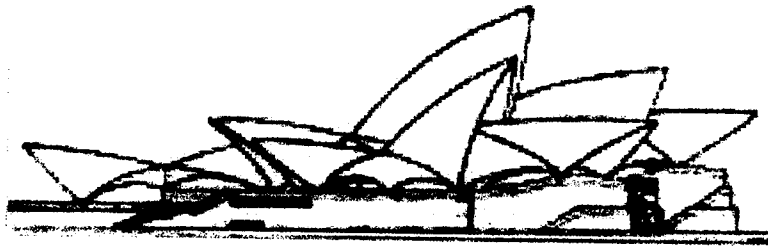




CHALLENGER 19



# CHALLENGER nineteen

Autumn-Winter 2003-2004

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# HOW THE WEST HUGO WAS WON

(OR MARY KAY SHOWS THE PATIENCE OF JOB WITH REGARD  
TO FLAKY ARTIST)

Sue Mason

I really wasn't expecting to win.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, everyone says that.

But I really, truly wasn't and besides, I had more pressing things to worry about than an awards ceremony half a world away.

I like Worldcons, and the more of them I go to, the more I enjoy them. It's as with any con, the more people you get to know, the more fun it is. I've been going to UK cons since 1982 and I met people at my first convention that I'm still friends with now; British fandom is a comparatively small and cozy group. Worldcons, of course, are a whole magnitude bigger, a whole new crowd to get to know, new stories to tell (or old ones to recycle with a fresh audience) all in all, Worldcons are fun.

But not this year.

I'd wanted to do Torcon, as I'd never been to Canada but *REAL LIFE* tm got in the way. More specifically, I moved house in August.

Now, I have friends and work colleges who move house as often as you change your socks. They are completely blasé about it (okay, as completely blasé as one can be about such an upheaval) and blithely tell me that this is their sixth house and how there is a knack to getting everything done on time, beating solicitors into shape and making scads of money by buying a pit and rebuilding it from the ground up.

Believe you me; I am not one of those people. In truth, I had never moved house before. Not in forty years. Which, I think, is sort of considered quite a long time to stay in the same place. I'd been wanting to move for a year or two but a couple of things were hampering me. Firstly, I was an artist, starving in the garret and secondly, I had forty years of my stuff, my Mum's stuff, my Gran's stuff,



Great Auntie Nellie's stuff etc, etc, etc all cluttering up the place. I solved these twin hurdles by getting "A Proper Job" which at least promised a regular income and then by having the mother of all clearouts.

The clear out took months, complicated by the fact that everything in the house, according to Mum, was a treasure of great emotional/financial/historical value. The local charity shops think I walk on water, I gave them so much. I sold stuff, gave it away, became a regular at the local tip and gradually, the stuff mountain became a hill, then a hillock then a tumulus, then a grassy knoll and finally I found the floor.

It's very cathartic, getting rid of so much stuff; I heartily recommend it, sort of like dieting but without the unpleasantness of saying "no" to chocolate.

I didn't move very far, only 10 miles, but I saved 10k on the price of the house with each mile I moved out of Altrincham, so a house which would have cost me 165k in Alty, cost me 65k in pretty little Northwich, a Cheshire town famous for it's brine pumping since Roman times. So I was able to afford the house but it runs the risk of disappearing into a hole in the ground at any moment, such things add spice to life.

The unfortunate bit was that I moved house the same week as Torcon, a poor bit of planning, but unavoidable.

So I needed a designated acceptor for my Hugo nomination.

As well as saying "oh I didn't expect to win" it's also a terrible cliché to say "it's an honour just to be nominated" but with the Hugo, it \* is \* an honour just to be nominated - people who know your stuff think it's good enough to be up there, whether you go on to win or not, is in the lap of the gods (or Worldcon members, same difference). And pre-Hugo party is fun. So is the Hugo losers bash (at Philcon, I got rather squiffy on vodka and coke at the Hugo losers party, apparently this is not a common drink in the US, it's a standard in the UK, so I was the only person drinking it, which meant, even if I persuaded someone else to go to the bar for me, they still knew who the Guilty Party was).

I asked friends on Rasseff and Livejournal and Mary Kay Kare volunteered, selflessly, to be a stunt Sue for the evening.

Mary Kay emailed me several times to ask for an acceptance speech in case I won and I told her every time not to worry, she wasn't going to have to go on stage, I didn't have a cat in hell's chance of winning... Eventually, she managed to winkle a couple of lines out of me, just thanking the editors who pub my stuff and the fans who read it, nothing to bring the roof down (a la Mr Gaiman at ConJose).

And I got on with house moving.

Which is jolly hard work and I don't plan on doing it again for another 40 years, thank you very much. I had lots of help from friends, which is an advantage of not moving



very far and Steve Davies, fellow Plokta Cabal member came up from Reading to help me with the manly tasks of putting up bookshelves and building flat pack furniture. In the time it took him to put up a wall of shelves and plumb in the washing machine and build a shelf for the DVD's, I managed to assemble one teeny tiny CD rack - which leans rather drunkenly against the wall. Power screwdrivers might be a good idea in the hands of those with DIY skills, but they just allow me to screw things together crooked with greater speed. And then it's harder to put them right again.

On the Saturday, while relaxing with a beer after a long day lifting boxes, I idly asked Steve what night the Hugo's were awarded on. Sunday, he assured me, as we opened another bottle and fought with the cat for space on the sofa and thought no more about it (not even those wistful 'wouldn't it be \* nice \*' sort of thoughts).

At about 3am, I was woken by my elderly, rather senile cat, Spookie, doing his banshee impression at high speed through out the house. He does this periodically, and was doing it all the more as a protest at me removing him from his territory of 18 years. It's a singularly disturbing sound, particularly as he getting more and more deaf so the wails are getting more and more loud and I swore at him somewhat for not only waking me but disturbing my guest too. Bloody cat, I mumbled and rolled over. \*This is an important plot point, don't forget it.

Sunday, we went out for lunch at my local, a canal side pub. We fed the swans chips, which can't be good for them and is possibly illegal, them belonging to Her Majesty, of course and watched the canal boats drift past. Steve went home to sunny Reading and I was all moved into my first home.

Then the 'phone rang.

Now, the thing to remember at this point, is that I think the Hugo ceremony isn't until Sunday night (and I've confirmed this with Steve so I'm \* sure \* it wasn't on Saturday), so when I heard Mary Kay on the other end of the line, my immediate thought was "Oh, she's lost my little email with the speech in it!" So when she said, "Hello Sue, it's Mary Kay, you've won!" my immediate reaction was to tell her not to be silly, I couldn't possibly have won.

I am saying this to a kind lady who is *A.* telephoning me from several thousand miles away. *B.* is too nice to tease me about something like that. And, most importantly, *C.* has a Hugo with my name on it sat in front of her.

Bit of a giveaway, that last point.

After a few minutes of Mary Kay being very patient, I believed her.

Then I had to sit down.

I said I wouldn't believe it really until I had the Hugo in front of me. I now have it, and a beautiful thing it is too, but I still don't quite believe it.

If the house does sink into a brine pit, it's the first thing I grab!

*\* Important plot point. Of course, the cat was caterwauling about the house at 3am because Mary Kay had tried to call me and the telephone, being downstairs where the cat was sleeping, had woken him but not me - proving that he's not deaf, he's just not listening to me. But any seasoned cat owner would have realised this, of course.*



# AND HOW THE HUGO WAS PRESENTED! (AN EDITORIAL)

GHLIII

And that's how *Challenger* finally made it to the Hugo podium. And if it wasn't to pick one up, but rather to give one away ... well, no can complain. Presenting the Best Fan Artist Hugo was one of the highlights not only of Torcon, but of 2003 -- a year that did not lack for high moments.

(Not that anyone noticed *me*, up there. All eyes with any sense behind them must have been affixed on *la belle* Rose-Marie, who wore a beautiful Renaissance-inspired gown [for which she made special undergarments] and looked too wondrous for words. No one could have been prouder -- nor more negligible -- than ye editor.)

We'd been walked through a rehearsal earlier that Saturday, and knew where to go and when. But our nerves were up. DUFF has put us in fandom's spotlight, and we felt it important to look good there. Still, when Toastmaster Spider Robinson called us forth, and the *real* spotlight hit us with its atomic glare, it burned away the last of our stage fright, and so we came to the podium, and held forth.

I began matters by flacking for the Fan Fund auction to be held the next afternoon. Tacky, I know, but I had to do it. Torcon had originally scheduled the event for Friday, far too early, and I'd expended most of my time at the convention rearranging matters. I'd finally secured a room and a time and now for the auction I had to let fandom know about it, in as broad a venue as possible.

Rosy came forward next with some words about the value of fan art to fan editors, and as such a creature, I could not have agreed more. Then it was my turn to read the nominees. Flushed with the moment as I was, I couldn't help but append personal annotations: "Brad Foster, of Texas ... Teddy Harvia, *also* of Texas ... Sue Mason, of Plokta and the world ... our great friend, Steve Stiles ... and our *new* friend, Frank Wu!" Finally, Rosy took the envelope, opened it, and read the extra-large print. *Sue Mason* was the 2003 Hugo Award Fan Artist.

Spider handed me the Hugo, so at least I got to *feel* one before I handed it to Rosy, and my beloved girl handed it to Mary Kay Kare, who accepted it on Ms. Mason's behalf. Then we went back to our place amidst the masses, and the short wait before my hopes for a return to the podium were *Mimosa*-mashed.

Well, losing the Best Fanzine Hugo was only just -- *Mimosa* was effin' terrific in 2002, and there are no sweeter people or better buddies on this planet than the Lynchi. Besides, Rosy and I made out pretty well -- we got to attend the best bash at worldcon, the Hugo ~~Losers~~ Nominees' Party. You'll find photos from it in my Torcon spread later on. It was, to use my favorite word of late, a hoot.

Except for one thing. Partway through the party the *complete Hugo voting results* were handed out. I *hate* this practice. In many cases, it blunts the joy of the winners and exacerbates the disappointment of the losers. Who wants to hear that their victory was only a fluke in the fluke-ridden Australian ballot, that more people actually thought another the best? Who -- like the lady at MilPhil last year, crushed by placing below No Award -- might feel such news a public humiliation? Why not let the Hugo nominees have their evening, and wait to release the full voting breakdown until the day after the awards? What's the big rush?

I raised this issue on the UK in '05 Chat Line, and was basically told to pound sand. Releasing the totals as quickly as possible was fannish tradition, I was told. Possible hurt feelings were no reason to deny the numbers crunchers immediate numbers to crunch. Cheryl Morgan made the only sensible and fully understandable argument supporting early release of the totals. A nominee in Best Fanzine for her on-line *Emerald City*, she simply said, "I want to see how I did." *She* did great -- first in first-place votes

and high overall. **Challenger** came in *fifth* – certainly no humiliation, and I expected no better, but I wouldn't have minded waiting to find it out.

I shut my cake-hole, and will obey the consensus, of course, but if I ever *run* a worldcon, and the decision on when to release the full Hugo results is *mine*, you know what to expect.

So: Noreascon. What are our plans?

DUFF is, of course, our responsibility at the Boston worldcon, and we have plans for the fan fund there. Already we've been in touch with N4 programming about a suitable auction time and site. We're continuing to gather material to hawk – donations gleefully accepted – and will be running an inventory in a progress report this spring. Already we've got more than enough books and toys and tuckerizations to fill an hour of program time; that might cause problems if we want to join forces and auctions with the other fan funds. Another problem to solve. Well, there's time between now and then to work that out.

Also, sometime between now and Noreascon, a new DUFF election will be held, and the new Australian delegate will be elected. Rosy and I will host a reception honoring this worthy, and have *that* soiree to plan. I hope we're not annoying Noreascon with our constant inquiries about DUFF, but hey – we just want to do a good job.

So: check out our DUFF website, which should be opened by now at [www.DUFF2004.com](http://www.DUFF2004.com). It'll feature our auction inventory, updates on Noreascon and other plans, and, when the Aussies get their competition going, a download-able ballot. Naturally, we hope and expect that every **Challenger** reader will cast their ballot, support DUFF, contribute goodies to the fund ... and *run* next time!

But we'll have more than DUFF to keep us busy before the worldcon. We have a program book to edit.

Joe Siclari's call came in the early days of December. It hit us with the force of a Patriot missile. *The head of Noreascon 4's publications division was asking us to put together the worldcon's program/souvenir book.*

The explosion was happy, and we were and are totally wowed by the honor, but ... *wow*. Not just work on a convention, but work on a *worldcon*. Not just work on the worldcon, but work on *Noreascon*. Not just work on Noreascon, but *edit* the *program book*. The souvenir everyone in fandom will carry away from what may possibly be the biggest fannish convention of the decade. That's more than a *job* – it's an awesome *responsibility*.

I edited the program/souvenir book for Nolacon II, of course, and despite a couple of iffy page layouts and dissatisfaction with the printer, I basically liked how it came out. My philosophy about this tome will be the same as it was for that one: *3Fs*, and not what you're thinking. *Fandom is fun* with the *future*. I hope for an attractive, light-hearted, but substantive publication doing honor to the convention, its guests (I ordered the 2003 **Discworld Companion** to learn more about Terry Pratchett), and the people taking it on with me. Rosy – Geri Sullivan, who'll handle layout – Joe, publications chief – and Eve Ackerman and Judy Bemis, who are peddling our ads. Interested in buying space or helping? Write to me!

And Let the Good Times Roll! (No ... wait ... that was the other one!)

*In this issue* a theme has erupted by sheerest serendipity. Entirely on their own, without the slightest guidance from \*pschaw\* me, this issue's **Chall** pals have contributed articles on classic SF writers from our genre's dawn. Maybe I should have held off using Paul McCall's magnificent **Lost World** cover for **Challenger** #17. It would have fit right in.

Dr. Craig Hilton on the greatest foil in literary history, Dr. John Watson. Rich Dengrove on the Martians of H.G. Wells. Ned Brooks on Wells' Cavorite (a "weighty" matter indeed). Greg Benford on Edgar Rice Burroughs. Even my own reprint about Christopher Lee from 1977 has a Tolkien reference and connection. You can't plan a common theme as neatly as that.

But it ends there. I suppose I could stretch the reference to Norman Lindsay in this issue's DUFF

article, "Pride of the Blue Mountains", to fit this theme, but a stretch it would be. Gary Robe's scouting tale, Jan Stinson's harrowing encounters with a future murderer, John Berry's adventures with idiots in the British countryside and Mike Resnick's Torcon diary have little or no connection with SF masters of the past – but they're not here because of any theme. They're here because they're fascinating stories, at least to me, and I'm betting they'll hit you the same way.

Readers have told me they like my stories about life as a public defense lawyer, if you call it living, but alas, my charmingly-titled "Kicking a Kitten" was one of two GHLIII pieces still unfinished as of press time. Next time. Instead, here's an update on a more personal legal matter. The ten-year-old traffic ticket which got me jailed for seven hours in May came up for trial in mid-October. I approached the city attorney loaded for bear. The attachment was bogus from Jump Street – the 1993 notice had gone to the wrong address, even though I'd written the right one on the ticket; I'd bought cars, been stopped by nice cops and hassled by hostile ones, and most significantly, I'd practiced criminal law for ten years in that very venue, all without any indication that there was an attachment out on me – but the city attorney merely blanched, "You're kidding me!" before scrawling "Dismissed" on the ticket, over and over again.

I appreciated that – but I'm still a lawyer, and still thinking: *sue somebody*. How much value would you put on seven hours behind bars for an honest citizen?

Finally, I must hail our Australian friend and hero Bill Wright for aid in the distribution of **Challenger #18**. A few weeks prior to Torcon, believing I'd save money, I sent Bill a package of enveloped and addressed copies of **Chall #18** via the cheapest method: an *M-bag*. I immediately felt guilty. Having had mixed results from M-bags sent across the Atlantic (and thank you, Sandra Bond), I was worried that, going by surface mail, the Pacific crossing would take even longer. It did – eleven weeks.

Once the zines *finally* made it to Bill's abode, that saint among saints conveyed them to his countrymen by hand and post – including a copy to the couple who rescued us from the heights of Hanging Rock. They weren't fans, so I imagine **Chall** was baffling – but they *did* send us a Christmas card!

**Chall #19's** cover is by Louisiana treasure **Ned Dameron**, from a silkscreen by my lifelong friend **Doug Wirth**. **#20** will be fronted by a glorious color illo by **Frank Wu**. Having predicted themes for my zines that never came to be, I know better than even to guess at its contents. **Chall pals** – surprise me!

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*One of the best SF writers working, as well as one of our foremost Chall pals, holds forth on one of fantasy/adventure fiction's forefathers ...*

# PELLUCIDAR REVISITED

*Gregory Benford*

*Illo by Randy Cleary*

About ten years ago I began to reread certain writers in a systematic way. It began with Heinlein and Zelazny and Terry Carr, because they were writers whom I could hear in my mental ear as I read them--a way to spend time with those departed.

I intended to in a sense keep these writers alive by keeping their work current, still playing a role in our culture. I could experience Heinlein's flat, Midwestern voice leaping among ideas; hear Zelazny's modest tones taking me through *Doorways in the Sand*; Terry's wit blossoming in his fanzine satire, *The BNF of Oz*. As a way of revisiting dead friends it has its charms.

Alas, the decade has added so many names I find it hard to keep up. I began rereading *Citizen of the Galaxy* and then included Asimov, when I wrote a novel set in his Foundation series. I read a Raymond Chandler novel every year because I love the voice — I heard a recording of Chandler just once and somehow it stuck with me. But no more than one Chandler a year, because Chandler only wrote seven novels. I could all too easily memorize them, make them go opaque to me.

Last year saw the passing of my wife, Joan, my father, plus Charles Sheffield and Robert Forward. So now I read the letters of my relatives and the books of friends. I added Kingsley Amis a few years back, hearing his lofty laughter throughout his comic novels. And Hal Clement (*Harfirfy Stubbs*) just this week...the list grows steadily.

Then the University of Nebraska Press asked me to write an introduction to Burroughs' *At the Earth's Core*. I had last read him at age 14. When Mike Resnick and others held the Dum Dum dinners at worldcons, I didn't go. Burroughs seemed much less interesting than the New Wave and the return of hard sf, the hot issues of those days.

But then I read *At the Earth's Core* and the past came swarming up in my nostrils. The 14-year-old was still there.

I tried to figure out why the book still appealed to me, even though I could see straight through its devices and props. The notion that a strange though Earth-like world might lurk beneath our feet appeals to our sense of adventure. Even better, I saw then, if it comes freighted in the language and imagery of dreams: a place where lands slide beneath the heel, monsters rise and fall in gory excess, and you are at the center of the action.

Indeed, you are the secret savior in the story, a man (always a man) bound for otherworldly glory.

There is no surer sign that Edgar Rice Burroughs wrote directly out of his own Technicolor subconscious than a central feature of the story: time flows nonlinearly in the subworld of Pellucidar. Mere moments pass for one character while months or years groan by for another. Burroughs explains this phenomenon as arising from the inner sun, which never sets, so the biosphere of Pellucidar makes no demands of scheduling upon the life that evolves within it.

The reader can grant a generous nod in the direction of plausibility for this explanation, but of course we know that even subterranean life follows a waking-and-sleeping rhythm, although not keyed to a twenty-four-hour period. (Indeed, people kept from a regular daylight cycle find that their wakeful period slowly lengthens, but their sense of the timing of events does not become confused.)

Consider also the physics of Pellucidar, which Burroughs discusses in some detail. Somehow the Earth allowed a "small sun" to form at its core, leaving an open space, so that five hundred miles down from the surface an "innerworld" thrives. The Freudian implications of this construction lie beyond my competence, but plainly in Pellucidar things are, well, more pellucid. It is a playground of the subconscious, lacking only the overt sexual energy whose expression the early twentieth century constrained in literature.

Lurid events come thick and fast to the manly narrator, each carrying meaning. He suffers injury and strives mightily, but he does not lose.

"The fascination of speculation was strong upon me," our narrator says, and indeed Burroughs plays with Pellucidar with an engaging, naive energy. Since Newton we have known that a spherical shell of matter has no net gravitational acceleration within it because the effect of each portion of the shell is canceled by its opposite. Thus there is no gravity on Pellucidar, except that provided by the "small sun" (which is apparently just a hot mass and not a true star). In reality that would be disastrous because the sun would draw everything toward itself. The folk of Pellucidar, would drift inward and be burned. The whole Earth would eventually implode into the center.

No, the physics doesn't work, right down to the strange little moon that orbits the "sun" in exactly one day. Geologists knew quite well that this hollow earth could not exist, for Pellucidar would have been detected by the refraction of, seismic waves around the hollow.

Pellucidar is most definitely a dreamland, and its literary invention must be evaluated by that fact. The scholarly Perry, the inventor of the craft that bores into the inner world, finds in the writings of the dominant species that they "take no account of such a thing as time. I find in all their literary works but a single tense, the present." So the language has that essential aspect of dreams, always present and immediate.

The reader of the 1914 *All-Story Weekly* magazine, in which this yam first appeared, was also treated to some mordant moralizing as spice to the bloodthirsty romantic adventure:

"We may be snuffed out without an instant's warning, and for a brief day our friends speak of us with subdued voices. The following morning, while the first worm is busily engaged in testing the construction of our coffin, they are teeing up for the first hole to suffer more acute sorrow over a sliced ball than they did over our, to us, untimely demise."

