zimbabwe; at least, it ranked here before President Robert Mugabe went crazy two years ago; we won't be going back while he's alive or ZANU, his political party, is in power.) 3. Chobe (Botswana) 4. Samburu/Buffer Springs (Kenya) 5. Aberdares (Kenya) 6. Maasai Mara (Kenya) 7. Serengeti (Tanzania) 8. Etosha (Namibia) 9. Mana Pools (Zimbabwe; see above note) 10. Queen Elizabeth II (Uganda) 11. South Luangwa Valley (Zambia) 12. Moremi Reserve (Botswana) 13. Amboseli (Kenya) 14. Tsavo (Kenya) 15. Meru (Kenya)

Mike, we wanna hear all about those, too. – Editor

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Sad News

John Guidry

I was lucky enough to meet Ray Lafferty back in 1968. Every time he would see me he would say "Guidry, Guidry, Guidry." And then he would point his finger at me and say "Bang Bang!" This went on for a number of years and at last I ran into him sober and then at last I saw the genius that was Ray Lafferty. From then on I knew the best time to talk to him was early in the morning. He had no liver and one drink and it was back to "Bang Bang!"

I saw him (two different years) take one drink and then he was out of it. At a party in New Orleans (back in 1969 or thereabout) everyone had to leave and we (a number of local New Orleans fans) had to pry Ray from the walls, doors and anything else that he could grab onto to put him into Norman Elfer's car (it was raining like crazy) and then when we got him to the hotel of course he would not get out of the car ... all the while singing a song. We got him to his room and saw him to bed. We later found out he had left the hotel to hit the bars in the French Quarter.

A few years later we had a DeepSouthCon and Ray was the Guest of Honor. He did not take a drink for the entire con as he wanted to be on panels and give his speech. Wow what a con.

Dan Galouye became a very close friend of his and in later years every time I would see Ray he always told me how much he missed Dan. The world is a sadder place without him. R.I.P. Ray.

*At the worldcon in San Francisco in 1993 Ray Lafferty won a Seiun Award for "Continued on Next Rock". Out in the audience I whooped and leapt and cheered like a fool. The guy behind me tapped my shoulder once I settled down – it was Dan Knight, and he was giving me a copy of his **Boomer Flats Gazette**, a zine devoted to the Cosmic Ray. A contact after Lafferty's passing brought back copies, which you'll find reviewed elsewhere, a letter which is quoted in that same place, and that which follows.*

HUMAN

Dan Knight

Upon reading a scholarly essay Ray once quipped to me, "This Lafferty guy is a pretty sharp character. I'd like to meet him one day." As those who knew him will attest, he wrote as he thought and (thankfully) thought as he wrote. The unique voice that so many celebrate was not an affectation. Neither was it a carefully crafted persona fashioned to cunningly go over the wall during that literary jailbreak that was SF in the mid-sixties. The man was just being himself.

If you, gentle reader, have something unique to express you will probably be the last one to know it. Ray was the last one to know it. I'm not saying he couldn't tell his good from his bad. He was an astute writer and sharp enough to know which of his novels, or more often short stories, were cream and which were just good old wholesome milk. What I am saying is that the ghost who mussed my hair, slapped me on the back and ended up living in my pocket like a talisman – the essential and personal anima of Ray's stories – was not known to him. It *was* him. There are folks who spend years plotting out story arcs, experimenting with Voice to achieve just that particular shade of nuance. Ray wrote. Ray wrote Ray. He might have been capable of artificially recreating the style of somebody else but I doubt it. Take a look at the stories in **The Early Lafferty** chapbook (our first publishing adventure). He thought he was doing a **Saturday Evening Post** pastiche on one of them. Don't bother trying to guess which. They're all Lafferty stories. Even in 1960 they could be mistaken for nothing else.

Genius, someone said, isn't about being the smartest buffalo in the herd, but in seeing the world from a different perspective. To – in the lingo of the last decade – see outside of the box. Ray came from outside the box. We (and you know who you are) got him because we embraced him as one of our own.

It wasn't a sure thing. His first and still unpublished novel **Manta** was murder mystery. Read **Okla Hannali** (a novel my buddy Terry Bisson believes is the Great and as yet Uncelebrated American book – kin to Melville's **Moby Dick**) or **The Fall of Rome** (reprinted under its original title **Alaric** recently). These and the very good unpublished **Esteban** are historical fiction at its most entertaining. All of you aging hippies who tripped out on **Arrive at Easterwine** and **Past Master** give yourselves a pat on the back. Thank you, SF and not those other guys got the lion's share of his work.

Here's another good quote. "Effectual people live life. Ineffectual people write about it." There's a revealing statement. I don't care if you believe it or not. Ray did. These are not the words of a man with high thoughts of himself. This is a very human person with feelings of inadequacy like most of us. Some of you may recall one of his stories ["Eurema's Dam", Ray's

Hugo winner] in which a little boy is forced to invent the most amazing devices not because he was so intelligent but because he believed himself dumber than dirt. He even created a mechanical simulacrum to deal with girls because he was too tongue-tied to do his own courting. There was a lot of Ray in there.

There will be, I expect, quite a bit of memorializing over the next little while. People will say many grand and beautiful things (you can almost see Ray's ears go red in embarrassment). It's proper to celebrate a good man's life. It is proper to overcome loss with fond remembrance or to acknowledge professional or personal debts. Beware though. It would be easy to recreate him in retrospect a Giant and therefore untouchable and ultimately unknowable. That would be tragic because who he was, in truth, was a funny, intelligent, self-critical, kind, opinionated, God-fearing, loving and sometimes cranky guy, just like the best and the rest of us. Or, in a word, human. Not distant like some piece of classical Greek statuary but close. He was the Old Man who threw your ball back over the fence with a smile. Who collected comic books and baseball cards, bad jokes and new friends. Remember him. Remember him fondly with a grin and a wink. And, in the phrase he most often closed his letters with –

“Have fun!”



Yeah, I believe this, Terry. Yep. Absolutely. No problem.

IN TOUCH WITH *SPORTS*

Terry Jeeves

38

Some people must think I'm a sucker, or at least I'm like the washing on the line, just waiting to be taken in. Anyway, they keep accosting me in pubs and suchlike, places with offers of free books, free love or free soul-saving. That's how I met Vishnu Ramasjudder. I had just commenced a scientific experiment involving the specific gravity of a complex liquid and had barely blown off the froth when this bewhiskered Indian geezer sat down opposite me.

He wore a black beard and on his heads, one of those turbans that Indian chappies wear. Leaning towards me, he produced a slip of paper from somewhere in his face fungus and handed it to me. In large black letters it said **VISHNU RAMASJUDDER**, in smaller print came the legend, **Medium, Seer and Occultist**. Near the bottom, in tiny print appeared **Agent for Acme Shoe Polish** and finally, in microscopic letters, **Printed in Wigan**.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Ramasjudder," I said. "What made you pick on me?"

His eyes seemed to blaze as with some hidden fire, but it could just have been cigarette smoke. "I was called to you as one in need of spirit contact from the vast beyond," said the Medium, Seer and Occultist. That reminded me of my pint. I removed the South end of his beard from my glass, squeezed a few surplus drops back into it and took a good swig. Something gave a jump in my throat, but it was probably just a hop. Anyway, too late now, it had gone. So had the beer. I ordered another and asked Mr. Ramasjudder if he would care for one. "No, sahib, it is forbidden for we of the Inner Circle to allow beer past our lips. perhaps I may have a double whiskey instead, but only if it Johnny White Horse, as their distillery is located at the Third Focal point of the Great Pachyderm."

The drinks came and Mr. Ramasjudder began explaining the Inner Meaning of his Life Cycle. It proved to be a long story and several times Ramasjudder had to replenish his fuel tanks, each time at my expense. As Mr. Ramasjudder explained, another rule of his Order that he was not allowed to touch money. By the call of "Time, gentlemen!" I was beginning to see its advantages. It was at this point that Ramasjudder invited me to accompany him to his home for a consultation with the spirit world. I could already feel a certain warmth of spirit, so I agreed.

We took a taxi (apparently his rules also barred the use of public transport) to a dingy street in the East End. Once there, Ramasjudder led me up a scruffy alleyway, through a rickety unpainted door and up a narrow stairway to his room. I was struck by his thoughtfulness for others when he insisted we go on tiptoe to avoid waking his landlady. We entered a gloomy garret lit by one small bulb. Several other rules of the Order were immediately apparent. They obviously frowned on wallpaper, laundries, and judging by the empty bottles, they were clearly strong supporters of glass reclamation projects. In Ramasjudder, they had a strong adherent.

"Take a seat on the bed, oh sahib," said the seer. Turning away from me he fiddled with something, there was the sound of pouring water and the Mystic placed a goldfish in a jam jar up on a shelf before turning and producing an oddly-shaped crystal ball. "Sahib, before we use the Magic Crystal, we must first drink a glass of the true nectar blessed by the Inner Circle." So saying, he picked up a black bottle and two empty jam jars, into each of which he poured some amber liquid.

"You, sahib, are unused to the dangerous evil forces of the Great Pachyderm and must be protected against them by the addition of this powder. Sadly, I only have enough for one of us, so I must take my chances." Saying this he unwrapped a spill of paper and poured a white powder into my jam jar. "Now I will don my robes of Office and we will partake." He turned away to an old dressing-gown hanging on a nail and began to don it.

It was at this moment a thought came to me. I couldn't let this kind, thoughtful gentleman run risks on my behalf. Quick as a flash, I swapped the jam jars around.

Ramasjudder turned back, now wearing the tattered dressing-gown, picked up his jam jar and said, "Let us now drink to the Great Spirits that we may be enriched by their aid." He downed his potion and I did likewise. He made a motion over the crystal ball and commanded me, almost as if he was brushing away dust, "Look into the all-seeing globe and tell me what you can see." I looked and was amazed. I had always thought it twaddle that anyone could see anything in a crystal ball, but I had been wrong. I could clearly see a large hole in the dirty tablecloth. I told him so.

Mr. Ramasjudder had a little difficulty swallowing, but recovered and suggested I try again. He re-dusted the crystal and said slowly, "Look deep in the glass. Do you feel sleepy? You are feeling drowsy ... you are falling asl-ee-cep ..." Mr. Ramasjudder fell across the table and began to snore.

I was afraid for his soul, at first, but then I saw he was merely sleeping soundly. I lifted him onto the bed and was about to leave when I noticed a pile of pound notes sticking out from beneath his pillow. Clearly, some enemy, knowing his avoidance of money, had put them there to bring evil upon his head. Ramasjudder had risked his life for me, probably only my switching the powdered nectar had saved him. The least I could do was to help him now. I slipped the money into my wallet and tiptoed out.

I never saw Mr. Ramasjudder again, but a few weeks later I was accosted by another bloke wearing a turban. He said his name was Shiva Skuldujeri the Mystic Acrostic. As I said, I'm not a sucker. He drank beer, so he couldn't have been a Great Pachyderm. I bet Mr. Ramasjudder could have taught him a thing or two.

ARE WE HERE NOW YET?

Robert Whitaker Sirignano

I've wracked my brains about what to say about Ray Lafferty's passing. Felt he was "gone" a few years ago, when his strokes left him unable to write and to care for himself. I knew his physical presence was still available, but the essence that was his writing and mind was no longer in contact (or passed on to those who cared).

The few last letters I received from him were over questions I asked about the essence of God. We knotted down to the differences between experience and belief. I've had a handful of religious awakenings, glimpses of a vast otherness bathed in white light and blue fire. Ray wrote back to say that he'd never experienced such a thing, no real dark nights of the soul and that his experience was based on a life-long faith and that he found it comforting and as profound as a spiritual awakening. There were some, he knew of, that faith should prompt such glimpses as I had touched upon. But one should not upstage the other (spiritual one-ups-man-ship does exist: we did not play that hand of cards).

A week or two after that discussion, he mailed me a small book of *Selections from Thomas Aquinas*, with a note that he felt I was one of the few who could comprehend the larger essence of the Saint's work.

I wrote back that I had read large samples of his writing when I spent time roaming the University of Delaware's library. He was a Saint illuminated by faith; you could feel it in his writing, across the translations.

That was a while ago. I miss "something new" from Lafferty. But there is a lot of his work I should tap into again. Maybe the difference a decade makes (what with some added maturity and respect) might seem fresh and new.

R.I.P., Ray, there will be no others like you.

TOLKIEN

IN THE MODERN AGE of PUBLISHING

Joseph Major

A few years ago, a publisher sued to have *The Lord of the Rings* declared a public-domain work, because of the Houghton Mifflin/Ace matter. They failed; of course, they were a small group, without resources to hire big-name lawyers, pick a suitable site (Alabama, say), or get the influence of prominent politicians whose books they publish.

Let us suppose (von Daeniken mode *on!*) that a bigger publisher did this. A bigger publisher, which in addition has acquired the habit of taking the concept of "editing" far beyond its heretofore established limits. Now we enter

THE REVISED LORD OF THE RINGS by J. R. R. Tolkien (with Jerry Pournelle, Eric Flint, S. M. Stirling, John Ringo, David Weber, William R. Forstchen, David Drake, John F. Carr, Roland Green . . .)

Our story begins with Captain Belisarius "Rick" Hammer of the 227th Imperial Mercenary Unit. Captain Hammer is a stunningly able and valiant commander, whose values have never been recognized due to the fact that in every situation, he is placed under an incompetent commander who, after Rick has won the battle, takes all the credit and has Rick reassigned to another no-win situation. Oh yes, he is also a student of ancient military history.

Rick is the only surviving officer in the Unit, which is several hundred strong. He is, therefore, working with the senior noncom of the Unit, Sergeant Teri Testosterina. Double-T is 199 cm tall, ample-figured, has her red hair in a long braid, and can whip any man in the Unit. She thinks herself homely, and has had many lovers die in her arms on a stricken battlefield.

In the ranks of the Unit are such highly skilled sorts as "Prof", a cutting-edge physicist who got tired of university politics (damned liberals) and went merc; "Hog Jowl", a 220 cm, 220 kg mass of muscle; Wang Lo, martial arts master of Kombo, the ancient martial art that enables a man to flick aside an artillery shell, slide between the spaces in a wall's atoms, live underwater for up to a month, and sword fight on wires between trees; Nick ha-Bibulah, the armorer who alone among the Imperials speaks with a funny accent but can make an air car with two pieces of wire and a broken pliers; and many other people of technical resource, which makes the Imperial tactics of 90%-casualty frontal assaults seem just a bit wasteful.

The 227th is on passage from one such disaster to another when IT happens. The ship falls through a warp in trans-sidereal space and begins to break down. Captain Rick gives the order and with the survival equipment and arms, the Unit bails out to land on this convenient nearby planet.

While rallying after landing, they are approached by a man astride an animal. After some confrontation, they manage to establish communications and are escorted to the home of the King, one Theoden, who is in desperate straits.

Rick immediately mobilizes his forces. He begins training the Rohannese in the advanced ancient tactics combining the best of the ancient Romans, English, Chinese, Incas, Cherokee, and Suevi, promoting all his men and women to officers of the new model army. He also falls in love with the king's beautiful niece, a warrior woman equal in grace and competence to the legendary Xena, Rylla, Ash, etc.

The king's lead advisor informs Rick of a conveniently available industrial plant, and after some negotiations (involving the arrest of several wandering strangers who intruded into the Security Zone) the owner of this facility, one Saurman, accepts the leadership of the Grand Commander Rick.

The reorganized and rearmed army of the Domain has to deal with a threat from one Sauron, a hostile and malevolent ruler to the east. Marching eastward to join with the old allies of the kingdom, the new model army begins rallying and reorganizing, including sending patrols into the No Man's Land with Sauron's domain to recover a powerful artifact, using the newly-developed airships.

In the climatic final battle, Sauron and his top nine aides confront Rick and the new model army amidst the

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A GRINDING OF THE MIND: Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity

Guy Lillian

You know, if the criminal law paid even half as handsomely in money as it does in fascination, I'd be a rich, rich man. It's my ill luck and worse judgment to fall in love with the branch of law that is most compelling to my nature – and least financially rewarding. Translation: I'm starving, but I love to go to work.

I guess it's because I'm a shallow middlebrow straight from the middle of the TV generation. (I also graduated in the *middle* of my law school class, though I was on Law Review: go figure.) Criminal law is *sexy*. It can make for great theatre. While occasionally a civil suit might form the basis of a good movie – **Erin Brockovich**, for instance, or **The Verdict** – criminal justice is almost always great viewing, no matter which side the story takes: an innocent man defending his skin against an unjust or misdirected system, or noble prosecutors trying to jail a dangerous miscreant before he can eat your children.

Even in real life, and even for jaded lawyers, criminal court has dramatic clout. There's a reason CourtTV exists; trials are *fun*, the best free show in town.

Of course, real court – either on the tube or live-in-your-face-in-person – have an additional appeal. It is real. A person's freedom and everybody's justice hang on the verdict. So entertainment value notwithstanding, criminal law is also *important* – in a fashion immediate, personal, and occasionally, final.

So I love the field because I'm drawn to its authentic drama – even when that drama is horrible. Even when the defendant is Andrea Yates.

You know Yates. She was a Houston housewife who drowned her five children last year while in a state of pathological depression and psychosis. Long diagnosed with severe post-partum



depression, she had recently been taken off the medication which had kept her condition under control. Her berserk savagery was accompanied by a blank, numb diffidence which made her madness all the more apparent. Even returning to her medication didn't bring her all the way back from the black hole of lunacy. Has there ever been a more clear case of legal Insanity?

Apparently – the jury rejected her Insanity plea and found her guilty as charged.

The verdict in the hideous case was wrong, in every way but one. Convicting a defendant of willful murder when she is certifiably, demonstrably psychotic flies against fundamental human decency. Unfortunately, the verdict fell right in with Texas' law. I cannot, for that reason, condemn the jury, as I do the O.J. panel or the pack of pinheads I watched acquit the Greensboro Klan/Nazi killers in 1979. Those people, in both cases, were bigots and imbeciles who let prejudice do their thinking for them. The Yates jurors simply gave over their wits to the prosecution's narrow view of the narrow Texas law. No, they are not contemptible, but neither are they admirable. They let themselves be manipulated toward a legal injustice.

What would have been just? Obviously, finding that Andrea Yates was insane.

Insanity is a funny word. We toss it about with an almost amiable recklessness. We all know what it means, or at least what common sense tells us it means: an insane person is one who misinterprets objective reality, and/or cannot control his emotions or actions. Alas, the term has a strict legal meaning that is far from self-evident, at least in Louisiana and, as far as I can tell, in Texas. Not self-evident, that is, if you can think far beyond January 20, 1843.

On that day a gentleman named Edward Drummond left 10 Downing Street, London, residence of his employer, the British Prime Minister. Drummond walked to the Admiralty, visited his brother's bank, and began to return to Downing Street. He was almost there when a young man walked up behind him, shoved the muzzle of a pistol into his back, and fired. Drummond died a few days later. His assailant, Daniel M'Naughten, entered history.

Said the *London Times*: "The prisoner ... is a young man, rather above the middle height, having the appearance of a mechanic, and was respectably dressed. ... He is rather thin, has a good colour, and his countenance betokened nothing ferocious or determined."

On his initial examination in the dock, M'Naughten was polite and articulate, and mostly, self-possessed. He claimed "the Tories in my native city have compelled me to do this." They followed him, he said, ruined his sleep and his health, and "have completely disordered my mind, and I am not capable of doing anything, compared to what I was."

M'Naughten's intelligence gave the *Times of London* pause. "[W]hatever of eccentricity there may have been in [his] behaviour, there has been ... such symptoms of foresight, prudence, deliberation, and design., that it can hardly have been the conduct of a madman...

"But the moment we attempt to divine any imaginable motive for an act so deadly ... all appears wrapt in impenetrable darkness."

(Le plus nom change ...)

M'Naughten's craziness was marked in the press from the outset, despite his external calm. "[He claimed] that there were devils in human shape seeking his life," they wrote. He was "evidently labouring under some hallucination of mind." Cracked or not, Drummond was dead, so M'Naughten went to trial for murder.

His lawyer's name was Cockburn. (Don't you just treasure British names?) His defense of Daniel M'Naughten is one of the great legal feats of our species.

"The question is not," he said, "... whether [M'Naughten] knew that he was killing another when he raised his hand to destroy him, although he might be under a delusion, but whether under that delusion of mind he did an act which he would not have done under any other circumstances, save under the impulse of the delusion which he could not control, and out of which delusion alone the act itself arose."

M'Naughten, Cockburn said, was a victim of "the wild impulses which his frantic imagination engender[ed]." Cockburn put on medical evidence – 1843 thought at its most progressive – that backed his thesis. An insanity expert testified that M'Naughten called his disturbance a "grinding of the mind," and that "if he took a ton of drugs it would be of no service to him."

Cockburn's defense was so strong that, instructing the jury, Lord Chief Justice Tindal practically ordered an acquittal on grounds of insanity. The manner in which he phrased his instruction, however, narrowed the point, and the precedent – to this day.

"[If] in balancing the evidence in your minds you think the prisoner capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, then he was a responsible agent and liable to all the penalties the law imposes. If not so ... then you will acquit the prisoner."

That narrowed the question, all right. On January 20, 1843, did Daniel M'Naughten know right from wrong when he shot Mr. Robert Drummond?

Of course, the jury acquitted M'Naughten. He was confined as a lunatic at Bethlem, and later at Broadmoor. He didn't recall shooting Drummond, but acknowledged that he had to have done something "very bad" to have been imprisoned. His paranoia grew even more severe. Whenever a stranger entered the common room, in his later life, he hid and knitted. M'Naughten survived his act by about 20 years. His case is still with us.

I cannot disparage M'Naughten as a legal precedent. At the time it was an exceptional humanitarian and intellectual leap far over the tenor of the past. Cockburn and Tindal brought the law regarding the culpability of the insane to a new pinnacle of understanding and compassion and intelligence. Sigmund Freud, after all, would not be born for another 13 years.

Even before Freud threw mankind's self-understanding for a loop, lawyers were trying to give insanity a broader meaning than Tindal's. The term "irresistible impulse" appears in an 1844 Massachusetts case, an expansion of M'Naughten and an alternative to its right/wrong standard. The precedent from this case lives on, too. "If ... the mind of the accused was in a diseased and unsound state, the question will be, whether the disease existed to so high a degree, that for the time being it overwhelmed the reason, conscience, and judgment, and whether the prisoner, in committing the [crime], acted from an irresistible and uncontrollable impulse."

The "irresistible impulse" standard had, therefore, two parts: (1) a mental disease or defect (2) causing an irresistible impulse. The key test was whether the defendant had lost the power to *choose*, not the power to *distinguish*, between right and wrong. It was a looser standard by far.

In 1871 the law threw the gates wide on the subject of insanity. A "New Hampshire test" grew out of a rationale that insanity was too big a problem to be discernible by a single right/wrong test. The state Supremes simplified the question to whether the crime "was the offspring or product of mental disease."

In *Durham v. U.S.*, the court said the single M'Naughten standard "cannot validly be applied in all circumstances," and that it would be better if "the fact finder should be free to consider all information advanced by relevant scientific disciplines." Translating to English, that meant the insanity could be proven by other criteria than knowing right from wrong. Perhaps with this new breadth in mind, the court added "mental defect" to "mental disease" as criteria.

"We use 'disease,'" wrote the court, "in the sense of a condition which is considered capable of either improving or deteriorating. We use 'defect' in the sense of a condition which is *not* capable of either improving or deteriorating, and which may be either congenital, or the result of injury, or the residual effect of a physical or mental disease."

The court did not, of course, intend the presence of *any* mental problem to be a license for misbehavior. The disease/defect had to *cause* the crime. "He [the crook] would still be responsible ... if there was no causal connection between [his] mental abnormality and the act."

Durham was a “but-for” analysis, shifting blame from the ill to the illness. It was a generous standard, *too* generous in many eyes. In 1961, Warren Burger, later an undistinguished Chief Justice for the United States, threw a lasso around its neck and tried to rein it in.

Noting that psychiatric professionals could fight for years over whether an emotional trait was “a mental disease or defect,” Burger maintained that understanding and control – *choice* – should be part of the insanity picture. The new determining question was, did “the accused lack capacity to exercise his will”?

This question would return an essential duty to the jury. Under **Durham**, the shrinks would decide if a defendant had a mental disease/defect and the jury would be bound by their determination. By the standard Burger advocated, the jury would have to evaluate the *effect* of that defect on the accused. Was the crime the *product* of his disease? Did the illness *cause* the act? This was the jury’s duty to answer, said Burger, not the psychiatrists’.

The rule won the day. In yet another milestone case, **U.S. v. Braumer**, 1972, a standard was reached which promised to protect lunatics from culpability – but *not* the merely evil. It’s the Model Penal Code, Section 4.01.

“A person is not responsible for his criminal conduct if at the time of such conduct as a result of mental disease or defect he lacks substantial capacity to appreciate the criminality of his conduct or to conform his conduct to the requirements of the law. The terms ‘mental disease or defect’ do not include an abnormality manifested only by repeated criminal or otherwise anti-social conduct.”

This standard was more restrictive than **Durham** yet more open than **M’Naughten**. **M’Naughten** required that the criminal be *completely* unable to appreciate the difference between right and wrong. What about losers who could tell that what they were doing was wrong, morally and legally, but could not restrain themselves? The term “substantial impairment” put to the jury the question of whether the defendant’s impairment caused him to lose his ability to (1) understand the illegality or wrongfulness of his act, or (2) obey the law.

Excluded were psychopaths or sociopathic personalities – in techno-legal jargon, “badasses”. The redactors of the Model Code didn’t want career criminals hiding behind a psychiatric diagnosis; making a living by crime may be crazy, but it isn’t insane.

The Model Penal Code is popular. Most states follow it. It seems a fair compromise between **Durham**’s breadth and **M’Naughten**’s narrowness. Still, this is a winger era, and a bullet pumped into the most prominent winger of all caused a revulsion against insanity defenses. When John Hinckley went on trial for shooting Ronald Reagan, *he* was found NGRI, and conservatives countrywide freaked. They didn’t *care* that the man who’d popped their demigod was insane. They wanted Blood.

What they got was the Federal Insanity Reform Act of 1984 – when else? – that tightened the Code standard a turn with an important qualification. The mental disease/defect, it said, had to be “severe.” Furthermore, the defect didn’t provide a *carte blanche* escape from criminal liability, but only “an affirmative defense,” which the *defendant* would have to prove before a jury could accept it. When you consider that 99 times out of a 100, if not more, the State bears the entire burden of proof in a criminal trial, that was a significant foreshortening of defense rights.

All this is well and good and utterly irrelevant to the backwater hole-in-the-ground where I live and practice. Louisiana’s standard for legal insanity has never risen beyond **M’Naughten**. Since before our sun burned bright in space, Louisiana Revised Statute 14:14 has read

"If the circumstances indicate that because of a mental disease or mental defect the offender was incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong with reference to the conduct in question, the offender shall be exempt from criminal responsibility."

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The conclusions of the statute are almost defiantly antiquated – it even rejects "irresistible impulse." Texas has a similarly worded law, which is why Andrea Yates – with an undeniable clinical history – had to face a potential death sentence as a murderer – instead of lifelong hospitalization as a diagnosed schizophrenic. I once sat in on the trial of a maniac who had murdered his children, and his Insanity plea, too, was rejected. But Brian Bibb's courtroom behavior contained so much blatant showmanship that even I thought he was faking. Yates wasn't faking. I have no explanation for her prosecution and conviction aside from official social sadism. **M'Naughten** was decided 13 years, I remind you, before the birth of Sigmund Freud. Why is it considered weak for society to implement the wisdom our civilization has accrued since 1843?

I've pled many clients Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity. (Actually, the correct plea adds a simple "Not Guilty" to the fore, signifying that the state has to prove the client committed the crime before the defense must prove that he was loony-tunes when he did it. There's a different "standard of proof" for the two sides, too, but you know enough.) I'll restrict my war stories to two. Both date from my early days as a public defender in Jefferson Parish.

One dude, whom I'll call Kirpen, was charged with a violation of La. R.S. 14:40.1: *terrorizing*. If you wonder, that means

"the intentional communication of information that the commission of a crime of violence is imminent or in progress or that a circumstance dangerous to human life exists or is about to exist, with the intent of causing members of the general public to be in sustained fear for their safety, or causing evacuation of a building, a public structure, or a facility of transportation, or causing other serious disruption to the general public."

Translation: *bomb scare*. That's just what the idiot did. He threatened to blow up his house with a *nuclear bomb* if the police summoned by his equally psychotic father didn't skedaddle. Kirpen's behavior was so bizarre that there was no question but that he was deep-down crazy. It had all been settled: the assistant district attorney – Danny Sherman, whom you might remember from "Born to Lose" in **Chall #7** – and my predecessor had stipulated to a judge trial, to be decided on the police report, that the judge would find the client Not Guilty and Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity, and off to the happy hospital the defendant would go. Trouble was, Kirpen would have none of it. He thought his mind was glistening clear, thank you, and anyone who thought him insane was obviously calling the kettle black. His previous attorney was removed from the case and luckless, luckless Lillian was assigned to stand up and look stupid at trial.

Kirpen was a flaming hemorrhoid of a client. He had me issuing instantan subpoenas to people he'd called during his delirium, thinking that their testimony would prove that he didn't have the statutory intent to cause sustained fear to members of the general public. Any discussion of his obvious paranoia was Out. Finally, in utter exasperation, I put Kirpen on the stand, let him tell his story, and watched Sherman slice him up on cross. ("Did you *really* think there was a nuclear bomb in your house?" "Well, uh, ah, no, but I, uhh, that is, ahh ..."). The jury did the only thing they could do, considering that he admitted to the crime, and the judge sentenced Kirpen to two years, with instructions that they make him take his medicine. That was the only reason he was in trouble in the first place.

(I wish I could report that Kirpen was better now, but upon his release, the poor clod committed suicide. He fashioned a makeshift gasmask and fastened it to a tank of industrial gas. Shame: good-looking kid, intelligent ... and *Martian* crazy. If he'd let us plead him NGRI, we might have been able to help him.)

My second case was probably the most interesting NGRI I ever fought. The guy's name was – or I'll say it was – Art Corona, and he was a bossy, bullying blowhard ... no lunatic. There was nothing intrinsically insane about his condition: epilepsy.

Corona was charged with First Degree Robbery, making the victim believe that you're armed with a dangerous weapon. He had hailed a taxi and asked the driver to take him to a secluded street. There he'd leapt over the seat, thrown his arm about the driver's neck, stuck a stiffened finger against his head and demanded money. The driver wasn't fooled by Corona's deadly digit. He dragged Art out onto the pavement, fed him a fast five to the chops and sat on him until the police arrived.

Corona claimed to remember nothing. At the time, he said, he was coming down from a seizure. At such a time the world, for him, was unbroken fog.

I did some research. Lo and behold, Corona had a case. Severe epileptics, emerging from the mind-zap that is their disease, go through a *post-ictal* period, when they can move and talk and appear normal, but from which they can bring no memories, and within which they can act without intent ... or knowledge of right or wrong. Corona's blood work upon his arrest indicated that he was in just such a state, and no one could claim that his act was anything but deranged. As trial began, I liked my chances.

Sherman began with the victim – if you can call such a tough and unaffected dude a victim. He described Corona as calm and seemingly straight during the incident, but when it came time for the defense case, my psychiatric expert repeated his contention that a "post-ictal" epileptic could both appear straight and think crooked. (Both Sherman and the judge made private fun of the word "post-ictal," and seemed surprised when I told them where to find it in *Silence of the Lambs*: they thought I'd made it up!)

Art's mother told a terrifying story of what her son was like in the throes of illness. He wallowed on the floor and when she tried to help him, grabbed at her breasts, not recognizing her for who she was. Bossy even now, Corona made me ask her if he was a good boy, despite all this ... which allowed Danny to list his many arrests for alcohol abuse and fighting. That hurt our case, but at least it shut him up ... until I put him on the stand.

I used Corona's arrogance to his advantage. I got him to read – begrudgingly – the diagnosis made by the doctors when he was last hospitalized. He read most of it, then lapsed into surly silence. "What *is* that last word?" I asked him. "I ... I can't tell," he squirmed. "Isn't it ... 'psychotic'?" It made the insanity plea seem less self-serving, I thought, to have to pry it out of my client like a bad tooth.



WR 84

It was a perfect Insanity defense. Even under Louisiana's antique M'Naughten nonsense, it fit. By a preponderance of the evidence, the requisite standard, I had shown that Corona had suffered from a mental disease or defect. I had proven that while under its onus, he did not know right from wrong. I had heard no contrary evidence that he was not post-ictal (thumbing my nose at Sherman) when he grabbed the cabbie. Beautiful; slam-dunk; we'd win.

We lost. I was green, Jefferson Parish jurors were (and remain) afraid of their shadows, and Corona was an obnoxious dweeb. But we got a second chance when the case came back on appeal. The judge had made the most basic of mistakes, and racked the wrong number of jurors. Since Danny didn't want to try the case again, he offered us a terrific plea bargain, and Art, cheerful, rested, and sane after a few months of incarceration – and regular medication – took it. He went right home. Everyone was happy.

I have a couple of NGRIs working now. One might hold up. The guy had been held incompetent to stand trial until he went on his medication. Now he's okay. *Before* he started his meds, his jailhouse mattress caught on fire. *Arson*, screams the D.A. Even if so, we already have psychiatric testimony that the man was nuts at the time. Well?

If only it were always that easy.

The worst crime you can think of happened again in April, 2002.

At ten o'clock one evening, a man showed up at the St. John Parish Sheriff's Office in LaPlace, Louisiana. I'll give his name as Roy Logan. He designed piping for an engineering firm. He was having onerous financial difficulties and his house had been foreclosed upon for the second time, and he had filed Chapter 13 bankruptcy. He had never been arrested before, but he had been discharged from the Navy for psychiatric reasons, and he'd been to seven different psychiatrists in Louisiana. When my boss interviewed him, he claimed that he'd been diagnosed with learning disabilities and schizophrenia. He was addicted to marijuana, he said, and popped Xanax a couple of times a day, for stress.

He had come to the detective bureau because, at 5:30 that morning, some 17 hours before, he had slit the throats of his sleeping wife and their sleeping children. Apparently he evinced no remorse. He simply said that he wanted to die.

One morning very shortly after the crimes, Judge Sterling – the same jurist who sat on my murder case (see *Challenger* #15) – held a special hearing for enrollment of counsel. I attended and took a look at Roy Logan. He was about 5'8", in decent shape, with thinning, slicked-back brown hair. He sat alone and said little to the lawyer his father had hired, and although he swung around in his seat once to see who was in the court room, he ignored his surviving family when they tried to tell him that they loved him. Maybe he blamed them for not pitching in when he was drowning. Who knows – you try to read such a mind; I can't.

Judge Sterling assigned him an even case number, in his division. If the private lawyer hadn't signed on, the case would have fallen to me. All of the above would have become, once again, much more than a mental exercise, because I would have had no choice: Not Guilty and Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity. It's the only possible plea to a crime like that.

You always defend the undefended. Sometimes, you must defend the defenseless. Occasionally – rarely, thank heaven – you must defend the *indefensible*.

Continued from page 40

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ruins of the allied capital Minas Tirith. "Prof" and Nick work together to hot-wire the recovered artifact into a powerful weapon, using an obscure variant of Asimov's Principle, and the burst of energy generated slays Sauron and all his aides. Teri's latest lover, the king's nephew Eomer, dies in her arms, Rick marries Princess Eowyn and proclaims himself Emperor, and all is well.

In the second trilogy, Morgoth, the superior of Sauron, emerges from his stronghold in the north. The Empire has developed a technological and industrial base sufficient to arm the new model army with flintlock muskets, but Morgoth has a bigger and badder army. They swarm south and engulf the Empire, bringing ruin and devastation. Finally, in the ruins of Minas Tirith, the survivors confront Morgoth and his top aides in one final climatic battle, where the newly-produced Whitworth rifles enable the Empire to pull off a victory. The prince Faramir, Teri's latest lover, dies in her arms. Rick annexes the mountains and forests of the north to the Empire.

In the third trilogy, Melko, the boss of Morgoth, emerges from his stronghold in the south. The Empire has developed a technological and industrial base sufficient to arm the new model army with rifled muskets, but Melko has an even bigger and badder army. They swarm north and engulf the Empire, bringing ruin and devastation. Finally in the ruins of Minas Tirith, the survivors confront Melko and his top aides in one final climatic battle, where the newly-formed Shaolin Kung Fu Fight Corps of martial artists enables the Empire to pull off a victory. The former Ranger Strider, Teri's latest lover, dies in her arms. Rick annexes the harbors and fields of the south to the Empire.

In the fourth trilogy, Tauron, the son of Sauron, emerges from his stronghold in the far east. The Empire has developed a technological and industrial base sufficient to arm the new model army with machine guns, but Tauron has an even more bigger and badder army. They swarm west and engulf the Empire, bringing ruin and devastation. Finally in the ruins of Minas Tirith, the survivors confront Tauron and his top aides in one final climatic battle, where the newly developed nuclear weapon (based on a description in a novel found in one soldier's reading unit memory bank) enables the Empire to pull off a victory. Chief Industrialist Saruman, Teri's latest lover, dies in her arms. Rick annexes the plains of the far east to the Empire.

In the fifth trilogy . . . but I think you have the idea by now.



Illo by Kurt Erichsen



SCHIRIH '99.

THE ZINE DUMP

Publications received (between November 4, 2001, and May 25, 2002; a very, very few unreceived titles italicized this time. Sorry if any of these notices seem stale or shallow.

Fandom is producing fine zines far more quickly than a poor faned can review them!

*This section of **Challenger** is dedicated to the memory of **Bruce Pelz**.*

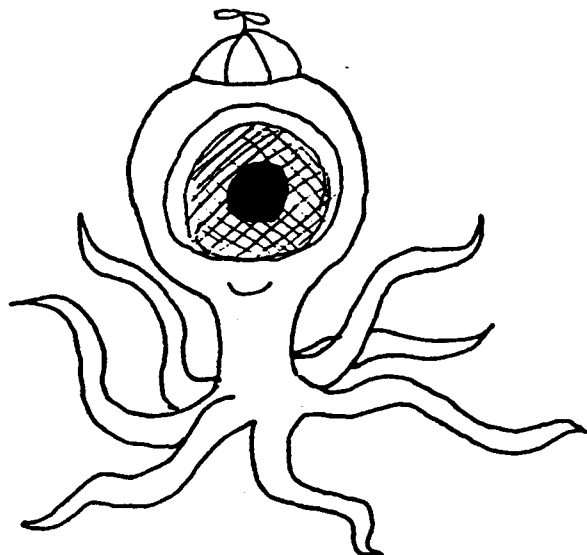
Adverse Camber / Inconsequential / Talking Shit / Joie de Vivre / Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpey, Worcs., DY12 1NP UK / yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk / trade / Four zines by the editrix of **Barmaid**, all revolving around different conventions (Corflu, Secon, Eastercon, Novacon), all consisting of natter about Yvonne's eventful life. **Adverse** deals with the loss of her job, **Talking** with 9-1-1, **Inconsequential** and **Joie** with Brit fandom in convention; the booze and camaraderie seem an enormous help for our girl. It's an upsetting time for one of our favorite fanzine folk, and of course we wish her quick goodness. As an aside, we must salute Martin

Tudor, whose fanzine service is responsible for the handsome reproduction of these zines, and Dave Hicks, whose spiffy illos adorn three of them. I wanna couple of "Brit Fan Barbies"!

Alexiad Vol. 1 No. 2 / Joe & Lisa Major, 1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville KY 40204-2040 / jtmajor@iglou.com / \$1 or. / Joe Major's book reviews are the best thing about **Fosfax**, and while the great political genzine is in hiatus, Joe & Lisa are publishing them as a separate zine. The works he touches upon range all over the map - a collection of Sherlock Holmes pastiches, two tomes on the

Rosenbergs, an account of the Shackleton voyage – it's everywhere this year – Turtledove alternate history, and Hugo nominee **American Gods**. I most enjoyed Joe's fannish autobiography; he and I could have met at MidAmeriCon in '76! I must admit to missing the point of the Conan/Macchiavelli parody that ends the issue, but if you hit yourself on the head with a book and hear a hollow sound, it's probably not the book that's empty. My fault, in other words.

Angry Thoreauan #28 / Rev. Randall Tin-ear, P.O. Box 3478, Los Angeles CA 90028 / revtinear@angrythoreauan.com / www.angrythoreauan.com / \$5 first class, U.S. / "Doing our best to make things worse since 1987." Can Tin-ear blame me for my "misconception" that this zine has "a nihilist tone"? The self-conscious nastiness of the cover – depicting depraved cannibals, for such is this issue's theme – reflects a subtext of aching despair at the human condition that runs through the whole issue. (That doesn't exclude humor – viz Mary Field's "Placentophagy" and the *recipes* that accompany it, and most of the fiction has a funny tinge to its cringe.) I always welcome **Thoreauan**; Tin-Ear is intelligent and talented and serious, and the zine is well-written and effectively, if grotesquely, illustrated, and its issues need confrontation. I hope to keep getting the zine despite my stubborn inability to do just that: get it. But it seems to me that hurt such as cries out from these pages is asking to be argued with, and answered. Men ran up into the burning World Trade Center to rescue complete strangers, and a woman I'd known for 25 years verified my life last year by agreeing to share it. These things answer a lot of life's horror for me.



Ansible #171-7 / 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. / Dave admits to a touch of exhaustion in one of these issues, but **Ansible** perks along as always, with varied views of **A.L.**, Mike Moorcock missing the point of **LotR**, awards of many sorts, too many eulogies, Thog's marvelous Masterclass – the whole ball of wax, at least British wax. #177 contains a nice obit for Ray Lafferty.

Baryon Magazine 85 / Barry R. Hunter, P.O. Box 3314, Rome GA 30164-3314 / baryon@bellsouth.net / www.geocities.com/BaryonMag / \$1 / Horror fiction dominates this fine Southern reviewzine. Its beautiful Ruth Thompson cover evokes a sad vampire tale by itself. Books by King, my beloved Quinn Yarbrow, and Clive Barker, hearkening back to when he was splitting the horror envelope from within (**Books of Blood**). But many genres are touched upon: there's even a Beatles book!

Batteries Not Included Vol. VIII #11-12, Vol. IX #1-5 / Richard Freeman, 513 N. Central Ave., Fairborn OH 45324 NEW / \$3@ / As he always does, former porn performer Richard Pacheco brightens Vol. IX #1 with his informed and articulate perspective, this time through an interview with senior porn queen Seka, coupled -- heh -- with recollections of their first professional ... encounter. In the latest number, his subject is the pensive Porsche Lynn, whose doubts about the "adult" world are treated with Pacheco's usual thoughtfulness and respect. He's one of a number of fine writers who tackle the world of videotape pornography in **BNI**. David Steinberg's review of **Strip City**, for instance, is ace. Every issue is unapologetic – Dave Cummings' letters about his exploits as porn pro are mind-boggling; that guy is older than *me* – and enlightening, and for the serious reader, challenging: it's a fascinating exercise to try to read behind the words for what porn is really all about.

Blue Lights #69/70 / Vicki Werkley, 16563 Ellen Springs Dr., Lower Lake CA 95457 (starwerk@aol.com); Todd Andrews, 6736 N. Commercial Ave., Portland OR 97217 (starman@pobox.com) / sample issue \$6 / The Official Newsletterzine of Spotlight Starman International, now in its 15th year. A healthy 50 pages deep, this is an exuberant example of media fannishness. The club hosts a biennial Starman Family-Con, and this zine boasts poetry contests, news and bio sketches of members, trip reports (Janeen Schouten's "Excellent North American Adventure" is given much space) and lots, lots more. Focused a bit narrowly for my tastes, but the enthusiasm is enviable.

Books Read, 2001 / William Breiding, P.O. Box 170486, San Francisco CA 94117 / trade / Not just a

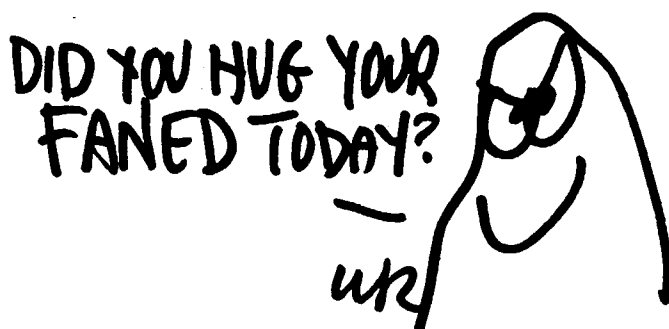
listing, but an involved and thoughtful set of reviews by a guy who pays attention when he runs his eyes across a page. I knew and admired Poul Anderson for decades, but Bill brings a fascinating political perspective to his work that I managed to miss. (I still like "No Truce with Kings" much more than he does.) There's a lot else; the sad but consistent end of H. Beam Piper, Algis Budrys (whose **Rogue Moon** was part of one of the best Hugo ballots in history; it could only lose to **A Canticle for Leibowitz**); Breiding is a unique wit whom books touch and affect deeply; he's a boon companion on a journey through a book-full year.

Boomer Flats Gazette Nos. 2-4 / Dan Knight, 16631 Kennedy Road, Caledon ON LON-1C0 Canada / Priceless chapbooks devoted to the work and worth of Raphael Aloysius Lafferty, Patrick of Tulsa and author of **Space Chantey**, received with the article "Human" to which I refer you. Oh! There is such wonderfulness here! Poetry (under Ray's pseudonym Mary Mystic O'Trassy), essays, even an unpublished-hitherto story; Dan reports that he published 15 books and chapbooks of Ray's over a 7-year run (I want all); that there are 11 novels still unpublished and he has one, **Iron Tongue of Midnight**, press-ready. "I never had customers," he says of his Lafferty-publishing career. "I had new friends. They sent me news of their families, exotic snack foods and gifts of foreign publications. We had 'community.' An uncommon commodity these days ... Ray's passing seems to have shaken the dust from the rafters. People are checking in from all over." And Dan seems to be planning another **Boomer**! Yes! Please! Praise heaven and belay that supernova! There is Lafferty yet unread!

Brooklyn! No. 35-36 / Fred Argoff, 1800 Ocean Pkwy #B-12, Brooklyn NY 11223-3037 new address / \$10 per 4 quarterly issues / I wanted to meet Fred when Rosy and I visited New York this Christmas; I imagined his joining our jaunt across the great bridge which bears the name of his borough ... and his fanzine! Next time. This issue includes a funny photographic guide to Brooklyn, **Wisconsin**, a passionate paean to Brooklyn baseball (I'm so old I remember when the Dodgers had *soul*), explains the genesis of the Bay Ridge name, argues with nameless foes over the borough border. The 36th number mentions another zine by Fred with a NYC theme, subways. Lay it on me, brother! I want to see it if it's anything like this really nifty zine: you can't leave **Brooklyn!** without sharing its love of Brooklyn.

Chicon 2000 Memory Book / Was the '00 worldcon my favorite convention of all time? Could be – and not just because I attended as a Hugo nominee. I came away from it with a fiancée, too, remember! (I have to correct Mike Glycer's account of my meeting with Rosy, as reported in his article here. I didn't attend her

daddy's epic Apollo 11 pre-launch party in 1969; Joe introduced us at MidAmeriCon in '76.) Photos, data, awards awards awards ... Chicon 2000 was a glorious event, and this zine is a fun remembrance of it.



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The Cinderella Vegetable / Vanessa Schnatmeier, 1122 Hudson Street, Redwood City CA 94061 / Righteously funny LASFAPazine, postmailed after the LA apa's 302nd disty. Her misery over an infected wisdom tooth is assuaged by hilarious reprints of "valid Shakespearean syntax" ("You are as worried as the sum of yourself and the difference between my small smooth hamster and my nose. Speak your mind!")

Conferring with Earthquakes #8-9 / Universe Falling Down / Brin-Marie McLaughlin, 247 19th Avenue Apt. 6, San Francisco CA 94121-2353 / brininsf@aol.com / <http://members.aol.com/brininsf/index.html> / "Merry meet from San Francisco," Brin says. And so it is, a nifty perzine with happy natter about Wings – did she know Paul McCartney was in another band before that? – jazz memories ("Sing ho! For the life of a bear"?), homeboy Barry Bonds' HR record ... but interrupted by 9-1-1. She writes during that awful time for comfort, and sharing the days with her is itself comforting. In the later issue the comfort needed is personal. First, she tells the story of her turbulent friendship with musicians Andy Ball and Vincent Clarke, which she laments in the one-sheet **Universe**. But then gears shift, real life intervenes in its ugly and important way, and Brin must compellingly relate the story of the demise of her brave father (born April 22nd, the same day as my dad). A beautiful and poignant photo of the gentleman and his daughter, then an infant, bids him the fondest possible farewell. I'm sure he'd be proud of it.

ConJose Offline and Progress Report 3 / P.O. Box 61363, Sunnyvale CA 94088-1363 / <http://www.conjose.org> / Info on the forthcoming worldcon, heavy on the masquerade and ads for the even further forthcoming worldcons, a list of new members, and the Hugo nominating ballot! Member

A0124 had his in weeks before the deadline! Offline carries the room reservation form; it physically hurts to think that we probably won't be there.

ConNotations Vol. 12 Issue 1-2 / Stephanie Bannon, c/o CASFS, P.O. Box 62613, Phoenix AZ 85082-2613 / leigh@casfs.org or dyer@maricopa.edu / six issues for \$12 mailed bulk rate, \$18 first class / This media-rich tabloid publication of the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society features a short story this issue, the winner of a contest, as well as a LosCon report, video reviews, book thoughts (long section on *LotR*), plus movie and TV news. The April/May issue reviews anime, the finale of *The X-Files*, lots of SF (one of *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang* appears, 25 years after it won the Hugo). Excellent "Pro News" column, and frankly exciting news about *Terminator 3*. An enormous workload, this bi-monthly zine; I can't help but think that such energy in a club will find egress in another worldcon bid soon.

Contact! Spirits of Things Past No. 4 / Dick & Leah Smith, 410 W. Willow Rd., Prospect Heights IL 60070-1250 / rhes@enteract.com / "Not available for the usual, but for \$10 to benefit Ditto and FanHistoriCon" / "72 fans find fandom" and tell their stories in this marvelous collection, responses to a detailed questionnaire from the editors of *Stet*. I wish I'd responded and been part of this epic publication, which is rich with reminiscence. Many are the paths to fandom, and not equal is its reward, but for these 72, it's been a spiffy skiffy journey. **Contact!** is also spiffy: probably the class of the Zine Dump this time.

The Cosmic Hairdryer #1-2 / Max, 8 Ryeland Close, Ancells Farm, Fieet, Hampshire, GU51 2TZ U.K. / max@hawkida.com / FAAN-winning new entry on the busy Brit zine scene, creative and literate, with a touch of amusing irony. Max's opening issue opens with a witty fannish parody of pyramid schemes, introduces the author/editrix through a series of pointed anecdotes through the years, reviews *Memento*, aught-one's most original film, and in a closing tale of familiar misery, disses and-discusses her horrible career as a sandwich maker. (The day I spent making salad dressing in 1979 rate as the most disgusting eight hours I've ever spent outside of the urologist's office.) Max attaches a playing card to every copy: I got the six of diamonds. Issue two is thickened by impressed LOCs, interestingly answered by *footnotes*. She hails "Britconia" in a ripe parody of tourist guide palaver, and explains her chosen name, which she takes very seriously. It's fun watching Max feel her way into fanzining; hope she follows her zine across the Pond sometime soon for a worldcon or a Corflu or a Ditto.

Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi no. 8 / Andrew C. Murdoch, 508-6800 Westminster Hwy, Richmond B.C. V7C 1C5 Canada / raven@wolf.spynet.com / t.u. or \$2@ / Each copy of this spiffy fanzine is personally autographed by the editor; whether this makes them more valuable as collector's items or less is for someone else to say. Anyway, a great fannish hoax is herein exposed: though Andrew continues to claim that he is *young*, he also admits to *being married*. I call for investigations. His wife's admiration for Steve King leads him to attempt a legal download of the story King published solely on-line; which leads to all sorts of computer trouble. Murdoch reviews a slew of publications - **Challenger** is a "phone book of a 'zine" - including one by an Ozzy gull even younger than himself. Hmmp! She hasn't sent a copy of her zine to *me*: age discrimination! He reviews *Planet of the Apes* (the novel; how do they explain the moon in the book?), the vital Canadian convention, V-Con, prints a "recipe" for Liquid Nitrogen Ice Cream, and has a response to 9-1-1 that borders on the (dare I say it?) profound. I like his lettercol title, "Questions, Comments, Observations, Death Threats", and am impressed by his art. Even Scott Patri's illos are growing on me.

DASFax Vol. 33, No. 11-Vol. 34, No. 5 / Tay & Rhonda Hageman, 4080 S. Grant Street, Englewood CO 80110 NEW / slip.stick@mindspring.com NEW / http://www.dasfa.org / Nice variety to the Denver clubzine covers, with Gail Barton, Alans Jones & White, Sheryl Birkhead among those represented. The incredible generosity of our fan artists is *the* great reason fanzine fandom is enjoying a renaissance. Good contents, too, amidst the usual club trappings, with Sourdough Jackson's comments on computer viruses an absolute necessity, but I must tsk-tsk the *former* editorial staff: the third part of a worldcon report by Leigh Kimmel is not only repeated two issues in a row, it's also duplicated under Fred Cleaver's name where his apt book reviews should appear. Surely the high Colorado altitude was at fault, and the Hagemans seem prone to no such faux pax. Rhonda's editorial in the penultimate issue is a delight.

Data Dump 58 / Steve Sneyd, Hilltop Press, Almondbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 8PB U.K. / \$4 / Handwrought listing of SF poetry anthologies and collections, received with several very handsome booklets of SF verse, including a definite keeper, *War of the Words*. This "Sampler of SF Fanzine Pomes" contains works by several, including John Brunner. **DD** itself begins, as so much seems to lately, with sadness, as Steve laments the passage of

Keith Allen Daniels, who shared his passion for science fiction set to meter.

Death Ship / Violet Jones, P.O. Box 55336, Hayward CA 94545 / at editor's discretion / The editor of **Spunk!** brings a thick legal-size publication of anarchist zine reviews, with exhortations that amateur publishing is "the last existing exercise of Freedom of the Press for the individual in America." Jones recently endured an encounter with a librarian fretful that zines such as those she reviews, and planned to discuss in a public presentation, might contain pornographic material; I'm not surprised; we're in a censorial age. Long exchanges about violence with Jeffrey Deboo in this zine, a lot of intelligence, a lot of anger, a sad sense of isolation. I sent her the last couple of **Challengers**, and she seems surprised that despite all of our talk about spaceships and comic books, SF zines can occasionally avoid being "geeky." Sure they can, just as anarchist zines or paste-up personal zines can, and I'll explain why. SF is only the unifying element in fandom. We're here to meet other people and become known to them: for social interaction. Our silly enthusiasms serve that end. There is more to a science fiction fan than his tastes in the genre, and although those tastes are a perspective we want to share in our publications, what we're really sharing is our *selves*. So I, to use a convenient example, write about my wedding, my career, my politics, my reaction to 9-1-1 and Columbine ... and I read other zines to hear others write about *their* families, *their* 9-1-1 experiences, *their* lives. We are in this hobby to reach out to one another and to become known to one another, and to reassure one another person to person that our passage on this planet is a journey worth taking. That's why both Jones and I celebrate the zine as a vital element in the freedom of the press.

DeepSouthCon 40 / P.O. Box 4857, Huntsville AL 35815-4857 / Nice packet of info about the '02 DSC, at which Allen Steele, Connie Willis, Vinnie Di Fate and the Lynches are to be honored. Ad rates, lots of maps (visitors to Huntsville should *live* at the Space Center), Rebel and Phoenix Awards; DSC is my home convention, so see you there!

De Profundis 347-351 / Marty Cantor, c/o LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood CA 91601 / www.lasfs.org / Aught-two gets off to a righteous start for L.A.'s epic SF club, as shown by this monthly newzine. So-La-La Con, next May, is heralded. Epic minutes, including a tribute to the still-ubiquitous Bill Rotsler, are much more diverting than they have any right to be, Ted White's fanzine reviews are up-to-date which is more than anyone could say of **Challenger's**. A eulogy for "a kind man, a gentle man," John Stanley

Woolston, shows the value an institution like LASFS puts on its people.

The Devniad 79D / Bob Devney, 25 Johnson Street, N. Attleboro MA 02760 / One of the most reliable and enthusiastic fan writers working matters on-line about **Lord of the Rings** and Boskone, capturing the flavor of that convention in a slew of sharp quotes from attendees various, including Neil Gaiman. Why doesn't Boston fandom get behind this guy and win him a Hugo?

Dewachen / Trinlay Khadro, P.O. Box 240934, Brown Deer WI 53224-0934 / trade / SFPazine from a delightful and artistically gifted young lady. Her attitude is pure Green Party, which suits a person from a town named Brown Deer, don't you think? Accompanied by some neat photos of Trinlay (I guess it's her) and her ferret, Elric.



Ephemeris Vol. One Nos. 1-3 / Keith Russell, 1835 N. 50th Ct., Kansas City MO 66102-1515 / syntheticsky@hotmail.com / Newly-renamed clubzine of the Kansas City SF&F Society, in a pocket format, its contents are what one expects from a local publication - club minutes, chatter, with some fine movie reviews interspersed. I particularly like Paul Burns' and David Sooby's takes on **Brotherhood of the Wolf**, an extremely intriguing French film of the past year. What was that thing, anyway? Upcoming cons are listed, movies shown ... say, KCSSFS; didn't I hear rumors of a worldcon bid from this, the birthplace of the modern event?