Though the reader roams through a dream – with much emphasis on travel-innumerable descriptions of valleys, mountain chains, routes, and frustrated geography– there are these value-setting asides, particularly to shore up certain social cliches. Reflecting on the perfidy of ordinary Earth women, we learn of one: "She had been head over heels in love with a chum of mine – a clean, manly chap – but she had married a broken-down, disreputable old debauchee because he was a count in some dinky little European principality that was not even accorded a distinctive color by Rand McNally." All this outrage is in contrast to the narrator's feelings for the far more desirable, and moral, Dian of Pellucidar. The girl of our proper dreams, yes.

This world beneath the surface of the Earth is perhaps Burroughs's most appealing, for it comes from his greatest strength: leaving behind realistic referents, which liberates our desires from time and space so they find expression free of social constraint. His more famous Tarzan series took us to the jungle, where a noble, novelized hero could always best the worst elements of both that raw world and the intruders from civilization who sought to pollute it. Similarly, his Barroom sequence, set on Mars, portrays a stage for dreamlike epics mixing science-fictional and fantasy elements.

A fourth series taking place on Venus, created later in his career, lacked the energy of the earlier creations but nevertheless transported readers beyond their limits.

It is easy to read Burroughs's burst of literary invention from 1912 to around 1930 as liberation from a frustrated life, through creativity. When he finally turned to writing at age 36, he was a pencil-sharpener salesman. Quickly he produced Pellucidar, Tarzan, and Barsoom, writing furiously. His immense popularity, with 40 million books in print (including translations), arose from sheer storytelling drive and invention. Many films have been made from his novels, most of them fairly dreadful, and he had myriad paperback imitators. In the 1960s he had a large revival until the

1980s. Now that his best work is going out of copyright, small presses like the University of Nebraska's can publish him readily, with little up-front cost. I suspect his next revival is about to begin.

Purists point, as I have here, to the implausibility of his backgrounds. Pellucidar abounds in animals from all eras of evolution, without bothering to wonder how they could possibly fit together. Occasionally there are good details, as when Burroughs opens with an earth-boring machine whose description drew upon his experience helping at a gold dredge on the Snake River. But in other series his John Carter reaches Mars by magic wishing, and his planets, Venus and Mars, are far from what astronomers knew about them even in the early twentieth century.

No, Burroughs is purely fun and not remotely realistic. He knew that the science didn't have to be good, it just had to sound good. His pulp melodrama came before modern sf, but it is not inferior to the later work. Just different.

The twenty-first century is a good time to reassess his importance, as the innocence and verve of his visions recede into the distant glow of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The early century, particularly after the First World War, knew more grim realism than romance. No wonder readers found themselves drawn to the sheer gaudy energy of this furiously productive storyteller. He lives well, in rereading.



*copyright 2003 by Gregory Benford*

*A discussion has been raging in the Southern Fandom Press Alliance about Cavorite, the anti-gravity substance created by H.G. Wells for his marvelous novel, **The First Men in the Moon**. Ned, a retired NASA wind-tunnel engineer, has chimed in as follows ...*

# WEIGHTY COMMENTS ON CAVORITE

*Cuyler W. "Ned" Brooks*

*Cavorite* – a substance that could block the gravitational field (as metal, or any conductor, can block the electrostatic field).

All objects create a gravitational field in proportion to their mass – it is the interaction of these fields that we perceive as gravitational attraction. If Cavorite were interposed between the Earth and a bowling ball, the bowling ball would no longer be attracted to the Earth. The Earth would no longer be attracted to the bowling ball either, but that would not be noticeable!

What would happen to the bowling ball? Well, it would be faintly attracted to distant masses on the other side of the Cavorite from the Earth, but probably not enough to measure. The big effect would be the ball's own velocity – if it were at the Earth's equator, it would be going about 1000 m.p.h. on a curved path, and the centripetal force would act in the upward direction, causing the ball to rise.

The ball would rise with an acceleration of

$$a = v^2/R = 1000^2/4000$$

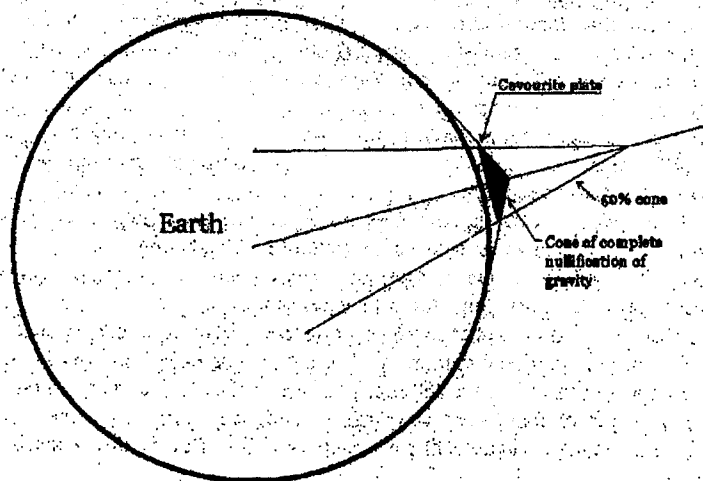
$$a = 250 \text{ miles/hr}^2 = 0.1 \text{ feet/sec}^2$$

Not exactly zooming, and of course if the ball drifted out of the area where the gravity was blocked it would immediately fall back with an acceleration of 32 feet/sec<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, it could be held in place by a piece of dental floss – if the ball weighs 5 lbs = 80 oz, the force required to restrain it would be proportional to the acceleration, as the mass is constant. The

force exerted on the ball by an acceleration of  $a = 0.1 \text{ feet/sec}^2$  would only be about 0.25 oz.

On the other hand, if the experiment were carried out at the North Pole, the bowling ball would merely become weightless, acted on by very small unaligned forces. After a while it would drift back into the Earth's gravitational field and fall to the ground (or the ice or the deck or whatever there might be to stand on at the North Pole).

It has been objected that the very existence of Cavorite



would violate Newton's laws, because at the edge of the "shadow" blocking the gravitational field a perpetual motion machine would become possible. That is, if a wheel were mounted vertically with the axis on the border and half the disk in the Earth's gravitational field and the other half above the Cavorite, the wheel would spin without energy input because half of it was pulled earthward while the other half was not. In fact, if energy were not removed from the wheel (as by a brake or an electric dynamo), the wheel would spin faster and faster until it either reached an equilibrium with air and bearing friction or exploded when the centripetal strain exceeded the strength of the material.

This is an important objection, but I'm not sure what connection it has to do with the problem. There are, after all, other ways to cancel gravitational attraction on half of a vertically mounted wheel! Suppose we use our 5-lb bowling ball (since we have already done the math on that) as a wheel by sticking an axle through it – now half the ball will be accelerated toward the Earth ( $a = 0.1$  feet/sec), while the other half will not. How could this be accomplished without Cavorite? Well, half of the ball could be in a tank of liquid with the same density as the ball itself. There is nothing technically difficult about that! Any conceivable seal at the vertical interface between the dry side of the ball and the wet side of the ball would exert more force opposing the rotation of the ball that could be overcome by the approximately 5-inch-lb torque available from the asymmetric force on the ball – but that is a mere technicality.

Suppose the ball were suspended between two tanks, one containing the liquid whose density matches that of the ball (thus making half the ball weightless) and the other some much lighter fluid that is immiscible with the heavier liquid (like oil and water). Now only a light seal would be needed at the interface, because the small amount of the lighter fluid that got through into the heavier fluid would float to the top of the tank where, if the tanks were both exactly full, it would flow back into its own tank. Whatever heavy fluid got into the light-fluid tank would fall to the bottom, where it could be returned to its own tank by a small scavenger pump.

So we don't need Cavorite to extract energy from the gravitational field with an asymmetrically loaded rotating wheel.

*And on another matter ...*

But wouldn't a single atom of Cavorite have little effect? It seems to me that it would block the gravitational field of the Earth (the only one around that can be measured easily) only in a tiny cone above that atom. Beyond that any mass acted on by the Earth's field would still feel the pull of most of the Earth's mass – think of the shadow of a flea sitting on a light bulb. To another flea just off the surface above him there would be some shade, but a couple of flea-lengths out the other flea would be pretty much illuminated.

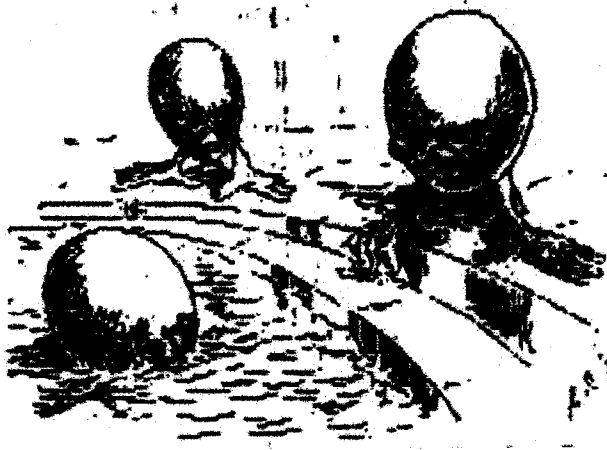
*And yet again ...*

So how large a Cavorite shield would we need to get to low Earth orbit, say 150 miles up, where the main engines could be used to achieve orbital velocity without working against atmospheric drag? Alas, it's a good thing the Cavorite shield can be only one atom thick, because to achieve full nullification of gravity to 150 miles, it will have to be about 2000 miles in diameter. Well, *most* of the atmosphere is in the first 50 miles above the surface – how big a shield would that take? Still over 1000 miles across.

This of course is based on the assumption that the Cavorite itself has weight! If it can (unimaginably) shield *itself* against the gravitational pull of the Earth, then we need only coat the ship itself with it and be off to conquer the universe!



*And speaking of Mr. Wells ...*



# EVIL ALIENS AND H.G. WELLS

*Richard Dengrove*

I imagine some fans will be reluctant to call extraterrestrials *evil*. It seems so judgmental, so human-centered, so unenlightened. But what do you call it when they seek to destroy us, eat us, use us, do experiments on our bodies – especially push things up our genitalia and rectums? No, we can only call them evil. Maybe not in the general scheme of things, but to us they are evil.

As fans, we might have come into evil aliens in the old pulp science fiction. I hear they were quite plentiful at one time. Heroes were always saving heroines from them. Then there were '50s and '60s horror movies, such as *The Thing* (1951) with James Arness, George Pal's *War of the Worlds* (1953), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* (1956).

However, the evil alien is more popular these days for the role it has played in the world of flying saucers. Unlike the horror movies of the '50s, where the aliens could be everything and anything, one type dominates over the rest, the Greys. Also known as the Grays. They were named for their gray skin. Sometimes they resemble the fetus of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). Sometimes, they have a big nose, which some find reminiscent of anti-Semitic stereotypes. Sometimes their eyes are slanted. Sometimes, they are short, often under five feet.

However, these seem to be the Greys' main characteristics: large heads, very thin and weak bodies, no ears, long thin fingers, large eyes. Sometimes their thin necks get stressed.

This all seems related to the original evil

alien. To find out about him, we have to go back to the 1890s. And to the Mars novels. Where, as fiction, Victorians traveled to Mars and observed its civilization. The first such novel was published in 1880, but the main ones date from the 1890s. For the people of this time, the future was written in stone. To be credible to an audience, the planets had to be portrayed one way in a science fiction novel, and not deviate much from it. All planets started out hot and wet. And, over time, cooled and dried. That at first made for tropical jungles to form with lots of wild life. Some Victorian novels had big game hunters on a tropical Venus or Jupiter. Later, the planet cooled and dried still more. And it was necessary for life to become more intelligent. That was when humanoids appeared. Humanoids who became more advanced scientifically over time. To fight the encroaching cold and dryness. However, it finally overtook them. And the planet died.

This was considered science-based, and that was why you could not deviate from it. It was – sort of. That planets were originally hot, and cooled, was always attributed to the Nebula Hypothesis. The accepted theory about how the solar system originated. However, I cannot see how that could be. Instead, I suspect the idea goes back to the work of William Thomson, AKA Lord Kelvin. And his theory about why the Earth was losing heat. It was suspected that applied to the other planets too. This theory dominated the science of the time. While the Darwinians first objected, they were eventually cowed.

Changes in animal and plant life followed

this. The novels claimed they were using the Theory of Evolution to explain how. I suspect their explanation was closer to theories of progress popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, like Charles Bonnet's (1720-93). Of course, the theory had to be adapted to the findings of Victorian paleontology and geology. The problem is that, according to this theory, development took just one pathway. The changes in life on Mars and Venus would be the same as on Earth. According to the doctrine of Evolution, they can take many pathways, even on Earth.

A third bit of scientific evidence of the time pointed to intelligent life specifically on Mars, the canals. Lines that some felt could only have been made by intelligent irrigators. They were discovered in 1877. And I am sure they served as an inspiration for the Mars novels. It is difficult to tell how strong a theory the Canals were among astronomers. Even in the 1890s, there was some doubt about them. There is no doubt, however, the Canals appealed to the public.

And spawned a number of Mars novels. The first Mars novel of note was **Across the Zodiac** (1880) by the English scientist and historian Percy Greg. The Martians are technologically advanced as a result of their more highly developed reason. They have movies, which hadn't been invented then. And telephones, which had; but, I guess, were considered advanced. All was not well in this utopia. The Martians had developed their reason at the expense of their emotions. They had lost their vitality, their motivation – their purpose. In the novel, this meant they lived hedonistically with no thought to tomorrow. What is worse is they had lost empathy with other humans. Wives were chattel.

As I said, this reflected Earth's future. You would not have expected the Victorians to be dubious about progress. The impression we get of them is unlimited optimism. But it comes out in the Mars novels and, in fact, is their trademark. So some things are older than we give them credit for.

Something similar to Greg's novel happened in Robert Cromie's **Plunge into Space** (1890), the next Mars novel of note. The more highly developed Martian reason had made Mars a paradise even though growing conditions had gotten worse. But their reason had also been developed at the expense of their emotions. They

had lost their vitality and motivation too. In this novel, that meant the Martians could not get enthusiastic about anything. Not only could they not get enthusiastic about arrivals from Earth; they could not get enthusiastic about their own space travel. They had it and lost interest in it.

The third novel of note was Gustavus Pope's **Journey to Mars** (1894). It is an early action adventure science fantasy à la Burroughs, complete with princesses. Unlike Greg's or Cromie's novel, the Martians have space travel. Like Greg's novel, however, because the Martians' had overdeveloped their reason, they lacked purpose, and were too involved with the selfish pursuit of pleasure. Now we get to H.G. Wells novel **War of the Worlds**. Up until now the aliens have been humanoids. They have looked very much like us. Like humans. Humans being considered the height of Evolution.

H.G. Wells begged to differ. And in so doing, took the Mars novel to its logical conclusion. He developed the originally humanoids species of Mars into one more rational in their minds and the design of their bodies. Reason became the reason d'être of both their minds and their bodies. Because of that, they were no longer human. The Martians had developed an enormous head. The better to support an enormous reason. In fact, they were mostly head. A head which permitted them to communicate telepathically and which, I guess, eliminated all misunderstanding.

Furthermore, the hands had evolved into tentacles. Better for manipulating things and building machines. And putting their reason into practice. Their eyes had grown too, to see better what they were doing. On the other hand, they had no bodies. The flesh is weak. Finally, his Martians no longer practiced sex, the most notorious emotion of them all. They budded like a lily or a fresh water polyp. Which means they duplicated themselves at some point in their body.

Similarly, the Martians were more rationally designed than we are. They never had to sleep or experience fatigue. Digestion causes many diseases; so it is reasonable the Martians had other means to get nutrition. They drank blood through a beak and that went directly into their blood streams. Some things that were no longer used have disappeared. Their feet, for instance. The Martians had built powerful machines to replace them. And

do many other things. In fact, the Martians were heads who wore machines like we wear clothing. This was an extension of the Victorians' attitude toward machines. Also, their nose and ears were not used much anymore and had disappeared.

This did not make the Martians good, the traditional supposition; but evil. Unlike with Gregg and Cromie, motivation, vitality, purpose, etc. were still there. The need for survival on a dying planet was sufficient to sustain them. However, Martians could no longer empathize with humans. It was worse than simply losing empathy; they were no longer human. And had no more regard for us than we do for cattle. We humans could provide blood their bodies need. And be their pets. And maybe work animals. But if we stood in their way, they would crush us like vermin with their heat rays and poison gas.

And, for us, that is what makes them evil, even though they were doing no less than any other animal does. Including man. This is Wells' crowning irony. However, make no mistake about it: Wells wants us to view the Martians as evil. And he goes out of his way to make them appear horrific.

How do I know all this about Wells' Martians? H.G. Wells says so. A little in the Introduction and a lot in Book II Chapter 2 of his novel. Plus he makes references to articles in an 1893 *Pall Mall Budget* and *Punch Magazine*. The reader might be led to believe that he made up these articles to keep the novel's verisimilitude. Baloney! He is referring to his essay "Man of the Year Million," which was reprinted several times in November of 1893. Not only in the *Pall Mall Budget* but its mother journal, the *Pall Mall Gazette*. And I wonder if Wells wrote the humorous verses in *Punch*.

In *War of the Worlds*, Wells makes no bones that the Man of the Year Million and his present day Martians are supposed to be one and the same. Just like the other Mars' novels. However, in actual fact, they differ. In *War of the Worlds*, Wells' object was to scare the bejesus out of people rather than satire. By making his Martians horrific and appear unadulterated evil.

In the essay, Martian mouths are small and, I guess, their hands or tentacles are where their neck would be. In the '30s, he was asked to draw a picture of his Martians. And this was the

way he drew them. Also, their mouths are small because, in the "Man from the Year Million," they obtained nutrition by taking nutrient baths. A *Punch* cartoon showed them taking a nutrient bath.

However, this differed completely from the Martians of the novel. He made them more like octopuses. Instead of a small mouth, he gave them, as I said, a beak surrounded by the tentacles. Octopuses were creatures Victorians seemed to fear. Creatures we are not supposed to fear but we do. I hear there was a totally un-p.c. scene in Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* where a hero fights a rather vicious octopus. No one around then to sing the octopus' praises. The beak had a double function: not only was it supposed to resemble an octopus'; it was so the Martians could suck blood from their victims' veins. Like vampires. Which bring terror into our hearts even today.

I doubt Wells believed a word he wrote about either Martians or the Man of the Year Million. In the "Men of the Year Million," he claimed to be describing the theory of a rather pedantic German academic. And the rationale was a wild and woolly mixture of Hegelian philosophy and Lamarckian biology. In short, in his rationale, Wells was practicing a popular pastime of the era: ridiculing German academics. Wells certainly knew the difference between Evolution and what this fellow was advocating. He had studied under Thomas Huxley, Darwin's bulldog. In a 1906 *Cosmopolitan* magazine article he speculated that Evolution would likely take other paths: e.g., intelligent life might come from elephant like or octopus like creatures: rather than a path that would lead to today's Martians and the Man of the Year Million.

But while Wells knew Evolution, he also knew how to be a crowd pleaser.

According to Peter Nicholls' *Science in Science Fiction* (1983), "Man of the Year Million" was the more influential work. Many science fiction writers based their future man on Wells'. And their aliens. It is true few science fiction writers after Wells had the guts to do what he did: dehumanize man so much that he was no longer man. Even when the alien/future man is evil, he kept his body no matter how small and weak it had become. The hands have only long fingers and not tentacles. As for the budding and the nutrient



baths, you can forget them. With those changes, that future man/alien has become a fixture on the popular science fiction landscape.

Because these beings would retain the large eyes of Wells' Martians, I wonder if that was where the phrase Bug-eyed Monster, or BEM, came from? Which was so popular during the '50s. Of course, the real rationale for this was forgotten. Scientists knew by 1910 that the Martian canals were an optical illusion. The public eventually followed. As for Lord Kelvin, it was found in the '30s that he was mistaken. However, the vision of a future man, flawed by reason both socially and by Evolution, remained.

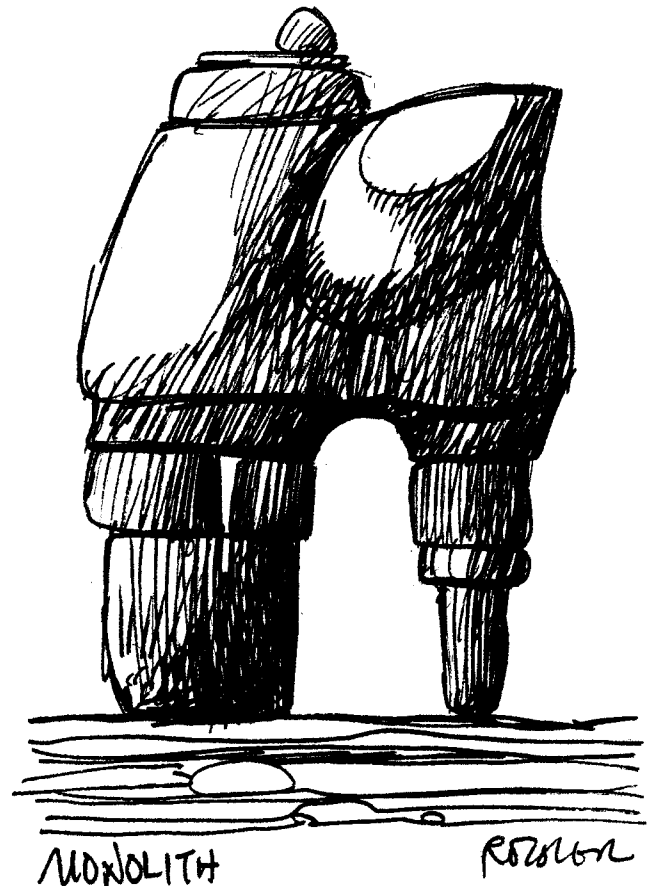
When did this being enter the flying saucer mythos and become the Grey alien, which we were talking about earlier? Joe Nickell claims the first time was Betty and Barney Hill, 1961. However, Curtis Peebles claimed their aliens were reported to have large chests and Jimmy Durante noses. They were only Greys because their skin was gray. It was not until the 1975 Betty and Barney Hill movie, *The UFO Incident*, that we see full fledged Greys with large heads and eyes, and small bodies.