Erg 156 / Terry Jeeves, 66 Red Scar Dr., Scarborough, N. Yorks. YO12 5RQ U.K. / erg40@madasafish.com / Terry opens '02 and Erg's 43rd year with another sprightly issue, looking back on the tradition of mad scientists in the pulps – he's right; none better than H.G. Wells, whose Invisible Man was surely one of the maddest of the lot – and on Charles Fairey's unusual aircraft designs. Wish they'd built the Fairey Rotodyne. Penelope Fandergaste – I believe that name. I do! I do! -- chimes in with impressions from Harry Potter, and there are many good LOCs. Terry's finally giving us the addresses of his correspondents; hooray. 43 years of Erg! I'm almost that old! *kofkof*



WALK SOFTLY AND CARRY A MEGAWAT LASER

Ethel the Aardvark No. 99-102 / Sean-Paul Smith, 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 / This one sports a cute Rinaldo cover by Phil Wlodarczyk, a photo of the radiant Samantha Whitehead, lots of pics of club nuttiness (Twister, Lego nights, etc.), a complaint by the President about limited library space, and a mammoth section on **Enterprise**, reprinting a big slug from **TV Guide**. A correspondent from SpacedOut Inc. demands that Trek feature a gay character. The following issue celebrates a couple of major milestones for the Ozzies: the club's 50th (!) Anniversary and **Ethel's** 100th. With it, Sean-Paul Smith surrenders the editorship, with cover shots (unidentified) of early club members, a funny PVP strip by Scott Kurtz, and a

Ditmar ballot. Into the editorship with #101 comes Emily McLeay, who focuses on a profile of, and article by, member James Allen, a piece by Elaine Foster on Nanotechnology, which sounds like something out of **Mork & Mindy** (na-nu-na-nu, get it? hahaha), a squib on Costumecon, more good reviews, and more plans for the club's 50th anniversary. #102, to bring us up to date, gives a short history of MSFC from Alan Stewart, a long appreciation of the club by Danny Heap, and as always, good Ed McCordle reviews.

Fanzine Fanatique Autumn 2001 / Keith & Rosemary Walker, 6 Vine St., Greaves, Lancaster LA1 9WF U.K. / FanzineFanatique@aol.com / Thirty years Keith's been at this, and he lists some pretty outre publications. I'm always astonished at the breadth of the amateur publishing hobby. There's even a Lum'n'Abner Society newsletter. Keith wants to broaden his own scope to include e-zines.

File 770 140-141 / Mike Glycer, 705 Valley View Drive, Monrovia CA 91016 / MGlycer@compuserve.com / \$8 for 5 issues / The reigning Hugo winner for two years in a row opens in an idyllic account of Mike's season of languor at Yosemite, where his wife is teaching. Suffering is good for the soul. The usual goodies follow: fannish news (awards, Gordon Dickson's estate, etc.), scientific tidbits (it's hard to work up much angst over Pluto's atmosphere), a long and exhaustively detailed MilPhil report (in which I am kindly quoted, only I didn't say we panelists had to drink from "goat pens," but *hoofprints*), and two very evocative pages about 9-1-1. Ed Green's piece is every bit as harrowing as his account of the L.A. riots in **No Award**. there is, of course, much more, obits and LOCs and excellent artwork by Taral, Erichsen and others, but ... then comes the next issue, which blows its predecessor away. We hear all about Sierra, Mike and Diana's newly adopted daughter, who gets a fabulous welcome not only from her proud papa but also from a beautiful color cover by Alan White – the best and happiest work I've ever seen from him. Inside, many con reports on Corflu and other fannish meets, as well as nervous reportage on ConJose, which seems to be suffering from the same committee panic as most other worldcons I've followed, and more of the usual goodies as described above. In addition, Mike reprints several of his better covers – prime quality stuff.

Flashback no 4 & Special Holiday Issue / Jerry Page & Jerry Burge, 193 Battery Place NE, Atlanta GA 30307 / jerryburge@mindspring.com / \$5 / The grand Jerrys – two of the founders of Southern fandom – present more tributes to the great pulp magazines. The writing is conversational, entertaining and

enlightening, filled with love for the genre; the artwork, in addition, is downright astonishing. The special Christmas issue, especially, is a toothsome Christmas package. The Santa cover is so reminiscent of Edd Cartier (profiled last **Challenger**) in humor and quality that I was surprised to find it was by Ron Wilber. Diana Sharples – **Chall** 9's cover artist – contributes a fine bacover, too. But what vaults the illos into the celestial city of delight is the artistic subject matter: ladies of Southern fandom. Wendy Webb, Dee Jarvis, Lillian Douby, and, of course, Lillian's mother Mary Ann van Hartesveldt are among the lovely people lovingly depicted. Yeah, we rebel boys is lucky.

For the Clerisy Vol. 8 No. 44 / Brant Kresovich, P.O. Box 404, Getzville NY 14068-0404 / kresovich@hotmail.com / \$2, LOC, or trade / I wonder if Getzville is near Toronto? Mehopes we'll get to meet Brant at the worldcon there, if so. Here is another intelligent publication centered about the glory of books. His take on **The Unbearable Lightness of Being** opens with a sentiment I readily identify with: "airplanes make me mental." I, too, value weight and solidity. On to Patrick O'Brian's sea novels – was it the van Hartesveldts who praised these to me? – and the Coen Bros.' **Man Who Wasn't There**, a neglected masterwork from last year. The terrible Christmas snow in Buffalo, which we encountered, segues into zine reviews (a couple unfamiliar) which segues into Plato, a review of a ghastly tale of skin experimentation, a long (2/5 of the zine) and superb lettercol, and his 9-1-1. His memories of Latvia on that terrible day teach lessons about "the illusion of security and safety," and his final paragraph on the subject is exceptional: "*Terrorists and killers exist. Accidents happen all the time. Disease is a given. It's existentially retarded to worry about the fickle finger of fate deciding it's our turn to be in the path of a drunk driver, a distracted pharmacist, a meth-crazed robber with a knife, or a virus that turns one's muscles into ice. Not much to do but forget about having things under control and being able to do something, anything. Embrace change lest it throttle you. Be alert and resilient and compassionate. Laugh. Read.*"

For Dickheads Only / Dave Hyde, P.O. Box 611, Kokomo IN 46903 / I suppose I should give up hoping for another issue of this once-superb publication devoted to the works of Philip K. Dick, but dammit, now all we have are movies like *Impostor* and *Minority Report*...

Fosfax / Timothy Lane c/o FOSFA, P.O. Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281 / \$3 or. / I understand money troubles are afflicting fandom's best right-wing journal. Guys, if I had it, you'd share it.

Head! 4 / Doug Bell & Christina Lake, 12 Hatherley Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8QA U.K. / head@headwest.fsnet.co.net / A super article by Simon Ounsley opens this energetic publication, on the crisis of conscience engendered by his shaking hands with Tony Blair. How does a genuine liberal handle a politico who supports your agenda – but with compromise? Do you cheer the half-a-loaf he's won or condemn him for not coming home with more? I voted (happily) for Al Gore, so my own stand on the issue should be plain. Next, Tim Jones talks about life close to the **LotR** set; **Fellowship of the Ring** won the British Academy Award, demonstrating the superior taste of the far side of the Pond. (Last time we saw the film they'd slid coming attractions from **The Two Towers** into the print. I clawed at the screen for more, more, more.) D. West's rather mordant Eastercon cartoons give faces to many Brit names and Victor Gonzalez's TAFF experience, and Christina provides a written account. All kinds of people I want to meet were there – Yvonne, Sandra, Alison Scott ... someday, someday. Doug Bell brings his readership along on a surfing expedition (yes, a Brit, surfing), Nick Walters goes to a **Dr. Who** event in L.A., and Pete Crump, in "Pigs Might", takes a ride in a *jet fighter*. Braver lad he than I! So is Spencer Ostraczci, wearing a Toilet Hat – does he wear the thing or simply describe it? Do I want to know?

Instant Message 695-9 / NESFA, P.O. Box 809, Framingham MA 01701-0809 / <http://www.nesfa.org/> / Semi-monthly newsletter of the Boston megacub.. #695 is but a single sheet. The followup issue, however, is 10 pages worth of Boskone 39 preparation. Every department seems up to snuff and together, a great confidence-builder for the '04 worldcon. Publishing, conventions, and fun, goofy meetings, too – NESFA is into everything. I can't find editorial credit, but **IM** is well done and all business ... except for the fine eulogy for Damon Knight that begins #699.

Jomp Jr. #21 / Richard A. Dengrove, 2651 Arlington Dr. #302, Alexandria VA 22306 / dengrove@erols.com / <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/7076/> / t.u. / Theme for this issue, Atlantis, as one of the most consistent of **Chall** pals devotes most of his 21st number to the myth, reality and purpose of the fabled lost continent. As always with Dengrove's stuff, it's fearfully well-researched and entertaining, roaming from Plato and Solon to Haggard and Captain Nemo. Sprague deCamp gave a speech about Atlantis at the DeepSouthCon in 1976, and Donovan sang about the legend; now I can say I understand. "Way down / be-low the ocean / where I wanna be / she may be ..."

The Knarley Knews #91-2 / Henry Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton WI 53024-2017 / welch@msoe.edu or LethaWelch@aol.com / \$1.50 @ / A wow-inducing yankee doodle dragon by Teddy Harvia begins one of Knarl's best issues yet. The editor "spumes" about Ditto, which I am anxious to attend, Jan Stinson reviews a Robert Charles Wilson novel, Rodney Leighton reviews **No Award** and **Twink**, Sue Welch riffs on lions, and Todd Bushlow chatters on about his 20th year high school reunion (A beloved lady from my high school class, a mere 34 years after graduation, recently found me through Classmates.com and visited Nawlins. She told me all her friends thought I was cute. "Now you tell me," I replied.) The 92nd issue opens with a grand Alan White cover (is there another kind?). Knarl editorializes about the flu (for joy!), his hockey team (insane sports they play in Wisconsin), and a nifty trip to Vail for a few skiing swoops on the slopes. More fine contributors - Charl Proctor, Gene Stewart, Rodney Leighton, Sue Welch -- weigh in on theatre, patriotism, fanzines and Uganda, respectively, followed by a jolly lettercol featuring familiar, friendly names.

Langford Meets Swamp Thing / Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU, U.K. / A fun account of Dave's trip to Florida for Tropicon/FanHistoricon in 2000. He claims to have read *Ulysses* in one sitting on the flight over, arriving with but ten pages of the last chapter to go. I know that book: it's about Ireland. The touristy stuff makes for enjoyable reading, as it makes for enjoyable experiencing; I envy Dave his visit to the Bahia Mar marina and the home of Travis McGee. The convention itself was no less diverting. I should have gone, but my '00 Florida excursion had to wait for the next shuttle launch. Alec Holland didn't show.



The Leighton Look / Rodney Leighton, R.R. #3, Tatamagouche, N.S. B0K 1V0 Canada / Occasional

letter and letter-of-comment substitute, right off the top of Rodney's head. Sometimes bitter, sometimes wildly complimentary (see his LOC in this present **Challenger**), sometimes ribald. Yes, Rodney, every woman in New Orleans is a babe, and I, too, never tire of looking at photos of my wife. Rod's looking for "wrestling related books with some sexual aspects" to review in **Batteries Not Included**. Reminding me of one of my favorite dirty jokes from college ...

Living Free No. 122 / Jim Stumm, Hiler Branch, Box 29, Buffalo NY 14223 / 6 issues/\$12, \$15 outside North America / Unusual but interesting futurist publication, given over mostly to a fascinating review and synopsis of Marshall Savage's **Millennial Project**, which apparently runs rampant with extrapolation and imaginative ideas. Reprinted concepts for cities at sea and moon colonies are illustrated, and later debated with correspondent Paul Doerr. Hard to get a handle on this very different pub, but also hard to set down once I started reading.

Lofgeornost #65-67 / Fred Lerner, 81 Worcester Ave., White River Junction VT 05001 / fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu / FAPA and trade / Few fanzine experiences in the past six months reflect America's roller coaster ride of emotion as well as the fall and winter issues of **Lofgeornost**. The November issue opens with a sober and enlightening exposition on the possibility of war between Islamic and western ideologies, keying on the idea that al-Qaeda struck at the WTC thinking they would demolish America's whole way of life by destroying a symbol. Boy, did they misread us. Even an embittered liberal like myself knows that there is more to America than a couple of buildings, or even the capitalism they allegedly represented. There's no living with lunacy that thinks otherwise; I echo Fred's simple, strong declaration: "What the world needs is a Muslim Reformation." By the following issues, Lerner is back to discussing his reading plans and fantasy great William Morris, proof if any is needed that we Americans are alike mainly in our resilience. Knock us down, stand back.

Memphen 272-7 / Greg Bridges, P.O. Box 820534, Memphis TN 38182-0534 / Trade / In addition to the usual club announcements, Greg offers a fine memorial to Meade Frierson and impressions of MilPhil (he enjoyed the Retro-Hugos; I'm crogged), and campaigns for a Hugo nomination for Tom Foster, the extremely able and funny cover artist for most recent issues. I concur; I'd love it if this talented guy added **Challenger** to his repertoire. Anyway, the Memphis club is active and enthused, and their zine contains an ongoing survey of writers with Memphis connections, interviews with Terry Brooks and

Michael Stackpole, good reviews and much else. I love Memphis for many reasons (not *only* Platinum Plus), so here's a pledged vote for their next DeepSouthCon bid. I'm always glad to encourage others to work like hell.

Mimosa 27 / Richard & Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 1350, Gaithersburg MD 20885 / e-mail: fiawol@cpcug.org / website: [http:// www.Jophan.org/mimosa](http://www.Jophan.org/mimosa) / \$4 or / Here's a treat and a half: starting with the ferociously original cover by Teddy Harvia and Brad Foster (depicting, apparently, the synapses of an SFnal imagination). Rich & Nicki even allow themselves to be featured (twice) on the wraparound cover, and engage in some welcome personal chatter in their worldcon report. I truly love the photo of Rosy and me at Philly's famous LOVE sculpture. Content: fan history by such luminaries as 4E Ackerman, Alexis Gilliland, Dave Kyle, Bruce Pelz, Sharon Farber, Bob Madle, Fred Lerner, *etc.* ... definitely, an ace selection. Earl Kemp's account of life [*sic*] in a porno mill and Steven Lopata's memoir of life as tiger toy (*toy*, I said, Linda, not *tea*) rank as my favorite reads this time, but there's not a clunker in the lot. The lettercol stands out for all the Rotsler/Gilliland collaborations. *Class act* – you can't say that enough about **Mimosa**.

Miranda #7 / Kate Haas, 3510 SE Alder St., Portland OR 97214 / bruceandkate@juno.com / \$2 / Nicely-written perzine by a new mother in Oregon, socially liberal and thoughtful throughout. Haas makes her everyday life a sweet experience to share. This time includes carpool memories, bike-riding with her "Mr. Baby," jam-making, a self-debate on the merits of TV, and the only science fictional writing, a couple of encounters with Ursula LeGuin. She should sit down with Susan Higgins one of these; they remind me of each other. Kate was put off by the babe element on **Chall** #15's cover, though she liked some of the contents; God knows what she'll make of this issue.

My Year in Review / Taral Wayne, 245 Dunn Ave. #2111, Toronto Ontario M6K 1S6 Canada / taralwayne@3web.net / A publication for Gallery, a Cult-like apa for funny animal fandom. Usually, Taral contributes art – which figures – but this time, it's comments on past editions of Gallery and reminiscences of 2000. Yes, that's the year he's reviewing; if he's done a follow-up issue I'd enjoy seeing it, especially if – and considering 2001, that's an enormous "if" – he seems less drained. Accompanied by "New Ten Commandments", in which God tells us "I make the judgments around here."

No Award #11 / Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore St. #105, N. Hollywood CA 91606 / louishoohah@netzero.net / Superb new issue of Marty's genzine, The strongest quality of the zine is its

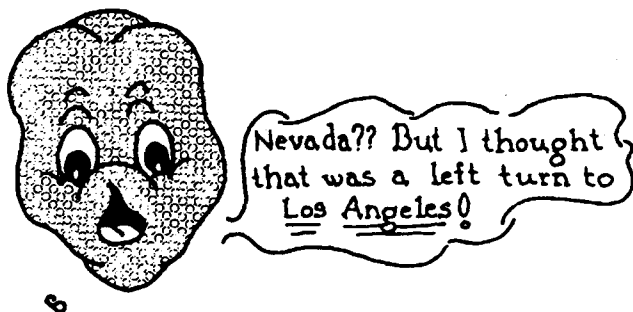
consistency. Chapters of Len Moffatt's memoirs of LASFS in ages past (this time, the Outlanders in '51) and Ed Green's account of the L.A. riots have been showing up for several issues now, as have hilarious parodies by Milt Stevens (present on this occasion, "A



Celebration of Silly Titles") and apt fanzine reviews by Joseph Major. Greg Chalfin, whom I remember for his impeccably-reproduced LASFAPazines, chimes in with a plaint about book prices, and the artwork is wonderful – Ross Chamberlain's **LotR** cover is priceless! But it's the lettercol where this issue really grabs, with responses to Earl Kemp's virulent anti-Heinlein article in the previous issue. I may have to reprint my youthful account of the terrible encounter between RAH and Alexei Panshin, from a SFPazine in '74 ... I can't explain what happened, but I can certainly report it. Anyway, high quality here; Milt should be Hugo-nominated for his fan writing, and if *any* "No Award" should have space on the Hugo ballot, this is it.

Nonstop Fun is Hard on the Heart no. five / Dwain Kaiser, P.O. Box 1074, Claremont CA 91711-1074 / dgkaiser@hotmail.com (NEW) / "the faanish 'Usual'" / Boy, this is a gorgeous fanzine! I even found diverting Kelly Freas' caricature of the editor and the photograph of William Rotsler's naked rear end – the zine would *have* to be terrific for me to stand that! Spiffy, funny Marc Schirmeister cover, color photos, lotsa Rotsler, Stiles, and other excellent art, and then there's the clever content, most especially Earl

Kemp's Rotsler memoir (including the aforementioned photo) and Jim Schumacher's similar paean to Bill's quality as a human being. I am frankly but pleasurably baffled by "The VALSFA Chronicles", but I was born near the Valley (in Mojave) and should catch on with multiple rereadings. Which should be delightful, considering this attractive, warm-spirited zine which it rides.



Noreascon 4 P.R. 1 / MCFI, P.O. Box 1010, Framingham MA 01701-1010 / info@mcfi.org / <http://www.noreascon.org> / I'm 1296S, Rosy's 1297S in the 2004 worldcon, and we wouldn't miss it, so time for us to morph those S's into A'. Distressingly big bucks needed, but we know the convention will be worth it. Certainly this superb P.R. testifies to the quality we can expect. Articles by Resnick on being a worldcon GoH, Janis Ian on her first such event, MilPhil, Deb Geislet's recounting of the '04 bid saga, Ben Yalow on contract negotiations ... these guys are pros at this fan stuff. I look forward to the con; can't wait to trod the decks of Old Ironsides again.

Once More, with Ceiling! #3 / UK in 2005, 23 Kensington Court, Hempstead NY 11550-2125 / uk2005@hotmail.com / The bid newsletter for Glasgow, conveying the non-surprise announcement that the bid has been formally approved by bConJose site selection, has set up a "constitutional" committee, has merchandise for sale, and scored well at MilPhil. I'm all for this bid, unopposed or not; see its ad elsewhere.

Opuntia #49-51 / Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7 Canada / \$3 @ or. / The zine with the omnipresent cactus on the cover comes through again, with informed natter about crank letters, stamps ("all artistamps are cinderellas, but ..."), Con-version, many book reviews (among the subjects, Benford's **DeepTime**, Benedict Arnold, coelacanths, and a book about the alphabet which no doubt uses its subject matter to great effect), and *outré* zines. Nice surprise: old pal and fellow Saavik aficionado Carolyn Clowes

(whose **Pandora Principle** is *the* best Trek novel) contributes an anecdote from Rivercon. Showing that his expertise knows no inking of bounds, Speirs expounds in #51 on "The History of Illegible Postmarks", a sordid tale of passion, arsenic, and murder, with asides on the composition of Egyptian postal ink and the difference between Sinusoidal, smooth and Sinusoidal, jagged.

Out of Reich? / John Berry, 4, Chilterns, South Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 8JU U.K. / trade / Self-published alternate history novel in which the staff Peenemunde was kept intact and allowed to continue its researches after World War II. Also self-illustrated, with portraits of JFK, Wernher von Braun, various fictional characters, imaginary stamps, rockets real and rockets unreal ... it's spunky, well-done, and enjoyable, quite a feat!

Peregrine Nations Vol. One, No. Three-Four / J.G. Stinson, P.O. Box 430314, Big Pine Key FL 33043-0314 / tropicsf@aol.com / \$1 or t.u. / A neat new touch to Jan's perzine - color type. There's also a funny Schirmeister cover on the third issue, lots of LOCs, several short, moving responses to 9-1-1, spunky zine reviews (**No Award** is "more fun than a saucer full of BEMs"), and a piece on "Life in the Modern American Newsroom", which would make my wife, once a reporter at the **Palm Beach Post**, feel right at home. The fourth issue, dedicated to Michelle Kwan (oops!), has fine LOCs right at the front, a *funny* review of **Chall** #15 amidst its sprightly zine listings, good articles by Lyn McConchie and Will Hogarth (asking for a "controlled Armageddon"), and a neat quasi-editorial wherein J.G. wonders whether Charlie Williams was still with us (as far as I know, yes). I just read a cool Edgar-winning novel, by William Bayer, called **Peregrine**; I like *this* bird even better.

Plokta Volume 6 No. 3 / Steve Davies, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks RG30 2RP U.K.; Alison Scott, 24 St. Mary Rd., Walthamstow, London E17 9RG; U.K. Mike Scott, 2 Craithie Rd., Chester CH3 5LJ U.K. / locs@plokta.com / www.plokta.com / My wife and Joe Major both thought I was featured on the map of "Middle Plokta" that adorns this cover of the preeminent Brit fanzine, but I'd guess Ms. Edwards is the "Lilian" they stand in for Lothlorien. So fleeting is fame! But so clever is this cover, a tribute to British fandom, with an occasional reference to Aussie and American zines (I spot **Twink!**) tossed in. The Fellowship of the Plokta is lovingly depicted in the first interior illo, by the splendid Sue Mason (as opposed to the merely adequate Sue Mason, who is neither a Brit nor a fan; in fact, I'm sorry I mentioned her), and the content teases **LotR** as only **Plokta** can. A bit less ingroupish than before, and therefore a bit

more comprehensible to one who is not *in the group*, but the joy never seems to stop in Middle Plokt.

Probe 114-115 / Liz Simmonds, P.O. Box 781401, Sandton 2146, South Africa / sfsa@newhorizons.co.za / "for sale and exchange" / High quality digest zine from the SFSA, featuring winners of its short story competitions, cute Mark Paris cartoons, terrific covers by Roberto Schima, reviews, a fact article on Roentgen, and the occasional verse. What say, people: worldcon bid yet?

The Reluctant Famulus 58 / Tom Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian MI 49221-1627 / tomfamulus@dmci.net / the usual, "especially written material and artwork" / Beautiful color collages by A.B. Krynock dot this issue of a venerable personal/genzine.; the cover is especially gorgeous. The interior artwork and photos are also in color, lending TRF a class no other genzine shares. In a most moving opening editorial, Tom moves from family thoughts to 9-11 to the splendid news of his latest grandchild. Robert Sabella reviews volumes by Sean Stewart – whose *Galveston* blew me away – and Andrea Barrett, Gene Stewart discourses on "magical" imagery, Amanada Hunter shares a number of shots (some too small for my eyes) from the works of Maxfield Parrish (including a very funny photo of the artist posing for one of his own paintings), Sadler prints some on photos (hi, Roger) and exults over *LotR*. Except for a Kynock bacover, the issue closes with a photo of grandbaby #5, Tanner Jeremiah, for whom 2001 will be meaningful for more than the World Trade Center.

Sansevieria 48 / Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7 Canada / A different plant grows atop this Speirs publication, aimed at FAPA. It opens with a cool article on "Lawyers in Space" describing a statute meant for brouhahas on the space station. I wish I'd published it. It's followed by a compelling piece on social solitude and "restoring social capital", a funny jab at the Canadian military from within its ranks ("Don't look conspicuous; it draws fire") and Dale's own reaction to the horrors of 9-1-1

Rune 86 / Jeff Schalles, Minnesota SF Society, P.O. Box 8297, Lake Street Station, Mpls MN 55408 / rune@mnstf.org / A beautiful – and beautifully illustrated (xeroxed color photos) – tribute to Mn-SFS member Scott K. Innes, with artful, heartfelt tributes by many. Obviously an A+ guy; I wish I'd known him.

Science Fiction Five-Yearly #11 / Geri Sullivan et. al., Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315 / idea@toad-hall.com / Semi-centennial issue of Lee Hoffman's silliest – but certainly most enduring – idea, a genzine produced once every five

years. From the Rotsler whimsy on the envelope, to the hilarious Steve Stiles cover (check out the Earth in the background), it's just great fun. Greg Benford, Ted White, Danny Lien and Dave Langford are only a few of those who provide squibs (Langford's article on the origin of *Ansible* is priceless.) The longest-running serial in fanzine history, Nalrah Nosille's "INissassa" (you *do* get that, don't you?) sports its 11th installment. The whole thing is a hoot. I even enjoyed the itchy mimeograph paper on which the zine is impeccably printed. The only solemnity accompanies SFFY on a single sheet, a eulogy for co-editor Terry Hughes.

scopus:3007 #11 / Alexander J. L. Bouchard, P.O. Box 573, Hazel Park MI 48030-0573 / ajlbouchard@juno.com / the usual / "An interim edition while I get the main deal going," Alex tells us, giving us four pages of natter about family matters and convention plans while a larger zine is in the works.

SF Commentary 77 / Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood, Vict. 3066 Australia / gandc@mira.net / \$A35 for 5 issues / Beautiful and professional journal, with gorgeous color covers by Dick Jenssen, an excellent article on Thomas M. Disch by John Sladek, many many many reviews (including many from the SF Masterworks series, which seems awesome), with contributions from Robert Lichtman, David Lake, and Roslyn Gross. The index of reviewed authors is incredible.

SFSFS Shuttle #146 / Karen and Cynthia Warmuth, c/o South Florida SF Society, P.O. Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33307-0143 / batwarpk@aol.com / While it opens with a sad obit for Jack Haldeman, a nifty meeting at Cboca Raton's Museum of Cartoon Art is also described in this clubzine, as are a club dinner at which a trivia contest duelled for domination with the entrée, a NASA speech, and a charming Tropicon XX "re-cap" (Bujold and Clement were guests). We see an awed review of *LotR* – would that the Oscars had shared this good taste – and a letter from the club chairman that sums up 2001: "dead and buried (hopefully at a crossroads, with a stake through its heart)." If it hadn't been for Rosy, I'd agree.

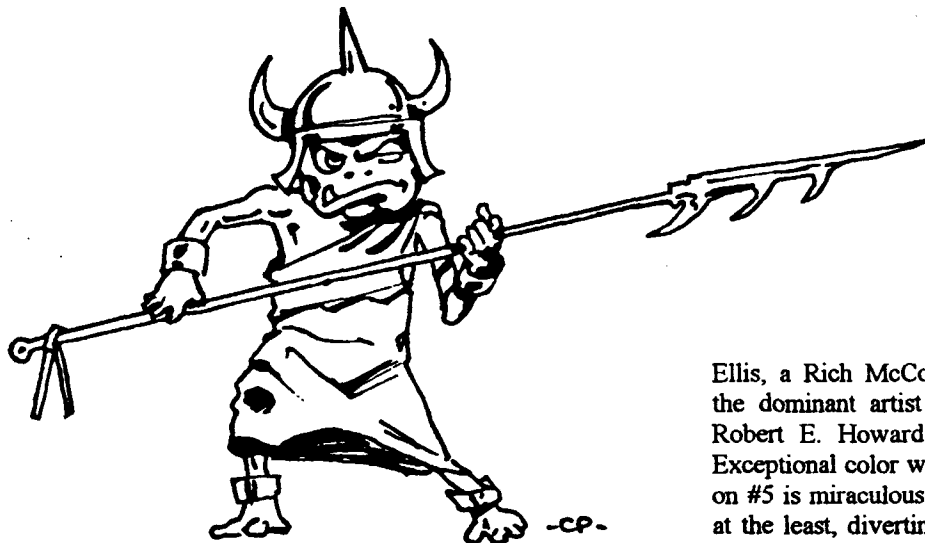
Skel's Trove / Bill Bowers / 4651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati OH 45238-4503 / eWorlds@Outworlds.net / Lots of goodies for sale on-line. If you love old fanzines, check it out.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin Vol. 7 No. 11-12 / Julie Wall, 470 Ridge Road, B'ham AL 35206-2816 / jlwall@usit.net / SFC membership or. / There are a lot of fine features to this ever-valuable guide to fandom in the rebel region: lists of regional

conventions, clubs, and zines, con reports by Tom Feller and Laura Haywood-Cory, terrific cartoons by Randy Cleary, and LOCs by the load. But there's material even more special to me – a collection of tributes to SFC's greatest president, Meade Frierson, and Naomi Fisher's delightful account of Rose-Marie's and my wedding. "The End is Nigh," she says – but Naomi describes a grand *beginning*. I imagine Hank Reinhardt and Toni Weisskopf, whose wedding is given the grand treatment in the next issue -- where Hank wails on con committees about their no-weapons policies -- feel the same way.