It was only then the Grey entered the flying saucer mythos. *War of the Worlds* seems to have been a greater influence here. Like Wells' Martians, and unlike his Man of the Year Million, the Greys have had nothing but contempt for us. In the late '70s and early '80s, they were often about to invade. Also, they mutilated cattle and humans for their blood. Like Wells aliens, in order to eat. They sometimes invade in a rational way, by subterfuge. Sometimes, convincing an evil or naive Federal government to let them set up cities underground. But they prove most rational when, in the 1990s, Budd Hopkins hypnotized subjects to recover memories of UFO abduction. Under hypnosis, they claimed the Greys conducted scientific tests on them: what more rational a pastime could the Greys have. And that, during these tests, the Greys pushed objects up their rectum and genitals. The very sign of rationality gone overboard.

The Greys reached the height of their popularity in the '90s. Of course, their popularity persists. I guess, like the late Victorians, we have been worried that reason has a tendency to go too far. And produce monsters.

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*The release of Return of the King brings to mind the one occasion on which I came in contact with a member of the cast of Lord of the Rings. Verbatim from a LASFAPazine of 1977, behold.*

Off on the black ship of horror, out on the seas of terror, cloaked in the deepest of nights, you sail on ... and you notice with dismay that the Captain of your frail vessel wears a long black cape, and files his incisors ... that the first mate is wrapped in rotting linen ... that instead of a figurehead, the prow of your ship is a *wicker man* ...

Panic! For well you might! Rush to the rail and gaze back to land, to the all-too-distant shore ... look toward the land, yes, look

Christopher Lee

WARDS ...

On November 19, 1977, I took a seat in the fifth row of the Sena Mall Theatre in Metairie, Louisiana, adjacent to New Orleans. In that 5<sup>th</sup> row sat the Sons of the Sands, the NOLA fan group to which I belonged. About us, close enough for conversation, sat other friends and acquaintances. Amongst us, Clarence Laughlin, brilliant photographer (see his book, published by the Museum of Modern Art), septuagenarian sage, motor-mouth and book collector *par excellence*. Standing before the packed house, watching microphones being adjusted by the theatre crew, stood pudgy, full-grey-bearded Stirling Smith, local movie pundit and host of this midnight show. Usually a genial fellow (I'd appeared on his show the previous April), Stirling was tense and edgy tonight; he had just driven, at over 100 m.p.h., down from Jackson, Mississippi, over wet roads. And his guest was following in another car.

But finally Stirling received word from backstage. He lowered the mike *way* down, and introduced his guest with a rambling, semi-pointless story about Orson Welles (whose name Stirling pronounced "Arson").

And then the curtains parted near the exit and in walked a tall, thin, striking handsome fellow. Is it any mystery by now? Christopher Lee.

*Very* tall, Lee looked to be, also, very exhausted ... for after all, he'd been on the go all day, and the drive south from Jackson is harrowing enough in dry daylight. But striking nonetheless, Christopher Lee ...

A word or two of cinema criticism. Chris Lee is a pretty good actor who makes good B movies. He is almost always much better than his material. His best roles have been in the Richard Lester *Musketeers* movies and as Scaramanga in *The Man with the Golden Gun*, in which he so thoroughly outclassed Roger Moore's James Bond that one's sympathies were tipped entirely in the wrong direction ... hurting the picture. Mostly he has played in relatively weak flicks ... but he has been impressive in almost everything he has done. Tonight he appeared before



us to hype **The Wicker Man**, a much ballyhooed suspense film which had premiered the night before ... and which would not be shown here. To a good deal of grumbling, it was announced as we had paid our money that instead of **The Wicker Man** we would see an unheralded new film called **Dark Places**.

But I wander.

Lee took the microphone and nervously, I thought, told an anecdote of his own about Orson Welles, who directed him in an unreleased version of **Moby Dick** (Lee played the second mate to Orson's Ahab). He boosted **The Wicker Man** as the best film he'd ever done, mentioned that he had never seen **Dark Places**, and mentioned that his autobiography was coming out in England. The publisher's title, he admitted somewhat shamefacedly, was **Tall, Dark and Gruesome** ... whereas as all could see, was anything but. He then called for questions, and I pause to curse myself for not taking notes. His words deserve to be reported verbatim, whereas paraphrase will have to do. Throughout, Stirling chose the questioners from raised hands in the audience, and occasionally intruded on the answers by trying to repeat the query. But no matter. Lee, dead tired as he was, was fully master of the situation.

Would he play **Dracula** again? Probably not – he felt he'd done about all there was to do with his interpretation of the character and he was pleased to see that others were taking on the role ... including Louis Jourdan, he noted. He mentioned that he didn't regard many of his so-called "horror" films as that, but as melodramas ... **Fu Manchu**, for instance.

Is it true that he was once an opera singer? Yes it was. He mentioned that he sang a ditty in **The Wicker Man**, and urged us all to go see it, for the fifth time.

What was his favorite movie? Hard to say ... but Lee won my eternal devotion when he said that he would *have* to call **Citizen Kane** the *best* movie he'd ever seen ... and he could have had any part of my anatomy that he chose, pickled in alcohol, after he went on to say that **Paths of Glory** rated very highly with him as well. The man was obviously picking up GHLIII vibes from row 5, or else we share superior tastes in films.

What was his favorite book? Lee smiled and played with his ring. That one was easy. **The Lord of the Rings**, which he claimed to read "six times yearly." I had just finished my *first* reading of **LotR** a few weeks before ... and I loved it ... so again, the tall man before us struck home. And proved himself human (despite most of his roles) when he allowed himself to drop a name (I do the same thing all the time; hell, I'm doing it now): he recalled his own friendship with Tolkien with great fondness. And added some news: he'd been asked to play a part in the upcoming cartoons ... he didn't know which roles, but if ever there was a Gandalf or a Saruman, it is he. [2004 editor's note: *Boy, can I call 'em!*]

What was his first film role? Lee smiled, embarrassed, and told us that he'd borrowed a tux from the director to make the movie and never returned it. I'm sure that Lee would be pleased to know that I've forgotten the title he told us, since he implied that the flick was a dog.

Someone who had heard a radio interview with him earlier that day asked if he'd heard any more Beatles records ... seems that he somehow never heard one before that afternoon "even though," he name-dropped, "I know all four of them quite well." At least he knew that there were four of them. He allowed that the song he'd been treated to earlier was right pretty.

Would he ever make another flick with Peter Cushing? The audience applauded spontaneously at the mention of Lee's old comrade in movie evil. Sincere affection filled Lee's golden voice as he confided in us that Cushing was mostly retired ... having lost his dear wife in 1970, he also lost most of his desire to work. He quoted a letter from Cushing ... "Dear Fellow," it began ... that was how Cushing always began his letters, Christopher Lee said. Lee had invited Cushing to come make films with him in America, where Lee now lives, and Peter had declined, kindly. "I'll write to him and tell him of the response his name drew here tonight. Perhaps that will change his mind. I know it will move him greatly."

Had he seen **The Exorcist**?, asked an asshole two rows down. No, Lee said, and there was a touch of ice in his voice. For purely personal reasons. "I have a daughter 14 years of age." "I thought it was funny," the boob pressed him. Lee ducked and swam on to the next question. How many languages did he speak? The answer: several ... and he reads and writes Greek.

Someone asked him if he was wearing Bela Lugosi's original **Dracula** ring, and he said no, just a

replica, and that only as tribute to Lugosi. The real ring was in the possession of Forrest J Ackerman, and it was nice to hear the mention of a familiar name. When I muttered "Forry," despite myself, Lee looked up and said "Yes," acknowledging the familiar nickname. (I've seen that ring, at the first **Famous Monsters** convention in 1974, I went up to Ackerman and *kissed* it. You got your Pope, I got mine.)

From the back of the auditorium an inevitable, yet incredibly painful, question came. Did Lee believe in the occult? Groans stifled themselves throughout the theatre ... but Lee, thinking perhaps of **The Wicker Man**, perhaps not, said yes, he did believe that there were dark forces in the world ... he called them "the old religion" ... and to avoid tampering with them at *all* costs. Hype? Maybe. **The Wicker Man** deals in such matters. But he sounded serious, so serious that the next question was, had he ever met Anton La Vey? Yes ... who had sent him books inscribed "*To a perfect devil.*"

And I asked a question. He'd made something significant of the difference between horror and melodrama. What then, *was* horror? What was his personal definition?

And if I do say so, I got the best and most interesting answer of the night. Lee dropped a name again, but it was one he of all people is most entitled to drop. *Boris Karloff* had told him something that *Lon Chaney* had said to him: "Whatever we do on the screen, the audience can imagine far worse. What we have to do to is *suggest*, and let them *imagine* the worst. Everything is *suggestion*."

Lon Chaney to Boris Karloff to Christopher Lee ... to me. And five or six hundred other people. (I, however, asked the question.)

Chris Lee stood before us for over an hour, closing, on Smith's suggestion, with the tale of how he won a special belt buckle from the Stunt Men's Association after dangerous underwater work in *Airport '77*, a beastly flick in which he was criminally wasted. Then he steeped back, accepting our thunderous applause.

There were autographs signed, of course. The man was obviously exhausted, but since he was very willing to sign for one and all, I joined in, after borrowing the camera of a most beautiful young woman named JoAnn Dilworth to take some shots. He led us out into the lobby and there signed and signed while **Dark Places** began within, and when at last I was able to place before him the blank envelope filched from Justin Winston's house earlier that evening and secure the signature used in my logo, I managed to work in a namedrop of my own.

"This [autograph] will go well with my Fritz Lang," I said.

"Ah," Lee smiled. "I never met him, alas."

And though Christopher Lee dropped his names without a trace of the repellent egotism with which I always drop mine ... and though Christopher Lee filled that room and that evening with an enormous grace and good will the like of which such a cur as I could never approach ... I allowed myself the thought that I had had two pleasures this gentle, civilized master monster would never have: meeting Fritz Lang, and discovering Christopher Lee.

\*\*

Oh yes, the movies. I returned to my seat and enjoyed **Dark Places**, a pretty good haunted house meller with a nice surprise twist. Lee does little in the film, however, playing support to an unknown British actor and Joan Collins ... you know, of the 21<sup>st</sup> Street Mission.

The next day I took Lee at his word and drove the 90 miles to Baton Rouge. There **The Wicker Man** was in its third day. And despite a very hokey introduction I found that the film was quite intriguing, original, and even compelling, dealing with paganism from a rather unique standpoint. I hope that Britt Ekland's nude dance sequence isn't cut when the film has its general distribution, because not only is it extremely erotic, it's also subtly *disturbing* ... in a non-sexual way. Not the greatest thing since sliced salami, but an interesting movie ...

And I had to go see it, anyway. I felt as if I owed it to Christopher Lee.



*Want a good lawyer? Ask another lawyer. Want a good doctor? Ask another ...*

# JOHN WATSON - THE GOOD DOCTOR?

A Talk by Dr. *Craig Hilton* for the Sherlock Holmes Society of Western  
Australia on the 25th May 1996

*Doctor Watson*, as everyone in the English- and non-English-speaking world can tell you, is the companion of Sherlock Holmes, the rather-less-bright sidekick to the great detective and second member of the renowned sleuthing partnership. People who don't know him from the original Conan Doyle stories are still aware of him through the thousand movies, TV and radio programmes, associated literature, pastiches, parodies and any other representation of the legend. To most people, Holmes and Watson are more icons than literary creations, shaped mostly by mental images of Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. If you asked your aunt to give a brief description of Doctor Watson, you could bet your bottom dollar she'd use the word "bumbling" at some stage.

Now I don't think anybody in his right mind would let himself be treated by a GP of the Nigel Bruce version, except perhaps someone keen on being poisoned with the wrong prescription. But the true Watson of the Canon was obviously a little more competent than that. He was more along the lines of Edward Hardwicke or David Burke, a man probably gifted with above average intelligence, considerable education, a great deal of passion and sympathy but with a fairly conventional imagination. He had all the makings, some might say, of an excellent general practitioner.

So was he? I am looking in this essay to explore the truth of the matter. But before I can answer this, first we'll have to

know a little about the man, the history of his career, the history of general practice, the state of the art at his particular time, and only then can I search the pages of the books for evidence of his performance.

John Hamish Watson was born in England in the early 1850s (1852 by some accounts), and after the death of his mother, he and his brother Henry Jr were taken by their father to spend some of their boyhood in the Australian goldfields. Returning to England, John was educated at a good school, thence proceeding to the University of London Medical School in about 1872 to pursue a medical degree. He was a staff surgeon at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London. In 1878 he was given his degree, and from here he went to Netley to take the course for surgeons in the Army. Having completed this, he was attached to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as assistant surgeon, but on travelling to India to join them he learned that with the outbreak of the second Afghan War his corps had advanced far into enemy territory. He succeeded in regaining them in Candahar, where he set about his duties.

Watson says that the campaign brought him nothing but misfortune and disaster. He was removed from his brigade and attached to the Sixty-sixth Foot (Berkshires), with whom he served in the "fatal battle of Maiwand" on the 27th July 1880, extremely lucky in fact to have escaped with his life. Recovering from his wound in Peshawar, his fortunes even then took a turn for the worse when he contracted

enteric fever, and at last he was given his passage home to England to recover for the next nine months on an army half-pension. This was in 1881, and from the time he set foot on Portsmouth jetty, health "irretrievably ruined," Doctor Watson's time with Holmes was about to begin, and their subsequent adventures together are a matter of record to all good Sherlockians.

We know a lot from this time about his companionship in the game of detection. What about his day job? Well it seems to have been closely bound to his domestic circumstances, in that throughout his life the doctor worked when he was married and didn't when he was not. He lived with Holmes from 1881. He may have been married in 1885 and widowed in the next couple of years. Of certainty is that in 1888 the doctor married Mary Morston, moved out of digs with Holmes and bought a practice in Paddington, obviously to support his new wife. When he did go with Holmes on one of his cases he had to employ a locum to deal with his heavy caseload. In 1890 they moved to Kensington, where conversely his practice was "small" and "never very absorbing."

Things started to go downhill. In 1891, his dear friend Holmes was apparently killed in the line of duty, his wife Mary died in next few years and I am not at all surprised at the evidence that Watson's general condition had begun to suffer the effects of these depressing episodes. However, Holmes made his return large as life in 1894, and within the year Watson had sold his practice to take up again with the great detective. This move had the suspicious hallmarks of having been engineered, as it later turned out the man who had bought it was one of Holmes' relatives.

Watson again lived with Holmes and solved crimes with him until 1902. Whether he was also practising as a doctor at the same time is speculative, but I doubt it. Nevertheless in short order he was married again and consequently back in practice as a breadwinner. He did well too – it was described as "not inconsiderable."

Holmes retired in 1903, but Watson kept doctoring on, having little further contact with him. The medical career from then on, up until and including his service in the Medical Corps at the start of World War One, has little to do with the John Watson we know from the Canon. Details are not available but one can assume things passed without any great event.

So what do we have in summary? After graduation Doctor Watson trains as an army surgeon, serves as one briefly, takes a seven year break, commences work in his very first general practice at the age of thirty-six, does this for seven years (88 - 95) and after a further eight year break resumes it when he is fifty, once he has fairly well finished his association with Holmes. It seems he only worked for the money – no sooner was he free from a financially dependent wife than he would chuck it in.

Watson as I have said was a general practitioner. Though trained as a surgeon, he hung up his shingle in London as a family doctor, which was a common enough thing to do in his circumstances. General practice was a burgeoning field of medicine by the Victorian age, and in those days it simply meant a registered medical practitioner who had not gone on to enter the Royal College of Physicians or of Surgeons. It was the mainstream of medicine, which took all comers, handled every malady or misadventure that could be thrown at it and dealt with the highest to the lowest strata of society. It still does, by the way.

The history of General Practice as a specific discipline is long and tortuous. Medicine itself is as old as prehistory and has had a myriad of practitioners, but the modern Anglo-Saxon medical system we know today has its roots in three main groups. Firstly there were the physicians whose charter dated back to the time of Henry VIII. There were also the surgeons, who were lumped in with barbers by Edward IV in 1462 but managed to shake them off again with the founding of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1800. The third group were the apothecaries, who could

trace their origins back to mediaeval times from the itinerant medicine sellers not far removed from grocers. By charter in 1617 the medicine sellers were allowed the exclusive right to keep a shop with bottled leeches and potions of various kinds. Quick to keep them in their place, the physicians obtained an order forbidding apothecaries to prescribe medicine, but come 1663 and the Great Plague the tables were turned. It was noted the physicians had been the ones who picked up their gear and left town while the apothecaries stayed to care for the ill. England never forgot this, it seems, and in 1703 the high court ruled that the office of the apothecaries was to diagnose and treat disease, and a further ruling in 1829 added that they could actually charge for it.

The Apothecaries Act of 1815 declared that only those licensed by the Society of Apothecaries could legally practise as one. Becoming registered involved a five year apprenticeship, a six month hospital attachment and final exams. This was a momentous step which gave apothecaries standing in their own right. In 1830, following a test case in the courts where an apothecary successfully sued an attorney for the bill for his professional services, the editorial of *The Lancet* proclaimed that "the subordinate members of the profession, that is the general practitioners, have been raised 1,000 degrees in the scale of professional respectability and 10,000 degrees in the estimation of society". This was the first usage of the term "general practitioner," and it has remained the common descriptor ever since.

In 1858 the General Medical Council was established in England, a body given to maintaining standards and discipline through the whole of the medical profession. It set the requirements for training and examination of anyone who would be allowed to become a doctor. Indeed it allowed general practitioners to be *addressed* with the title of doctor, although the College of Physicians fought a fifty year battle against this. Women were allowed to join from 1876, and there was resistance

against this move too.

Western Australia had a medically qualified governor between 1862 and 1868. It was during his term that the state's first medical act was passed, which included the decree that "any person practising before 1869 [was] entitled to register, if necessary without the production of degrees, diplomas or certificate." That was in the Antipodes. Ten years later, in England, a youthful John Watson graduated from the University of London.

So what was the current state of medicine – and general practice in particular – in England circa 1890? The germ theory of infectious diseases proposed by Louis Pasteur and Joseph Lister's antiseptic principles of wound management had been established for about 25 years. The germs causing elephantiasis had been known for about 15 years and tuberculosis about ten. It would be another five years before Sigmund Freud would publish the results of his treatment of hysteria and Wilhelm Roentgen would discover the X-ray.

Some of the diseases that doctors came up against were self-evident: pneumonia, anaemia, heart failure and the like, although the more subtle points of the various forms of these were still under scrutiny. There were others which through the experience of various practitioners had been described as falling into recognised patterns such as Paget's disease, Parkinson's disease and von Recklinghausen's disease, from those established for years to those still in evolution. Injuries were a practical problem to be dealt with in a time-honoured practical manner. Of the available drugs, digitalis had been in medicinal use for over a century, morphine for far longer, and there were aspirin, laudanum and such, but compared with what we nowadays take for granted the list was short and relatively powerless. Sulphonamides and penicillin, the first of the antibiotics, were fifty years into the future. It puts the whole of the discipline into perspective – how can you start to differentiate amongst the finer points of pneumonia when the best available

treatment is still to rug up in bed with a woolly vest?

Let's look at the accounts of the author himself. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote several non-Holmesian short stories on medical themes, which shed some light on his view of the position and capabilities of the craft. In *Behind the Times* Doyle describes an old fashioned family doctor who had flourished in the age of caring *sans* cure, through the eyes of a much younger doctor full of the modern ways of curing *sans* care. The younger describes the elder, a Doctor Winter, in his treating him from delivery and onwards through his childhood – "he vaccinated me, he cut me for an abscess, he blistered me for mumps" – a fair old therapeutic spread. The blistering by the way was moxibustion and involved the local application of heat or strong chemicals to create blisters on the skin, in the way a liniment or poultice might be used today, only a degree more invasive. Whether Doctor Winter had painted a substance on the young boy's cheeks or applied a naked flame to do the job, and whether or not the treatment caused more symptoms than it relieved, you and I know the superficial damage to the patient's skin would have done nothing to help his body rid itself of the virus. Nevertheless, blistering was in vogue up until the end of the century, at least for the like of this GP.

The story goes on to reveal some of Doyle's own feelings about the ideal qualities of a family doctor. "But at last there came a time of real illness - a time when I lay for months inside my wicker-work basket bed, and then it was that I learned that that hard face could relax, that those country-made, creaking boots could steal very gently to a bedside, and that that rough voice could thin to a whisper when it spoke to a sick child."

More on the healing manner of this slightly-behind-the-times GP: " ... [H]e has the healing touch – that magnetic thing which defies explanation or analysis, but which is a very evident fact nonetheless. His mere presence leaves the patient with more

hopefulness and vitality. The sight of disease affects him as dust does a careful housewife. It makes him angry and impatient. 'Tut, tut, this will never do!' he cries, as he takes over a new case. He would shoo death out of the room as though he were an intrusive hen. But when the intruder refuses to be dislodged, when the blood moves more slowly and the eyes grow dimmer, then it is that Doctor Winter is of more avail than all the drugs in his surgery. Dying folk cling to his hand as if the presence of his bulk and vigour gives them more courage to face the change; and that kindly, wind-beaten face has been the last earthly impression which many a sufferer has carried into the unknown."