Terminal Eyes #4-5 / Tim Marion, c/o Kleinbard, 266 E. Broadway, Apt. 1201B, New York NY 10002 / The passion Tim – who lives very close to Ground Zero – brings to the World Trade Center atrocity is strong, and the third **TE** rings with a witness' horror. Alleviating the nightmare, Tim's FAPazine offers a wonderful reprinted article by Avram Davidson on the legendary artist, Hannes Bok, excellent letters – including some from unfamiliar writers – and a reprinted prose poem from rich brown. #5 is wildly, deliciously eclectic, with contributions from brown and Walt Wentz, a 1977 note from Novalyne Price

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Snake Den whole no. 16 / Ken Faig, 2311 Swainwood Dr., Glenview IL 60025-2741 / moshasuk@interaccess.com / Esoteric Order of Dagon pub, reviewing novels like **The Haunted River** and scholarly studies of Algernon Blackwood, all, of course, with a strong Lovecraftian theme. *Cthulhu pfui mugglewump!* or whatever.

Starbourne / Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills CA 91344 / Beautiful color cover on this extended "tripe report," which took Bruce and Elayne to Hong Kong, Japan, and Hawaii – and this right after another 14-day cruise! Half the fun of paradise is getting there: the liner **Star Princess**, of which theirs was the maiden voyage, featured incredible entertainment. Someone in a New Orleans suburb recently won \$48 million in the Powerball lottery; except for this fun fanzine, that's as close as I'll ever come to such luxury.

Tangent / David Truesdale, 5779 Norfleet, Raytown MO 64133 / internet - 103133.1350@compuserve.com; <http://www.sff.net/people/Dave.T/index.htm> / Splendid on-line publication; it's Hugo-nominated, so definitely consider voting its way.

Ellis, a Rich McCollum portfolio – he was probably the dominant artist in REHUPA, the apa devoted to Robert E. Howard – and grand LOCs once again. Exceptional color work on the covers – Dick Jenssen's on #5 is miraculous – and the Babe photos within are, at the least, diverting. Elizabeth Hurley is a gift from God, but hey, they all are.

Thyme #133 / Alan Stewart, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia / a.stewart@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au / The u. or \$A 3; sub-scription \$A 15 / This is the March 2001 issue, a mere year old. It's handsome – excellent cover by Grant Gittus – well-written, especially the reviews, and informative, and I'm wild about the action-packed fan photos, but the news is, alas, stale. I wish we could get our zines up-around-&-over to-and-from Oz more quickly.

Time's Up #9 / Patrick J. Lee, 8640 Sewanee Ct., Sun Valley CA 91352-3558 / elee1997@aol.com / Amusing, sardonic, miserable comics of everyday life by a talented artist, primitive but clean in design. Lee gets a lot across in a very few lines, and a very few words. He needs to meet a lady who knows what the hell she's doing. I too think the girl on the cover to **She Said**, a past issue, is phenomenal. I wonder if I knew her mother at Berkeley.

Tobes Stole My Brain! / Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer, 26 Northampton Road CR0 7HA or 14 Northway Rd., CR0 6JE, both Croydon, Surrey, U.K. / A wild promotional pub broadcasting the TAFF

candidacy of Tobes Valais, "a mischievous spirit who infects the attitudes of everybody in a room," a cross-dressing maniac descended from French kings, who can – it says here – drink anyone alive under the table and brag – kindly – about it. His own zine – **Strange Delusions of a Drunken Fuckwit**, title says all – has never turned up in The Zine Dump, our loss. Valois claims broad Euro-support, so who knows? Maybe he'll swing through New Orleans after ConJose, if he wins. It's just the town for drunken fuckwits.

Torcon 3 Progress Report 2 / Naomi Black-Bilodeau, Torcon 3, P.O. Box 3, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1A2 Canada / Info@torcon3.on.ca / <http://www.torcon3.on.ca> / Informative p.r. for the '03 worldcon, with some helpful info on travel, taxes, concom contacts, and so on. Both L.A. and K.C. are bidding for 2006; should be exciting. I'm member V1708, and not only will Rosy and I be in Toronto, I'm hoping to talk my brother into letting me bring my nephews up for a night via the trans-Lake Ontario hovercraft!

Tortoise No. 13 / Sue Jones, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury SY1 2BQ U.K. / sue.tortoise@talk21.com / trade / *Dubious* zine – by which is meant that its theme – Sue has one for each issue -- is doubt itself. Religious doubt (beautifully resolved), personal doubt, scholastic doubt ... this publication is filled with intelligence and the virtue of questions. Next theme: Romance. The Brits have raised the perzine to new heights, and here's one near the pinnacle. Interesting debate with Joseph Nicholas in "The Lettuce Column" on the value of opinions, and short zine reviews that are simply electrifying. She calls **Chall** "a big zine for a big world," and I've had few compliments to match that.

Trap Door No. 21 / Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442 / locs2trapdoor@yahoo.com / the usual or \$5@ / Robert brings us another handsome, fascinating publication, beautifully reproduced and attractively presented, featuring short articles from "the senior guys" of fanzine fandom, each piece decorated by cool, individualized art by Craig Smith, Steve Stiles and others. The articles are expertly turned and all interesting, with special nods to squibs by Chris Priest and Stiles, but the prize of the issue is Joel Nydahl. The legendary fan publisher appeared at MilPhil – alas, I didn't meet him – and recounts both his **Vega** career and his worldcon experience, with a reply to Harry Warner's **Wealth of Fable** thrown in. A single sentence in his article unknowingly sums up the vast difference between the fanzine generations. A great lettercol, again from many of the "senior" crowd, but a sad editorial; since his last issue Robert has lost a browser, and many fannish mates as well. Including one of the first fans of substance I ever knew, Bill Donaho.

Bill didn't remember it, but I helped him change a flat tire once outside of Poul Anderson's house, standing in the headlights so my sweatshirt could reflect its light back onto the tire. That's a memory for you.

Tripe Reportcard 52 / Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills CA 91344 / Bruce and Elayne sent these potscrad from all over the world – this time, New Zealand. I'll miss them.

Twink #24 / E.B. Frohvet, 4716 Dorsey Hall Dr. #506, Ellicott City MD 21042 / The u. / Among my favorite siblings in my generation of fanzines, **Twink** really was part of the map of "Middle Plokta", and deservedly. Good stuff within this issue includes a Capclave report (that's a new D.C.-area convention), a fun article on kid characters in SF, a fine lettercol featuring great names, and pointed reviews – kind beyond measure to the bundle of pages you're holding now. I must take Eeb to task, though, for forever forswearing nominating and voting in the Hugo Awards. "The Fan Hugos," he says, "appear to us a lost cause." Take it from a Southern boy from Berkeley: lost causes are the only kind worth fighting for. Frohvet still produces a damned good fanzine, however burnt out he professes himself to be.

UK in 2005 Progress Report -1 / Andrew A. Adams and Jan van 't Ent / c/o Steve & Sue Francis, P.O. Box 58009, Louisville KY 40268-0009 / sfsue@aol.com / It's tall (A4 paper), it's slick (in all the good ways), it's unopposed, it'll be great. Do it!

Vanamonde Nos. 423-452 / John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St. No. 409, L.A. CA 90057 / Trade / These weekly Apa-L zines span the period from "Juneteenth" (that's June 19th) to October 31st, 2001. Much happened in that time, but John, one of fandom's polymaths, is always there with a quip, a quotation, a bit of arcane knowledge, an acute observation to his fellow L'ians. Perhaps sensing that something terrible was in the air, ha, he begins his edition for September 10, 2001, with a quotation from C.S. Lewis: "Hatred obscures all distinctions." The next week he begins with a line of his own, which I will quote: "*Heroism is that which we should do, which the world will be grateful we did do, but which is so demanding there is no blame if we fail to do.*" As usual, the shortest zine **Chall** receives in trade is also the most inclusive and possibly the most insightful, ranging over topic after topic after topic. The 2002 logo, another by Brad Foster, is a gem.

Visions of Paradise #89-90 / Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake NJ 07828-1023 / bobsabella@nac.net / One of Sfdom's most literate and intelligent zines, accompanied by **Halcyon Days**,



Wabe #4-5 / 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. / **Wabe** recently won the FAAN award for 2001, and it is indeed an attractive, *very* well-written publication – electrostencilled onto mimeotone, too, a nostalgic treat.

What lends the 4th issue special beauty is the artwork of Georgie Schnobrich, whose leaf-filled illustrations convey the beauty and melancholy of the autumn season in which this zine was made. Georgie also writes a piece on their local Halloween Haunted House. Of the editors, Tracy discusses costuming (my story about Disneyland's Pluto would redouble her ambition to wear that costume), Bodden describes the haunted theatre where he once worked, and Jae spins tails of "Working at the Cem" (as in cemetery). The fifth issue, appearing just as this **Chall** is heading to press, themes itself upon *collecting*, with a gruesomely funny cover by Dan Steffan (we don't *really* look like that, do we?), and great, snappy articles by Bill Bodden ("my name is Bill, and I collect collections"), Ted White (I had a similar experience with a ripped comic, only mine was destroyed by a neurotic teacher), Robert Lichtman, plus a special TAFF section with sharp squibs from Sandra Bond, Kim Huett, Jae Leslie Adams ... whose "fore words" anticipating the fate of this and all other fanzines in the misty yet inevitable future truly blow me away. I like these fanzines, which let you figure their themes out for yourself, especially when they're as quality-rich as **Wabe**.

Westwind #261-2 / George Nyhen, NWSFS, P.O. Box 24207, Seattle WA 98124 / mwsfs-info@sfnorthwest.org / free to members; dues \$20/year / Seattle puts lot into its clubzine. Lynne Taylor's cover on #261 is superb (is this the same Lynne Taylor whose work adorned the front of Challenger 11?) and I like the many photos -- except when only the backs of people's heads show (as in the account of the club's Norwescon retreat, where the future of the regional convention was debated and decided). An important NASFiC announcement is made (they're going for '05), there's a fine interview with the hungover writer Michael Marshall Smith, announcements of social functions, etc., etc.; the rain hasn't washed *these* guys away.

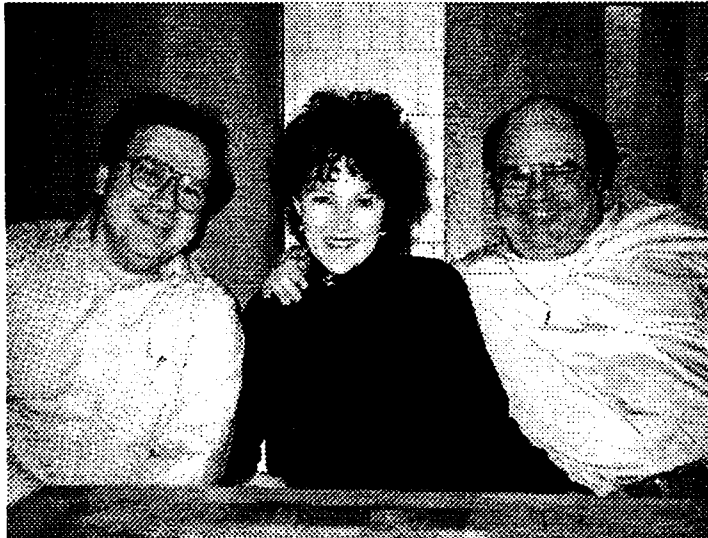
Would It Kill You to Smile? / Philip Lawson, Longstreet Press, 2140 Newmarket Parkway, Suite 122, Marietta GA 30067 / Not a zine, of course, but a genuine hardback *novel*, sent by Paul DeFilippo in exchange for Chall #15. I haven't had a chance to crack it yet, but the cover is wild – a ventriloquist and his dummy in a coffin that is also a car. Autographed by Philip/Paul ... and Michael Bishop. I'm grateful and delighted, but confused. Who's what?

Illustrators: Marc Schirmeister, Trinlay Khadro, Bill Rotsler, Mercy van Vlack, Steve Stiles, Alexis Gilliland, Jerry Collins (and I do think it looks like Rich Lynch), Sheryl Birkhead, "C.P." Terry Jeeves.



VISITORS AND VISITED

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In later pages you will read of Rose-Marie's and my journey to the Big Apple, where old buddy **Charles E. Spanier** greeted us ...

... and led us on an epic stroll across the Brooklyn Bridge. That's the eternal city glowing behind us. (Notice how my FDNY hat conforms to the shape of my head.)

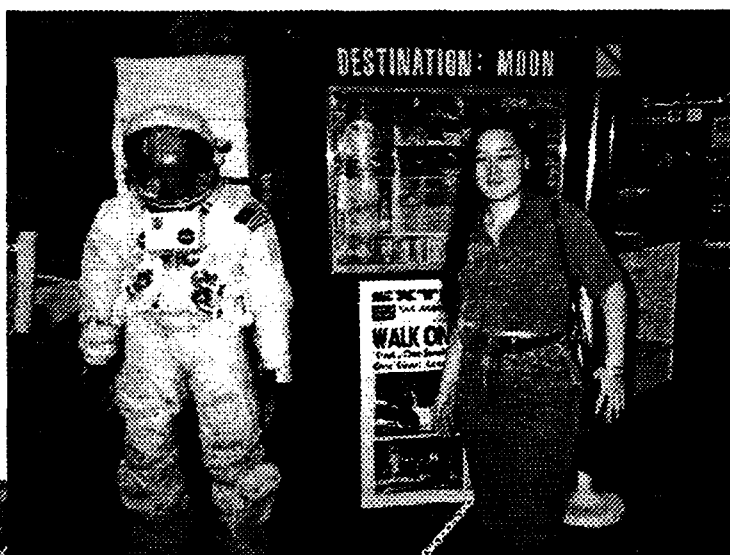


Here at home, we were pleased to play host to **LASFAPA's Ruth Temple and Lise Dyckman**. How'd you like the pralines, ladies?

The Challenger Tribute Naomi Fisher

From coast to coast, Naomi – DUFF winner with her husband, Pat Molloy – has exemplified class, wit, beauty ... and the glory of *food*. Naomi is undoubtedly the best *cook* in fandom. Anyone observing Southern waistlines after years of her parties knows that. She's even won two Rubble Awards for deftly devastating our diets. And our hearts. As you see, she is a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach. (Wow ... I oughta *bottle* myself!)

Naomi didn't make this sundae at Ghiardelli Square during ConFrancisco, but –with ye editor's assistance – she certainly *ate* it.



At L.A. Con, above, Naomi confers with a moonwalker.



And at the DeepSouthCon on Jekyll Island, Georgia, Naomi sculpts a winsome sand-mermaid. Beautiful job, but she hasn't a patch on her creator!

James G. Baker
5033 New Ranch Road
El Cajon CA 92029-8155

[Like Greg Benford,] I too read *The Black Cloud* many years ago, though several years after it was written. Fred Hoyle was lecturing in San Francisco (sometime between 1972 and 1979, don't remember exactly when), so I went to hear him as I liked the underdogs who backed unpopular theories. I also took a copy of *The Black Cloud* in hopes of an autograph. After the lecture I went up to the stage, presented him the book and my black and silver Parker 61 fountain pen. He looked at the book with a bit of surprise as if he hadn't seen a copy in quite of while. He signed the book, opened his suit coat and put my pen inside his pocket.

Not wanting to make a scene, but being too poor to give up that pen without some mention of it, I said as politely as I could, "Pardon me Dr. Hoyle, but that was my pen." He then opened his jacket to reveal two absolutely identical Parker 61s in his pocket. Dr. Hoyle then made the logical statement, "I have no way of knowing which one is yours, pick one." So I guess I have a 50/50 chance of having Fred Hoyle's fountain pen in my collection.

Sheryl Birkhead
25509 Jonnie Court
Gaithersburg MD 20882

Again, congratulations on your marriage – times surely have changed since issue #14 ... in many ways.

*For a great write-up of our wedding, check out Naomi Fisher's squib in **The Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin**, reviewed in this issue.*

Hey – I never knew that Terry Jeeves' character had a name – Soggy. Was it Schmoos in L'il Abner? Perhaps they were country cousins to Soggies?

Charles Williams Sr., wherever you are – thanks for giving us a fine artist.

Rich Dengrove
2651 Arlington Dr. #302
Alexandria VA 22306

Ah, Challenger 15. What makes it a great zine is that it is yours. And you being a generous soul, Guy, have made it ours. First, make no mistake, you, Guy Lillian III, have your say. You pine for the days when a science fiction writer, like Poul Anderson, could be nice to a neo. When there weren't so many neos that he couldn't afford to be nice to one.

Since it's your zine, too, you also tell us a tale about a murder, and greater sleazebags and lesser sleazebags. It sometimes sounds like all this fighting about what is evidence and what is not is between two shysters. But when you come down to it, the law, at least in this case, is an attempt to do the right thing. The only problem is it is turned into precise rules. Which is not what happens when a decent person in everyday life tries to do the right thing; they are a little vaguer about what the right thing is. Which is why we think the law is something different.

Also, in this zine, Guy, Gene Stewart is allowed to vent his spleen at the modern science fiction reader, who doesn't wish to read. As opposed to the Victorian reader who couldn't get enough reading matter, so it seems. And big business is in the modern reader's corner. When people have to read, it has to look like a movie.



EPISTLES

Also Terry Jeeves is allowed to present us with his Soggies, that remind me of Al Capp's Schmoos. Except they don't have whiskers and can't give us plenty. They just have the normal problems we do; only they're cuter, so their problems don't seem so bad.

Also Joseph Major is allowed to point out that dictatorship is the product of chaos, not order. Only when there is enough order, can a society have democracy rather than a more violent approach. And when they can, most societies choose it.

Also Gregory Benford is allowed to celebrate John Varley's *Steel Beach*, and the revival of hard science fiction. Which always had some blarney, its hardness was never granite. Of course, as far as I am concerned, there will never be another hard science fiction novel like *Edison Conquers Mars* (1898) whereby Thomas Edison travels to Mars and kills off every single one of H.G. Wells' octopoids with an electric ray gun.

Also Mike Resnick is allowed to make writing about Worldcon interesting by telling people's reactions to things. I read a book on writing once that said that was the secret of the novel, people's reactions. Of course, they have to have interesting reactions to keep up the interest. Which someone who is not a master might not know to choose.

Finally, Gry, you allow me to answer comments about my article on Cyrano de Bergerac. Alexis Gilliland and Pamela Boal say the historical Cyrano de Bergerac and Rostand's classical Cyrano de Bergerac are separate people. Indeed they are. And, I think, both interesting in their different ways.

I could do many more comments on many of your other fine authors. Some will say that your zines, like Winston Churchill's pudding, has no theme. But it does - we individuals doing our thing.

Frank Denton
14654 - 8th Ave. S.W.
Seattle, WA 98166

I am probably the world's worst responder to fanzines but I just can't let this one go by without a brief note. Certainly I must congratulate you and your lovely bride, Rose-Marie, on your marriage. Thank you so much for sharing the day through your photos. Wonderful! Did you ever think that you might go through life without marrying and sharing your life with someone else? Well, that didn't happen and I'm happy for you.

I certainly did think that. All I can say is that I was never more happy to be wrong.

That's some cover on **Challenger #15**. Aren't you the clever one? Clever enough to marry Rose-Marie, to whom you give ample credit for her computer skills. While there is much to comment upon in not nearly enough time, thank you also for your tribute to Poul Anderson and for reprinting the story of your youthful self and Poul's acceptance of you. That is the sort of man he was. He will be sorely missed in our community. I guess I could have not better tribute to the man than to pull an unread Anderson from the shelf and begin reading. *The War of Gods* leaped to hand. It appears to be a rousing tale and a tribute to Poul's heritage as well. It should do nicely.

And thanks to Ben Indick for his very nice tribute to Edd Cartier and the inclusion of two pieces of his art. You just don't find that sort of art in sf magazines any more. It's good to know that Edd is still kicking, even though he doesn't do much art anymore.

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

Editor's note: Eeb sent multiple letters about the issues mentioned in Challenger #15. Herewith sections from three of them ...

One thing I've noticed a couple of places in fandom lately is the assertion that "we" didn't lose anyone in the September 11th disasters. By this is probably meant, that none of the established New York City-area fans, Vicki Rosenzweig or Arthur Hlavaty, were killed. Okay as far as it goes. But, you know something? I still lost 3,000 people. The people I lost were black and Hispanic and white and Asian; they were women and men and children (there were several schoolchildren in the plane that hit the Pentagon). The people I lost were bond traders and military analysts and clerks and window-washers, and a priest who walked into Hell to bless the dead and dying, and then Hell fell on top of him. As might be expected at the heart of the financial world, the people I lost weren't even all Americans: there were Brits and Canadians and Hondurans, and probably from a dozen other countries as well.

It ain't over yet. Any day now I'm going to lose a kid, some 20-year-old kid from Texas or Virginia or Michigan, who signed up because the Army said they would pay for his college, or because he wanted to be the best and the Marines are the best; some kid who probably never actually wanted to go to a godforsaken (I use that adjective advisedly) hole like Afghanistan. But when they put a rifle in his

hands and put him on the transport, he said, "Yes, sir" and went, because that's what soldiers do; that's what Marines do. And some woman in Texas or Virginia or Michigan is going to get her kid back in a box. With military honors. So, anybody who tells me that "we" didn't lose anyone: your parameters are way too narrow. I lost 4,000 people. And it ain't over yet.

The position of the U.S. government is that those who fought for al-Qaeda and the Taliban are "unlawful combatants," i.e. terrorists, and not entitled to the protections of international law *in re*: prisoners of war. Pretty clear, I think, in regard to al-Qaeda, a multinational group with no discernible purpose except murder.

Possibly one could make a different case for the Taliban, which functioned for several years as a *de facto*, if not *de jure* government.

A pity bin Laden hasn't committed any crime in international waters or international airspace – or has he? Under those conditions we could execute him summarily under the laws concerning piracy.

The idiot who tried to blow up an airliner with a shoe-bomb would qualify – but no summary executions! We're not al-Qaeda!

If the situation is a little sticky regarding the Taliban, it gets positively gummy with regards to the so-called "American Taliban," John Walker Lindh. As an American citizen – assuming he has not renounced his citizenship – pretty obviously he is entitled to the full protections of the Constitution, and could only be tried in Federal Court. The fact that he has apparently been interrogated extensively without having access to a lawyer could make using anything he's said to this point difficult. Then there's the question of an "impartial" jury, which I imagine would be hard to find anywhere in the country.

Yes, well, easy for me, not even a lawyer – just an interested layman – to sit here and expound on legal questions.

Please do! The more citizens we have talking about such issues, the fewer sheep we have allowing Ashcroft to run rampant over due process.

While in principle I agree with Gene Stewart that SF is largely failing of its potential, I will have to take exception to his description of, e.g. *Tomb Raider* as "character-driven." In no sense can you describe the cardboard cutout employing the body of Angelina Jolie as a "character." Such things are driven by special effects. Footnote: Gene, you're not the only one in the world who has read mythology.

I hated Tomb Raider. The story was dull and Jolie, somehow, looked ugly, her famous lips like two halves of a knockwurst. I must admit, though, that the moment where she appeared topless (from the back) turned me into the hairy-palmed sub-teen the movie was made for.

67



I would be interested to know, Guy, if you still think of *Tau Zero* as "the mind-blowingest book ever printed in the field," or even the mind-blowingest published up to 1971.

Credit Nolazine editor Pat Adkins, alas, with that phrase; I liked Tau Zero but I know I didn't write that. He added it to juice up my article.

Wonderful pics of the wedding, though I would have liked an article about it as well. You are far luckier than you deserve, dude.

Amen to that!

I mostly agree with the esteemed Dr. Greg Benford that Sir Fred Hoyle was not only a scientist, but an SF writer of more importance than is generally credited, and to a large extent because of *The Black Cloud*. On the other hand, I recall trying to read Hoyle's autobiography. Somewhere around page 150 we were still in the author's elementary school years, with such letter-perfect detailed accounts of events that happened to Hoyle when he was 7 that I was left with the impression that either he had perfect recall, kept a detailed diary since early childhood, or was just making it up as he went along.

Reverend Kafoed is in the business of forgiving people, so his viewpoint [on September 11th] is understandable. He is still *wrong*.

Remarkable photo of Rebecca Morris on page 86. Right, we're all admiring the needlework!

Alexis Gilliland
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Challenger #15 arrived a few days ago – for which many thanks – and has been duly read; an impressive job, all things considered. Alan White's

color cover is excellent, and I quite enjoyed your wedding photos. Among the Epistles, Janet Larson wonders if any twin was a murderer. The Krays come to mind; twin brothers in England, they were both brutal killers who made the Kray gang masters of the London underworld for a time.

The Krays were the subject of a superb film some years ago. I'll never forget the closing shot of the middle-aged twins at their mother's funeral, chained, but separated and not allowed to speak.

Rose-Marie is right in urging you to produce smaller issues, especially if they come out more frequently.

Challenger evolved into its present size and frequency and I'm not sure I could change it now even if I wanted to. Also, I only get my present dirt-cheap 2-cents-a-click printing rates because a typical Chall requires 25,000 clicks; if the zine was smaller, it'd actually cost more to print. As for publishing more often, I've cranked it up to three times a year ... and oh, my achin' back! That's plenty!

Your attribution of motive is mistaken when you write: "The passengers on Flight 93 ... wouldn't let the killers hurt people on the ground even if it meant losing their own lives." Thanks to cell phones, the passengers knew they were going to die if they did nothing, and that fighting was their best and only chance. They came within seconds of retaking Flight 93 – and if they failed for themselves, they succeeded in frustrating an attack aimed at the Capitol, thus earning their posthumous unit citation. Which brings us to the 9-1-1, this issue's prime comment hook.



On the day, I was sitting at the dining room table, drinking coffee and reading the morning paper, when I heard a large plane flying very low, and a short time later (9:40 it was) a loud *whump*. A few

minutes later, my son Charles called me from Crystal city to tell me that hijacked airliners had been crashed into the Pentagon – which is a couple of miles from the house – and also into the World Trade Center in New York. So I turned on the TV for the news. Maybe I saw the collapse of the towers in real time instead of in replay. Shocking. I haven't been so upset since Dolly died, and have never been so depressed – Ansary's "A Question" touches on several lines of my thinking. Eventually I snapped out of it, on the grounds that I was making myself sick, and there was anyway nothing I could do about all the worst case scenarios I was conjuring up.

Writing a month or after you went to press, the resulting war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda seems to have been conducted with a good deal of finesse and more than a little intelligence. Rather than invading [Afghanistan] on the ground, as the Soviets did, we have sided with the Northern Alliance in their ongoing civil war while cutting the Taliban off from Pakistan and the invaluable Pakistani supply line. Our intervention with tactical air support and logistical backing has been decisive, but just as important, we are supporting one faction in an Islamic civil war, and ... it is not possible to wage *jihad* against one's fellow Muslims, a legal point not lost on World Islam and the Arab street.

At the Brookings Institute, Martin Indyk has tracked the anti-American demonstrations in the 21 nations of the Arab world. In week one, 9; week two, 3; week three, 1; week four, 2; week 5, 0; and in week six, 1. As time went by, the demonstrations also became smaller, suggesting that fewer and fewer were following the *jihad* shouters. In the field, the Afghan Taliban have changed sides, as is their wont, while the foreigners in the Taliban army, Pakistanis, Arabs and Chechens – volunteers who joined bin Laden's *jihad* against America – have found themselves stranded in Afghanistan where they are seen as an invading army, the foreign legion of the Saudi centi-millionaire and False Prophet Osama bin Laden. Why did he recruit a foreign legion? Obviously bin Laden didn't trust the Afghans further than he could throw them.

Judith Hanna
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S. Tottenham, London N15 4JU U.K.

Thanx for Chall 15, another very impressive issue. I always find your articles about your court cases interesting – thoughtful and thought-provoking. You deal day in and day out with a side of life most of us hope we'll never come in contact with.

One of the interesting aspects of living where we do, in Tottenham, one of London's low-rent, high unemployment and racially mixed areas, is that every now and then we realise just what thin ice shields us from the high crime and violence statistics for our area. I realised it yesterday when a neighbour popped around to talk about some ecological volunteering she's planning (two-weeks on a rainforest project in Costa Rica, to be followed by a local project here, helping community groups set up community gardens).