You will appreciate the value Doyle placed on medicine's being an art as well as a science, and that the very best doctor was one who did not neglect that special quality of compassion. To illustrate this finally, and with apologies for giving away the punchline: when the narrator succumbs to the influenza during a severe outbreak he was treating, rather than his modern, educated young colleague to attend him at his sick bed, he calls for none other than the old-fashioned, kindly Doctor Winter.

Doyle had written most of his stories with the benefit of hindsight from the early twentieth century. We read them now in the far end of the twentieth century from a far loftier vantage point. To us, even more than to Doyle, it would seem that the best the new doctors of Watson's vintage could provide scientifically to their patients, even with their "modern instruments and [their] latest alkaloids" was for practical purposes not really much more than what was on offer from Doctor Winter – a few less leeches perhaps, one or two less blisters maybe, but not much more than that, at least by our modern day standards.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a doctor himself, of course. Where Watson was described as having graduated in 1878, Doyle did so in 1881. Both chose general practice as their branch of medicine. Watson had a practice which obviously left him time to write (between engagements) and so did



Doyle's. Doyle, in his career as a GP, worked with a young assistant named *James Watson* who was obviously the source of his character's name, and reputedly used a surgical lecturer called Joseph Bell as a source of inspiration for Holmes.

It's interesting that the cold, incisive surgical lecturer became Holmes and the GP Watson. Doyle was echoing the time-honoured impression of the physician and the surgeon being learned men on their pedestals and the general practitioner being the true doctor of the people. The stories could only have been the incredible successes they were by this very virtue, of Watson as Everyman, the compassionate doctor, proxy for you and me. While he does not dazzle us with medical science, it would be hard to imagine him giving the same comfort to Helen Stoner if he was a didactic physician. It just wouldn't work.

The Canon is very sparsely supplied with good descriptions of Dr Watson hard at work. In *The Adventure of The Engineer's Thumb*, he is shown dealing with one Victor Hatherley for a surgical emergency in the form of an amputated digit. With his experience as an army surgeon on the battlefield, this one must have been a piece of cake. He says he "sponged the wound, cleaned it, dressed it, and finally covered it over with cotton wadding and carbolised bandages." I can't fault that.

Mr Isa Whitney is the patient in *The Man With the Twisted Lip*, in which Watson is summoned on one of those house calls we doctors wish we could do without. It's the "sorry to disturb you at home at this hour, doctor, but you must go across town to a seedy, low dive and make my husband come home and see sense and give up drugs for good. He'll listen to you" variety. The episode gives little idea of Watson's clinical acumen but speaks volumes for his

forbearance.

There are a lot of times we might have had the chance to watch his emergency resuscitation drill, with Blessington (in *The Resident Patient*), Mr Hilton Cubitt (in *The Dancing Men*), Charles Augustus Milverton and many more, but each time he was either too late or not in a position to help with the hangings, shootings, stabbings and other sundry demises. He would have had a crack at diagnosing Holmes' "fatal" malady in *The Adventure of the Dying Detective* if he'd been allowed to approach the bed, although since the illness was all a put-up job as part of a cunning plan, this would have defeated the purpose rather.

And I do note his extreme concern over his friend's cocaine habit, of which he very sensibly disapproved. If only he had had the same passion against the killer weed tobacco.

How did he fare in the management of the patients in his practice? Well, they seemed to keep coming back (except at his



"HOLMES PULLED OUT HIS WATCH."

Kensington practice, the one which for some unaccountable reason was small and never very absorbing – draw your own deductions), so either they were pleased with his results or he had taken a leaf out of Doctor Winter's book of bedside manner, or both. From this we can assume he performed at least as well as any other general practitioner, an amazing feat for a retired army surgeon out of practice for seven years. And his ability to diagnose? This might be surmised by his capacity (or lack thereof) to solve the puzzles that both he and his detective companion came up against. Was there ever an occasion that Holmes said "I see you have been talking with your stockbroker" and Watson replied "That was clever, Holmes, and I bet I know how you worked that one out"? Not that I can remember. And cast your mind to **The Sign of Four**, with a classic "locked room" murder: Holmes with an over-elaborate patience explains to the good doctor how the perpetrator made good his escape. Since both the door and the window are locked from the inside, the only possibility, however improbable, is the dirty great hole in the ceiling. I mean, I know it's a two horse race with Holmes as Silver Blaze, but sometimes Watson doesn't even rate a distant second.

Nowadays, this degree of dullness in the consulting room wouldn't be tolerated for an instant, not even with all the warmth and compassion, nor antibiotics and X rays in the world. Standards are higher, goals must be met, and a friendly hand on the shoulder is still no substitute for an acceptable result. At the same time, general practice is rising in stature relative to that of the physicians and surgeons, and a modern day Watson could not assume he could drift into it as a soft option whenever he needed a bit of ready cash to support his latest wife.

Now, if the Watson of today had had the opportunity for modern medical schooling before being unleashed on the population at large, he may have done all right. If he had chosen a career in general practice and undergone the undergraduate

and postgraduate training, his genuine compassion, dedication and interpersonal skills would probably have helped carry him through, and for one I should certainly liked to have met him.

When it comes to the end of things, Doctor Watson was a man you could trust. He was as honest as he was dedicated, and if he didn't spend his whole working years solidly behind a GP's desk it was only because he didn't let his one profession dominate his life. We his readers could not have known Holmes in the way we do, had not his zealotry been viewed through Watson's stability, his cold analysis through Watson's empathy, and his specialisation through Watson's well-rounded comprehensivity. Stability, empathy and comprehensivity – you couldn't want for better qualities in a general practitioner. In his diagnostic and therapeutic limitations he was on a par with all of his late nineteenth century colleagues, but in the medical qualities – and the truly human ones – held by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to be the most fundamental to his craft, John Watson was indeed The Good Doctor.

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*Retired from the world of forensic fingerprints, John Berry tells a tale of British good samaritanism and derring-do...*

# “NUFF SAID!”

*John Berry*

The Icknield Way is the remains of a fifth century Anglo-Saxon track running northwards from London and passing through Hertfordshire, amongst green fields and isolated woodlands, through Bedfordshire.

This July morning in 2003 was warm and sunny. Because of my high blood pressure, requiring maximum medication, my doctor suggested I go for walks every day. So Diane and I decided to travel by coach to the north of Letchworth and follow Icknield Way for a mile or so. I carried a small light rucksack with sandwiches, biscuits and a flask of coffee. We de-coached adjacent to Icknield Way, we crossed a couple of fields and found sparse segments of the trail which we followed northwards.

After half a mile or so, I noted a large hillock, presumably built by the Anglo-Saxons or earlier ancient Brits. Atop it a group of people waved energetically in our direction, shouting loudly.

We waved back, delighted at their greeting, but they persisted in their incoherent shouts, so we climbed a fence and headed towards them. They waved their arms even more frantically, and I cupped my ear, rather like a satellite dish, better to decipher their words. Diane did the same.

“They’re shouting *Help*,” she said.

We looked at each other. What could their problem be? Should we investigate?

“Let’s see what’s wrong,” I said, and we headed towards the hillock. When we reached its base I decided not to vertically climb the large mound. Besides blood pressure problems, I also have a pacemaker, and I decided not to be so stupid as to incorporate physical stress into the scenario. So we wound our way gradually upwards to the summit in a circular motion.

When we reached the top, a strange scene confronted us.

A middle-aged man was staggering around, trousers undone, clutching an empty whiskey bottle, singing an obscene chorus out of tune.

I noted two elderly men and their spouses. One of the women was in an electrically-powered invalid chair. She pointed to the drunkard.

“He isn’t with us!” she screamed.

“What’s your problem?” I inquired.

“We are amateur archaeologists,” a man explained, “and decided to climb the mound. Unfortunately, my wife’s invalid carriage is defunct, and we cannot get to the bottom of the mound because she cannot control her descent.”

The drunkard broke wind aggressively and ostentatiously urinated, fortunately against a breeze.

The other man explained that he had used his mobile phone to request assistance from police and the fire brigade, but they were quite rude and said it wasn’t an emergency.

“Have you any ideas?” the wheelbound woman asked.

“By the way, if I may intrude,” interrupted her husband, “I note your camera. Would you

very kindly take a couple of shots of us so that we can use them for our article in our society's magazine?"

I obliged, and then pondered their predicament.

"Suppose you and your friends hold on to the invalid carriage and permit a controlled descent?"

"No, we obviously thought of that, but my husband has a bad back, and Fred here has diabetes and she has angina," said the wheelbound one.

"My husband has a Pacemaker and has very high blood pressure," announced Diane, firmly suggesting she would not permit me to partake in any physical activity.

With a horrible cry, the inebriated one sank to the ground in a drunken stupor.

"How's this for an idea?" I eventually announced. "I will lie horizontally on the grass about eight feet down the slope. My wife will assist you to gently shunt the invalid carriage towards me. When it reaches me, hold it firmly, and I will lie down again a few feet away, and you can re-shunt, and so on. The invalid carriage will thus be in complete control, because my inert form will stop it rolling down the hillock uncontrolled!"

"There isn't any alternative," they collectively mused. "Er ... in fact, it is quite a good idea!"

So we performed as I had indicated. It worked wonderfully.

We reached the bottom, I stood up and Diane pulled grass off my apparel, and rubbed away the little blobs of mud.

They crossed to a large Estate automobile and thanked us profusely. They even managed a tittle of applause.

"I suggest you dial 999 and get an ambulance for the drunkard," I said. "It *is* an emergency – he might swallow his vomit and choke." A man did so.

They waved goodbye as we continued our northwards trek. After a few moments, Diane suddenly stopped.

"Did you get an address to send the photographs to?"

I snapped my fingers. "Hold on a couple of moments. I will go back and get an address – thanks!"

I retraced my steps, turned a corner, and was staggered by what I saw.

A table had been erected at the rear of the automobile, and three canvas chairs placed around it, in which sat the two men and woman, sipping glasses of wine. On the table was a large cake, sandwiches, meat pies and biscuits.

They looked at me open-mouthed.

So.

Surely they should have at least offered Diane and myself a glass of wine for our valued assistance?

I gave them an askance glance through narrowed eyelids, spun on my heels and strode away.

"Did you get their address?" asked Diane.

"Nuff said," I replied with finality.



*Some things are true for every worldcon: they have a dealers' room, they present the Hugos, and Mike Resnick is there ...*

# TORCON 3 DIARY

*Mike Resnick*

*art by William Rotsler*

*Tuesday, August 26:* I wasn't looking forward to this day. I hate long drives, and we had rented a minivan so that we could drive to Toronto with octogenarians Mary Martin and Margaret Keifer and also with Debbie Oakes, who was recovering from some fractured vertebrae suffered in a car accident.

We'd rented a 7-passenger minivan after ConJose last year, spent a few days driving around the Monterrey/Carmel area with five passengers, and found it quite crowded. In fact we had to ship some luggage home rather than stuff it into the van. So when I paid for the van Monday night, I noticed that it was parked next to a much larger 8-passenger minivan and wondered aloud rather wistfully how much more it would have cost. The girl at the counter just shrugged, said no one was renting the 8-passenger vans anyway, and gave it to me for no extra charge.

I had spent the prior week making audio cassettes filled with things Carol and I loved that I thought would please at least some of the passengers – the original Second City Players, a number of professionally-read science fiction stories (some of them not even by me), old radio shows, and the like ... so of course the van didn't have a cassette player, and at the last minute I had to hunt up a batch of CDs instead.

We left at 9:15 in the morning, caravanning with Bill Cavin and four other passengers in *his* minivan. Carol and I had planned to drive in two-hour shifts, but I felt so comfortable I just kept driving, even after we stopped for lunch near Detroit. I was still driving when we reached the Royal York at about 7:15 that night, the longest uninterrupted driving stint I'd ever done. (Carol and I were used to driving four and five hours at a stretch from the days when we showed collies. Every time we'd stop for coffee or lunch or to use

the facilities, the dogs would wake up and have to be walked, so we learned to go hours and hours without stopping.)

The Royal York was exactly as I remembered it – a large, elegant lobby, friendly staff, wildly expensive main restaurant, and the smallest rooms this side of my guest closet. We unpacked and then, accompanied by ten other people, we walked a couple of blocks to Shopsy's, which was heralded by all the guide books as the best deli in Toronto. Turned out to be the worst meal we ate all week. Ran into Bob Silverberg and Karen Haber there; Bob and I were still trying to coordinate our schedules at that late date so that we could have our annual lunch together ... but we attacked it with less enthusiasm than usual, since we always try to eat at a deli, and dinner at this one hadn't been encouraging.

CFG (the Cincinnati Fantasy Group) always takes out a hospitality suite at Worldcon, and this year was no different, especially since we had 25 members there. But the suites were so tiny and so overpriced for what they offered that instead we took facing executive bedrooms, each of them capable of holding maybe eight guests on sofa and chairs. In all honesty they were totally inadequate, but the suites the hotel offered for twice the money weren't any better.

I was scheduled to give Janis Ian away at her wedding the next afternoon, and since I'd never met her spouse, I popped over to their room to do so, and stayed to visit for maybe half an hour. Then it was down to the lobby to greet old friends who were starting to arrive, and finally off to bed at a relatively early 2:30.

*Wednesday, April 27:* We woke up about 8:30 (maybe six hours earlier than usual for me), went

down to the Epic – the hotel's upscale restaurant – and had breakfast with Pat Snyder and Janis, who were being wed a little later in the day. Then, in the company of some CFGers, we took the subway to the Bata Shoe Museum.

That's right: a museum dedicated to nothing but footwear. And absolutely fascinating. From the earliest caveman foot coverings to the shoes that were made for Chinese women who'd bound their feet, to wooden clogs, to moonwalking boots, the museum was filled with every imaginable kind of shoe. There was a celebrity room where you could see the shoes that Gene Kelly wore when he made "Singing in the Rain", shoes that Astaire and Rogers danced in, Michael Jordan's first pair of Air Jordans, Pierce Brosnan's latest 007 shoes, the memorable boots Elton John wore in *Tommy*, the shoes Maury Wills wore when he stole his 100th base, a pair of Shaquille O'Neal's size 22's, and hundreds more. There was a room that displayed nothing but the bride's wedding shoes down through the ages and from all across the globe. There was a room with Canadian footwear from prior centuries, mostly made from the skins of animals. And the nice part was you could do the whole place in under two hours.

We took the subway back to the Royal York, got into our flowery shirts (the wedding party was told to dress Hawaiian), and walked a mile to City Hall, where we signed as witnesses and joined a little wedding party composed of Janis and Pat, Carol and me, George R.R. Martin and Parris McBride – and the *New York Times*, which got wind of it and sent both a reporter *and* a photographer.

We walked back along a different street, window-shopping all the way, and registered at the convention center. No one tried to stop me from entering the hucksters' room a day early. (Maybe they were desperate for the business; after selling 300 tables at each of the last three Worldcons, Larry Smith was unable to sell even 90 at this one. The art show was even smaller compared to prior renewals.)

Then, at dinnertime, we were joined by the Boston Mafia of Tony and Suford Lewis, Rick Katze, and Paula Leiberman, plus a few CFGers, and we went to the Movenpick Marche, about a block from the Royal York, Fascinating place, with an enormous selection; you visited a little kiosk for

each specialty – steaks, seafood, crepes, pizza, whatever – and had whatever you wanted cooked to order, then brought it back to your table. Same with the desserts.

So yeah, I broke my diet, and no, it wasn't by accident. I'd been on it since the first weekend of May – I started it the day after the Kentucky Derby – and I'd lost 66 pounds by August 26. I knew I couldn't stay on it with the sumptuous meals that (I hoped) the various editors would take me to, so I just made up my mind to go off it for six days. I have to admit that I enjoyed the hell out of those six days; I don't feel even the slightest trace of guilt.

We got back to the hotel at perhaps 8:30, and spent the rest of the night hitting the bid parties to meet our fannish friends, and now and then I'd go down to the bar, grab an iced coffee (I don't drink) and meet my pro friends. (A lot of them don't drink either, but until the pro parties open up each year, most of them hang out in the bar.)

CFG was starting to attract a fannish crowd, but since it was so small and cramped, most of them filed right back out and spent their time at the competing Los Angeles and Kansas City parties, which had enormous suites (and, doubtless, enormous hotel bills.) I wound up spending the last couple of hours of the evening/early morning talking to Joe Siclari, Edie Stern, Jay Kay Klein and Rick Katze in one of the Los Angeles suites. (They had two huge ones and a couple of smaller ones as well, all clustered together.)

*Thursday, August 28:* We got up at 8:30 again, this time to grab coffee and go to the Toronto Zoo, accompanied by the newlyweds, plus Pat and Roger Sims and some more CFGers. Carol and I are zoo buffs, so much so that we even went to zoos in Kenya and Malawi after touring the game parks – and we both agree that the single most impressive zoo exhibit we've seen in our lifetimes is the gorilla pavilion at the Toronto Zoo. It covers quite a few acres, and is (I hope) a harbinger of things to come at all zoos.

There were a number of other indoor pavilions as well, doubtless so they'd have someplace to display the animals during the brutal Canadian winters, and whoever designed them all was underpaid no matter how high his salary was.

I had hoped to spend the entire day at the zoo, and indeed had told the Program Committee

not to schedule me on Thursday. So of course when the preliminary schedule came out (so close to the con that changing it was almost impossible) they had me on two Thursday panels. I told them again that I was going to the zoo and to reschedule me. So they compromised and put me on only one Thursday panel.

I just love the Torcon 3 Program Committee.

We got back at 3:00, at which time I parked the car in the convention lot for \$13 Canadian a day, rather than return it to the Royal York, which was extorting \$30 a day. Then I went inside and shed my (figurative) fannish beanie and donned my (equally figurative) pro hat for the next three and a half days. I took a quick tour of the tiny art show, spent a little more time in the hucksters' room, and finally went to my 5:00 panel, a totally typical Humor in Science Fiction discussion, made bearable by the presence of Esther Friesner and Tanya Huff.

At six I met Carol and my agent Eleanor Wood – we were celebrating 20 years as Man and Agent, having entered into our licit relationship at the 1983 Baltimore Worldcon -- and we went to dinner at Canyon Creek, a surprisingly good basement chop house somewhere along the two-block walk from the Royal York to the con center. And I did something at dinner I have never done at any meal at any convention in my life: I signed a contract right there on the linen tablecloth. (It was for a new *Widowmaker* book, plus reprints of the first three, and Eleanor had been negotiating it for a few weeks, but it was still a unique experience to actually *sign* a contract at a con rather than just negotiating one or promising to sign it when it was ready. Made me feel like a Real Writer. I hope no one minds all the salad dressing on Page 4.)

Then it was back to the hotel. I think they had a Meet The Pros party after opening ceremonies, but no one officially announced it and like most pros I never go to it anyway. This was the night that Josepha Sherman and I discovered the Charlotte suite, where they served the most delicious chocolate fondue you can imagine. Just about all the bid parties – Charlotte, Seattle, Los Angeles, Columbus, Kansas City, and Japan -- were open, so were the con suite and the CFG rooms, and there were a number of private parties as well, which is to say that by Thursday night the convention was going full speed. (The SFWA Suite

didn't open until about 2:00 AM, but it was just around the corner from my 7th floor room, and because of the convenience I found myself visiting it a little more often than usual.)

I kept running into Bob Silverberg, and we got so much visiting done that we decided to put off lunch for a year and try again at Boston, when our schedules might mesh a little better. (I'd offered to drag myself out of bed on yet another morning, but he considered the prospect of facing me at 8:00 AM before I'd injected any coffee into a vein and promptly – and wisely – decided against it.)

*Friday, August 29:* At noon I had a panel on Travel As A Research Method. It consisted of Jo Sherman, Elizabeth Moon, Samantha Ling, and a moderator, a young girl who defined herself as a writer though she has yet to sell a word, and who completely dominated the discussion despite her lack of travel *or* writing experience.

When the panel was over I wandered over to the huckster room, met Stephen Pagel of Meisha Merlin Press, and went to lunch with him and his art director. They're in the process of transforming themselves from being a small press to the big leagues – they were the ones who bought the new *Widowmaker* book – and they couldn't have given me a nicer dessert than when they told me that Donato Giancola, who had painted the original three *Widowmaker* covers for Bantam and whose work I love, had agreed not only to paint the cover to the new *Widowmaker* book but to do brand-new paintings for the three *Widowmaker* reprints as well. (I named a star after him in the third book. I wonder if that had anything to do with his decision?)

After lunch I ran into Nick DiChario and his parents, spent a little time visiting with them, and then Nick joined me as I went off to do my 4:00 PM reading. I'd told a number of people that I would be reading "Travels With My Cats", which I think is one of the two or three best stories out of the couple of hundred I've written, and I was really



disappointed to see the small turnout I got – maybe six or seven people, tops. When I left the room at 5:00, I bumped into B.J. Galler-Smith and Ann Marston, who had said earlier in the day that they were going to come to the reading, and asked them why they had skipped it. They insisted that *they* hadn't skipped it, *I* had, that they sat in a room with maybe 40 or 50 people waiting for me to show up and read and I never did.

OK. Originally the Program Committee scheduled me for a 30- minute reading. I told them that was unacceptable, that whichever of my upcoming stories I read, I needed more than 30 minutes. So on Sunday, a day and a half before I left, they e-mailed me that I was to read from 4:00 to 5:00 in room 206D. I never thought about it again. But on Friday morning, the committee, as it did every day, passed out a correction sheet with all

THIS FANZINE  
IS THE SEA  
WORLD OF  
FANDOM!



the new venues for the program, and on that sheet I was to read in some other room. Basically, if you got your information from the convention's web page, you went to the room where I read. If you got it from the daily correction sheet – the committee handed out the pocket program on Thursday and immediately told

everyone to ignore it – then you went to the room where I didn't read.

I just love the Torcon 3 Program Committee.

At 5:00 I went over to the Stars autographing. Stars is the major anthology Janis Ian and I co-edited for DAW Books, and we had a special signing with all the authors who were in attendance. It was the first time all weekend I'd managed to see Joe Haldeman or Rob Sawyer, but we didn't have any time to visit because there was a

seemingly endless line of people wanting those books signed. (It stopped only when every last huckster ran out of copies.) And, since it involved Janis Ian, two Toronto papers and a Toronto TV station sent people to cover it, and even *Publisher's Weekly* sent someone to write it up. I usually give out a couple of interviews at Worldcon; at this one I gave out 6 to the press and 2 to television, and only one didn't lead off with either "How did you meet \*\*\*Janis Ian\*\*\*?" or "What's \*\*\*Janis Ian\*\*\* really like?"

The session broke up at about 6:30. I went back to the Royal York, met Carol, and we went down to the DAW suite, where we joined Betsy Wollheim, Sheila Gilbert, and everyone who had worked on Stars, including my good friend Marty Greenberg (who was the guy who actually sold the project to DAW Books.) When we were all assembled we walked through the underground mall a couple of blocks (I read somewhere that it's seven miles long), emerged in some skyscraper or other, took the elevator to the top floor (the 54th, as I recall), and entered Canoe, which, if it isn't the finest restaurant in Toronto, is surely in the top three. Best meal we had all weekend, and while Carol spent most of her time visiting with Betsy, Marty and I put our balding heads together and worked out a number of projects – most of them, surprisingly, having nothing to do with anthologies – that we plan to do together. (He had inadvertently left his medication back in Green Bay, not surprisingly didn't feel all that well as the weekend progressed, and left the con a day early. I heard from him the day after we got home, and he's fine now.)

We got back to the Royal York a couple of minutes before 11:00, just time enough for me to get to our room and pick up an envelope that contained three of my upcoming stories. You see, when I thought I was only getting half an hour to read, I made an arrangement to do a private reading in B.J.'s and Ann's suite at 11:00 PM Friday. I even contacted the Babes For Bwana Harem Division (which is to say, Julie Mandala and Linda Donahue, the belly dancers who regularly perform at the Babes For Bwana parties and at my autograph sessions) and got them to agree to serve as halftime entertainment between my stories. And just because the Program Committee relented and gave me an hour (well, actually, they gave me two hours, both



of them at 4:00 on Friday), I saw no reason to cancel the reading or the dancing.

And for a private reading, I'd have to say it was pretty public. I think at one time we jammed about 35 people into that suite, and the belly dancers certainly kept them there between stories. We finished at about 1:00 AM, and I stopped by Pat and Roger Sims' room, where Leah Zeldes was throwing a party to celebrate her 30th year in fandom.

Then I went up to the Tor party. It still had quite a crowd, but both my publisher, Tom Doherty, and my long-time Tor editor, Beth Meacham, had already left. Still, I got to see a lot of friends I hadn't connected with yet, and pick up a couple of assignments to write stories for upcoming anthologies, and I was pleased to see that my jacket to *The Return of Santiago* and my daughter's jacket to *The White Dragon* were both prominently displayed on one of the walls.

The rest of the night was just a matter of making the rounds of the 6 bid parties, the Tor party, the SFWA Suite, and CFG. I found Walter Jon Williams, who's the head of SFWA's Anthology Committee, and volunteered to work on it. (I think my exact words were: "Can I join your gang?") He said I could if President Catherine Asaro okayed it, and since we're old friends and collaborators, I knew she would...but I had a chance to ask her five minutes later, because as I was walking from one party to another at about three in the morning, I passed by her room, and was confronted by our gorgeous president in her nightgown. Some noisy group had awakened her and she was standing rather groggily in the doorway, trying to figure out what had happened – so I took the opportunity to volunteer, and she took the opportunity to mutter an affirmative before going back to bed. I seemed to continually run into members of the Resnick Listserv – B.J., Ann, Toby Buckell, John Teehan, Guy and Rosy Lillian, a number of others – and finally toddled off to bed at about 5 in the morning.

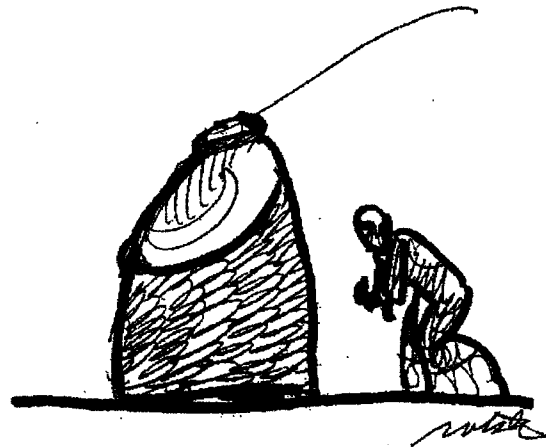
*Saturday, August 30:* I got to sleep late – well, late for a Worldcon, anyway – for the second day in a row. Skipped the SFWA meeting as usual, woke up at 11:15, and made it to Larry Smith's table for my noon signing, where the belly dancers were waiting for me. It was a repeat of the last couple of years. For 20 minutes I thought I'd made a mistake; they

drew hundreds of people, but everyone took photos and no one bought books. Then they began buying, and again I think Larry did about \$450 to \$500 worth of Resnick sales in my allotted hour.

We treated the newlyweds -- Pat and Janis – to lunch, and then I joined a very small and informal meeting of the anthology committee in the Royal York's lobby. They've got some nice projects coming up, not the least of which is an anthology of translations of foreign sf stories that Jim Morrow is overseeing.

At 4:00 I went to my kaffeeklatsch, half-expecting to find that the venue had been changed, but a bunch of people were there and we had a pleasant hour. I passed out signed cover flats to a number of upcoming books, signed trading cards from *Chicon VI* – I still have maybe 200 of them left – and answered questions about current and forthcoming projects.

Then I met Carol and Beth Meacham for dinner at Epic, the hotel's very fine and even more



expensive restaurant. Beth's another one I talked into the Medifast diet; she's lost 50 pounds in 3 months and changed her hair style, and I literally walked right by her without recognizing her. Her husband is down over 70 pounds in the same time period. This is some diet, let me tell you. Then it was off to the Hugo ceremonies. Spider Robinson did a much better Toastmaster job here than he had done in Orlando back in 1992, and the movie excerpts were thankfully only about 30 seconds each, rather than the interminable ones they tend to

show at these things. Rob Sawyer had a night to remember: his *Illegal Alien* won the *Seiun* (the Japanese Hugo) for Best Translated Novel, and then, about an hour later, his *Hominids* won the Hugo for Best Novel. I'll be writing the ceremony up in detail for *Chronicle*, and the results are available all over the internet, so there's no sense going into them here. There were no major surprises: Gardner Dozois won the Gardner Dozois Award (Best Editor), *Locus* won the Locus Award (Best Semiprozine), Bob Eggleton won the Bob Eggleton Award (Best Artist), and Dave Langford won the Dave Langford Award (Best Fan Writer).

Then it was off to the parties. Most of the bid parties were closed, except for Columbus and Glasgow, since the votes had already been counted (and the 2006 Worldcon was won by Los Angeles, where the Anaheim Hilton remains the best party hotel on the Worldcon circuit – as opposed to the best overall hotel, which is Chicago's Hyatt). Ace gave a huge blast right after the Hugos, Boston hosted the annual Hugo Losers Party, Glasgow held a party, Calgary (which is hosting the 2005 Westercon) had a very nice party, and the ASFA (the American Science Fiction Artists guild) had a pleasant and reasonably uncrowded suite. I did a little business here and there, and went to bed at about 5:30 AM.

*Sunday, August 31:* I had asked the Program Committee not to schedule me before noon. Ever. So of course they gave me a 10:00 AM panel on Sunday, something titled "A United Africa", which is somewhat less likely to occur than, say, riding a flying pig from Cincinnati to Minsk. There were a couple of Africans on the panel, along with Steve Stirling, and everyone agreed that it was an asinine proposition. For this I had to walk over to the convention center on four hours' sleep.

I just love the Torcon 3 Program Committee.

When the panel was done, I ran into CFGer Jeff Calhoun and we wandered over to one of the coffee stands, where I got my morning dose of caffeine.

Then I went to my official autograph session (i.e., no belly dancers, plus it was late in the con, why reasons why I had less books to sign than at Larry's table). Carol and I had hoped to have lunch with Jo Sherman, but I was on display at 10,

noon, 3 and 4, and she was on panels at 11, 1 and 2. I hung around the hucksters room (why do I spend so much time in the hucksters room when I buy so few books these days? Easy. It's where you find readers as opposed to watchers), signed from 2:00 to 3:00 at the SFWA table, and at 3:00 I showed up for a panel entitled "Dying is Easy; Comedy is Hard", with Connie Willis, Terry Pratchett, and Esther Friesner. I think there have been maybe 70 funny books published in the science fiction field in the past 20 years, and the four of us are probably responsible for half of them. We drew a huge audience – my guesstimate was 500 to 600 people, the most I've ever seen for a panel – and had a great time being funny rather than instructive.

Then, the moment the panel was over, I had to show up for another one, the Kelly Freas Retrospective Slide Show, with Joe Haldeman and Howard Waldrop. Kelly was supposed to have been there, but he broke a hip the week before Worldcon, it required surgery, and he had to stay home – a hell of a way to spend your Worldcon Guest of Honorship – and Alex Eisenstein took his place.

So there we were, all ready to do the slide show. Only one problem: no slides.

Since all of us are Kelly's friends and have known him for decades, we decided to kill some time by telling mostly funny stories about him while a committee member went looking for the slides. He returned after we'd ad-libbed for about 40 minutes to announce that he couldn't find any slides and it wasn't the committee's fault, that we panelists were supposed to supply the slides. It was the first any of us had heard of it, and indeed I doubt that any of us except perhaps Alex possessed even a single slide of Kelly's artwork. So much for the Kelly Freas Retrospective Slide Show.

I just love the Torcon 3 Program Committee.

We met Steve Saffel, my editor at del Rey, in the Royal York and then took a cab to Toronto's Greek Town, where we had dinner at Ouzeri, which had been touted to us by Rob Sawyer and other residents as the best Greek restaurant in town. I can't imagine there were any better ones; Ouzeri is just a cut below Chicago's Greek Islands, which is the best there is.

During the meal Steve mentioned that Eidos, which owns the Lara Croft character, had

approved my manuscript – I'd done the first novel for the game, as opposed to the movie, franchise during the summer; it's set in Africa and Paris and is known unofficially around the del Rey office as "The Slightly Fictionalized Resnick Travel Diaries" – and that the book would be coming out in December. Evidently the numbers – which is to say, the pre-publication orders -- look very good, always music to an author's ears. Steve also told me that his grandfather was Armand Denis, the African traveler/adventurer/zoo-animal- collector. I have some of Denis' books, and more to the point, I have a DVD of his rarest film, **Wheels Across Africa**, which was made in 1936. I'm having it copied for Steve, who's never seen it.

The Science Fiction Book Club held its 50th anniversary party on Sunday night, and since I've sold them so many books I felt obligated to attend -- and wound up enjoying it more than any other party all weekend. Somewhere around 1:00, as I was making the rounds and dropped in for the third or fourth time, I found myself with SFBC's Andy Wheeler, Jo Sherman, Jim Minz (my daughter's new editor at Tor), and former SFWA President Paul Levinson. Paul decided to tell a joke; none of us would let him get two lines out before criticizing it. He was still trying to finish it at 2:30, when I left to check on the other parties once more.

One of those other parties was in the SFWA suite, where *Asimov's* and *Analog* threw a party for Stan Schmidt, who was celebrating his 25th year as *Analog's* editor. Very crowded party, very good cake.

Baen Books also threw a party, hosted by Toni Weiskopf and, in Jim Baen's absence, by Bill Fawcett, with whom I've done a number of projects in the past. We wanted to talk, but it was too crowded the first few times I dropped in. Finally, at about 2:45 in the morning, we were able to put our heads together in a corner without being overheard and actually got some business done.

I kept making the circuit of the pro parties, plus Los Angeles, Columbus, and CFG until it was almost 6:00. Then I went to bed and read for a bit, and finally fell asleep when the sun started shining into the room.

*Monday, September 1.* Carol had remarked a couple of times during the year that she hasn't enjoyed recent Worldcons as much as the Good Old Days

when I was just a fan and didn't have to do any business, that for the past ten or twelve Worldcons it seemed the only time she saw me once the con started was at dinner, so I made up my mind that at this Worldcon we'd spend more time together. As I mentioned earlier, we went to the Shoe Museum (and the wedding) on Wednesday and the zoo on Thursday. And since the Program Committee had evidently figured I would be ready to kill them all by Sunday night, they left me totally unscheduled on Monday. So we had lunch together, just the two of us, and then, joined by Beth Meacham and a couple of CFGers, we took the Hippo Tour. This consisted of getting into an amphibious bus, spending an hour or so riding past all the most interesting sights and buildings in Toronto while a guy with a microphone at the front of the bus gave us some history and anecdotes about what we were seeing, and then plunging into the lake, where the bus became a boat and chugged around the shoreline. Fascinating trip; I wish we'd taken it earlier in the con.

Carol and I are Honorary DiCharios. Nick and I have collaborated on so many stories that we actually produced a book of them a couple of years ago (**Magic Feathers: The Mike and Nick Show**, if anyone cares), and Carol and I couldn't be more fond of Nick's parents if they were our own. As soon as we learned that they were coming to Torcon, we set Monday night aside to have dinner with them, and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. (Nick's dad is also going on The Diet. I seem to be a walking advertisement for Medifast, so I had Ralph Roberts, who not only publishes Alexander Books and Farthest Star, but is also a Medifast representative, send me about 40 business cards as a diet rep, not a publisher. Anyone who asked about my weight loss and expressed any interest in going on the diet themselves got a card; I came home with only 6 left.)

There wasn't much in the way of parties. The con suite was too crowded to turn around in, so a few of us went up to B.J.'s and Ann's suite (where I had done the reading on Friday night) and spent some time there. Then, as with just about every Worldcon, I wound up in what passed for the CFG suite, stayed until 5 in the morning, and went to bed just before the alarm clock went off.

*Tuesday, September 2:* I dragged myself out of bed

about 7:30, helped Carol finish packing, grabbed some coffee, retrieved the van, drove back to the Royal York, picked up our passengers, and drove home. Took about 10 hours, including pit stops and lunch.

Came home to learn that our 17-year-old cat hadn't died while boarding at the vet's (we half-expected her to). There were over 700 e-mails waiting for me, a pile of mail about 25 inches high, and sitting on my desk as I write this is the little notebook I always take to Worldcons. In the front it has the room numbers of all my friends and professional contacts. Shortly after that it has a list of all the party and bidding suites, then a list of private parties in a code no one else can read (just in case I misplace the book and someone picks it up), then a list of all my panel and autograph assignments as well as a list of all my luncheon and dinner engagements, followed by a list of the dozen or so restaurants, with phone numbers and addresses, that we've culled from various guide

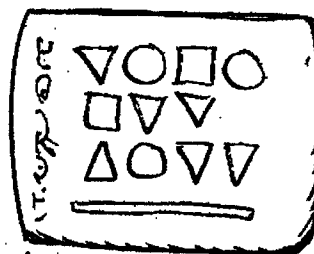
books.

The very last thing in it is a list of all the things I've promised to send editors, writers and fans. As I look at it right this moment, I still have 27 things to send, so this seems a proper time to close.

Was it a good Worldcon? Not very.

Did I enjoy it anyway? I always do.

Am I looking forward to the next one? Like a kid looks forward to Christmas.



Item Not Won - Similar Items Found



Dear mojave111,

Unfortunately, your bid did not win the following item from art\_par:

**The Gospel According To Philip K Dick - Item #3382718759**

Final price:	Your maximum bid:	End date:
GBP 6.50	GBP 4.00	Nov-19-03 13:50 PST

Here are some other items on eBay you might be interested in:

Similar items found on eBay

Item Name	Price	Bids	End Date
Dick Tracy - The Movie Storybook	£2.00	0	Nov-21-03 13:43 PST
Gospel according to St Matthew PASOLINI R2	£12.99 £16.99	0 <i>=Buy It Now</i>	Nov-24-03 11:01 PST
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MATTHEW...PASOLINI	£4.75	0	Nov-22-03 08:20 PST
Gospel According to St Matthew DVD PASOLINI	US \$29.99	<i>=Buy It Now</i>	Nov-21-03 12:45 PST
DICK POWELL Philip Marlowe FAREWELL MY LOVELY	£1.99	0	Nov-26-03 10:59 PST
DANIEL O'DONNELL...THE GOSPEL SHOW...VHS PAL	£2.99	0	Nov-25-03 07:49 PST
DANIEL O'DONNELL -THE GOSPEL SHOW-LIVE	£4.99	1	Nov-26-03 01:59 PST

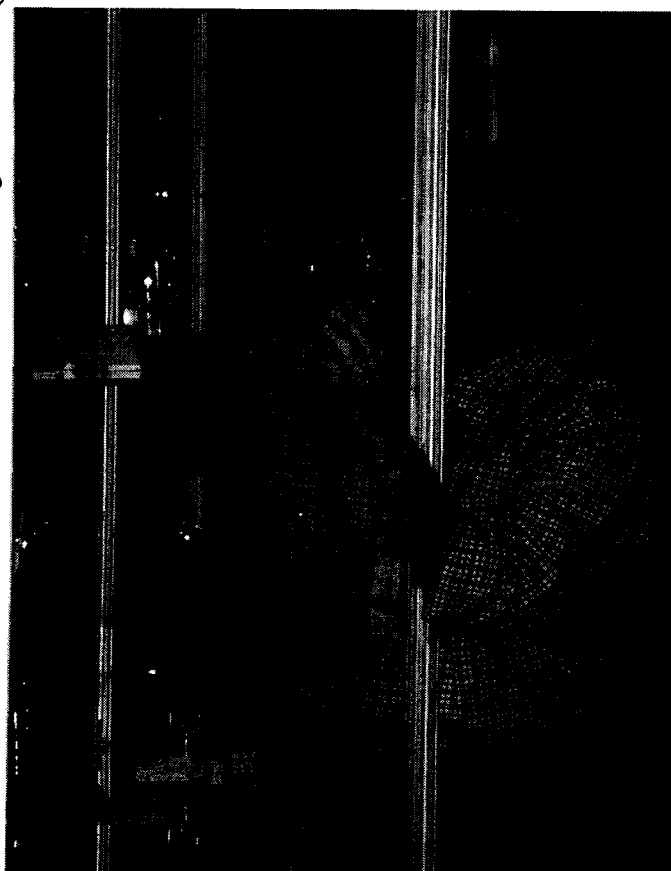
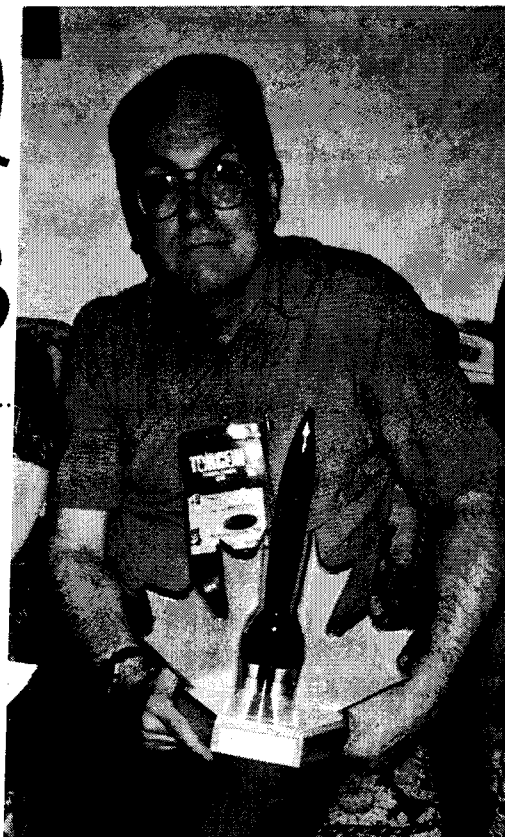
# TORCON (200)3

in words and pictures ...

It was by no means the best of worldcons, nor the worst ... but since Confederation, and the bid for New Orleans which consumed me there, Torcon 3 was by far the *busiest* World Science Fiction Convention I have ever attended. As DUFF delegates Rose-Marie had the pleasure of presenting a Hugo, the fun of putting on a party, and the responsibility of conducting an auction to rebuild the Down Under Fan Fund. And as a Hugo nominee, I had the pleasure – and it is that – of sweating out the preliminaries, applauding friends' victory, and joining the swarm of winners and also-rans at the best party of the con.