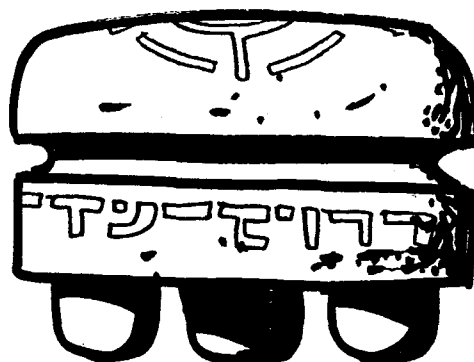
When we got the question of whether our neighbourhood is showing any improvements from the Government regeneration funding that is supposed to be available, she was gloomy. "Still a lot of dodgy characters hanging around the pool-room at the bottom of our road, where the drive-by shooting was," she mentioned. I hadn't heard about the shooting. "A couple of years back, I guess," she said. "The pool room extends back towards my place, and when they were raided by the police, we had people running through our garden to escape." A couple of years back was when the corner where our road meets the main road had a drive-by shooting too – the chap shot seems to have been a innocent passerby, a Somali just cycling. No leads to who done it. That shooting was just days after the police raided a crack dealing house around the corner on the main road, as part of a crack-down. Over the following weeks we discovered the locations of what had been half a dozen or so local crack-houses by the fact that they sprouted police-officers on guard outside after the raid.

Mostly, the streets here feel reasonably safe, even friendly. People smile and say "al-ri-ight" as they pass. But the local crime stats, and the experience of an ex-colleague who was mugged the other week, and had her arm broken, are reminders that where there's poverty, is where desperate people who can't cope with legitimate life end up – often terrorising and preying on those even more poor and unfortunate, as easy victims.

Of course, how to fix up society so it works comfortably is a complex matter, an art rather than a science. One way of looking at it is that women going into jobs instead of being around as what you might call 'the fabric of community' has made things worse – that is, men haven't balanced the situation by putting their time and energies into community activities. The result is erosion of community life, left to the retired and unemployed, and maybe a few part-timers.

Another is that a healthy and comfortable

community fabric comes down to "the middling sort": a fair share of economic security and status, not too harried and overworked to have time for local social activities that build up networks of neighbours who know and have some trust in each other, are willing to share and swap and help out among themselves – rather than being surrounded by distrusted strangers. Through the problem is complex, seems to me the solutions are just too simple and commonsense to impress highly qualified and high paid wonks and "experts."



RITUAL OBJECT. WR

Teddy Harvia

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Alan White's babe cover art is wonderful but it had me wondering what it was doing on **Challenger** and then I realized you are probably trying to lure adolescent boys into fanzine fandom or at least into your fanzine.

The wedding photos are wonderful too but who is the gorilla in a monkey suit with the bride?

I'm not sure, but he looks like Nikita Khrushchev.

I immediately recognized Peggy Ranson's Statue of Liberty, but the rest of the art [in "9-1-1"] is chaotic and angry, not her typical style but very appropriate for the subject matter.

You have wonderful art and articles throughout which I intend to enjoy now that I have my LOC out of the way.

John Hertz

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Los Angeles CA 90057

John sent his response to our last issue on the back of an envelope of Vanamondes, his Apa-L

zine. I'm sure he'd be horrified at my publishing his note, but it's too nice to consign to a WAHF.

Thanks for **Challenger 15** which just came. Love the Mardi Gras beads (in necklaces!) at your wedding. Ben indick's tribute to Edd Cartier is much deserved. Cartier is one of our rare humorists. Mike Resnick's big heart and expansiveness are a pleasure in print as in person. Glad you're enjoying Vanamonde.



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There is plenty to digest here with the article on Fred Hoyle. He was a terrific talent and will be missed. One thing about the passing of time is that we will lose more and more of the old timers that made the field what it is today.

Some of the talents left us too early, like Tom Swann and H. Beam Piper. Others managed to live long lives and write pretty much everything they wanted. I just wonder what some of the folks could have achieved with a longer life span. I hope they let Hoyle's creations alone and not try to expand his ideas.

Congratulations on the marriage. I'm sure you and Rose-Marie will share a lifetime.

It's always a pleasure to see something from Ben Indick. Ben has a wealth of knowledge of a lot of the older artists and authors that would fill volumes if he only had the time to pass it along.

The MilPhil article and photos gave a good look at the con to those of us not able to make it. "Spiders & Snakes" was another interesting look at the things that have to be done to insure a fair trial and the American Justice system. (My wife) Kathy's law firm does mostly corporate and business law, so we don't hear many of the stories like you have to tell.

Count your blessings. There are many days when I wish I had the calm and patient intelligence required for corporate work, which isn't as much fun as criminal defense but pays much, much better.

Lastly, Meade Frierson was one of a kind and is greatly missed. He was one of the last of the

Southern Gentlemen and a great friend. He touched a great many lives and his dream of the united Southern Fandom will go on for many years to come. In this way he will continue to touch more lives. As for those of us who knew him, he will always have a place in our hearts.

Terry Jeeves
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Apologies for hand-scrrawl but this is a time of [dental, medical, computer and automotive] disaster. Amidst all this gloom comes a ray of sunshine in the form of **Challenger #15**. What a stupendous cover, worth a Hugo on its own. Plenty of excellent art and photos inside too – a regular art gallery. I really enjoyed your account of meeting with Poul Anderson. He will be missed. I tend to agree with Gene Stewart on the growing-up of SF – but can't say I particularly like the adult it has grown into. Too much fantasy, bad language, sex and pretentious phrasing – or am I getting old?

Various comments on the desecration of the Two Towers. Our heart goes out to all involved. Tamas Ansary summed it all up in one page. It's a terrible thing any way you look at it.

I enjoyed the Cartier piece as I rate him second only to Schneeman – lovely couple of illos. My thanks also for the great coverage you gave to my piece and the nice words on *Erg*. A superb collection of photos, especially of you and your loved one – why did I always think you had a beard?

A great load of LOCs and great fanzine reviews.

Your trip/con report certainly covered some ground but held interest throughout. All in all a terrific issue and well-deserving a Hugo.

Have you ever been fan GoH at a convention? If not, what's the matter with them Brits?

Sue Jones
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Chall 15 arrived safely, the cover was admired, and it was read and enjoyed and pondered thoroughly. As ever.

Pleasant coincidence just now – I delayed switching off the radio and getting out of bed because our local station was playing Janis Ian's "At Seventeen". So I was half asleep, enjoying that song. Still running in my head while washing, and I'm thinking of Mike Resnick's piece and your photo in **Challenger**, and how good it was to see she was still around, not just another "whatever happened to..."

And then I get an e-mail from you when I turn on the computer. I get from half-asleep to fully up and running with nary a whiff of the usual early-morning discontinuity. Now there's a smooth "segue" any radio DJ would envy!

["The Zine Dump" features] not only a kind review of my efforts, but once more our kind reviewer labours under the delusion that Siberia is a cat, rather than an Imaginary Tortoise – e.g. as in "turtle" not as in "tortoiseshell" in your alien tongue – but who am I to quibble?) What you didn't get, as promised, was a proper loc.

I am disappointed to read [in e-mail] that you are not expecting to do another law piece next time. Don't give that up for good, Guy. Those law articles are by far the most gripping and engaging things that you put into Chall, and yes, they are "disturbing" and they *should* be. That there are people like you who can do the job you do, and still damn well *care* about what you are doing and about justice being done is good. Your ability to communicate that caring, and the need for that caring as you tell those stories is a rare gift. We need to be shaken out of our complacency occasionally in order to look through your eyes. Thank you for the 'disturbing' glimpses, they turn Chall from being just another good zine into a valuable one. More power to your elbow, and more power to your pen.

(p.s. Looked like a *GREAT* wedding!)

It was! By the way, your review of the last two Challengers in Tortoise really blew my mind. "A big zine for a big world." Whoa – that's staggering praise.

Jerry Kaufman
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The cover [to Challenger #15] is quite astonishing, color and collage. Wonderful contrast between the fantasy babe on the poster and the real people in front of it. Thank you, Alan White.

Part of the challenge of a 110 page zine is deciding if I'm really going to read it cover to cover. I admit I only skimmed the letter column, since I don't remember much about the previous issue, and skipped nearly all the pieces about September 11. I've read so much about it already (including the Tamim Ansary piece, which followed many paths into my computer at home and at work when she first wrote it) that I couldn't bear more.

But I mightily enjoyed such memory feasts as Greg Benford's piece about Fred Hoyle and Ben Indick's on Edd Cartier. (Ben confused me mightily

with his story about "Edd, together with Anthony Fabian and myself (Barry Malzberg in background)" because in the next statement he says Barry referred to a "Steve" who was present. Any chance that "Anthony Fabian" is actually "Steve Fabian"?)

I also enjoyed your latest installment of adventures in the criminal underworld of New Orleans. These people you help are fascinating and the situations much more complex and unnerving than the ones shown in television dramas (generally speaking). You might consider approaching a publisher sometime with a collection of them.

Thanks, and keep 'em coming.

Robert Kennedy
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Camarillo CA 93010-2451

Thanks for #15. Great cover by Alan White.

In December, I received another Jury Duty Notice. Here in Ventura County one is given a Group Number. You have to call in on Friday, then Monday through Thursday to see if your number is called. My Group Number was quite high and they cut off just before my number. So, no Jury Duty in 2001 and I should be safe for a year.

Your "farewell to Poul Anderson" and your "personal thanks" were much appreciated and very interesting.

The photos from your wedding were great. You can print all the pictures of Rose-Marie that you wish.

Impossible.

I enjoyed "How Much is That Soggy in the Window?" by Terry Jeeves. Anything Jeeves writes is enjoyable.

"Some Notes on the War Against Civilization" by Joseph T Major was both interesting and informative, which is what one has learned to expect from Joseph.

"Varley and Verne" by Gregory Benford was much appreciated. So was "Millennium Philcon Diary" by Mike Resnick. I was unable to attend the Millennium Philcon and enjoy all reports. I will be at ConJosé.

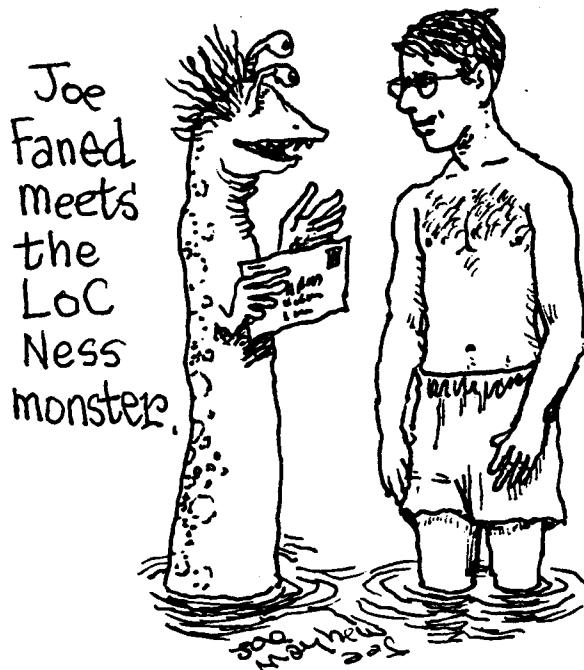
Your "Spiders & Snakes" and "9-1-1" were excellent.

Actually, the whole issue was outstanding. The above are just the articles I enjoyed the most.

Wow, there's another picture of Rose-Marie (p.79) followed by several pictures from the Millennium Philcon and Philadelphia itself. And, yes, thank you for the picture of Rebecca Morris. (Is

she Rebecca or Roberta [the name you use in my loc]. Well, she looks like a Rebecca.)

Joseph T Major: I subscribed to True for many years. Actually, right up to when it went out of business. I've never heard of the magazine "Men" (I think that should be "MAN'S" as will be indicated below). In June 2000, my brother and I were in Brookings, Oregon at the Chetco Community Library to see their impressive exhibit concerning the bombing on September 9, 1942, of the nearby forest by Nobuo Fujita. After the war, Fujita was invited to visit. One can imagine what he must have thought about how he would be treated. He was well treated, came back several times, and even brought his family. On one of the trips, he donated his Samurai sword to the city as an apology. The sword now hangs on a wall in the library and they have numerous articles about the bombing and Fujita. So, finally to the point. One of the articles (which the Reference Librarian was kind enough to copy for me) appeared in MAN'S for December 1962. I did notice some naked female pictures. I was, however, too much the gentleman to ogle the magazine in the presence of the female Reference Librarian.



Jan Stinson: Yes, search warrants "based on false information can result in property and reputation damage." They can also result in the death of the person or persons involved. Just ask David Scott who lived near here. Oh, sorry, he's dead.

Killed by a Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriff who, along with some federal government goons, invaded Scott's property here in Ventura County (where they didn't belong). They claimed to have evidence that there was marijuana. But, there was no marijuana or any drugs on the property. The "search warrant" was a lie and the real reason for their invasion was Asset Forfeiture. Or, you could also ask the Branch Davidians. Oh, sorry, most of them are dead. In this case, the "search warrant" was based on outdated information and lies. I apologize for getting into this. But, I have very strong feelings concerning these and other similar events and you raised the issue.

Rodney Leighton

R.R. #3

Tatamagouche NS B0K 1V0 Canada

Thanks for Challenger #15. Rose-Marie was a beautiful bride. But how could she be otherwise?

Thank you for dedicating The Zine Dump to Cliff Kennedy. He would have been touched, as I was. Very nice gesture. You know, Guy, if you stopped listing all those defunct zines you could save about two pages.

Comments to a couple of things:

Alex Slate: Has it really been two years?

Jan Stinson: I bet you were none too happy with the Epistles section, huh? "Fandom is supposedly known for its tolerance." Where in the world did you ever get such a foolish notion? Fandom is full of opinionated curmudgeons who tolerate nothing and no one. The people you berate, Joe and Guy, are actually much more tolerant than many people.

And at opposite ends of the American political spectrum, and good friends, too, if I do say so.

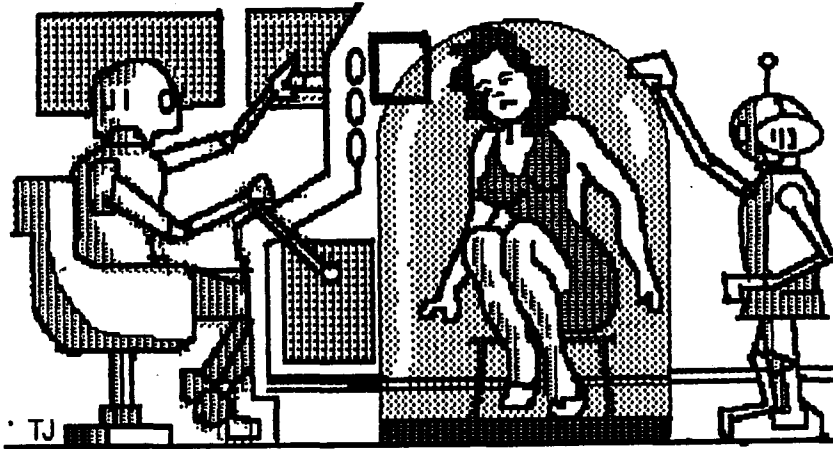
I do understand your frustration, being married to a cop. Me, I have always felt there are good cops. I am afraid the evidence suggests that they are few and far apart. I also think that many cops overreact; take things to an extreme. Your comments about putting your life on the line ... every day doing silviculture I could be killed by a fall down a mountain. But I don't want to take a bulldozer and flatten all the hills into a parking lot. When harvesting I could be killed by a falling tree at any time. But I don't want to burn down all the trees in the world. Lots of evidence that many ... undoubtedly not all ... cops want to totally control and dominate every person in their world, rather than protect them.

I should mention that I am definitely leaving SF fanzine fandom as an active participant. I am still interested in reading the things and I am hoping to continue with *The Leighton Look*, but I am writing no LOCs after the end of this year. I have also decided to discontinue writing reviews and columns for zines. I had notions about reflecting on *Chall for The Knarley Knews*; I was going to start off with "If anyone should ask me to recommend the ideal SF fanzine to try to see if they are interested in the genre, I would recommend *Challenger*, as it is the best SF fanzine there is."

Too bad – that one we would have loved to read.

commercial enterprise, wherein masterpieces are ignored in return for the production of mere dross.

As for Master Potter specifically, while it appears that his handlers at Scholastic and AOL Time Warner have transmogrified him into a commodity, his creator, Ms. Rowling, seems only to have intended it as a story to entertain. Had the stories been written to commercial needs, the protagonist would have overcome being a physically-challenged third-world woman's woman. Incidentally, though the meddling morons at Scholastic changed "Philosopher's Stone" to "Sorcerer's Stone", they left in all the medieval



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Lovely cover by Alan White.

"Growing Up SF'nally" by Gene Stewart:
Bob Bloch once wrote a piece about a writer's day. The writer got on the bus, dropped off a manuscript at the post office, went shopping, and came home. Everyone he had to deal with, by an amazing coincidence, read his stories and liked them. Every one of them made more than he did. Every one of them thought the writer should be more of a starving, impoverished artist pouring out masterpieces from a ruined garret, that he was being paid too much for stories.

Contrawise, the writer who thinks about writing one "money" book to get enough to live on while crafting the Great SFnal Novel and five years later is grinding out *Tratyn Runewind #27: Tratyn the Phlebotomist* is suffering a different sort of deprivation. But publishing has always been a

alchemic references with their "big and odd words." "Thoughts on the Scene": It is perhaps a bit heartening that the Taliban, a band of gangsters about as representative of Islam as Christian Identity is representative of Christianity, have been driven out of most of the country. The tenuousness of their control confounded the Afghanistan = Vietnam paradigm. Not that some parts of the Northern Alliance have been any better, but one hopes that they will be reconstructing the country under some sort of international supervision.

A piece in today's *Wall Street Journal* noticed how, once the Taliban was no longer able to guide the press in Kabul, all sorts of undestroyed buildings were found. Taliban freedom of the press presented a lunar landscape – anarchical Godless liberal freedom of the press found much of the city untouched. All hail the power of Allah's name, let ifrits prostrate fall.

"Gentleman Poul Anderson": There is a hole in the world of Science Fiction now.

"You Are Cordially Invited to the Launch of the Lillians": And now Thanksgiving this year is our fifth anniversary. Let us hope that June 30, 2006

will be much brighter.

"A Question": Actually, while Pakistan seems almost grovelingly eager to allow allied passage through its territory, most of the operations seem to be from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, or from carriers in the Indian Ocean.

"Remembering Fred Hoyle": There seems to be a greater acceptance of SF in Britain. Granted, both Sir Fred and Sir Arthur got their accolades for other accomplishments (this is an old tradition. A. Conan Doyle became Sir Arthur, not for Holmes, Challenger, Gerard, etc., but for effective propaganda during the Boer War, H. Rider Haggard was knighted not for Ayesha, Allan Quatermain, umSlopogaas, and so on, but for being a hardworking public servant; but their publishers sure appreciated it). She and *The Time Machine*, for example, were read by the arbiters of taste. And now, who writes for *The Spectator*? Michael Moorcock!

"How Much Is That Soggy In the Inkwell?": Doesn't the "Bentcliffe for TAFF" item qualify as subliminal advertising?

Somehow the Soggys remind me of Al Capp's two inventions, the Shmoo and the Kigme. The Shmoo, you recall, was the all-encompassing provider for human needs. It longed to be eaten and tasted like anything. It also provided materials from leather to wood – even its eyes made good suspender (braces) buttons. The Kigmy had a natural target on its behind and endured joyfully being kicked whenever a person felt frustration. Masochism meets stress relief.

"My Dad": From Paducah, you say? Was he related to the Quarles family? I have a Robert Wayne Williams, but no Robert Edward. . . . One of the interesting things about "climb[ing] around in the Family Tree" is all the interesting relatives you find there. For example – excuse me for a moment

HEY! TED! TED WHITE! YOU OVER THERE! LISTEN UP!

. . . I am related to Mary Custis Lee, Robert E. Lee's wife. Thus, when Lisa and I went to Arlington National Cemetery during our post-Worldcon visit, I could and did comment quite legitimately that we went to see Cousin Mary's house. (The relative we stayed with was also named Mary, and is also related to Mary Custis Lee.)

"Edd Cartier: EverGreen Imp: Oh my Ghod. Edd Cartier is still alive. Given the advance planning needed it may be too late for a Worldcon but some con somewhere has to highlight this

veteran of the Golden Age. We usually don't forget our great ones which makes such an omission particularly poignant.

Epistles: Bruce Pelz: I have never gone to a high school reunion so have nothing to compare with your account of your fortieth. There doesn't seem to have been one of mine since their tenth. I have contrived a certain sympathy for Harold Hardoah of Jack Vance's *The Book of Dreams*; Harold came to his class's twenty-fifth reunion and proceeded to extract retaliation for all the many wrongs done him – he had become Demon Prince Harold Alan Treesong, by the way. Unfortunately the party ended when Kirth Gersen shot him in the butt.

Robert Kennedy: Yes. One of the things I got during our post-Worldcon trip was a picture of the cousins who got married in the double wedding ceremony with my grandparents. My cousin R. A. Mabry (named after his grandfather, a guy who rode with Forrest) had a picture of his parents; his mother was my grandfather's first cousin and his father was my grandmother's first cousin. Now if I could only get a picture of the wedding . . .

Terry Jeeves: Small clarification – the National Air and Space Museum is in Washington, D.C., not Florida. I saw it for the second time (and Lisa for the first time) after leaving Arlington. I believe you in particular could spend all day there – the Wright 1903 Flyer is on display.

Terry would pitch a tent at Air & Space.

Milt Stevens: As for high school experiences, mine in particular, see the comments above about Harold Alan Treesong. My high school was only about 400 and so there wasn't enough of a population to have a like-minded group of my mind.

Rich Dengrove: (or actually, editorial response) But your exaltation at finally finishing your collection of Hugo Award Winners by finding *The Forever Machine, ne They'd Rather Be Right*, came a cropper when you actually *read* the thing.

As for the Fox Obscenity, to cite the site (nice rhyme here) again, check at <http://www.badastronomy.com/bad/tv/foxapollo.html> which answers all of Rick's problems.

Robert Sabella: Yes, "Please come to Boston for the Worldcon . . ." Or '03, Toronto. Let me echo the Editor's plea, I want to meet you.

Reply to me: So the Nazis were sexier. Bad luck, I guess. The chekist look – tight brown leather overcoat belted back and worn with a flat cap – could have had that panache, but nooo . . .

Jan Stinson: It looks like, in the division

between cops and scum, you have allocated me to "scum". Nothing I can do about it. Jurgen observed, during his idyll in Cocaigine, that his stepdaughters the Eumenides would have a hard time of it, since in their career in law enforcement they would have to associate with the most depraved and evil sorts.

"Never judge someone before you've walked a mile in his shoes. That way, if anything's wrong, you're a mile away and you have his shoes."

Binker Hughes: "Since it's such a fine line . . ." in keeping with which Reuters' expunged use of the word "terrorist" and its derivations from its news reporting. Somehow this did not keep Afghani <mmmp> from stopping vehicles with four journalists, including two from Reuters', and shooting them.

Zine Dump: "The Fatal Glass of Beer" is available on VHS and DVD. Amazon.com lists it, albeit it's hard to get. Ask at your video store for "Golf Specialist/The Dentist/The Fatal Glass of Beer". It ain't a fit night out for man nor beast.

And why did the Hugo presenters have to read "No Award" in every category? Made me think that Marty Cantor had a chance, it really did . . . not.

"Varley and Verne": The character in Steel Beach is called "Hildy Johnson" because of varying versions of "The Front Page" in which Hildy Johnson was either male or female, and that is in keeping with Varley's world of quick-'n'-easy sex change. (How realistic *that* is is another matter altogether.)

While Verne did insert many appropriate things into the location for *Dans la terre a la lune* he also added a hill that was considerably higher than any natural elevation existing in Florida. The Vertical Assembly Building is higher above sea level than any natural elevation in Florida, for example.

I thought the person who told Isaac Asimov about "Zhoolvern" the writer was his father.

Verne died March 24, 1905. What he thought of *les freres* Wright I have not run across.

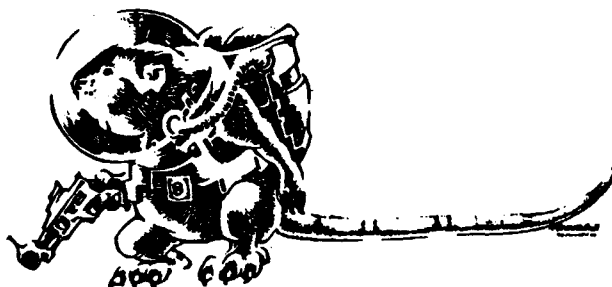
The French for a while boosted *le* local *homme*, Clément Ader, as being the true first to fly in his craft *Eole* in 1890. "Veel-bair" (Wilbur Wright was a media hero in Europe), during his tour of France, got a look at the *Eole*, and concluded that it wouldn't work -- no controls, essentially.

"Imagine!": Given that Mohammed Atta, for example, was from a well off family, like most of his fellow hijackers, and 'Usama bin Laden himself is rich, dropping "food, medical supplies, temporary

housing, and clothing" in Afghanistan would do nothing to address the problem of al-Qaeda.

"Millennium Philcon Diary": Interesting point about the Retro-Hugos. I at least did not vote for AgBob for Best Fan Writer.

"Mil Phil WorldCon 2001 Photo Essay": You lingered in the Assembly Room at Independence Hall to commune with the spirits of Jefferson and Adams. So did Lisa, on our visit there. Fortunately you did not have to hear the woman explain the story of the three-hour prayer meeting that saved the Continental Congress.



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Just reading through Challenger 15 on this Christmas day, and I thought I would make a few comments. I must say, as usual, it's an incredibly impressive effort - *all those pages!!!* I very much enjoyed Mike Resnick's "Millennium Philcon Diary" and thought it was great that he managed to persuade Janis Ian (with very little effort, apparently) to collaborate with him on a story and later participate in the convention -- that's just one of the elements that make this a remarkable con report. And of course, Mike has a very unique perspective to start with, considering he is such an active social fan as well as being, apparently, one of the more prolific professional writers. Mike's report actually makes me feel regretful that I was not there (due to financial as well as chronological impoverishment), but no doubt I would not have had 1/100th as good a time as Mike did. Mike also makes me feel regretful because, judging from his trip reports, even if I set Challenger down right now and devoted the rest of my life to it, I doubt would ever be able to read everything that man has written and edited!

I also note, with mild amusement, Mike's often futile attempts to connect with Barry Malzberg. Malzberg is someone who is known to be just as shy and reclusive as Harry Warner, apparently (or even myself, for that matter). As a

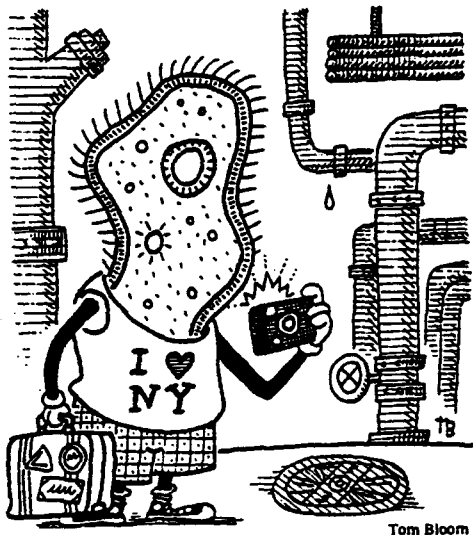
matter of fact, someone suggested just that at an ESFA meeting last year (during one of my few exceptions to my hermit-like ways), to which Joe Wrzos replied, "Why, I bet Barry doesn't even know who Harry Warner is!" Barry heard this challenge to his fannishness and rattled off, "Sure I do! Harry Warner, 423 Something Avenue" from memory. "No, that's Summit Avenue," I corrected.

Finally, I should also make note of Charlie Williams' homage to Dave Stevens on page 74 where he is illustrating a belly dancer performing for the amusement of Mike Resnick. Is this the same "Charles Williams Jr." who wrote "My Dad"? If so, he certainly makes his father sound like a very special person indeed. (Or even if not!)

Is so. Is not the Charles Williams whose novels Binker Hughes reviews elsewhere in this issue, however.

In your book reviews, I will indeed have to look for *Forgotten Tales of Love & Murder* by Edgar Rice Burroughs, but mainly for the illustrations by "Dany" Frolich, who, like you, I remember fondly. (Did you ever get his underground comic, *Trivial Annoyances*?) You didn't say how much the volume costs. Can I find information about it on a website?

The website is www.sstar.com/treasure/tarzana.htm, or you can e-mail me and I'll pass along your message.



A good comic book I can recommend to you, although, of course, it isn't really a comic book, in any sense, is the magazine-size *Heroes* one-shot, which features a different comics artist on each page drawing a scene dedicated to the heroes who

performed during the unspeakable atrocities on September 11th. Although it was not done by one of my favorite artists, I thought the most striking page was the one devoted to the passengers of Flight 93 – it showed them standing up and advancing on the hijackers. I have to admit that when I saw that page, tears suddenly started erupting from my eyes.

I got a LOC from Alexis Gilliland, who told me, amongst other things, that the term "Al Qaeda" has no historical precedence, but is, instead, the name of the Arabic translation to Isaac Asimov's Foundation trilogy! I mentioned this to rich brown via an email, and since I have not read that trilogy, he summarized a bit of the main idea of Harry Seldon attempting to alter people's beliefs and ideals through the orchestration of certain events, a practice which Seldon called "psychohistory." If bin Ladin does indeed see himself as a Harry Seldon figure, I bet he wouldn't be quick to admit it!

"Reverend" Kenneth Kafoed's suggestion that "instead of dropping...bombs...we dropped food, medical supplies, temporary housing, and clothing..." is very idealistic and noble-sounding, but what would be the actual result of a practice like that? The part of me that was a small child in the late '60s still wants to believe in peace, love and understanding, but forget the fact that we are presently dropping both bombs *and* food over Afghanistan, how would militant terrorists react if we responded with gifts and understanding rather than bombs? Somehow, I don't think they would understand, and would instead think of America as an extremely weak nation that is quick to capitulate to its enemies. This kind of idealistic thinking is what has served in the past to merely nourish America's enemies, so they can live to attack us another day (am I sounding like a "hawk" now?).

Your pages of photographs from the worldcon were very much appreciated, as your pictures are every time you present them.

In your review of *Terminal Eyes*, you mention publicity photos of "H.W.A." I've never seen any of these. Nor have I seen videos, performances, etc. - apparently everyone thought their act was too hot (read: raunchy) to air. Guy, I can't even find them on the Internet!! Can you help me out here? Do you have any of these publicity photos? Uh, we are referring to "Hoes with Attitude," right?

I believe that's Ho's with Attitude. Garden implements are not involved.

Read "Spiders and Snakes" with interest - I really like your strong narrative sense. You manage

to fill out the story beyond just the "he said then she said" routine. Guy, you *are* keeping up with the current Justice League cartoon on the Cartoon Network, right? I am reminded of the two-part episode, "In Blackest Night." The Green Lantern is on trial on a foreign planet, and The Flash inquires as to who is going to defend GL. When he is told they have no lawyers, he is incredulous. "We solved our lawyer problem a long time ago," one of the alien prosecutors offers. The Flash then offers to serve as GL's lawyer. The alien prosecutors consider this, then reluctantly decide to let him do so. "And if we rule against him, you will share in his fate," one concludes. "Hey wait a minute!" interjects The Flash, "that's not fair!" "That is how we eliminated our lawyer problem," was the answer. Heheheh.

Speaking of the Green Lantern, I'm glad you printed Robert Sabella's letter where he expresses angst and alienation about hanging out at a Worldcon. I like what you said in response, "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." I guess this is (part of) the reason I had such a miserable time at Chicon. However, I must take issue with him when he says his last Worldcon was Boston in '81, not just because I was there and didn't know him. C'mon, people, it was 1980!

But Bob's lack of interest in attending Worldcons, and his stronger interest in the Mardi Gras prompt me to suggest that both he and I (who have never met) should travel down to Nawlins and foist ourselves upon you for the duration of that festival!

Joseph T. Major raises an interesting point: "There is now some concern about gang retaliation against jurors." I always thought a deciding factor in the infamous Rodney King verdict was jurors being afraid of (legal or il-) repercussions from the police. I admit I wasn't there, but I can't help but wonder if they were *not* a "white hung jury" but instead a jury in fear for their lives and freedom from the local constabulary!

Sheryl Birkhead is right on to sing the praises of Grant Canfield (and kudos to Sheryl for her own Hugo nomination, by the way). Grant Canfield had a slick, professional, detailed, cartooning style that I don't feel fandom has seen before or since. What has Grant been doing in the last 20 years, while I've been "away"? Since he hasn't been active in recent years, he would be a "shoe-in" for that "Retro Hugo" award you seem to

dislike so much.

As for the appearance of *Challenger*, I must say once again that all that white paper is a little Too Much. Also, your print is very faint in many places, and almost all the commas look like periods to me. Much better is the typeface in the review insert in Terry Jeeves' letter – the Arial comes out much darker and clearer, for some reason.

I tried for some variety in fonts last issue, and agree that the Goudy – which I consider a more attractive typeface than Times New Roman – didn't repro as well. We're back to the latter now. Also, I uniformly disliked all the art, except for the pieces by people who aren't with us, either by reason of relocation or death (in other words, Jerry Collins and William Rotsler). Although I *loved* the cover and the inside logo. You're right – Alan White is due his own Hugo soon.

Thanks again for the great zine, Guy! Thanks for excerpting from my e-mails, too. And if I haven't said so many times before, congratulations on your marriage, you lucky dog!

I had some trouble getting #15 printed. Though I used the same outfit that had handled every issue since #9, and though I provided what I believed to be detailed and extremely elementary instructions, CopyMax tossed the job to a new employee who ignored all – and printed on but one side of the page. I got them to re-do it and promise to recycle all that wasted paper. The next job is the one that got distributed, because although it was a shade too light, with all the problems you mention, at least it was double-sided. Next time I stand over them and approve a test copy.



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I see that various people are still talking about their jury experiences. This is something that I and Judith are very unlikely ever to endure, by virtue of our left-wing politics – specifically, active membership in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) during much of the 1980s. Given the overall political tenor of the time – Thatcher on the Cold War then was rather like Dubya on terrorism now: *everyone who does not support us wholeheartedly is a scumbag commiesymp bleeding heart liberal faggot*, etc. etc. – this meant that our names would have been added to the "banned" list as a matter of routine, to ensure that we (and everyone else on the list) couldn't side with the accused in one of the state's quasi-political trials (cutting through fences around military bases, painting slogans on military equipment, that sort of thing). MI5 and Special Branch were fingered on several occasions during the eighties as snooping peace movement activists – but in the absence of a Human Rights Act nothing could be done about it. Hence my certainty that we're on the list and that we'll never be picked for jury duty.

Gene Stewart says that Harry Potter is a product. Well, it might be now, with all the merchandising that accompanied the first of the films – not to mention the merchandising that was spun off the books before the film rights were sold: compare the likenesses of the character pre-film and post-film and you'll notice many differences – but this was not the case originally. Then, the books were books, a nostalgic romp through a never-never England of boarding schools, cream teas, a working class which knew its place, and an evil which is externalised and defeated (as one critic remarked, adults read J. K. Rowling's novels because they're simple and straightforward, while children prefer Philip Pullman's because they're complicated); but I daresay that if you're coming to them for the first time now, the stories will be difficult to disentangle from the surrounding hype (and Stewart will face the additional handicap of not being English, and thus not having an instinctive grasp of the social conventions embedded in the narrative).

Stewart also disputes C. P. Snow's observations on the two cultures, suggesting that the contemporary USA has dozens if not hundreds. In saying this, however, he is mistaking Snow's use of the term. "Culture", in the usage conferred by

Snow's argument, is not as an anthropological term (as one might speak, say, of Islamic culture, or Chinese culture), nor is it being deployed in its historical sense (Beaker culture, Wessex culture, Romano-British culture). It is instead being used to distinguish between what he sees as the two competing ways of understanding the world: that is, the scientific, which attempts to explain it; and the artistic, which attempts to interpret it. Any other reading, as Stewart's, simply misses this point. (Indeed, if one starts any response to Snow's argument without grasping what he means by culture, one will very rapidly cease to respond to him at all.)

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In re Challenger #15's tribute to Poul Anderson, while

Skäl

is a word in Swedish, it means "Reason or motive" for action. As a title for a farewell to Poul it doesn't make a Hell of a lot of sense. I'm guessing you meant

Skål,

the traditional Swedish toast.

Poul was of Danish ancestry, but same difference: he prefaced autographs with that word.

If I goofed on the umlaut or whatever, that explains the rumbling sound we heard in Birmingham: my Swedish great-grandparents churning in their graves.

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Whattacover! Alan White strikes again. Great colour, and can't beat the content. I'm lucky to be able to make QuarkXPress work for me, so I envy his dexterity with whatever software he's using.

He tells all in his piece this issue.

September 11 changed us all. 25 Canadians died in that attack, which is one reason why Canadian troops are now on their way to join US troops in Afghanistan. We discovered that several people who have been involved with the various attacks have lived or been based in Toronto. We discovered the depths to which the human race can sink, and we are supposedly the most civilized people this planet has ever hosted. We discovered new heights of zealotry, and how far it can go. We

discovered how many people can grieve at once; all of us. I have serious doubts about our reaction to these events...I pray we will not replace this horrific zealotry with our own brand. (Several LOCwriters have said that some Muslims must really hate the US to do something like this. That's true. The greatest wisdom America could garner from all of this is to try to determine and understand why America is so hated. If that could be discovered, American might understand those movements that much more. *Ah, tae see oorsels as ithers see us*, said Robbie Burns...) You say in the LOC that Congress is destroying due process for aliens...many have been worried about the US flouting international law, and ignoring the Geneva Convention in dealing with Taliban and Al-Qaeda terrorists and soldiers. Today, Donald Rumsfeld says that the US is treating its prisoners humanely. Yet, I wonder what would happen if an international group demanded to see the prisoners in Kandahar and Guantanamo Bay. Unlike others, if I had to determine what would happen to these prisoners, I would purposefully treat them humanely, and tell them they are being treated far better than they might treat their own prisoners. This is the moral high ground Dubya speaks of...it's time to stand on it.

Marvelous pictures of the wedding. We would have loved to have been there, and once again, congratulations to the both of you. Yvonne and I celebrate our 19th anniversary in May, and we are already planning something special for our 20th.

From all the negative reviews I've read about A.I., I'd think I was the only moviegoer who actually enjoyed it, although I admit, I didn't enjoy it enough to go see it a second time. It had questions to answer, and even if it didn't completely answer them, it left us with the questions to ponder further. Where does the mechanism end, and the organism begin? Can a machine have emotions, can it love? How would we feel if we were in that position, and continued to strive for that love? How would we feel if it were attained? We enjoy bending our heads around these SFnal questions, going back to Data in ST:TNG, and as far back as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. David, the little boy mecha, desperately seeks love from his mother, while he learns (and we are shown) the cynicism behind so-called love. It would be typical of Kubrick to end the film on a negative note and leave David's desire for a return to maternal love unfulfilled. Spielberg's deus ex machina of kind aliens who find David and give him a satisfying (at least to him, not necessarily to us) return to his mother winds it up on a semi-

uplifting note. I admit I'm a wuss when it comes to an ending like this, so I actually enjoyed it. Again, it wasn't so great that I'd see it again, but it does deal with a theme I've liked for some time, the search for some emotional satisfaction, usually in the form of love or some other fulfillment. The movie didn't do what it set out to do, but it contained that favorite theme, so I liked what I saw.



Locs

Wonderful Charlie Williams essay on his father. Would that I could write something so loving of my father...I think many of us would find that difficult. Both of my parents are still alive, struggling through an Ontario winter and thinking of moving back west to British Columbia. Yvonne has lost her father, and now, a stepfather. I study the reactions of others to the loss of a parent, for I fear what my own reactions would be should I lose one myself. That time is not now, but it may be soon.

One of the greatest fans of *The Shadow* is our old friend Andrew Specht. He has enjoyed SF in all its forms, from Doctor Who in his neohood to pulps in his middle age. He has an amazing collection of pulps, books, magazines and other publications, most concerning *The Shadow*. He has been a costuming fan in the past, so there was something he wanted more than anything, and he went to Yvonne to ask about it. Yvonne is a talented seamstress and tailor, and in the past, she had made Andrew a Sherlockian greatcoat that he still wears as a winter coat. So, this time, he presented her with a reproduction of an Edd Cartier illustration. It was of *The Shadow* full length, wearing a coat that was double-breasted above the waist, and single below.

Yvonne was able to reproduce that coat, and with a neckerchief and wide-brimmed hat, Andrew recreates the figure of The Shadow every annual pulp convention in Toronto.

He has to meet New Orleans fan Doug Wirth, who also costumes as Lamont Cranston Kent Allard, and – most importantly – needs no makeup on his nose.

I know you were at MilPhil, Sheryl...I wish we could have met. But then, with so far to walk to see just about everything, I saw many people only in passing...Guy and Rose-Marie, and the Thayers, and even other people from Toronto. I haven't read any Harry Potter books, but Yvonne won tickets to see the movie. It was a great adventure, and Harry reminded me of Luke Skywalker, which was based on several old archetypes. A fun movie, with great effects. **Lord of the Rings** was wide and expansive, beautifully done. The movie is crammed full of the story, and yet, there is so much they had to remove to make it fit. Such is the story the movie is based on, still one my favourites. I can hardly wait for **The Two Towers** this coming December.

(You don't have to say, but...what head-swelling offer did Bruce Pelz make you at the Worldcon? Enquiring minds (and nosey parkers) want to know!)

I am now in charge of the traveling Fan History Exhibit.

Milt Stevens echoes my own childhood...when I was in high school, the present sucked, and I hoped for better in the future. I was right, although my expectations for the future were pretty high. In some ways the present still sucks, but in other ways, I'm very happy and very lucky. I can't and won't complain. If you got everything you always wanted, what would you wish for then?

Thank you for remembering Cliff Kennedy in The Zine Dump. Let's see...Yvonne Rowse's title **Barmaid** seems to be on hiatus. I received three small zines from her last time she mailed something to me...**Adverse Camber**, **Sacked** and **Talking Shit**. Yep, them's the titles. I think there's a new **Jomp, Jr.** you may have received by now, in addition to another **Mimosa**. Karen Johnson has been in touch with people, and she still hope to move from Australia to Florida. A new **Peregrine Nation** has shown up, too. Graeme has been forced to suspend **Space Cadet**, but he is working on a Canadian version of the **Fancyclopedia**, which can be accessed from Bill Burns' www.efanzines.com website. Rebus dates...May the 4th be with you?

Finally...I miss **Proper Boskonian**. I wish NESFA could revive this great zine.

Yes!

Yvonne worked the World Fantasy Convention in Montréal this past November, and I ran into Lee Modesitt in the elevator. I told him that I had just received a fanzine from South Africa with an interview with him in it. He seemed slightly upset with this revelation. He told me that the interview had been conducted via e-mail about a year and a half previously, and that he'd never received an issue. After returning home, I e-mailed the new editor, Liz Simmonds, about my meeting with Mr. Modesitt, and she assured me everything would be put right. (A quick e-mail to South Africa...my, this world has gotten much smaller, hasn't it?)

Mike Resnick's MilPhil diary...I hope Mike will share Janis Ian with the rest of the Worldcon in the coming years. The rest of us would have liked to have seen her, too! But then, I might have walked past her, and not recognized her, even though I've always loved her music. I left a message some time ago on her website, hoping she'll come to Torcon 3 next year.

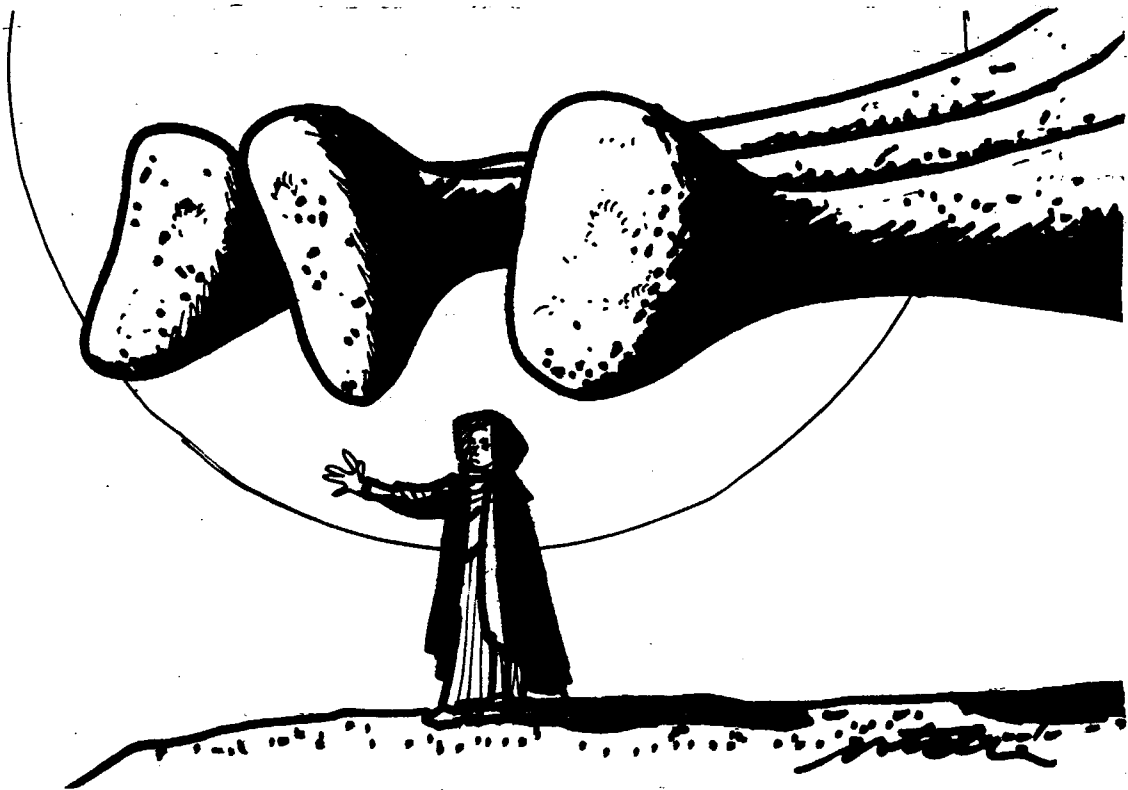
I always enjoy your Worldcon photo essays. With luck, we'll make it into one of them, one fine year when we can all get to Worldcon and party together. Plus an excellent essay on that amazing court case. There are several fannish lawyers in Toronto, including Ken Smookler and David Warren, both on the Torcon 3 committee, and I wish they'd outline some of their own legal adventures. Finally, my condolences on the loss of Meade Frierson. I think I met Meade at one Worldcon some years ago. We're all a big family, to be sure, but with so many aunts, uncles and cousins, it's tough to get to know them all.

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Thank you for sending the 15th issue of **Challenger**. Frankly, I did not expect to receive it. You are very kind.

The front cover is truly astounding. The busty model looks familiar, as if you had used her photo in other publications. Is it anyone we know? Was the cover run on a color laser printer or did you spring for a fancy print job?

With so much material to peruse, I can only hit a few highlights. Thanks for reprinting the back cover illo from Meade Frierson. Did not know the man well but respected the job he did with all of his



interests. In case your readers are interested, I put together a brief tribute on the Southern Fandom Confederation Web site at www.southernfandom.com. Of course you contributed to the tribute—that Julie Wall did for the SFC Bulletin. Meade will be missed.

Mr. Resnick tells us that SF fandom now has its first celebrity fan. It had to happen eventually. I had heard a year or two ago that Ms. Ian was living in the Nashville area. Now I know why her classic "At Seventeen" rang such a loud bell for me. Many fannish folk know of the disconnection and loneliness that is expressed in the song. One wonders if there are other celebrities who read the stuff and might be interested in fandom but would never be caught dead at a con or club meeting.

You dig out and reprint cartoons from the ancient past—that is, when I was active in fandom. The Bambioid cartoon brought back a few memories. And Dave Ryan's cartoons about fuggheads was the first time I've seen or heard that word used since I drifted back. In fact, it seems that much of the old fanspeak has drifted out of use. No one talks of gafiation or Real Soon Now or propellor beanies. Or am I simply not hearing them? It's possible.

As good as **Challenger** certainly is, herewith a couple of suggestions for potential improvement. Rose-Marie is right about the length

of the zine and Rich Lynch is right about needing more of a focus for each issue. You've got at least two normal fanzines' worth of material here. A lot of editors would get three issues out of this. The zeal is impressive, but most Best Fanzine voters don't go by weight. Anything this big almost has to seem unfocused unless you create a Theme in big block letters and require every page to tie to it like a Dick and Jane reader. Another factor is that such a big zine can scare the reader. It's too much to attack all at once.

The mix of text typefaces does not help, either. You use Goudy Old Style (the New Yorker font) for some of your articles, but most of the remainder is set in Times Roman. You may have a reason for doing this, but I can't figure out why. These fonts are quite similar to each other but different enough to be noticeable. My small amount of reading in the field says you either make the text fonts all the same or make a clear distinction between them and use the difference to set things apart. For example, use a sans-serif font for a distinct section like the letter column and a single serif font for the rest. Take it for what it's worth.

It's worth quite a bit. I tried Goudy for most of my own articles, so as to differentiate them from those in Times Roman by others. It looked great on the masters, but reproduced worse. So Times New Roman for everything, now, with the occasional minor exception.

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I came home late last night and decided to watch A.I. Lacking the Kubrick/Spielberg movie, I watched Astro Boy. The First episode: Astro Boy is created because his inventor felt great guilt over the death of weight. He loses hope and love. Unhinged, he sells him to a carnival barker who puts him in an arena to battle other robots...

Sounds about the same. Though I wished they'd made an Astro Boy film instead of A.I. The major difference is that Astro Boy doesn't remain naive about his experiences, does take in new ideas and believes in trying. Kubrick's characters have a selfish streak and aren't interested in changing their minds.

One friend compared A.I. unfavorably to Tomb Raider.



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I remember Poul Anderson with fondness. As a new fanzine editor one of the features I used to do was interviews was pros. I started with the pros I knew in Texas, Howard, Neal etc. As a convention in El Paso I asked Poul (the GoH) for an interview. I was certainly not particularly well-known. I can't remember if I was editing The Texas SF Inquirer then, or whether I was just doing Robots & Roadrunners. But he graciously agreed. He was the first pro I interviewed that I hadn't previously known for a couple of years.

I didn't care much for A.I., either. Actually, it would be better to say that I was very disappointed. The best literature is about the protagonist becoming, gaining control over his or her environment. David never does really learn. The ending is pure *Deus ex machina*. Very, very unsatisfying. The people never seem to learn, either. If the people had learned, *a la King Kong*, the film could have been redeemed. But no ...

I'm sure you mean the de Laurentiis King Kong, the abortion which featured Jessica Lange asking

the ape "What's your sign?", and not the genuine article, wherein Fay Wray screams as no woman had ever screamed before or since, and is the cool-i-os-i-test movie of all time.

Back to "The Empty Man" – don't quite know what to say at this point. What can we do? Can we condemn this type of interrogation? Guy, you seem to indicate that this example is common. Are you sure? Let us say that it is. I would like to pose you a question. If there is little but circumstantial evidence to convict a murderer, and the only real way to get a conviction is this type of interrogation, what do we, as a society, do? Can we afford to leave killers on the loose?

It's not really on point, but I'm reminded of the way the detective played by Harry Andrews drew the truth out of Kim Stanley's kidnapper character in Seance on a Wet Afternoon. He tricked her, but by doing so he solved the case and rescued the victim (and gave Stanley the chance to act the paint off the walls). I have no hard-and-fast opinion on such questioning, since the Empty Man's guilt was settled beyond question by his second confession, but ... could such interrogation techniques entice an innocent, weak man to confess to crimes he didn't commit?

For the most part, I thought your ending monologue on 9-1-1 was quite good. However, I am sorry and a bit upset with a few little things you said. You have admired the leadership shown on this issue by both Bush and Giuliani. Couldn't you have left it at that? Why the personal attacks on the two of them first?

To underscore the impact their actions of the moment – emphasis purposeful – had on me. Praise means more when you praise people you detest.

Distrust the potential for misuse of the powers all you want. Any law in the wrong hands can be dangerous. However, a little paranoia at the right time can be a good thing. Besides, if they are out to get you, you aren't paranoid.

Only my secret enemies think I'm paranoid.

Joy V. Smith
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Excellent cover! (One of the belly dancers?) I love the guy pasting on the issue number (#15). Lots more fun cartoons, illos, and photos, of course, but what is the word on the back cover cartoon (the SFPazine cover)?

Huitloxopetl ... the Mayan-influenced title of Meade Frierson's SFPazine.

I think Gene Stewart is a little harsh on the current crop of SF. One of my favorite writers now is Bujold. (Terry Pratchett is also one of my favorites, but he's Fantasy.) And there are others.

Thanks for including people's thoughts on the September 11 attacks; Joseph and Lisa Major's were especially inspiring. Somehow, that takes me beyond the death and tragedy back to life... In a similar vein, I loved your memories of Poul Anderson.

Great photo essay on "The Launch of the Lillians" at Cocoa, FL. Loved your wedding song too.

"All in the Game" is one of my favorite songs of all time. Get this: the music was written by Charles G. Dawes, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning Vice President of the United States!

Excellent review of A.I. And I enjoyed Greg Benford's article on Fred Hoyle and his idea about life in the clouds... And thanks for Terry Jeeves' article on his Soggy cartoon creation... Wonderful piece by Charles Williams Jr. in memory of his father.

I enjoyed the background and artwork of Edd Cartier (article by Ben Indick), also the epistles and zine reviews. Of course, as usual, **Challenger** keeps going. Very interesting article on Varley and Verne by Gregory Benford. Mike Resnick's "Millennium Philcon Diary" was fun, though he always makes me feel like a slug. Thanks for all the con photos. And now the roller coaster's going down to the tragic murder trial tale. (The drawings really got through to me.) Another thoughtful issue.

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Thanks for #15 - has already distracted me from what I should be doing for a couple of hours. Still a lot to read properly, but I know damn well if I don't respond now, however bittily, kipple will bury the good intent.

Mentioning kipple, [I was] startled to see "The Zine Dump" had Dave Hyde's **For Dickheads Only** address in Kokomo. Last time I heard from him, few years back, it was from Detroit, a brief note saying big changes in his life, and would be in touch again when things sorted. Is he back at old location, or are you going on backwhen address?

The latter, alas. I keep hoping that the onrush of movies based on Philip K. Dick stories - two this

year alone, which makes at least five that I can think of - will spark a revival in Hyde's excellent zine, or even the PKD Society Newsletter, but no such luck. Where's the film version of The Man in the High Castle?

Thanks for kind mention of **Data Dump**. The problem with reprinting is tracking people down for permission or their literary executors/heirs.

The very effective narrative of "Spiders & Snakes" brings to mind the cliché re "the banality of evil."

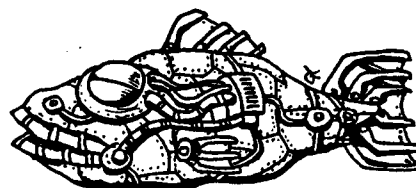
If memory serves, **Slubberdegullion** was a fz of early '90s, from East Garforth, near Leeds, by a Nigel Somebody (Richardson?). There are still a lot of punkzines about, I see the odd one, and each lists many others - real raw energy.

I assume the "Long Riders" [poem is by] Poul Anderson? Can't find mention of source in the article. (I don't have any of his poetry collections, so can't check to see if in/sourced.)

A compliment! I wrote "The Long Riders" in about 1972. There's a reason I don't write more poetry, and it seems pretty evident to me.

To call **Solaris** "a cheap Russian ripoff of 2001 which makes no sense" seems an amazingly ignorant statement, if you'll excuse my saying so, but then you clearly have a blank spot on Russian culture (cf your remarks on Russian art) - what about the Russian Futurists and all the other extraordinary experiments, Constructivism etc etc, that Stalin snuffed out?

The next correspondent agrees with you. All I know is that I find even Faberge eggs boring. Gimme my Jackson Pollack.



Colin Lester's **International Science Fiction Yearbook** (Pierrot Publishing, London, '78) has a megalist of academic libraries with SF fanzine collections. One in the States which seems keen on expanding its SF holdings, generally including fanzines, is the Popular Culture Library, Alison M. Scott, head librarian, William T. Jerome Library, Bowling Green OH 43403-0600. Here in the U.K., the SF Foundation Library, part of the

University of Liverpool Library, also has a large fanzine collection, and welcomes further donations. Contact Librarian/Administrator Andy Sawyer, at POB 123, Liverpool L69 3DA.

There has been at least one Nobel for Literature predominantly for a work of SF – Harry Martinson, in 1974, where the citation specifically cites his SF epic poem “Aniara”.

Never read this ditty. Where is it available?

The snobbery about comics still, sadly, persists. When I started researching the area of poems presented in comic strip form, although it is hardly a rare crossover, I could find no critical writing about it – that’s why my own little book on the subject, *A Word in Your Eye*, came about, and has gone almost unreviewed, I suspect because “the poetry lit-crit types” see comics as beneath them, although they’ll devote acreage of text to other kinds of experiments in poem presentation.

A lot of other things already found in the ish I’m tempted to respond to, but I feel exhausted after just reading Mike Resnick’s article – and he does it without stimulants other than coffee, terrifying *ubermenschish* stuff!

*I must refer you to Fred Chappell’s River, Louisiana State University Press ‘75, part of the larger poem Midquest, and the poem entitled *ahem* “Science Fiction Water Letter to Guy Lillian”. Like Fred’s WFA-winning story “The Somewhere Doors”, it deals with the attractions and insufficiencies of science fiction to “poetry lit-crit types” ... specifically, one who attended Nolacon, knew Lynn Hickman well and who is now poet laureate of North Carolina. And it has my name in it!*

Dale Speirs

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I can’t remember if I sent congratulations to the happy couple before, so if not, then belated best wishes. As you wend your way together through the winding path of life, etcetera etcetera. I’m sure you’ve heard enough of them by now, so I’ll leave it to you to insert selected homilies to taste, various Irish proverbs, and wrap up with romantic sentiments.

“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.” Actually *Solaris* predates 2001. The book, by Polish author Stanislaw Lem, was published in 1961. I’ve

seen the movie version, which could have been shortened by an hour simply by cutting all those lingering camera views of vegetation dripping water and assorted long shots. But it was not a ripoff.