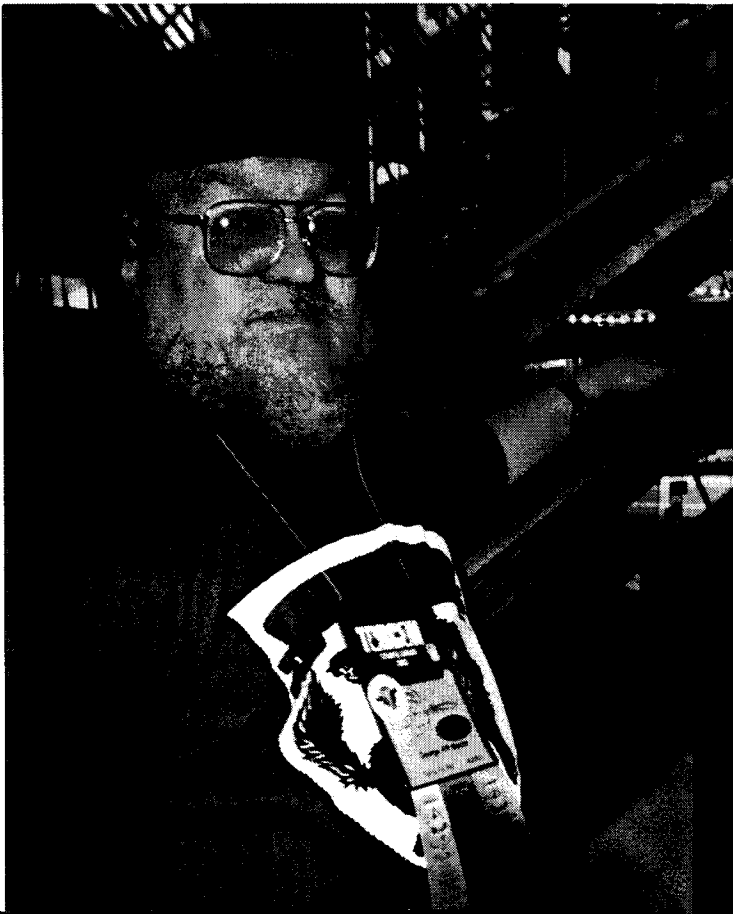
Speaking of Hugos, that's Rich Lynch above right with Torcon's distinctive Hugo base design. A Maple Leaf, executed in beautiful blond wood ... unless those are supposed to be *moose antlers*. Rich seems unfazed by the whole question. Who cared? I just *wanted* the damn thing! (Though not *quite* this much -----> I *am* just clowning here!)

We will reach the Hugo ceremonies and their results in due course. Until then, some scenes and some impressions from Torcon 3, the 2003 World Science Fiction Convention. Follow the yellow brick road ...

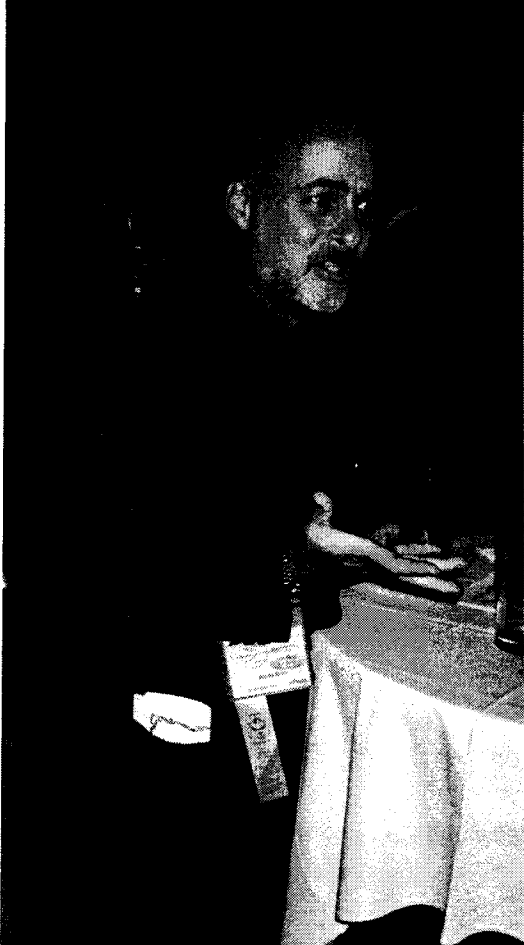


**THE DREAMERS OUR  
STUFF IS MADE BY** included

Pro GoH **George R.R. Martin**, whose Guest of Honor address spoke movingly of his childhood, and local boy **Robert Sawyer**, below, whose **Hominids** won "the Big One" at the Torcon Hugos, and who also copped a *Seiun* award.. You could tell from Sawyer's exuberance all week long that he *knew* this was *his* convention.



**David Brin** was on hand at the Nominees' Reception, and supreme Chall pal **Mike Resnick** not only gave a hilarious reading but was generous with advice, help, and friendship throughout. Read his account of the convention elsewhere.



## US FOKES

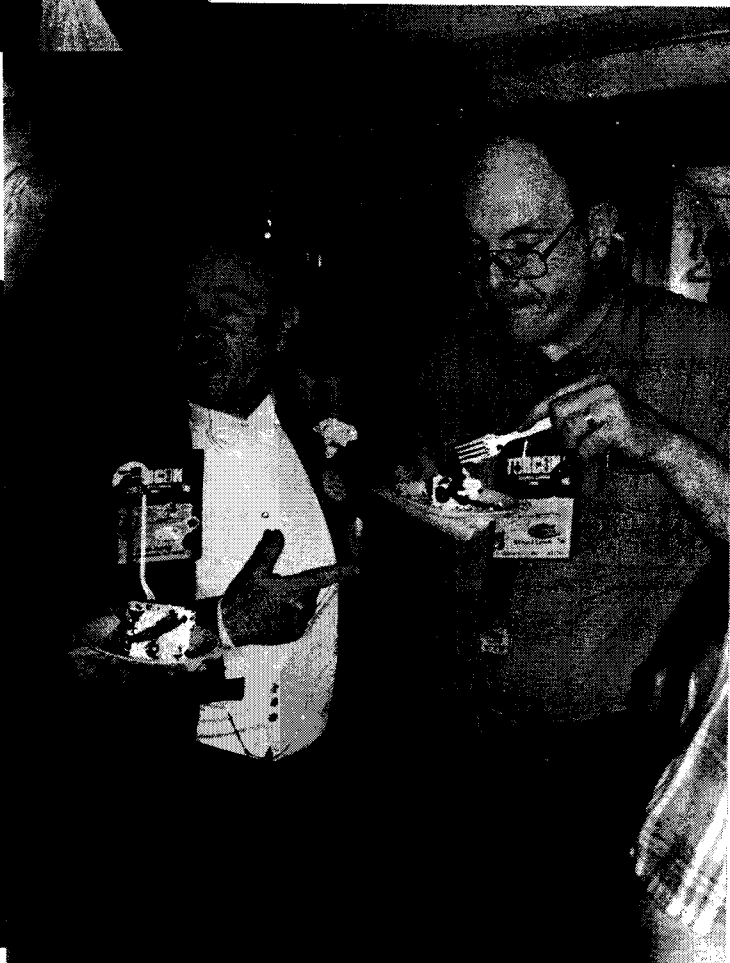
Pros are all well and good, but it's the *fans* who make a worldcon ... and here are a few. Right, fan publisher **Anne Murray** seems astonished by the madness about her. Below, **Fred Lerner** and **Tony Lewis** prop up GHLIII.



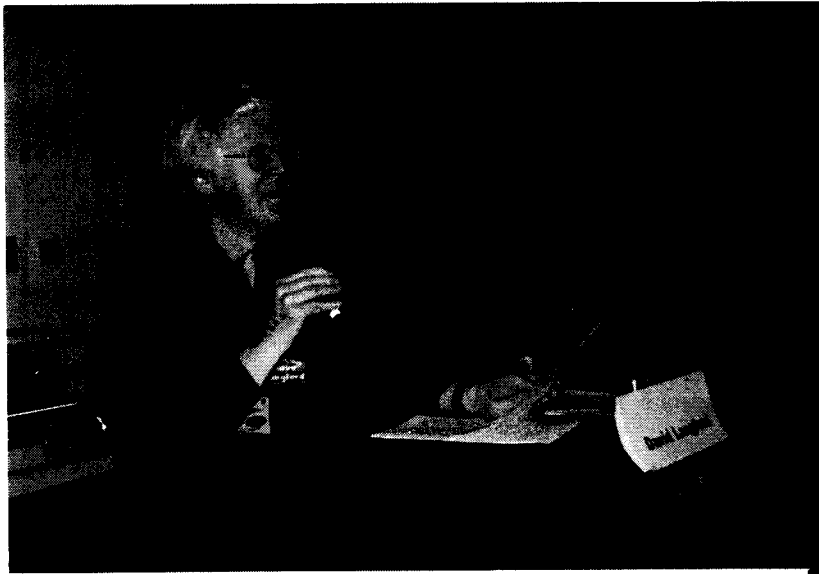
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Right, **John Hertz** answers the eternal question, "*Where is Rich Lynch and what is he eating?*" John's surprise Big Heart Award was a high moment of the con. Below, **Nicki Lynch** and **Art Widner** wander the halls.



## NIGHT OF THE FANGLORD

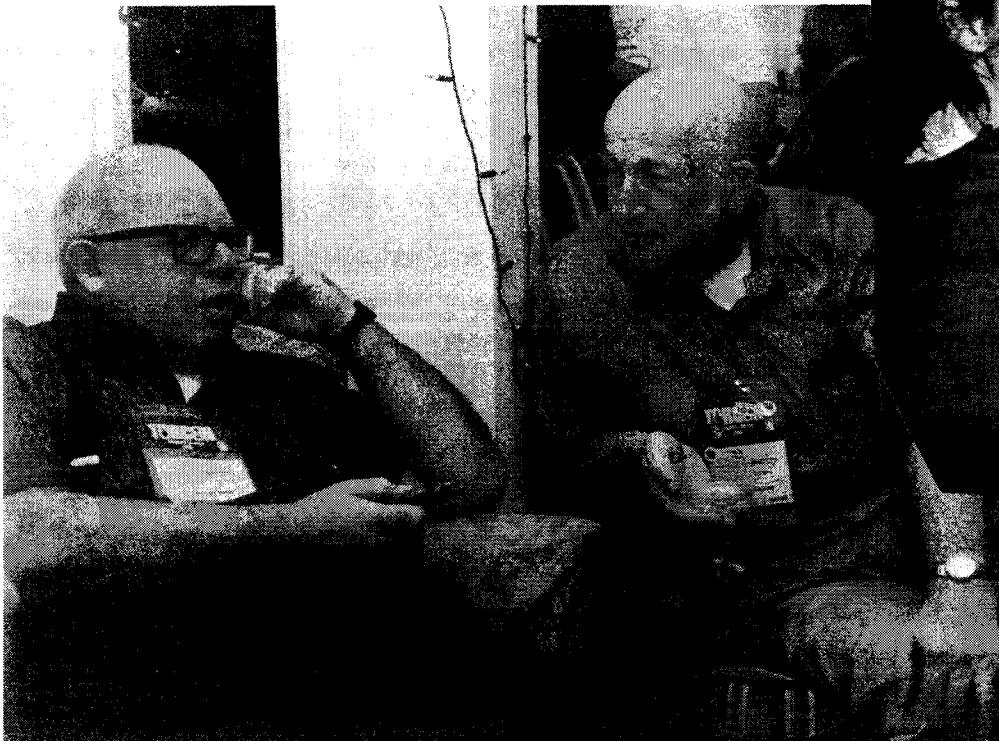


There were many fine moments to Torcon 3, and one of the best came when we got to meet **Dave Langford**, at last. His live “Thog’s Master Class” presentation, shown here, was so packed it bulged the walls – but where were the lines from **Werewolf vs. the Vampire Woman** by Arthur N. Scarm? “She dug her teeth into Sandy’s neck who screamed.” Wow! Dave won the Best Fan Writer Hugo again – his 15<sup>th</sup> in a row. I was immensely gratified when he

encouraged fandom to honor someone else in the future – he’s *made* his point, and I can see why.

Also making an appearance was **Andrew Murdoch**, whose wife won the unofficial award as Torcon’s Cutest Hobbit, and here, two stalwart pals, **Jay Kay Klein** (great meals you helped find us!) and **Alexis Gilliland**. Alexis came within a nomination or two of making yet another Hugo ballot!

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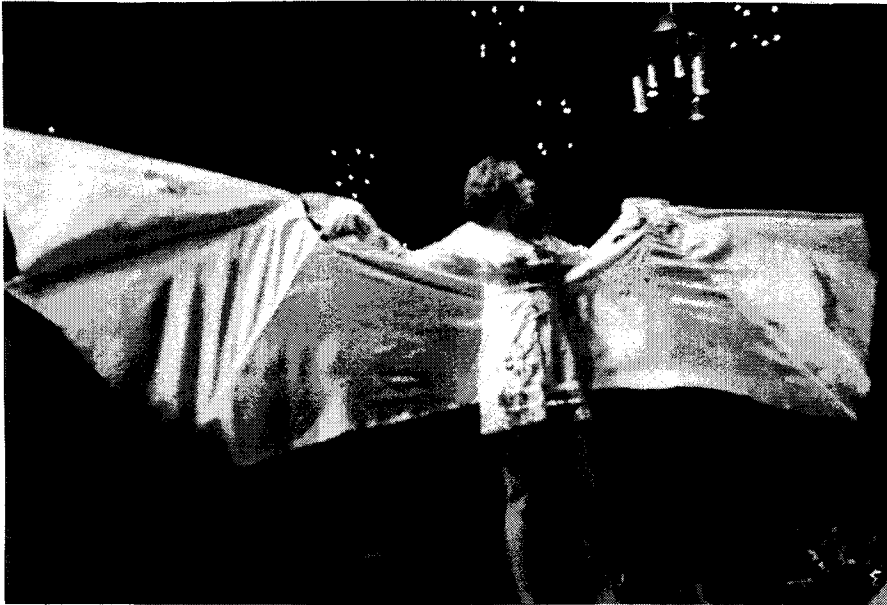


## MORE FACES OF TORCON

**Karen Schaeffer** seems to close her eyes to Torcon's problems.  
Badge-bedecked **Geri Sullivan** will be working with us on the Noreascon 4 program book!



**Rusty Hevelin** and I went to the same Junior High School – a decade or two apart!



The Torcon Masquerade was small but I really enjoyed the retrospective of prize-winning Canadian costumes. Rosy and I sat with everyone's great Australian friend, **Robin Johnson**, and on the way back to the Royal York, reminisced about **Karen and Astrid Anderson's** magnificent and revolutionary "Bat and the Bitten", from St. Louiscon, 1969 ...

Not *one minute later*, a sweet voice across the street called, "Guy!" **Astrid Anderson Bear** – blowing our minds in Torcon's most incredible coinkydink. It was grand to see Astrid again, and remind her of how her famous father went out of his way to drive a nervy 18-year-old neo to his first SF club meeting – because that was just the kind of guy he was.



What more appropriate companion for *la belle* Rose-Marie and myself (left, in goofy Aussie *chapeau*) than **Duffman**, making a surprise appearance at our DUFF shindig?

The party, if I do say so, was a great success – Rosy handed out Mardi Gras beads and I doled out hurricanes. So what does New Orleans' most famous drink have to do with Australia? Don't ask stupid questions! Just promise to be there at Noreascon when we toast the new Australian DUFF delegate!



# HUGO TIME

(again)

And once again **Challenger** came away empty-handed. But it was far from an empty evening. **Mib the Panda** got to lay claim to **Neil Gaiman's** award for "Coraline". Neil doesn't seem to know what to think of that. Gaiman blew my mind. Not only did he know my name from the DC Comics letter columns, he recalled a dreadful pun wielded by Julie Schwartz in replying to a critical missive: "You sure know how to *Guy a hurt!*"

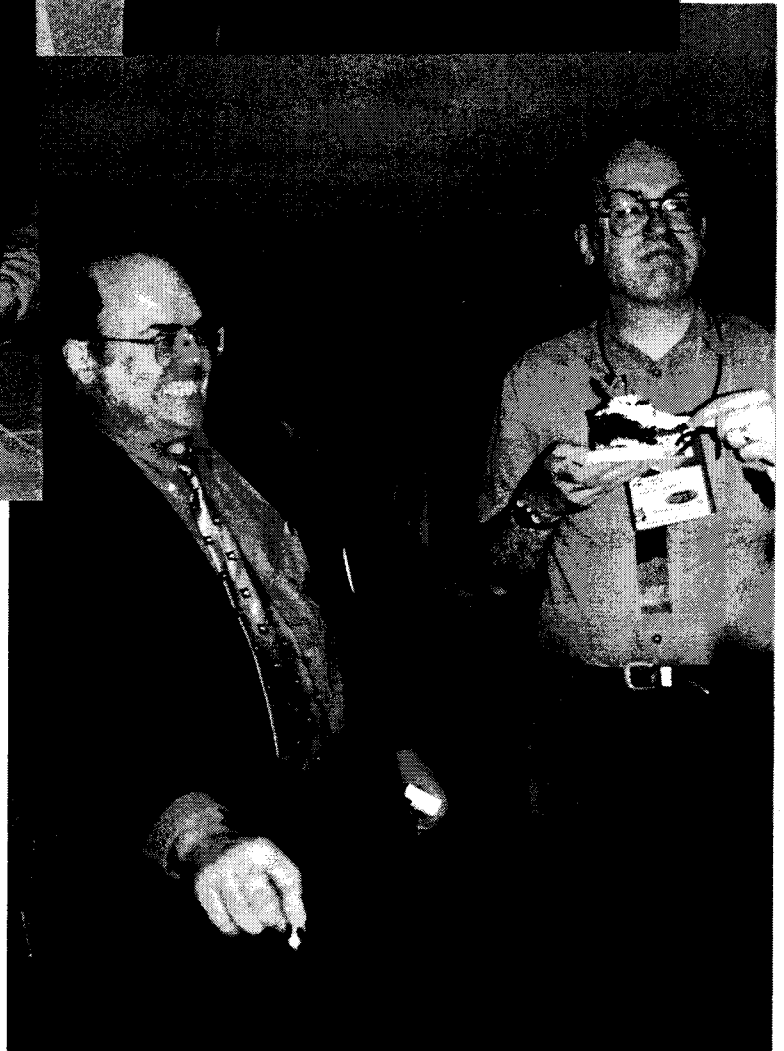


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**Frank Wu**, great fella, great artist, and future **Challenger** cover contributor, eyes the latest Hugo to escape him. Someday, Frank!

And maybe "Someday, Guy," too ... Unwilling to wait, that's **Rich Lynch's** latest Hugo rocket I'm trying to snatch.

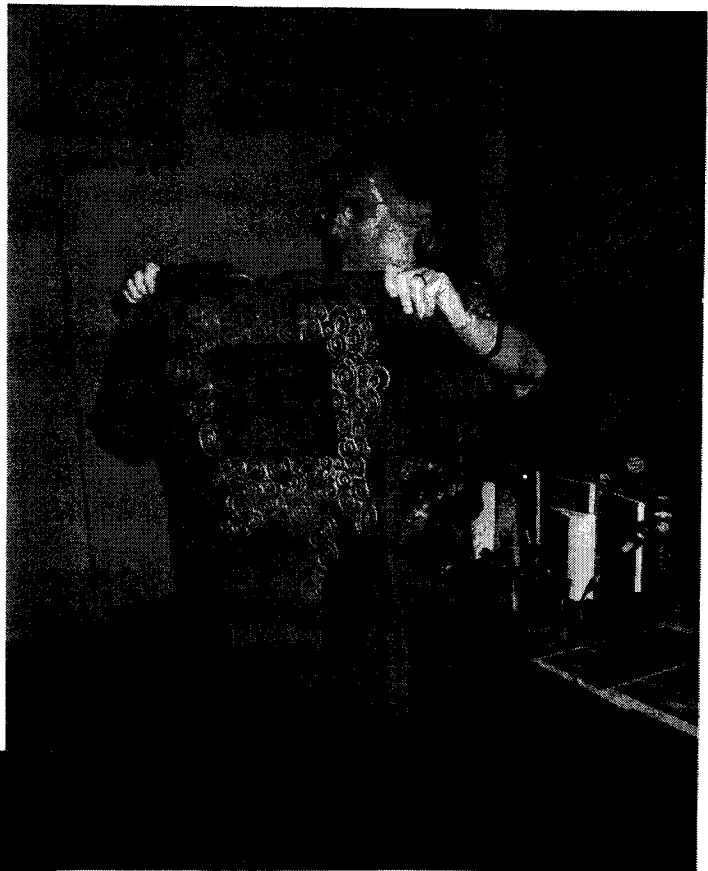


## The Fan Fund Auction

finally found a room and a time – thanks, and little thanks, to the Torcon Programming people. After still more hassle locating the material we'd shipped to Toronto, we assembled our TAFF and CUFF compatriots and got started. **Alan Rosenthal**, here depicted, ably worked the small crowd for TAFF, and **Colin Hinz**, despite a broken wrist, did the same for the Canadian Unity Fan Fund. (No, the Hugo was not for sale.)