I had in mind the Russian film’s use of the sound of breaking crystal, lifted from Kubrick, but perhaps Justin Winston’s spot review best summed Solaris: “It’s long, it’s dull, and nothing happens.”

I noticed that throughout the issue you referred to the World Trade Center disaster as 9-1-1. It should be 9-11. Nothing to do with the emergency telephone number. Someone once remarked that the USA was never prepared for any war it fought and won, and had planned and readied itself for the two wars it did lose.

I don’t get you. What’s the second?

But if the American government follows the money, they will undoubtedly prevail over the terrorists by cutting off their lifeblood flow of cash. The one advantage a government has is that it can be relentless over a long period of time and never give evil a moment’s rest. During the October crisis of 1970 in Canada, the FLQ was permanently squashed by that method.

Your case report of the woman murdered for change in the cash register made me wonder about the differences between Calgary and New Orleans murder rates. What is the per capita rate down there? Calgary has unfortunately become a big city (pop. 850,000) in more ways than one; we have just had our 14th murder. All of them arise from domestic disputes, drunken parties, and drug deals gone wrong, with only the occasional murder while committing [another] crime.

Your legal accounts are quite readable. Have you thought of eventually trying to get some of them published as true-crime paperbacks?

I couldn’t ethically turn such a profit from one of my own cases, but I do juggle other stories from the courthouse around in my head, with just that in mind.

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I really like the detail work on Alan White’s cover for *Challenger* #15. Having the bricks show through the poster is an interesting effect, and it sort of suggests that there is a far different reality behind the image you initially see. The ragged bottom edge of the poster looks like a devastated landscape with

smoke rising from it. Considering the female seems to be carrying a weapon of some sort, is she supposed to be an other worldly Kali figure? That would be in keeping with the **Challenger** title. If she is a Kali figure, the mundane figures in the foreground seem entirely oblivious to her destructive potential.

Unlike Gene Stewart, I'm not at all anxious for any effort to turn SF into literature. If a writer writes as well as they can at whatever they happen to be doing, they may produce literature. Raymond Chandler wasn't writing literature when he was writing. After he was dead, academics began noticing he was an outstanding writer, and his works were posthumously blessed with the title of literature. When writers set out to produce Literature they usually produce something that is literaryish. Even worse, they decide to enlighten the peasantry. Strangely enough, such efforts never become popular.

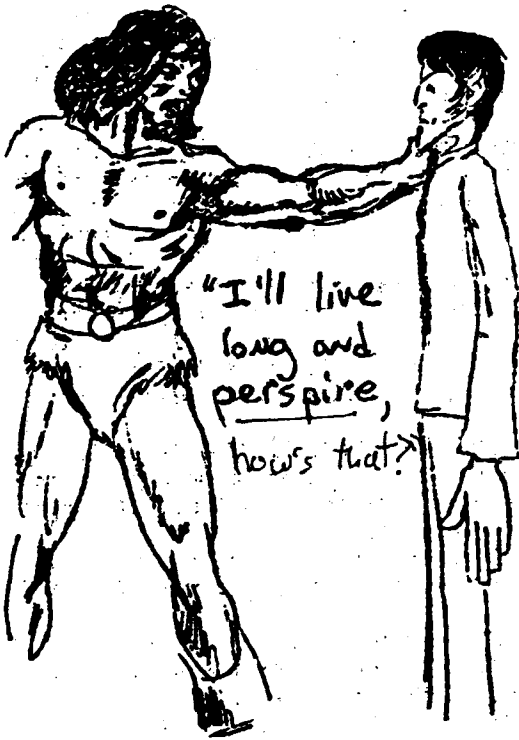
You did a fine tribute to Poul Anderson, who was undoubtedly one the 20th century's greatest SF writers and a really great person. I recall my own first meeting with Poul which didn't come as the result of any planning of my own. I was sitting in my hotel room at Tricon in Cleveland in 1966, and there came a knock at the door. It was the Andersons. On seeing me, Karen realized she had the wrong room. However, I was just joining SAPS at that time, and Karen was a member of SAPS, so I introduced myself. We chatted briefly, and before they left, Karen thought she should also introduce Poul. I'd been reading his fiction since I was in grade school, and I don't know why I didn't react more to meeting him face-to-face. Maybe it just didn't sink in. I remember being in the bar with the Andersons later in that con before they went off to watch this preview of some TV series called *Star Trek*. I knew an SF TV series would never go anywhere, so I pretty much ignored it except for the female models the producers had brought to the con. The models wore some costumes that were definite attention grabbers but which never appeared in the actual series.

I arrived in the Bay Area early the following year. I sort of floated in and out of the area for the next three years. In those years, I spent a lot of time talking with the Andersons. My time in Bay Area Fandom represented an era in my fannish existence. It was unlike that which came before or after. Life at sea wasn't really all that fascinating, so fannish things seemed like more of a high point in my life.

Or maybe, I was just young, and high points seemed much higher than they do today.

I'm not so sure Stanley Kubrick was fighting cynicism in *A.I.* I found the movie to be very depressing. In fact, I saw *A.I.* at a matinee and had to go to another movie that evening to get my mind off the first movie. I wasn't convinced that David was experiencing love. It seemed more reasonable to view him as a machine executing a program. A machine can be infinitely persistent. By reversal, maybe we are doing the same thing when we appear to be experiencing love. After all, a baby loves whatever feeds it. It's as much of a programmed response as suckling. Later in life, we attach love to the objects of our sexual desire. It may be a necessary part of our programming, but it is still programming. Gigolo Joe seems to deliver the defining line of the movie when he says "They don't love you; they love what you do for them." Alexis Gilliland wonders what challenge led to the Rampart scandal. In my own theory, I describe the problem as the two tiered organization. All police officers are hired as basic street soldiers, but the benefits go to





those who have other skills. People who move to the upper tier have to deal with staff writing, budget problems, personnel problems, technology problems, etc, etc. In other words, they have to have the skills that all organization require in order to move to the upper tier. People who can't move to the upper tier may find in twenty years that they are still swapping fire with the enemy. They are taking the risks, but the benefits are going to others. Some become angry. That can express itself as the Rodney King incident and some of the things which occurred in the Rampart scandal. Others may decide to reward themselves if the system won't, and that results in part of what Perez and his partner were doing.

Janet Larson asks about murderers who were twins. I do know of one case where a murderer was a twin. In that case, both twins were bad guys. One of them gunned a man down in front of several eye witnesses. It never was prosecuted, because nobody could say which twin had actually pulled the trigger. As far as I know, twins don't have any greater propensity to be criminals than anyone else. They may well have less propensity.

I also was disturbed by the large number of "no award" votes in the fan categories. Initially, I was thinking that it also occurred in the fiction categories, but I found that wasn't so when I checked it. Whatever the purpose of the Hugos may be, it isn't to insult people. A win for no award (sorry Marty) would be an insult to the nominees

and an embarrassment to the World Science Fiction Committee. I would personally favor abolishing the no award option. However, from local conversations, I have found there are a fair number of people who would be philosophically opposed to abolishing the option. I suspect this is one of those matters which will be discussed for a number of years with no changes taking place.

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With regards to your mention of *They'd Rather Be Right*, I dug out my copies and noticed an anomaly.

In the Bookclub hc edition of *They'd Rather Be Right* the copyright page is interesting. This Bookclub edition has Nelson Doubleday on the spine. But the copyright page says: Copyright c 1956, 1981 by Mark Clifton and Frank Riley, based upon material copyright c 1954 by Street and Smith Inc. It also says: Published by arrangement with The Donning Company Publishers...A STARBLAZE BOOK.

The blurb on the inside front flap of the dust jacket reads: "In 1955, *They'd Rather Be Right* became the second novel ever to win the Hugo Award, but for many years it was unavailable. It is now back in print, and the Science Fiction Book Club is pleased to be able to offer this classic novel of speculation."

So I guess a version published in a magazine in 1954 won the Hugo, and it was then published as a book in 1956, and reprinted by the SF Book Club in 1981.

Now we come to *The Forever Machine*, which I have as a Carroll & Graf pb, with "Masters of Science Fiction" and "The Hugo Award-winning Novel" printed on the front cover. The copyright page reads: Copyright c 1956, 1981 by Mark Clifton and Frank Riley based upon material copyright c 1954 by Street and Smith Inc. First Carroll & Graf edition 1992.

This book then starts off with Part 1, "Crazy Joey", which runs up to page 89. Then we have part 2, "Bossy", which begins where the Book Club hc of *They'd Rather Be Right* starts! The two books then run identical texts through to the end, complete with the same number chapters and breaks.

So I guess to have the actual *Hugo winning* material, you'd need the serialised version of *They'd Rather Be Right* from Astounding, August to

November 1954. The Book Club **They'd Rather Be Right** would be okay, and the pb **The Forever Machine** is a close third. Though I'd prefer it if the Carroll & Graf version printed "Contains the Hugo Award-winning novel" or "based on Hugo Award-winning material" on the cover as I consider these a more accurate description.

The copy I found was the Galaxy novel with the Wally Wood cover, and it too contains only the "Bossy" material. Was the "Crazy Joey" section in the Carroll & Graf pb ever printed before? And who was Frank Riley?

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Roger wrote two letters since our last issue – one regarding Challenger #14 ...

Dear Guy – Or should that be Mr. Green?
Sincere congratulations are in order, however belated.

I think it was Hannah Arendt, covering the Eichmann trial for *The New Yorker*, who came up with the phrase "the banality of evil." Well, I don't think language will ever have the capacity to cope with pure evil; but reading your account of the Empty Man, it comes as close as it can. It makes me wonder how you can face such day-to-day evil, and carry on being remarkably sane. Another quote, from Raymond Chandler, is "Down these mean streets a man must go," but he only wrote about them and could switch off at the end of the day. The other hand, police officers (and the legal fraternity) have to face the mean streets, and the effects of them, every day without end; so how do you cope? I suspect it'll be very different from now on, now that you've got a Significant Other (daren't say "wife" or "husband," for fear of the Thought Police hammering on the door).

For most of us, the Significant Other must be science fiction. At one point very much later in my life (a story yet to be told), comic books were rivaling it; so Gary Brown's travails [in "The Chase"] might best be read in the spirit of "There, but for the grace of God ..." They must surely strike a chord in each of us, even without a comic book collection to support; but what I want to know is, what is it about fandom, and science fiction in particular, that instills such a desire? There was perhaps a time when it was in such short supply and so disregarded that it was almost our solemn duty to collect all the SF we could, for the benefit of future

generations; but surely not today when there's such a profusion of SF (and comic books) and it's even become the subject of literary debate.

In my case, it was the SF prozines; especially during my London years, in the latter half of the Sixties. Then, I was hunting the latest issues down all over the city; and I suppose that reading them became secondary to the thrill of the chase. Mind you, when my Must Have List included every new issue of every SF magazine then available on this side of the Pond, I can look back and marvel at how I managed to read them all. Add to that a ceaseless hunt for SF in the remainder piles and secondhand shops, and you might say that I became rather obsessive.

Managing to hold onto those issues, as I'm sure Gary knows, was another matter. It was one thing, to buy everything up and ship it all home on weekend breaks; something else when I came home from London for good and had to realize that a two-up, two-down didn't have room for anything on the scale of another Ackerman collection. Hung on as long as I could, but eventually had to make some very hard choices.

Although from the few I have left (runs of *Astounding/Analog*, *If* and *Worlds of Tomorrow*), I needn't even open them and read. I can just look at the covers to be transported back to the particular time and place of discovery. An *If* cover blazoning "The First van Vogt Story in 14 Years!" that was the first of a pile in a secondhand bookshop in York; another with a Poul Anderson novella, found in Shepherds Bush Market in London, in a converted railway carriage; a *WoT* featuring "World of Ptaavs" by Larry Niven, my very first SF magazine found in London in a street just off Soho; this list is endless.

They say one picture is worth a thousand words, perhaps never more so than in the comics of childhood; but equally with SF art. Even when in black and white; part of the magic of the magazines, for me, were the artists and their illustrations. The Finlays, Morrows, Woods, Freas and Schoenherr. The pictureless *F&SF* could have been a very great disappointment but for its glorious covers, several of them Bonestells; who better for showing us what it was like Out There, where only a privileged few could go? Of course, since then we've had pictures back from the Hubble telescope and the reality is even but SF artists are still flourishing in spite of this reality, and that is maybe the true measure of their worth.

On electronic fen, I don't much share the

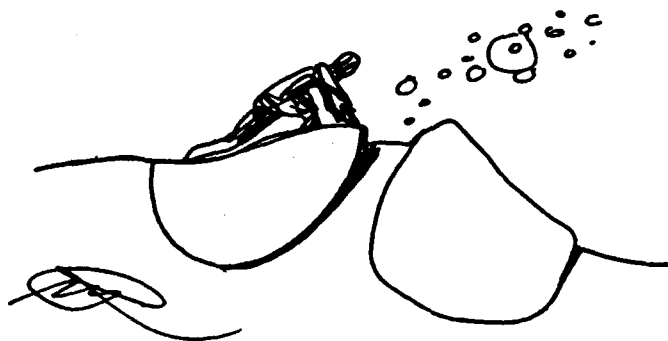
views of Gene R. Stewart, but go off in a different direction. My concern is more with the hours and even days that the Internet takes away, whether receiving or answering e-mail, sitting it out in chat rooms or just surfing the Net where one site can lead to another, and another ... And who knows where the time goes? My protest banner might well read, "Life's too short for surfing the Net!" Or, maybe simpler, "Get a life!"

For those of us who believe that SF goes all the way back to Lucian of Samosata and his *True History*, of course Cyrano de Bergerac wrote science fiction; we don't need any convincing. For those more benighted souls who believe that it all started with Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*, [Richard Dengrove's article] might make them think again. Well, at least restore Cyrano's honor for those of us who saw him with nothing more than a long nose and unrequited love.

But what would Cyrano, thrust into the future in an Sfional way, think of what we've made of his creation? No longer didactic, except in a few odd cases, no longer the oblique glance at humanity; the overwhelming impression is of entertainment through and through. Even so, I suspect he would have leapt at the chance to continue his writing career and probably ended up in Hollywood.

And the next, Challenger #15. Or did you guess that?

Ever since September 11th, I've been trying to find words for what happened and failing miserably; sorrow, grief, anger, horror, they're all inadequate when faced with something like this. "The banality of evil" I mentioned [above] doesn't even come near, and how can it? Perhaps thoughts and impressions are the best way; I've seen whole acres of newsprint and been none the wiser at the end of it; all I know is that evil beyond imagination was loosed upon the world.



And yet, thanks to being the most Politically Correct country in the world, over here [in the U.K.]

we've had to give both air time and newspaper space to debating whether what those "heroes of Islam" did was right, earnestly considering the causes for fear of giving offense to one of our many minorities. What I say – before the Thought Police come and batter down the door – is that what they did was offensive to everyone and there's no religion in the world that will condone a deed like that, no matter that the first words of bin Laden were "Allah be praised." Islamic heroes? Give me the true heroes, those of Flight 93! It must surely have been in their minds that, whatever happened, they would die; yet they sacrificed themselves for countless others. "Greater love hath no man than this ..." And those in the Twin Towers who knew they were going to die, and made those last calls to their loved ones; how can evil triumph over this? They may have been – in the weasel words – general casualties, but each of them was someone's world, never better illustrated than in the group photo of mothers with babies born after their fathers died.

From the general to the particular – as if every death wasn't particular to someone – the loss of Poul Anderson has been grievous indeed. I didn't have the advantage of knowing him, only his writing, but that seems to have been with me all of my Sfional life. Seeing his name appear on a magazine cover used to give me a *frisson* almost equivalent to the gosh-wow factor of earlier discoveries. In this field where Old Masters can happily share the same universe as Young Turks in apparent immortality, it's hard to accept any death; particularly his.

You know, I've come across some different Charles Williams in my time. There was Charles Williams the poet and Arthurian romancer, stuck in the crevices of my mind for *The Region of the Summer Stars*, one of his titles which proved the most evocative of phrases. Later on, there was Charles Williams, the crime and thriller writer to add to the list, who wrote like a dream; and then over here, Charles Williams the comedian. And now Charles Williams's father, who seems to have shared at least some of the attributes of the above. So what is it about the Charles Williams of this world, that makes them especially blessed?

Binker Hughes writes about the novels of one Charles Williams in this issue, and Charlie the artist provides illos to an article elsewhere. We have three Charlie Williams in Southern fandom, and I hope it won't wound too many feelings to pay special note to the one I call beautiful – in that case, "Charlie" stands for Charlotte.

Harry Warner, Jr.
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There is so much to this enormous treasure trove of fanac that I hardly know where to start.

I have absolutely no understanding of how that spectacular front cover was conceived, put together, reproduced, or what it's supposed to mean if anything. Alan White should divulge enough information for other artists to try to do half as well.

I echo your awe. Check out Alan's account of the creation of the Chall 15 cover earlier in this issue.

I think you are the star of the stellar writing team this time. Your tributes to Poul Anderson and Meade Frierson are in the best of taste and obviously sincere in the assessment of two fine individuals. I never met Meade, to the best of my knowledge, but I spent a few minutes with Poul at a con a long time ago and he was every bit the gentleman on that occasion that everyone describes him as having been all his life.

"Spiders and Snakes" was as enthralling and much more economical with my time in comparison with the book-length accounts of real crime that have become so popular in recent years. The element of your narrative that involved inability to convict on the basis of a collaborator's unsupported testimony about a crime reminds me that I may feel a little safer before long. There was a terrible, senseless double murder of an elderly couple five blocks from my home some years ago. The defendant couldn't be convicted for this very reason. Now it seems he may go to trial after all because recently developed advances in genetic science has made it possible to identify him with some of the evidence found at the scene.

As photographer instead of author, I also have nothing but praise for your contributions to your own fanzine. There must be at least a dozen prominent fans whom I'd never seen before, in reality or in photographs, who have become visible in my thoughts as a result of your picture pages. Until I read Terry Jeeves' article, I hadn't known that his Soggies had had professional incarnations. This discovery makes me wish those old British periodicals might sometimes turn up at the thrift shops and yard sales I frequent. But there hasn't been much immigration of Englishmen to the Hagerstown area since veterans of World War Two brought home British wives.

I'm sure Ben Indick's article about Edd Cartier startled a number of persons. It seems almost impossible that anyone who was a famous

prozine artist before the 20th century reached its midpoint could still be alive and in good mental and physical condition. Has [Cartier] never been honored as artist guest of honor at a major convention?

I don't know. Ben?



Everyone in this issue seems to feel that the Retro Hugos aren't a satisfactory way to pay tribute to the achievements of fans before that honor existed. I wonder if something similar could be done on the basis of polls taken by fanzines in those long-lost years? I know fanzine polls were very numerous in the 1940s and usually seemed to be an accurate gauge [...] except for the inevitable flaw that voters felt duty-bound to give a high place to the fan who took the poll and the fanzine in which the results appeared. Memory doesn't survive in good enough condition for me to be sure if this sort of polling was frequent in the 1950s.

Interesting question! How do the ridiculous Retros compare to contemporary polls from half a century ago? Surely there are fanzine libraries and historians who can tell us.

I'd like to know more about the incident mentioned by Michael Lee Rogers [regarding] the young man who was flagged down and interrogated

in Massachusetts and got into trouble for secretly taping his confrontation with police. Had the police been alerted to watch for someone fleeing a crime, and did the driver fit the description? Had the offended youth been driving eccentrically? Why did he react so violently to the episode if he had nothing to hide in his vehicle and no criminal behavior in his recent past?

I can't imagine any appellate court – short of America's thoroughly corrupt Supreme Court, of course – allowing that conviction to stand. John Ashcroft hasn't yet completely abrogated the Bill of Rights, and due process still exists, sort of, for some of us.

Boswell – in the paragraph quoted by Joseph Major – didn't make clear to readers of the future the whole story about Samuel Johnson's famous statement about patriotism. Boswell's *London Journal*, 1762-1763 contains fuller information in an editor's footnote. Basically, there was a political party in England known as the Patriots. Johnson detested its goals and its leaders. He was referring to this party when he said those nasty things about Patriotism. The party has been forgotten and his remark has become immortal.

I'm immensely pleased at Greg Benford's assessment of Jules Verne and I wish it were easier to find copies of his prophetic stories in good English translations today. A science fiction hardcover novel published in England in the 1930s or 1940s was generally reviewed with the same compliment as a unique description in science fiction of the way scientists really are, just as Greg Benford admires the writings of Varley. *Sugar in the Air* was the title, and the author might have been E.C. Large. I thought it was splendid and I've never seen a paperback reprint.



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Thanks for the latest Challenger.

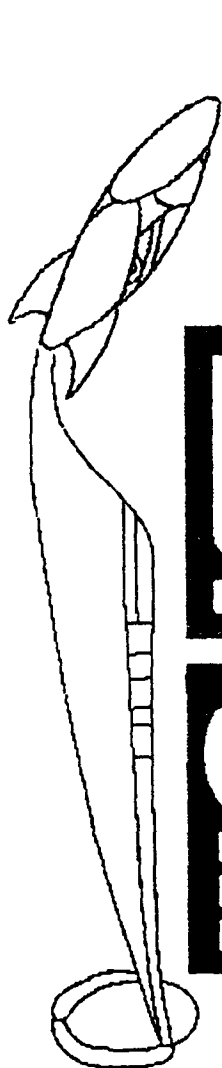
You certainly have more nerve than I ever will in calling up F&SF authors out of the blue. I once had to make the calls to invite guests for a convention (the guest liaison had not approached anyone to be a guest up to five weeks prior to the convention) and found it very difficult. I not at all surprised that you are more nervy than I am, that is just the way we are.

Despite my long editorial in *The Knarley Knews* I'm not certain where I stand on governmental trends following 9-1-1. I agree that we have to go after Bin Laden and his associates, but I'm not entirely convinced that invading Afghanistan is the best method. I am deeply troubled by the civil liberties erosion in the name of anti-terrorism. Everyone should be concerned with the speed the FBI and other authorities tracked the hijackers from a dispute in the airport parking lot. Within 48 hours they knew where they'd gone to flight school etc. by tracking supposedly confidential financial records. One of our senators took a lot of heat for being the lone dissenter on the anti-terrorism bill citing civil liberties. Our system is rooted deeply in the due process of the law and while I would agree that non-citizens do not have the same rights as a citizen I cannot condone illegal search and seizure nor undue detainment without timely access to an attorney and proper arraignment. We lost part of our moral high ground by "loosing" someone in the system based upon ethnic profiling.

My view is that the Bill of Rights is less a guarantee of the rights of American citizens than a restriction on government action, period. In other words, non-citizens enjoy the same protections as citizens. This is not a popular opinion in the current administration.

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Funny about your title, "The Empty Man". "Empti-man" and "Inepto-man" were two of my pet



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names for George Bush the Elder. I won't review the particular missteps that inspired me. So far, G.B. the Younger seems a vast improvement. He must have been paying close attention, both to his father's failures, and to Ronald Reagan's successes.

"Biggest hoot this time is the fool who claims Al Gore was mentally ill. Wow." At first I thought this was an attack on me — I had said something disparaging about Gore's mental state, as an aside in my Worldcon report in the March, 2001, *Fosfax* — and I was disappointed when I realized you were reviewing an earlier issue. (By the way, it is cowardly to attack somebody without saying who.)

How about this, then? Whoever said it was foolish.

There's plenty of evidence that even some of Al Gore's friends and supporters noticed something odd about him. For example, liberal cartoonist Tom Toles drew a strip poking fun at Gore's robotic qualities, ending with the punch line, "Almost precisely 9 months before his birth, a flying saucer crash-landed in Roswell, New Mexico." And then there is the article about Joe Lieberman in November issue of the once rabidly pro-Gore *Talk Magazine*: "The [Vice-Presidential] debate went adequately; it was certainly nothing like the multiple personality disorder Gore displayed in his three bouts against Bush. (If anybody told me beforehand that Gore was going to lose three debates to George Bush, I would have told him he was crazy,' [former Democratic Sen. Bob] Kerrey says.)"

A Roswell alien? Multiple personality disorder? Shortly after seeing, and wondering at, Gore's strange behavior in the debates, and elsewhere in the campaign, I stumbled upon an article on Asperger's Syndrome in the *New York Times Magazine*. In this mild form of autism, you can be highly intelligent but unable to intuitively grasp the feelings of people around you. (Not uncommon in fandom, I think!) Typically, you are rude to people, but don't know it; thus, Gore came off as rude and overbearing, just when it was critically important for him to project a friendly image.

But what establishes once and for all Gore's unfitness for high office is something that happened behind the scenes. After the first debate, his advisers sat him down and showed him the *Saturday Night Live* parody of his performance. Gore was so intimidated (!) by this TV skit (!!) that in the second debate he went too far the other way, leaning over backwards to be passive and accommodating. (Once again, the inability to

intuitively modulate one's behavior typical of Asperger's.)

I think of this election as the "Narrow Escape". In spite of Hollywood, in spite of the media elite, in spite of a November Surprise, Bush managed to squeak through. The Democrats' attempt to steal the election in Florida was a new low, however. It's as if, after a race was run, the loser suddenly declared that the track had been measured incorrectly, and that if the finish line were moved just the right amount, he would be the "real" winner! Unfortunately, a Florida Supreme Court made up entirely of liberal Democrats went along with this (in the end, by just one vote), several times rewriting Florida's election laws on the fly.

Finally the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in, first ruling 7-2 that what SCOTUS had done was wrong, and then 5-4 that it was too close to the Constitutional deadline to send the case back for further adjudication. In the current crisis, we can be very glad that the grownups are back in charge. The big liberal media recount effort ended in a fizzle, judging from the report on the *Today Show* (or was it *GMA*) this morning. They found that, just as the Republicans had asserted, manual recounts of punchcard ballots are unreliable and subjective (though they think Bush picked up some votes there). And after looking at many thousands of "over-votes" (votes for two candidates), using God knows what standard to pick the "real" vote, they were able to squeeze out a Gore lead of only, and I quote, "60 to 160 votes". Compare that to the several thousand votes from illegally registered felons that we know Gore got in Florida!

Yes, thank God the grown-ups won. Only infantile sissies need a Bill of Rights! Personally, I like Jeffrey Toobin's book on the sickening Florida debacle. Of course, it may be his conclusion that I like.

While I'm on the subject, I might as well really get in trouble. Without 9-1-1 the Bush administration would be toast. W handled our response to the atrocity with perfect immediate pitch, but since then, and aside from that, he's been a klutz. His environmental policy is a disaster. His economic policy is befuddled. Far from building an effective worldwide coalition against terror, he has alienated other nations with his — our — arrogance.

Our influence is shrinking, not growing. That's what happens when a president is chosen because he's an effective front man, and when a people are so diffident and dumb that they'll let a party cheat

its way into power, despite their stated will.

We're told W has been reading Edmund Norris' Theodore Rex, the superb account of the fantastic presidency that opened America's 20th Century. He said he was looking to TR as a guide to how to construct an activist presidency. Indeed, we can see echoes of TR's big stick policy in the war on terrorism, although W apparently missed the "speak softly" part. Domestically, it's clear his reading comprehension hasn't improved since he was drinking his way through college. Viz: Enron.

In the repellant Enron saga it is again clear that a new era of Robber Barons is upon us – corrupt business brokers who see the economy as a highway to personal loot rather than a backbone of a successful society. Their indifference to the fate of the people who worked for them is a definitive demonstration of the frailty, and falsity, of the corporate lifestyle on which Republican faith is based. Here, as in the 2000 election, they have shown that their faith is that the ends justify the means, and that it is perfectly all right to cheat anyone and everyone, for wealth and power.

Theodore Roosevelt stood both for individual character and putting the national welfare above corporate greed. He wouldn't recognize this current crowd. (In fact, the last Republican possessed of TR's grit was Eisenhower.

Ike stood up to the military-industrial complex, remember.) W, with Enron's fingerprints all over his administration, is his complete antithesis.

As for personal character, a President who gets falling-down blotto—pretzel schmetzel — in the middle of wartime is not a man to be taken seriously.

C'mon, Gore. Do it right this time.

Martin Morse Wooster

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Many thanks for Challenger 15. I enjoyed Guy Lillian's reprinted piece about Poul Anderson, although it would be nice to know when the article first appeared (it seems to have been from an apa ca. 1970). But I can certainly attest to Anderson's hospitality to neos. In 1976, I decided to write to Anderson to ask him what sort of books I should read about politics. He responded with a two-page letter full of good suggestions. He didn't have to write back; I was a college sophomore at the time, asking sophomoric questions. However, I never had the nerve to introduce myself to Anderson or

talk to him – but I'm sure he would have been quite professional and civil if I did.

More than that, he would have made a new friend.

Poul was just that kind of guy. Check out William Breiding's Books Read - 2001 for an incisive analysis of his fiction. My Chall 15 piece first showed in Nolazine 12, Pat Adkins, editor, a special edition for the 1971 DeepSouthCon, where Poul was GoH.