We sold two “tuckerizations” – though at bargain basement prices – and loads of other goodies. The take for DUFF amounted to a grand plus change. We have a lot more to peddle at Noreascon,

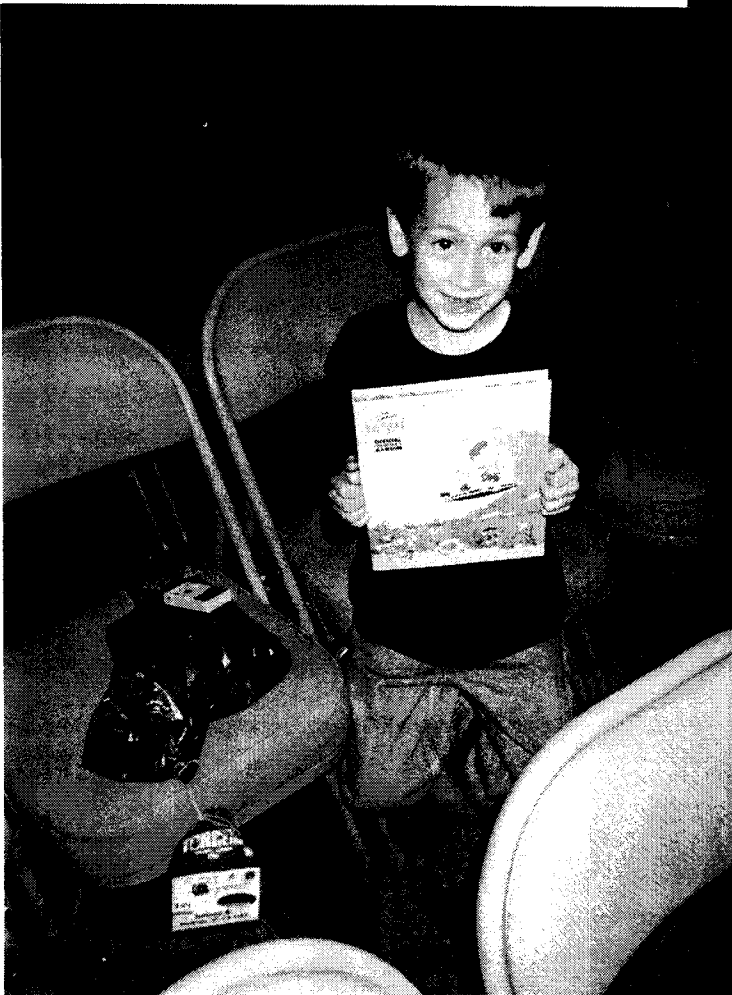
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and hope to bring in a lot more. Be there!

But on another level, we couldn't succeed better than we did with *this* buyer. His generous mother bought this boy two Aussie road signs, donated by Naomi Fisher, and this book of *Simpsons* pogs, donated by *Thyme* editor Alan Stewart. His joy filled the room. It was the high moment of Torcon 3 for me.

Torcon was small, badly organized, and it took two nerve-trashing hours to negotiate the last two kilometers and return to the United States. But it was good for DUFF, brought *la belle* Rose-Marie and me to the Hugo podium, and featured good moments with good buddies. That will be hard to top.



# The Challenger Tribute: P.L. Caruthers- Montgomery



In January, 1972, my great friends Meade and Penny Frierson showed me a photograph they had received in the mail. It depicted a handsome young fellow in bell bottoms and '70s sideburns, sitting with a striking redhead in a shag haircut and a short skirt. The redhead was toasting the camera, an expression on her face that said *volumes*. On the back of the photo was an inscription in a loopy feminine hand: "P.L. Caruthers and friend". But which, we wondered, was P.L. Caruthers?

We found out. "P.L." stood for Pamela Lynn, and Southern fandom was never the same. That's how you tell the great ones, you know. After they've come, and after they've gone, things are never the same.

About P.L., I could never tell enough. I met her at the Memphis bus station in March of '72. In August, she bedazzled the DeepSouthCon in a **Clockwork Orange**-ish derby. She kept bedazzling us for the next 30 years. She was a long-time member of SFPA. She was president of the Southern Fandom Confederation, and did a great job, too. With her husband, legendary Southern fan Larry Montgomery, she won the Rebel Award. I made the presentation, and felt entitled. After all, I was the one who invited Larry to the DSC where he ended a long gaffiation ... and met P.L.

I loved P.L. very much. It was out of sheer affection that I teased her in SFPA with "The Ballad of Eskimo P.L.", and in "I, Cloddius" there, named her *P.Livia* to my *Auguystus*. She was a personality among personalities, a constant comrade in our fannish family, the Redhead of all Redheads – and so, when Larry reached me during Torcon, and told me that P.L. had passed away, sickeningly young at 51, it felt like someone had torn out a piece of my heart.

Lord Jesus, You take care of our lady.



*When they caught Ted Kaczynski, I realized that he and I had been at Berkeley at the same time. I never met him,, but I **must** have set eyes on him. Which makes the following all the more chilling ...*

## WHY TV DETECTIVES COULDN'T CATCH THE UNABOMBER

*Joseph T Major*

As you know, in the eighties and nineties, a mysterious lone terrorist targeted universities and aircraft with individually delivered bombs of a painstaking cleverness of construction. Finally, when his turgid academic manifesto was printed in the public press, his brother identified him as Dr. Theodore John Kaczynski, Ph.D. (Harvard '62). Police responded to this by pulling him out of a small, cluttered hut in the Montana hills (which residence earned him the contemptuous title of "Hut Man" from one of his victims, David Gelertner). His wild, uncouth appearance was a perfect camouflage among the many dehoused vagrants cluttering American streets. But this investigation and arrest was a coordinated effort requiring the work of many different and many different kinds of law enforcement personnel. How would the famed lone detectives of TV-land do in this case?

**JESSICA FLETCHER** [*Murder, She Wrote*] could clear easily enough the old friend, come to Cabot Cove, Maine (called "Murder Capital of the World" in secret FBI reports) on a trip, who is arrested, accused of the crime, but since the Hut in Montana is nowhere near Cabot Cove, she would be at a loss at fingering the actual Unabomber.

**NERO WOLFE** [*Nero Wolfe*] would have the problem that Dr. Kaczynski would not have enough money to be one of the six suspects with equal motives, equal access to the murder weapons, and equally plausible alibis, who would band together to hire him to clear them of the charges. Besides, traveling to Montana would entail leaving West Thirty-Fifth Street. Pfu!

**MULDER & SCULLY** [*The X-Files*] would be searching for alien abductors, ghosts, psychic remnants, and the like, and never even suspect the fellow looking like a homeless man who just walked by carrying the box from Frank B. I. Wood.

**PERRY MASON** [*Perry Mason*] would have the problem that Ted would never be called as a witness in the trial of his client, so he couldn't get him to break down on the stand and confess to the bombings.

**THOMAS MAGNUM** [*Magnum, P.I.*] couldn't leave Hawaii to look into the case. Robin Masters, his mysterious never-seen mystery writer landlord, might need his car back.

**JIM ROCKFORD** [*The Rockford Files*] would be at a loss, since Ted would never break into his mobile home and beat him up. Blow him up, of course, but never beat him up.

**THE CSI TEAM** [*C.S.I.* with various suffixes] would intensely survey the scene of the latest blast, retire to its labs, and after in-depth study produce a profile of the working-class, some high school, guy with a compulsively neat home and a fully equipped shop in the basement where he produced these bombs. Then the guy in the hooded sweatsuit would drop off a package outside their office.

**LIEUTENANT COLOMBO** [*Colombo*] would get the insight, drive up to Montana, hitch a ride with a trucker after his decaying rattletrap Toyota broke down, walk miles into the wilderness, ask the Hut Man a few questions, finish, take one step, turn and say "One last thing . . ." and find the door had been slammed in his face, so without his key tactic available, he would fail to solve the case.

The **HILL STREET BLUES** [*Hill Street Blues*] gang would, after a long investigation during which each participant got to pull his or her own particular shtick, get pulled off the case due to the need to wind up the matter. Someone along the way would have stopped and asked a question of this homeless fellow carrying a wooden box, but then been called off to pull off another member of the precinct.



*Here's a spooker from the editor of Peregrine Nations.*

# Stirring the Darkness:

## A Crime Revealed?

*J.G. Stinson*

Students attending Friendly High School in Friendly, Maryland were often kidded by other area high schools' students about their school's name. Friendly HS opened in 1970, and I was a member of the fourth class that graduated from the school. Among the other students in my class was Garrett Wilson, with whom I was a member of the school's Concert Choir for my junior and senior years.

Thirty years on, I don't remember whether we shared other classes besides Choir. The people I usually hung out with were the "heads," the hippie-come-latelys of the early 1970s, and Garrett was very middle-of-the-road, a guy who often wore leisure suits and ties to school as well as for his class yearbook photo. He had a nice baritone voice, one that melded well with the others in his section and the choir as a whole. Our group attended the annual statewide Concert Choir competition both years I was a member; one year, we placed either second or first – my memory is faulty in that regard.

Garrett was a likable person, from what I knew of him. Perhaps we ran into each other at someone else's party once or twice, but I don't remember doing so. He liked to make people laugh, but he was serious about music and was also willing to help others out if they had trouble learning to sight-read music. But of the three vocal-music groups available to those who passed auditions for them, he belonged only to the Concert Choir. Though he could play piano quite well, he wasn't a member of the school's Stage Band. According to the FHS Class of 1974 yearbook, the only other extracurricular activity in which he participated was the wrestling team, which that year had a miserable 4-9 record — but that wasn't his fault.

When Garrett asked me out on a date, I was surprised. We didn't have the same friends, and the only thing we had in common was choir — we

didn't listen to the same popular music, I was certain of that, and he was a church-going type during the time I was reluctantly attending Catholic masses every Sunday with my mother, brother and sister.

(My father was and is Episcopalian – what one comedian [was it Robin Williams?] called "Catholic lite" – and sometimes attended with us. This was during the era when so-called mixed marriages between Catholics and those of other faiths required that any children born to the couple be baptized and raised as Catholics. I've been in the lapsed category for many years.)

I admit I was also a little flattered. Garrett wasn't my type, but I hadn't been besieged by guys for dates either. However, I didn't even consider saying yes to his request, mostly because I knew him as a fellow musician and acquaintance, and not someone I really wanted to get to know better. He was a big guy, just under six feet tall and robustly built; he reminded me of Keith Michell's portrayal of Henry VIII in the BBC series, and I didn't consider him to be fat. I was more interested in the tall, long-haired and slender type, and had already been swept off my feet by one such swain. I was happily involved in my first "serious relationship" with that young man (may he rot in hell – oops, that's another story), which had started during the summer between my junior and senior years.

So I smiled and thanked Garrett for asking me, "but," I added, "I'm going out with someone else."

Sophisticated words from a teenager who'd barely begun to discover what men and women got up to when the lights were out, but I'd always been an eclectic reader, and this was one area I'd been studying hard in recent months (not that it did me much good in the end with He Who Should Rot In

Hell — who belongs in another story).

Garrett took it well, smiled and said something polite, and that was that. I heard later that he took to the senior prom a young woman generally considered to be the nicest and prettiest in the senior class, but I think that latter opinion was one shared by the guys because of her bust size and not her personality. I remember her as very sweet-natured and innocent, with a more than capable brain, and can't recall her ever saying a bad word about anyone.

In my yearbook, Garrett wrote: "Janinininy He! He! Gee Janine it's been great knowing you. Everyday [sic] I saw you was a happy one. All my sad days really perked up when you passed me in the hall. Good Luck Love, Garrett." He wasn't the only guy who signed himself with "Love" in my yearbook, but he *was* the only one who was actually serious about what he wrote.

After graduation, my circle of friends gradually drifted off to college or road trips or full-time jobs, and I moved out of the area in 1977, back to Michigan. I never heard from Garrett again. I didn't hear *of* him until either 1999 or 2000. That was when my best friend from junior-high school, who'd moved in our 10<sup>th</sup> grade year with her military family to another state, wrote to ask me if I'd heard about what had happened to Garrett Wilson, and to ask if I had known him in school.

\* \* \*

My friend referred me to a *Readers Digest* article (August of that year) concerning the arrest, trial and conviction of one Garrett Wilson. The issue was still on the magazine rack at the local grocery store, so I picked up a copy and checked the article's photos. I was stunned to see Garrett's face there, plainly recognizable after 25 years, wearing a Hawaiian shirt and looking tan and well-off. I bought the magazine and read it as soon as I got home.

I couldn't believe what he'd been accused of doing — my initial reaction was that Garrett was the last person I'd suspect of a crime, much less the one for which he'd been arrested. But then I remembered all the years I'd spent researching serial murder and those who commit it, and I re-read that article. Slowly it became less shocking to me to think that Garrett Wilson could have done something so awful.

If asked why I got interested in reading

about serial murder, I'd probably reply that it seemed good fodder for fiction writing, and I was interested in the kind of mind that could commit such murders. Thousands of people kill to defend themselves, or while in altered mental states (due to a variety of reasons, from organic to extra-chemical means), but to deliberately plan and carry out two or more murders (in series or in a spree) takes a brain that isn't wired right, a person who didn't learn or wasn't taught that taking life was heinous and illegal, not to mention immoral in most cases. I wanted to know where the wires got crossed, and why, and whether the mind behind serial murder was created before or after birth, or both. I still don't know the answer to that question.

The best book I've read on serial murder is Robert K. Ressler's **Whoever Fights Monsters**, not only for its Nietzsche-related title, but for the meticulous details he includes and the history of the FBI's Behavioral Profiling Unit. Ressler's first book on serial murder and profiling came out years before John Douglas decided to get on the bandwagon himself with his more flamboyant style of prose. The two apparently have separate readerships, with each group calling the other's "hero" self-aggrandizing and a glory hog. That's their problem. I've read both and prefer Ressler. He was the one who taught me what the FBI uses in its profiling toolkit, and that toolkit allowed me to sort the knowledgeable from the twits when reading novels by writers who used serial murders as the main features of their books. The information Ressler provided was eye-opening and intensely fascinating to me.

My interest in this area was concurrent with my pursuit of information about multiple personality disorder, now called dissociative disorder (DD). I stumbled across this topic by accident in a library on Fort Riley, Kansas, during the last few years of my second Army enlistment. The book that hooked me was **When Rabbit Howls** by the Troops for Truddi Chase. I'd seen the TV movie of *Sybil* starring Sally Field and this book reminded me of it, so I checked it out. It proved to be the most harrowing read I've ever had. In the medical and legal communities, from what I've read, there's still some disagreement as to whether DD actually exists and whether it fits the insanity defense for those who commit crimes and claim to have DD. All I can say is that some years after



reading the Chase book, I happened to catch an episode of *Larry King Live* during which he had her on his show, live and in person, and she appeared to me to be one of the most haunted-looking people I'd ever seen. But she has actively resisted the integration of her alters (her other personalities), due to her belief that her core personality no longer exists, and as far as I know she's still a multiple. The TV movie made of her life which starred Shelley Long (from *Cheers*) was fated to be incomplete because it could never include all of the horrific things Chase said she endured as a child. No one but a true multiple can change alters, as Chase demonstrated so chillingly during her interview with Larry King.

So, the two subjects made up most of my reading material in the late 1980s to the mid 1990s (apart from SF). I had a few ideas for incorporating the two areas into a novel which never reached fruition, but it may yet do so, who knows? I'm still interested in both areas, and my permanent library contains books from both areas which I intend to keep for the rest of my life, because they're excellent reference books.

After reading the *Readers Digest* article about Garrett Wilson's arrest, I located online and bought a copy of a book written about the case, *While Innocents Slept*, by Adrian Havill. The book reads well, but the details concerning Garrett's high-school days are sketchy at best. The only person Havill seems to have found to interview about those years is Garrett's longtime friend John Farley. No one from the Concert Choir was interviewed, and the only mention of the group infers that it was Garrett who won "All-County" honors alone. I don't recall there being any soloist events at the annual Concert Choir competition; it would have defeated its purpose.

So, between the article and the book, I pondered the question: Did I think Garrett was capable of murder, based on what I'd read of the evidence presented at his trial and the testimony of several people, one of whom was one of his several ex-wives?

I'm still not sure. But when I look at his senior-year photo in my yearbook, I recognize a particular vacancy that I've seen in other eyes – eyes belonging to Ted Bundy, and Wayne Gacy, and Richard Ramirez. In writing this article, I've looked at that photo more in a few months than I ever did

in the previous 30 years. Every time I did, I got a slight chill.

\* \* \*

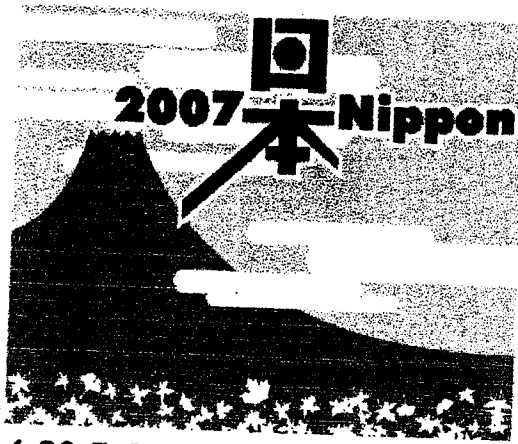
Garrett Eldred Wilson was convicted in 1999 and sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering his infant son, Garrett Michael Wilson, by suffocation in 1987 to cash in a large insurance policy he had on the infant. He was scheduled to be tried in autumn 2002 for his daughter Brandi Jean's earlier murder, which he is accused of committing for the same reason in 1981. I was unable to find further information on that case via the Web. He has a third child by his now-ex-wife Vicky Wilson, who maintains her belief that Garrett is innocent.

The CBS-TV series *48 Hours* repeated on July 1, 2002 an episode which focused on the Wilson case. Writer Adrian Havill was also interviewed, and said, "I wouldn't want to be a juror in a case like this [Garrett Michael's murder]. I wouldn't know what to think." Jurors from that trial said it was [Wilson's ex-wife and Garrett Michael's mother] Missy Anastasi's testimony that let them to a guilty verdict, which they delivered two hours after adjourning to deliberate the case.

The newspaper *The Prince Georges's Journal* reported in its Nov. 7, 2000 edition that the Maryland Court of Special Appeals, the lowest appellate court in the state, upheld Wilson's conviction in his sons death. But in its Aug. 6, 2002 edition, the newspaper reported that Maryland's highest appellate court overturned that conviction, based on its decision that "Montgomery County State's Attorney Douglas Gansler, who prosecuted the case, acted improperly by using statistics in his closing arguments to calculate the probability of Wilson's innocence." That decision also found fault with Circuit Court Judge Ann S. Harrington for not correcting Gansler's supposed mistake, "despite previously establishing legal guidelines for the use of statistics in the trial."

The article also stated, "The Court of Appeals did not fault Harrington for citing the similar circumstances surrounding the 1981 death of Wilson's first child when sentencing him to life without parole, another of the legal challenges raised in the appeal."





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Mitaka, Tokyo 181-0002 JAPAN

We'll announce winners on Friday, September 3, 2004, at Noreascon IV, the 62nd Worldcon (Boston). Enter as often as you like, but Peggy Rae may decline to consider anything that reaches her after Friday, August 28th, or more than a reasonable number of *haiku* from anyone. She may appoint suitable judges, but all her decisions will be final. They would have been anyhow.



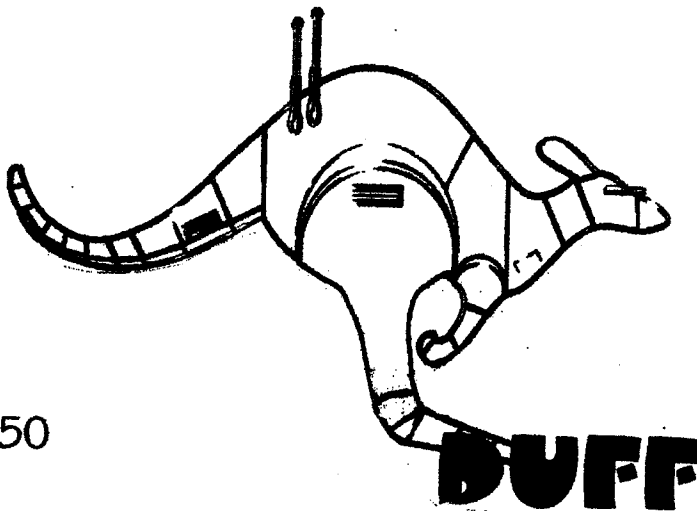
Noreascon IV will administer voting for the 2007 Worldcon site; to vote you must be a member, Supporting or Attending, of Noreascon IV; if you want to learn more, try their World-Wide Web site [www.noreascon.org](http://www.noreascon.org), or paper mail to P.O. Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701.

The *haiku* is a kind of poetry to rouse anyone's sense of wonder. Its three unrhymed lines, of 5-7-5 syllables, communicate a moment. Because *haiku* are so short, they tend to work by the painter's rule of drawing a brushstroke to show where the mountain isn't. They may be great or small. They may joke or grieve or gleam. If you want to read up, try R. Hass, *The Essential Haiku* (1994); D. Keene, *World Within Walls* (1976); R.H. Blyth, *Haiku* (1949). If you want to know who we are, try our Web site or paper mail address above.

For a true World-con  
Let us join hands East and West  
Who love the same stars.

"World Science Fiction Convention" and "Worldcon" are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society; "Noreascon", of Massachusetts Convention Fandom, Inc. Our chairman drawn by Masubichi Kaku. Nippon for 2007 verse by John Hertz.

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The ***DOWN UNDER FAN FUND*** is off and hoppin'! Australian fans are lining up support even now to attend Noreascon 4 as the 2004 DUFF delegate!

Check out the candidates and their platforms – and download your ballots – at [www.DUFF2004.com](http://www.DUFF2004.com).