Mike Resnick's comments about MilPhil were as always enjoyable, although all the work that Resnick does – meeting with all potential editors! – makes me glad that I am not a science fiction professional, and can spend my time at Worldcon as vacation time having fun. But Resnick is absolutely right that the Retro Hugos were a travesty. You can argue about whether Willis or Tucker was the best fan writer of 1950 (I'd vote for Tucker), but Silverberg was just another neo then. It's arguable that Destination Moon was the best SF film of 1950, but Farmer in the Sky was definitely not the best novel. I would hope that ConJose will abandon the Retro Hugo awards!

Seems so, and hooray.

I'm slightly more inclined to favor Harry Potter than is Gene Stewart. I can't imagine J.K. Rowling thinking "Hmm ... what sort of highly merchandisable character can I create to make a lot of money?" when she began to write the series. If she had, she probably would have come up with a more conventional children's character., along the line of Captain Underpants. My guess is that she decided to write the sort of book that was similar to ones she enjoyed as a teenager. It's true that here's a great deal of Harry Potter product out there, but the novels themselves are somewhat better than mere product. Rowling gets kids excited about books – which is a very good thing.

Guy Lillian mentions that being alone at a Worldcon "sucks like an Electrolux." I haven't had that experience in many years, but I recently attended my first Bouchercon since 1986. I only knew two people at that con, but I had an OK time. I found that some classic questions are good icebreakers. Talking about book collecting is always a good introduction. Asking, "Who's the modern successor to Chandler / Buchan / Hammond Innes" sparked some good conversations. So is "What's mystery fandom like in your city?" I'm sure that neos at a Worldcon could find similar lines. Hey, if nothing else, you

could find similar lines. Hey, if noting else, you can always talk Trek (the subject of at least one dinner at the last Corflu I attended).

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I have a parallel for "The Thunder Did It" [in Chall #14]. Somewhere in the nearby Wisconsin countryside there is a farmhouse one of my uncles would point out to us with this story; he knew the folks that lived there and supposedly they are the source.

Back in the late 1800s/early 1900s a family with two small girls (5 and 7) lived in the house. One dark stormy night they tucked in the girls and went to bed. At some point Ma and Pa were wakened by a huge crash of thunder - they went to check on the young'un's but they weren't in bed - in fact they weren't anywhere in the house! Eventually they found the girls out in the shed, and they weren't wet! When asked how they got there they said, *It was the thunder.*

FWAH (From We Also Heard): Catharine Asaro (congratulations for the Nebula for The Quantum Rose!), Ken Faig, Mark Proskey, Charles E. Spanier, Paul DiFilippo ("I didn't know they made zines like this anymore. A real blast of Golden Age fannishness with appropriate postmodern relevancy. A fine job!" Wow!).

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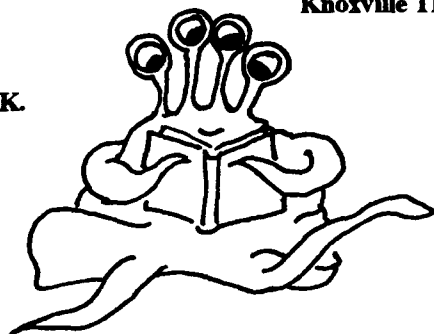
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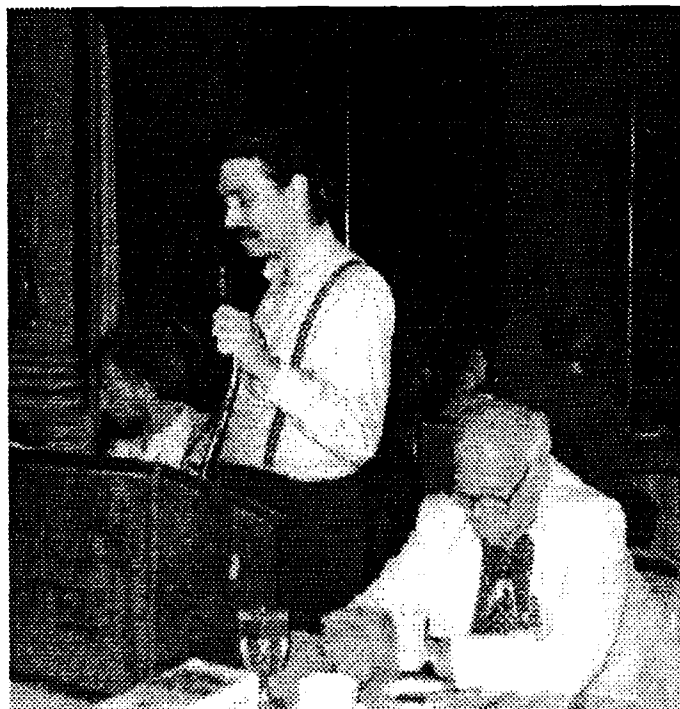
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“WHO? RAY!”

LAFFERTY SNAPSHOTS (some literal)

1969 ... During St. Louiscon I spot Clifford Simak in the lobby, talking with a French film artist who wants to make movies of his books. It's the only time I will ever see him, and I want him to autograph *Way Station*. While I'm waiting, up walks ... well, you know who. Simak did. "Don't you know who this is?" he asks the pesky *auteur*. "This is the great Lafferty!"



DSC '79 chair Justin Winston flanked by Jerry Page & Ray.

At that same convention, when Ray meets Anne McCaffrey, he grabs her in a voracious bear hug. "Dragon lady!" he shouts.

I am working for Quinn Yarbro in the press room. A reporter wants to interview a science fiction writer. "Who should I get?" I ask. "I don't care!" Quinn says. "Just get someone who looks like a writer!" I look to my left. Harlan Ellison, in his best Hollywood gear, stands there, declaiming. I look to my right. Ray Lafferty stands there, looking like a happy bum. I catch the eye of Pat Adkins, who has heard all, and say "Ohhhhhh-kay!" Pat collapses in laughter.

Ray's awesome *Past Master* loses the Hugo to *Stand on Zanzibar*. He sits at the New Orleans party, depressed. I voted for the brilliant Lafferty novel, but had, to my disgrace, listened to west coast fannish gossip and bet against it with two NOSFA members. The two bucks I won are burning my hand. I run downstairs to the Art Show, where Vaughan Bode is doing sketches for ten bucks a throw. I offer him the two dollars to draw a Hugo for Ray.

He has his own (and only, as it turns out) Hugo before him, and uses it to do his sketch. On his own he throws in *Roadstrum* from *Space Chantey*. He refuses the money. "Can you buy him a drink?" he asks, handing me the art. I give the drawing to Ray upstairs. I'm sure he hates it, but at least he knows how we feel. He kept it, anyway. That's it inside my back cover.

Some time later we NOSFAns are watching a theatrical re-release of *Fantasia*. We are properly silent until Bacchus appears. "Here comes Ray!" someone says.

1973 Lafferty's *Fourth Mansions* comes out. Beth Beavers, who would later become my first wife, is depressed. I grab the book. She has discovered the word "ear," which she pronounces "eeeer," and I find the right passage, and read it to her.

"Foley made the giant effort, and then the people in the streets no longer had peculiar ears. Or rather, they no longer had the archaic ears of the reappearing folks. They still had peculiar ears; Fred hadn't noticed ears much before; he saw now the thing that many people never see, that ears themselves are forever peculiar."

Her gloom disappears like mist in the sun.

From that same book, when the hero is railroaded into an asylum, the psychiatrist describes various psychotic conspiracy groups:

"Then there was the group that believed that all red-headed women were creatures from outer space sent here to intermingle with mankind to cause trouble and destruction."

"I could give you instances which would seem to prove them right," Freddy said.

"So could I, Smith," said the doctor.

(So could I, but I'm a married man, now. To a brunette. Enough said.)

1976 In 1974 I work for DC Comics in New York City. While researching a piece about Julie Schwartz for their fan magazine, *The Amazing World of DC Comics*, I interview Alfred Bester. It is one of the great conversations of my life – someday I'll write about it here.

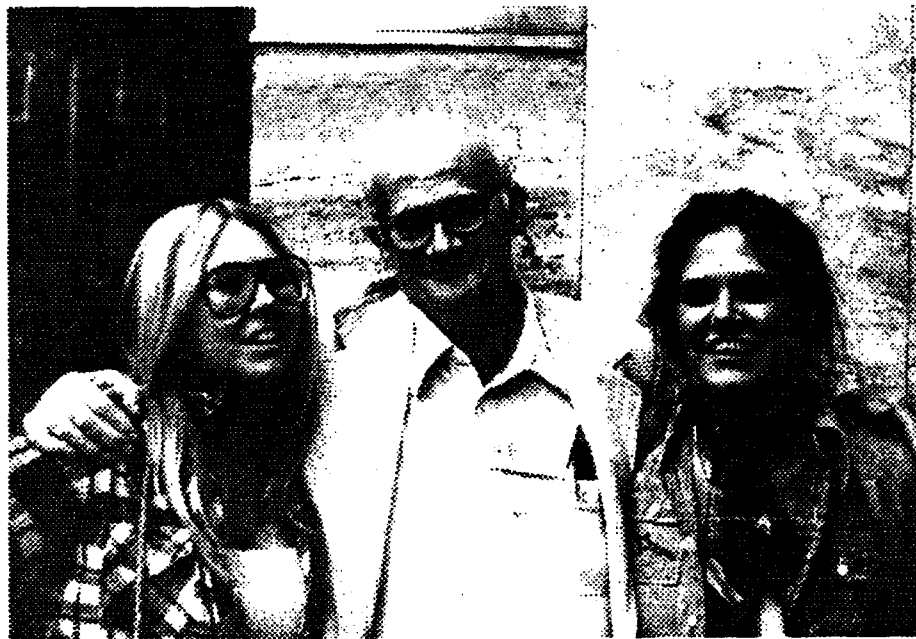
When Bester comes to MidAmeriCon, the Worldcon in Kansas City, Liz Schwarzin (now Copeland) and I buttonhole him in the lobby, just bugging the natty, moccasin-clad master in the way fans do. Ray wanders by. I call him over. "Mr. Bester," I say, "this is R.A. Lafferty."

There couldn't be a greater contrast, genius urbane and genius uncouth, but Bester's face lights up like a flare has gone off inside. "*Oh! Oh!*" he exults. "I've always wanted to meet you! Can I buy you a drink?"

"Well," Ray replies, shaking his head, "I've been trying to cut down. *But!* there seems to be a bar over this way..." And off they go. In wonder I say to Liz, and to myself, "I introduced R.A. Lafferty to Alfred Bester." I've said that a lot in the years since.

1986 In the majestic open-air con suite of Confederation's Marriott Marquis, Ray watches as Jack Williamson goes by. "Take care of him," he shouts at his companions. "*If he dies, I'm the oldest!*"

The morning after New Orleans won the rights to the '88 worldcon, I stumble into the Nolacon II party suite. It is nearly empty for the first time in days. Where before there had been throngs of victory-mad fans, now there are only three: Don Walsh, Cliff Amos, exulting over our win, and Ray. He's a mess, but he's there.



Himself at MidAmeriCon with its conquerors, Linda Krawecka and Anne Winston

1991 Chicon V is plodding along, rather lifelessly, when through a corridor comes Ray Lafferty, escorted by a smiling lady. Ray looks awful, but hey ... he's there! "*Yes!*" I exclaim. I never saw him after that, but you can read the letter he sent me after that convention, and I remember what he said in closing: "Luck and love to everybody in New Orleans, or who has ever been there, or is ever going to be there."



*On the Spot: Zero Degrees & Ground
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George Alec Effinger (1947-2002) won the Hugo, Nebula, Seiun, and Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Awards for the novellette, "Schrodinger's Kitten" (1989). He was nominated for Hugo and/or Nebula Awards for the following stories and novels: "All the Last Wars at Once" (1972); *What Entropy Means to Me* (1972); "The City on the Sand" (1974); "The Aliens Who Knew, I Mean, Everything" (1985); *When Gravity Fails* (1988); "Marid Changes His Mind" (1989); "Everything But Honor" (1990); and *A Fire in the Sun* (1990). His three "Budayeen" novels, *When Gravity Fails*, *A Fire in the Sun*, and *The Exile Kiss*, are considered classic cyberpunk novels. He was the author of twenty-six novels and story collections and wrote nearly two-hundred pieces of short fiction. He spent most of his writing career in New Orleans.

As this year enjoys its spring, and this **Challenger** approaches its end, reminders come of the frailty and unfairness of life. It shows in the theme that developed in this issue – mourning that unlikely, off-the-wall genius, Ray Lafferty. Sad as Lafferty's death might have been, at least it was timely. The death of George Alec Effinger was more than sad. It was tragic.

George was, like me, an adopted Orleanian; like me, he lived in the Easy because he loved it here. I enjoyed his work – particularly **When Gravity Fails** and the hilarious Maureen Birnbaum stories – and I liked the guy. We weren't friends, but we were friendly. I have nice memories of playing pinball with him on Royal Street (he considered the modern electronic games soulless), of doing the Wave with him at a Saints game, of driving him home from a Baton Rouge convention, of a writing class we shared, of watching him transform, with his charm, an angry collegiate Communist (the worst kind) into a shy, smiling girl. As the city's premiere SF presence he was of inestimable help when New Orleans bid for the worldcon, and he and his lady friend saved our hapless pocket program by staying up all night typing the thing. The last time I visited him – disgracefully long ago – I interviewed him for a convention program book. I admired the Nebula and Hugo he won for "Schrodinger's Kitten", and photographed him feeding toast to his cat as it sat in a box. For some reason we thought that spectacularly clever.

Effinger always had money problems and health problems, which apparently fed on one another to both spur and constrict his career. He was prolific because he had to be: there were always more medical bills to be paid. I understand from Dr. Jack Stocker, the good and kind retired professor who helped George through his last years, that those bills caused a lawsuit which tied up all the rights to his work – including the unpublished fourth Marid Audran novel. It's a cruel thing to be sick, it's a cruel thing to be broke, it's a profoundly sadistic thing to be brilliant yet be unable to exercise that brilliance. But according to Stocker, the lawsuit had recently been dropped, that George's work was his own again, and that he was both writing and selling. He was on his way back.

Effinger was cheated of his comeback. He died in his sleep in late April, a natural death, except for the horrible fact that George was only 54 or 55 years old. Lafferty was 87. He'd had his innings. George – a baseball nut, he'd appreciate even the hackneyed metaphor – deserved more time at bat.

On May 16 Rose-Marie and I attended a memorial for Effinger at a local bookstore. It consisted of testimonials and readings from a number of George's friends and students from his writing seminar at the University of New Orleans. In addition to us, Peggy Ranson, John Guidry, and Dennis Dolbear, Debbie Hodgkinson – who had lived with George here in New Orleans – was there, and Dr. Stocker, who read from a sold but still unpublished short story, and Effinger's ex-wife, Barbara Hambly, who read some of his *haiku*. Tears flowed, amid muted laughter; Effinger, to the end, was a much beloved man.

One young fella I particularly noted. I knew him from Jefferson Parish, where he'd been a clerk of court; we'd gabbed a lot about science fiction and I read a story he'd written about one of Santa Claus' elves. He'd taken Effinger's UNO class, and now he had something more substantial than elves to write about. A year or so before, he'd been on a street corner targeted by a drunk driver. It took me a moment to notice that he stood on a Terminator-like prosthesis. His left leg was Gone.

He was in constant pain, he said – "ghost pain" or not, I didn't ask. He was seeing a pain management doctor, and a shrink. But he seemed solid, together, capable, and perhaps that was because he was *writing*. If that was due to George, and he implied that it was, that's a pretty excellent epitaph.

And Bruce Pelz.

I guess I should make biographical noise about Bruce, explaining who he was for the benefit of those who didn't know him. But I can't imagine anyone in science fiction fandom who would not have known Bruce. This was *his* turf. We were *his* people.

Worldcon chairman, worldcon Fan Guest of Honor, worldcon power broker, party-giver, advice-giver, egoboo-dispenser, a great and generous friend ... Like all of us, I have a host of memories with his face attached. I met him at the Westercon in 1971 (Fred Patten asked him to hump a thick K-a zine down to L.A. from San Fran for me). I shared LASFAPA with him, and disgraced myself at his pre-Iguanacon party taking photos of his fan-crammed jacuzzi. When New Orleans fandom went insane and decided to bid for the '88 worldcon, it was him, and Craig Miller, that I first approached for support. (They

eventually served on our board.) When he and Robbie Bourget threw an L.A. Con bid party at New Orleans' NOSF₃, it was from his hands that I gleefully accepted a raffled "Reynolds Rat." Years later, at a Smofcon here, it was Bruce who told me that *Challenger* had made such a splash with its 10th issue that it was bound to make the Hugo ballot. My eyes bugged in sudden vertigo at such fannish heights, and he laughed, kindly.

Bruce paid me a huge honor at MilPhil, asking me to take over the worldcon bidding exhibit he'd run for years. I accepted, but had to renege in April; we might not be able to afford a cross-country journey this year. I'm ashamed that that was my last communication with Bruce – but it wasn't his last communication with me. A few days before his sudden death, a loan arrived – to help print and distribute this *Challenger*. SF fandom has lost its pillar. Those of us who knew him have lost a good and generous and witty and understanding friend.

Lafferty, Effinger, Pelz, the genius of Clarion, Damon Knight, and just this week, Jim Mule, the scion of NOLA's trekker VulCon. SF should indeed treasure this spring. It has been well paid for.

Just before Christmas, Rose-Marie and I drove to Grand Island, New York, north of Buffalo. You don't get much further north and stay in America. We had good reasons. I wanted my beloved lady to meet my nephews (Steve, 9, John, 5), to visit Niagara Falls for a proper honeymoon, and to see something she hadn't experienced since childhood: *snow*. We saw the nevvies – grand dudes, both, and *tall* – visited the Falls – even went *behind* them through the Cave of the Winds – and I guess you can say we saw snow, too: *seven feet* in five days. Only my nephews could have lured me into such miserable weather, although I must say Rosy looked beautiful with snowflakes spackling her hair.

Just *after* Christmas, we clambered out of Buffalo's Antarctic depths and drove south and east to New York City. Of course you know what we saw there.

A friendly fireman named Figueroa guarded the gate to Ground Zero, admitting only cops and firemen and newspaper reporters – and victims' families. Past him we could see only a fragment of a facade, and the tops of cranes – moving, searching, ever moving, ever searching. Leaving the site, we took the Staten Island ferry, the best free show in New York. I looked back on Manhattan in awe. The New York skyline was like a smile with missing teeth, a hand with missing fingers. Emptiness. Except for scaffolding and mesh nets on adjoining buildings, the main impression given by Ground Zero was *emptiness*. I never cared for the World Trade Center towers; they were ugly, lumpen buildings, totally out of scale for the surrounding area. But damn – *where were they?*

An aside. CBS' 9/11 documentary in March was stunning. Not even my visit to Ground Zero brought the event home so vividly. As the New York firefighters go about their business on the videotape, there is a swelling sense of foreboding. The approach of lunacy is chillingly evoked through an innocuous calendar, the 11th innocently centered in the screen. Idle shots of the giant buildings in the distance were *frightening*, heart-rending. And then, the jet guns overhead, far too close ... the planes stab astonishingly into the stolid buildings ... the firemen mill confused in the south tower lobby ... the sound on the roof, the ghastly sound on the roof, the unspeakable flat distinctive *whump* – everyone stops, everyone knows what it is ... the cool firechief finds an exit from that hellhole, and then goes back to get his men ... the terrible final roar as the universe gives way and the towers collapse ... the smoke and the dust and the faces like ghosts ... the pained acknowledgment of the French film maker – incorrect, thank God – that his brother is probably gone forever ... the relief at Ladder One as, one by one, everyone comes home ...

Once again, viewing the show, I was astonished, beyond pride, at how well, how competently, with what dedication, what professionalism and what courage those guys responded to impossible disaster – at their best when things were at their worst. They prove something grand about Americans and about people. I God-blessed Figueroa when I left his post at Ground Zero ... and I treasure the pullover FDNY cap Rosy bought me, within sight of those terrible, terrible cranes.

The next day, Rose-Marie and I met Charles E. Spanier, a stalwart buddy during my sojourn in the comics in 1974. Seeing him again revived a resilient and ageless friendship. He led us on a walk

across the most wonderful structure in New York, the Brooklyn Bridge, which brought a moment that was pure epiphany.

At the Bridge's center we turned back to face Manhattan. It was an incredible panorama. Almost directly before us loomed the horrible hole-in-the-sky that is Ground Zero. But its despair was bracketed by symbols of hope. To the left, in her harbor, the Lady fixed all in her calm, defiant gaze. My Swedish great-grandparents may well have come into this country under her steadfast welcome. She's just metal, of course, just a statue, of course, but there are those of us who believe that what she represents is real, and worth revering, as What We're All About. She is still there.

To the right, like a church atop a hill, the Empire State Building, again the tallest building in New York – and no kidding, while we watched the sun cut under the high clouds and burst upon the City with golden radiance. New York looked like an Oz not only beautiful and welcoming, but strong: *invincible*.

No one should mistake the way Americans feel – even Americans like me, who have no truck with W and his incompetent, duplicitous administration. America was obscenely and unjustly attacked on 9-1-1, and we reacted with just fury. Any government that supports terrorism against the US is in peril of destruction. We will scrape Al-Qaeda from the crevices of the Earth, and heaven help anyone who comes down on their side. *But*.

Our duty as citizens is to question and to inquire, to support principle over expediency and to keep our vision of America in mind, always. That means questioning any widening of the war. We insist on *proof* of such complicity, made formally and openly to Congress and to We the People. A perpetual war footing, with the absolute faith in the government that goes with it, is an intolerable idea. I remember my Orwell too well. In 1984, IngSoc controlled its people and justified its excesses by maintaining a state of total war. Perpetual war = perpetual crisis = perpetual terror = perpetuated power. Power which will, if perpetuated, only expand.

I really loved this year's SuperBowl, once I realized that it only seemed dull because New England had completely stymied the mighty Rams. The Patriots pulled together, kept the faith, fought like hell and did the job. Hooray. In keeping with my point, though, I must mention the ads which premiered during the game – public service announcements linking drug trafficking to terrorism.

I'm resolutely anti-drug, of course. As a '60s veteran and a defense lawyer, I've seen too much pain directly related to recreational dope to tolerate it. However, as I'm fond of saying, though druggies who think they're cool impress me as idiots, *fascists* who think they're cool impress me much less. Those Super Bowl ads signaled a coming expansion of extra-Constitutional anti-terrorism tactics to the "drug war" – and a further threat to civil liberty.

We Americans have got to watch ourselves. In extreme times we have shown a terrible tendency to go along with any idea and any persecution that promises a greater feeling of security. We are not above rationalizing the sacrifice of people and principle to make ourselves feel safer. Consider our obscene treatment of John Walker Lindh – the pitiable idiot who joined the Taliban – who was denied an attorney, stripped naked, blindfolded and strapped to a stretcher inside a closed metal shipping container for three days, *then* treated for his wounds and interrogated. That's an atrocious and intolerable violation of his rights. It stems from the same fear and laziness as the Japanese internments – the Iranian airliner disaster – the wallet shooting in NYC – and of course, Kent State, Rodney King ... and My Lai. Ever see *Save the Tiger*? Jack Lemmon's quintessential American is actually more thoughtful than many, because he remembers, and he wonders: "What *about* that ditch?"

Either we obey our own rules or we're just throwing people into a ditch. What *about* that ditch? Is *anything* acceptable if it carries the promise of less worry? Does the end justify the means?

While we applaud ourselves for our determination and resolve after 9-1-1, let's not forget our flaws – nor give in to them. So far, we have stood our ground and prevented the most egregious offenses to Constitutional law – the Bush and Ashcroft people have backed down from the secret tribunals and unappealable sentences they were pushing before. Let's back'em down further. "The better angels of our nature," as Lincoln put it, do not make us weak; they make us better.

Rose-Marie and I had just returned from a visit to the Symphony Book Fair and a voracious feast at a local seafood restaurant. Checked my e-mail, and found one from John Lorentz. *Congratulations from the ConJose Hugo Committee.*

I'd been weary, glum because of taxes, guilt-struck because I didn't like inflicting such a mood on Rose-Marie. But now I called her over in a sudden tizzy, and keyed on the e-letter.

It began, "Alison, Mike & Steve, I've just finished counting this year's 627 Hugo and John W. Campbell Award nominating ballots and I am very pleased to tell you that Plokta is one of the 2002 Hugo nominees in the Fanzine category."

Well, you *should* be pleased, I thought. Plokta is terrific. But - why was I reading this? Ahh, umm, err, what about **Challenger**? I dialed Lorentz's phone number. I read him the e-mail. He laughed with warm embarrassment. "I just hope I didn't send them *yours*," he mused. For indeed, he told me, **Challenger** is a nominee for the ConJose Hugo. Huzzah! Huzzay!

The story above is recounted with John's kind permission. I close with an observation from the Winter Olympics. Surely the high moment of the Games was the delightful victory of 16-year-old Sarah Hughes in the figure skating competition. In 4th place as the evening began, competing against older, more famous skaters, Sarah took the ice without much chance ... or much worry. No one expected her to beat Michelle Kwan and the others, so why not, she figured, let'er *rip* ... have *fun*? Kwan and the others were so uptight they practically sank into the ice. Sarah flew across it like a fairy out of *Fantasia*. While I loved seeing that Aussie speedskater win gold by simply being the last man standing, and that Czech skier win for daring a hitherto impossible flip, hers was the Games' magic. And resonance.

Let those of us who compete for our own trinkets take a lesson from the young. *Skate for joy*. Let the medals take care of themselves. So, for the sake of joy, not Hugos, thanks to all the **Chall** pals who made this happen, and more than thanks to the lady whose faith and caring have taught me that I am worth loving, and that this is a world worth living in. I forgot that for so long, Rose. I'll never forget it again.

And speaking of joy, conciliation, and joy once more...

After St. Louiscon, in 1969, I sent a fan letter to the most remarkable of the many remarkable people I met there. Here's what I got in return. May he, and all the friends we've lost this season, laugh forever in Paradise.

Tulsa, Okla.
Nov. 22, 1969

Guy Lillian
Barrington Hall
Berkeley, Calif.

Dear Guy:

I was glad to hear from you but a little puzzled at the letter coming from Berkeley, or maybe I hadn't been paying attention. Are you an upstanding New Orleans boy caught by circumstances in black-hearted Berkeley, or are you a citizen of golden Berkeley who once ran athwart a bunch of New Orleans Pirates?

It may be that you will like **Fourth Mansions** and you may find yourself a little bit like Freddy Foley in it, in youth and openness at least. It was for his openness that a number of amazing worlds happened to him and can happen to you. I have picked out four human aspects or movements in this, out of many, which are deformities and monstrosities in isolation, but which should be strengths when

integrated in the person and group personality. At least that is what I have tried to do. Even the Patricks must have their place in the integrated personality and they must have their place in you.

Don't take too simplistic a view of King's men, Programmed Killers, and Programmed Persons. The King's Men are not automatically on the other side, they are on all sides always in a fragmented society; and most of the persons on all sides are Programmed Persons. Whenever you find yourself talking or thinking in other person's catch-words, look out! Most of the of the of the several sides are straight from the Crocodile's mouth!

Poul Anderson out there is an example of a comparative conservative who is not stuffy or usual. And I can think off hand of a million liberals (or those who say that they are) who are completely stuffy and usual. But I seldom use the terms left or right, or liberal and conservative: in both cases they are the two sides of the same coin and it is a counterfeit coin. I see it as the Center and the Eccentrics, and all the eccentrics resemble each other in their shallowness. Or as the Well and the Shallows in Chesterton's phrase, and the truth is often at the bottom of the well. It isn't a question of compromise or ambivalence at the real center: there is depth there, and there isn't any on the fringes. In the Center is the hurricane's eye, the only place of serenity anywhere, dynamic serenity, hey, that's a good phrase.

I'm interested that you're writing a story. From the title it will be an angry one, which is fine. Don't make it all of one tone, though, or it will be monotonous, whatever the tone. Use a little something else for contrast, even if for ironic contrast. If you have discovered Yeats then discover or rediscover a short and early poem of his, when he was about your age, "The Valley of the Black Pig" which title providentially combines the two elements of your own title: the line especially "Master of the still stars and of the flaming door"; there's got to be the flaming door, of course, but don't neglect other elements. And don't mind a few rejections if you send the story around. A first story almost always has to be very good to break in; it's only the rated writers who can get away with second-rate stories, which doesn't seem quite fair. There's nothing special about writing, though: any intelligent person can do it well: in fact, any intelligent person can learn to do anything well. It will soon be the case, I believe, where every open person will acquire proficiency and expression, private, or amateur, or professional, in one of the musics, as the

Greeks called them, that is in one of the lively arts or the lively sciences; and there shouldn't really be any division between the lively arts and the lively sciences.

Actually I was a disaster in St. Louis, but I'm a fairly interesting fellow when I'm not so deep in the drink. I'll see you again at one of the things, Boston or New Orleans (even Dallas if it falls that way). Keep your eyes open and may a variety of worlds happen to you.

R.A. Lafferty

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At the SLEEPY SAILOR

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R.A. LAFFERTY



Frolich