*And vote!*

*Gary Robe had an article in the very first Challenger, and has appeared here often. Now he takes us into the wilderness, where more than one trail is being blazed ...*

# Kevin and the mountain

Gary R. Robe

*Woods are not like other spaces. To begin with, they are cubic. Their trees loom over you, press in from all sides. Woods choke off views and leave you muddled and without bearings. They make you feel small and confused and vulnerable, like a child lost in a crowd of strange legs. Stand in a desert or prairie and you know you are in a big space. Stand in a woods and you only sense it. They are a vast, featureless nowhere. And they are alive.*

-Bill Bryson, *A Walk in the Woods*

Ever since we moved to the Blue Ridge area I have wanted to camp and hike at Mt. Mitchell, NC and in early April of 2003 I got my wish. This is the highest peak in the Eastern US at 6,684 ft. I like high places and vistas and have wanted to explore the mountain more ever since we first visited it in 1991. I got my chance when my son Nick's scout troop planned an excursion there and needed adult leaders. Not that I would not have I invited myself along anyhow.

The southern Appalachians in general and the Black Mountains of western North Carolina in particular may not seem that impressive compared to the grandeur of the Rockies or the Andes, but believe me when you have to climb one of them a 3000 ft altitude change is the same on Grandfather Mountain as it is on El Capitan. Furthermore when you are on a backwoods trail in the Carolina Appalachians you are on your own. If you run into trouble you have three options. You can hunker down where you are and send a runner to the trailhead for help, you can hold up and hope that another hiker passes you by, or you can tough it out and finish on your own power. There is a reason that the Scout Motto is *Be Prepared* because on the trail you had better be.

In typical Scout-like efficiency the logistical plan for the outing was quite clever. About half of the group wanted to hike up the mountain from the base camp and spend the night on the trail. The more sane part of the party wanted to camp at the base, drive to the top the next morning and then hike down. That way those descending would be able to leave the vehicles at the summit, meet those ascending on the trail, hand over the car keys and let them dismantle the campsite at the base while the others hiked down.

We camped at the Black Mountain campsite on the banks of the South Toe River in the Pisgah National Forrest. This huge national reserve straddles the Blue Ridge Parkway in western North Carolina many miles away from much of anything. When we arrived at the camp the ranger warned us that the bears had just recently become active, were very hungry and extremely aggressive. He showed us where a bear had taken the plastic top off a supposedly bear-proof dumpster two days earlier. This meant that we had to take extreme bear avoidance precautions.

We were careful to leave all of our food locked in the vehicles and to not bring anything like shaving lotion or toothpaste that might smell interesting to a bear into the tents. When cooking and eating we were careful that no food scraps or packaging was left on the ground. We were also diligent that no grease or wash water was spilled from cooking or cleaning. We even saved and disposed of the wash water in the dumpster rather than establishing a grease pit. All these measures seemed to be effective because we had no ursine visitors in the night. In this case I will accept negative evidence as proof that we had taken enough anti-bear precautions.

We had a great night of telling tales around the campfire and teaching the greenhorns the intricacies of snipe hunting. The knowledge that there were actually hungry bears known to be lurking in the woods gave an extra frisson of excitement to the camp. There was one boy I'll call Kevin that drew my

attention right away. When I was a scout 30 years ago there always seemed to be at least one boy in each troop who just doesn't get it. I am afraid that this hasn't changed. Kevin had just graduated from Cub Scouts and this was his first real outdoor experience. This was not enhanced by the fact that Kevin was badly overweight and remarkably clumsy. Within 30 minutes of arriving at the camp Kevin had managed to fall into the creek and lose his glasses in it before the rest of us had even gotten the tents up. Through the rest of the night Kevin managed to get ashes in the food while playing in the fire, fall in the creek a second time to soak his backup pair of shoes and knock at least one tent over while running through the campsite. Kevin did, however, make an excellent snipe hunter and was genuinely disappointed when we called off the hunt at lights out.

The next morning we dressed warmly and made the 3,800 ft drive up to the top of Mt. Mitchell and the trailhead at the summit. You always take a chance with Mt. Mitchell weather. At that altitude it has a climate approximately like that of Timmons, Ontario. It is actually one of the coldest and windiest places in the Eastern lower 48. We got lucky because the day was about as perfect as one could ask for. Early morning fog and drizzle had given way to a nearly clear sky and temperatures rising into the 60's by midday. Once on the trail the only way off the mountain was to complete six miles of horizontal distance and 3,800 ft vertical drop in altitude. Better down than up. We met up with the uphill group a little before noon. They had had a more adventurous night than us. They had no bear encounters either, but since they were camping at over 5,000 ft they had a bit different weather. They estimated that the wind gusted to 50 mph at times and they were in the clouds for most of the night. Their tents had not stood up to the wind so they had to improvise windbreaks with pine branches and sleep in the open.

It soon became evident that our party had some troubles. The Scoutmaster Charles Hasbrouk and I were the only adults in the group to keep eight scouts on the trail. I took up the rear to keep the stragglers from falling behind. Unsurprisingly, Kevin just couldn't keep up with the pace of the group. He also had poor depth perception without his glasses and the trail was very rugged. Within the first third of the hike he had fallen several times and had skinned all his knees and elbows. Kevin and I had quite a nice conversation as he gamely puffed along and gingerly climbed down each place the trail dropped off more than a couple of inches. Before long we were so far behind the rest of the group that I could not hear them ahead. I signaled for a halt and Charles and I decided that the only way to keep the party together was to put Kevin in the front. This almost caused a mutiny because it dropped our progress to a snail's pace and it soon became obvious that we were not going to finish the trail until early evening. It was, however the only thing to do for Kevin because it allowed him to hike with Charles and take advantage of his 30 years of hiking experience.

The slow going was exacerbated by the condition of the trail. The park had only opened for the season one week earlier and so none of the winter damage had been repaired. It was especially tough going in the rhododendron thickets, known to hikers as rhododendron hells. There had been an ice storm recently that had splintered the normally resilient trees and produced a nearly impenetrable tangle that made progress and keeping on the trail difficult. In the midst of a rhododendron stand visibility is about 10 feet and there are frequent animal runs that can easily be mistaken for the trail unless you are careful to watch for blazes. On top of that the last few years have seen an especially bad infestation of Southern Pine Borers. These nasty rice-grain sized bugs get just under the bark of pines and eventually kill the tree. Thus most of the woods in the area are filled with dead pines just waiting for a good wind to knock them over. It seemed like everywhere there was not a rhododendron tangle there was a deadfall blocking our path. Of course, Kevin was barely capable of climbing over the fallen trees and his size made it difficult to pass him under. If the conditions did not allow him to go around a fallen tree then we just had to lift him and pass him over.

I would like to say that the older boys acted like good Scouts and cheerfully teamed together to help the weak link of the group make the hike. Scouts or no, the rest of the troop was still a group of teenage boys and their tolerance level for a young, disabled, slowpoke was not high. They complained and they pouted and begged to be allowed to split the party and race for the bottom. I must say that on Kevin's part he never cried from his obvious pain and took the abuse his fellow scouts were heaping without any

outward distress. Although he was near his physical limit, Kevin didn't cry for mommy or whine about when the trail was going to end. He just went slower and slower. Charles and I, however, had our hands full in helping Kevin and keeping the rest under control while negotiating a trail that was truly dangerous.

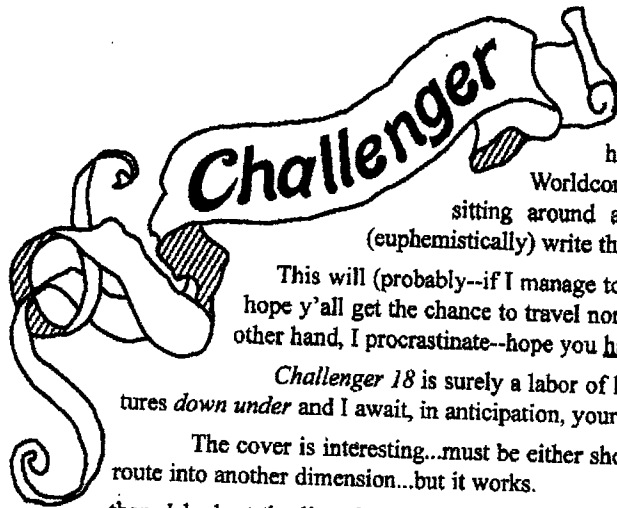
With most of the area trails the main problem is not that they are overgrown and disused it is that they are in danger of being loved to death. Nobody knows how many thousand people hike sections of the AT although it is well documented that several hundred manage to hike its 2000+ miles each year. There is hardly ever more than one foot of topsoil at any point along the AT and almost everywhere the trail leads the track is worn down to bare rock. The hiker must stay within a track that is seldom more than a foot wide and lined with anything from gravel to solid bedrock. It was no wonder that Kevin had such a hard time negotiating the trail because the path was so treacherous. I had taken a face-first pratfall in the first mile of the hike and had dislocated two of my fingers. I didn't bother complaining about it because I could still grip my walking stick and I was mobile. We were on the trail. So as long as my legs worked I saw no point of advertising my injury. What could have been done about it anyway?

Even with the slow pace I loved the hike. The weather was perfect, the trail was challenging, the scenery was interesting and the flora and fauna were fascinating. It was fun for me to observe how the composition of the forest changed as we descended. Near the top there were only hardy spruce pines. These gave way to juniper, Frazier Fir, maples and the dreaded rhododendrons at lower altitudes. Also at the summit the deciduous trees had not yet leafed out for the year so we got to see spring arrive in an afternoon as we climbed down. All of this grandeur was set to the music of a gaggle of increasingly discomfited teenage boys as the hike dragged on past five hours.

We did not end up having to carry Kevin off the mountain but it was a close thing. Charles finally had to implement the one measure short of improvising a stretcher that we could use. We scouted the woods for two stout limbs and then with Charles in the front and our of the older Scouts in the rear, held the poles parallel with Kevin in the middle and let him use them like handrails to support himself. This actually picked up the pace since it took some of the weight off Kevin's feet and removed some of his fear of falling. We limped into the base camp at about 6:00 when our projected ETA was more like 2:00. We would not have broken any speed records in making the descent even if we had taken the pace that the older boys preferred due to the horrible condition of the trail. Charles, who has almost 5,000 miles of lifetime hiking experience, declared that this was one of the most decrepit trails that he had ever hiked.

I can report that six months after this adventure that Kevin is still active in the scout troop and may have even knocked off some of his rougher edges. He just completed another 5-mile hike on the AT in October and by all accounts nobody was ready to strangle him at the end of it. As for myself I just bought a new pair of hiking shoes and plan to cover a 16-mile section of the AT with the troop in mid-October. The trees should be at near the peak of fall colors and the weather is predicted to be cool and dry. This should be a great hike. See, there's at least one in every troop that just doesn't get it!





August 2, 2003

Dear Guy, Rosy, and *Challengerites*,

Let me explain the dancing illo--I did up a handful of spots to illustrate titles done by this year's Worldcon GoH-but *Torcon 3* was not interested, so I have them sitting around and decided to sprinkle them among letters as I (euphemistically) write them. So, there is some slight method to the madness.

This will (probably--if I manage to get my act in gear) reach you before the Worldcon--hope y'all get the chance to travel north--so I will hope you have a ghreat time. If, on the other hand, I procrastinate--hope you had a ghreat time.

*Challenger 18* is surely a labor of love--and it shows. It was fun ti share in your adventures *down under* and I await, in anticipation, your trip report.

The cover is interesting...must be either short floors or there is a direct route into another dimension...but it works.

then, I look at the list of fanartists you ~~enned~~ managed to convince to do illustrations and you have a really tremendously talented bunch!

*The Clink*--well, I always wondered what would have happened if I had continued to ignore the letters I kept getting from the Motor Vehicle Administration in D.C. about that parking ticket (that I had never gotten-- they had misread the tag number off the ticket- but that didn't stop them from doubling the amount I owed each time they wrote--disregarding my response that I had never been in the location they cited). Uh, now I have an idea. No thank you--glad I merely wasted a full day with them and got it, belatedly, straightened out. Now what type of cake goes with a file...bet it is the proverbial fruitcake!

My brother spends a lot of time (and really racks up the frequent flyer miles!) working in China- but he postponed his next go-round until late August--just to be sure the health situation is cleared up. My sister has gotten to Japan, but not China. I am the only one who has not made a trip over there and unless I win the lottery I suspect I never will--but I really enjoy reading and hearing about it. Both siblings have only the best of things to say about their trips--except for the beds--guess we Americans really are spoiled in that respect.

Ah, so that's how *Frohvet* spends his days. I was sad to see the lastish of *Twink* really was the last issue.



*Brad* when I was in my third year of veterinary school, I admitted a little *Shih Tzu* dog that had been tossed by his owners into a laundry room because he would not stop barking. When they went to let him out in the morning, he was paralyzed--the husband had apparently managed to toss him into the wall and done spinal damage. anyway, guilt will do wonders and they loved that dog. While they were waiting, a miniature poodle bitch (now now readers- pay attention, I am a veterinarian) also entered the waiting area and was, ahem, hot to trot. *Mr. Shih Tzu* became very interested and things got lively for a few moments despite his condition. the miniature poodle's owner got very indignant and demanded that the *Shih Tzu's* owners control their dog--to which the owners replied--

"Hell, lady, he's paralyzed...he ain't dead."

Love the *Craig Hilton* illo on page 63--wish we could see more of 'em, but I understand that life often interferes.

Thanks for all the super photos--always a treat!

Thanks for this-  
ghood luck in Toronto!  
*sheryl*



Thanks to Joe Major, here's a group of Victorian cronies made up as characters from *The Lost World*. Guess who's portraying the good professor ...



# THE CHORUS LINES

**Heard From Also Did We:** Eve Ackerman, Greg Benford, Dave Berkebile, Sheryl Birkhead (regarding the stymied legacy of Harry Warner), Gary Brown, Tom Feller ("I work with insurance adjusters quite a bit. I don't get the impression that any of them intended to work in that field when they graduated from high school"), Rev. Bob Fleming, Brad Foster, Stuart Herring, John Hertz ("Roman Catholicism may have been the rock on which R.A. Lafferty built, but there was plenty of castle above that"), Steve Hughes, Ben Indick, Terry Jeeves, Trinlay Khadro ("I was so tickled to see my article right-up-front [well pretty much]"), Janeen Schouten, the inimitable Julius Schwartz – and no doubt many others!

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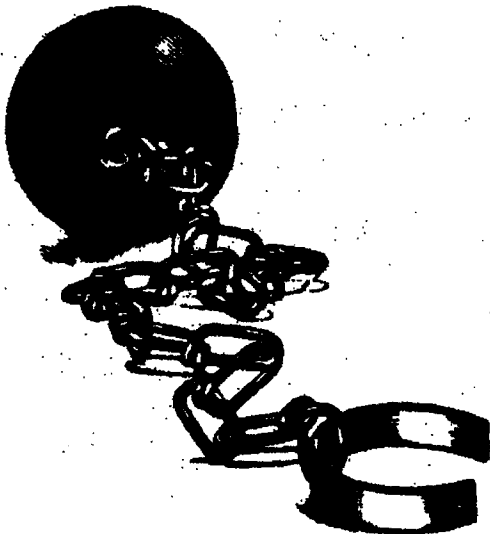
I loved the cover (Darth Vator); and I enjoyed reading about your DUFF trip; I'm glad you shared some experiences and photos and didn't save it all for your report. (Breath-taking description of Hanging Rock.) The pictures are always great, but I especially liked the one of you and the 'roo by the pool. Good composition and balance.

*Credit the photographer, la belle Rose-Marie.*

I enjoyed Trinlay Khadro's article on contemporary fandom and fannish backgrounds. Fascinating article by Gregory Benford on his visit to China (no birds! that is horrible!) and Japan. Intriguing article on insurance cases by E.B. Frohvet. And Mike Resnick's articles (in this case, his ConJose diary) always make me feel like a slug.

I liked Terry Jeeves's punny short story; and the LOCs are always full of info and sometimes controversy (cops, England and guns, fan and pro Hugos, early E.T.s - I thought that was a great article, btw). Interesting background on **Curse of the Demon**, which I've always liked. I agree with Robert Kennedy re: **Scare Tactics** - disgusting.

"The Clink" was a fascinating, though scary, diary, lightened by a fun illo. Incidents like that do make you appreciate family, friends, and freedom. (Your articles about the justice system are always enlightening, but, brother, talk about up close and personal...)



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I guess you knew I couldn't resist. Because I received **Challenger** 18 yesterday, I had to read it today. I spent the entire morning going through it, savoring it, all the way down to the good stuff.

Oddly, I even reread "Send Lawyers, Etc." again, and I liked it again. *{Ed.note: If the reader forgets, Earl wrote that piece himself.}*

Then the *really* good stuff: "The Clink."

You did it again, Guy, captured me with your words and thoughts and observations. Reading that piece made me remember numerous things from my past of similar nature. Only don't worry, I'm not going into them here and now. I've covered a lot of them already in eI - click in now and then <http://eFanzines.com/EK/index.html> and see how I'm doing. I've started a Letters to the Editor column in hopes that will inspire you.

So, back to "The Clink":

On page 66 you write: "When dealing with the law, a citizen should keep his mouth shut and let the facts speak for themselves. But like 99% of the rest of humanity in confrontation with authority, I was moved to babble - to try to explain. I pled lack of time and going to Australia and and and ..."

Later you repeat, quoting your own lawyer, saying: "'Say nothing!' Richter ordered - always the best idea in ... custody."

I hope that doesn't mean you don't take your own advice most of the time. You did violate the Number One Rule of all lawyers, "Never speak to them about anything." And, as you explained, you knew you were doing it when you were doing it. Some things do have a way of taking over and running your mouth when it least needs exercising.

Judge Judy would say that if you lie to her about the little things (license plates) she couldn't believe you about anything.

Then you wrote: "Seeing ... from this side of things was something of a hoot."

And wasn't it ever. I had exactly the same feeling when I experienced the same things for the first time. In fact, I shared a great many of your feelings and reactions.

But, Guy, you missed out on the really good hootful things ... like gang showers ... like endless all-night daisy chains.

*That's why I played my attorney card. No way I was going "upstairs to the dorms."*



You complained about no lock on the bathroom door when you had to urinate so badly. Tsssk! Poor boy. You should try two facing rows of 20 crappers ... no partitions ... no toilet seats ... no modesty... sit, shit, and scoot ... everything designed to humiliate and dehumanize you.

Then, at page 67, after acting so rationally, you blew it. You narced out.

In describing an encounter with burning pot, you wrote that you said: "Watch yourself, son!" I shouted. "That's a felony!"... "No person shall introduce contraband into or upon the grounds of any state correctional institution."

Guy, I'm willing to bet that the bulk of all drugs smuggled into lock-up areas come in through the administration and the guards. Do you suppose any criminal should have more concern for your quote than the law enforcement community itself?

*He should if he's going to expose himself – not to mention his cellmates, not to mention me – to a whole new quanta of jail time. That kid could have gotten everyone in the tank charged with smuggling drugs into prison. He had roadkill for brains. That said, I have no doubt that you're right, and most contraband is introduced into jails by guards. I know for a fact that some is brought in by visitors, and suspect that some – I am ashamed to say – comes in through attorneys. Nevertheless, those who get other people in dutch just so they can get high are a special breed of dipshit.*

On page 69, an altogether appropriate number for total release, you left the lockup. Doing so liberated you and caused you to write: "It took being free to return to me the fundamental American faith, that authority is an aberration, to be applied and accepted only with caution, for the natural state of man is *freedom*. That thought was a conscious decision – a choice – a faith. It's the only choice a defense lawyer and an American can allow himself to make. *The authority of the state must be applied only when it is backed up by proof*. All of us – us, now – who have been under its heel deserve no less.

"And I'd also taken freedom and sanity too much for granted. Chaos is. But it is not the only thing that is. Friendship is. Freedom is. Friendship is nice. *Freedom* is nice."

Thanks for a great issue, Guy. Keep up the good work.

*The good comments make it worthwhile.*

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Ah yes, Stiles on the problems of pets! You and your pal Joey, or your pal's joey ...

Hannibal Lecter could have made Norman Bates cry? Oh, I think he could have made Norman *sizzle*. With brown sauce, fava beans, and a nice Chianti ... (Apropos of nothing, when driving from New Harmony to Henderson one day, Lisa and I saw a sign for the Norman Motel.)

Greg Benford should realign his ideas to be in harmony with Maoist thought. Birds eat the people's grain. Learn from Dazhai [China's Potemkin Village]! And in some areas, including those where Benford occasionally dwells, believing that the *New China Times* does not have the correct line on world events could get one in trouble.

I am wondering about some of "E. B. Frohvet's" subjects. "Jack", the whackjob by any standard. In fact, he comes across as the poster boy for obsessive-compulsive disorder. Did "Irene", his mother, by any chance have an encounter with Howard Hughes? (Now that's a movie: **The Airplanes of Madison County**, with Tommy Lee Jones as Howard Hughes having a fling with Meryl Streep as the bored adulterous Iowa farm-wife ...) "Pablo & Pablo": And you've read **Citizen of the Galaxy**, too!? Did the hospital where the real Pablo was born take infant footprints?

On the ConJosé panel on "I'm Still a Fan" – if some obscure actor who had appeared in a show twenty years or more ago, say as a one-scene-and-blown-away redshirt on **Star Trek™**, had been in that audience, more people would have recognized him than recognized Rusty Hevelin and Fred Prophet, and in fact someone there might have written a slash story with his character ... Let's face it, the old-timey fans such as ourselves are becoming obsolete.

Going further about the Breeders Cup Juvenile jinx, Lisa thinks it's because most better horses are not prodigies ... the two-year old might be good, for a two-year old, but a more slowly developing horse will have greater potential.

My Tom Reamy-edited MidAmeriCon program book has R. A. Lafferty's autograph. The sober one.

If you mean the *New York World Great Moon Hoax*, any decent book on hoaxes will tell

you more about it. If you mean Gruithuisen's seeing Moon men, yes, indeed, tell us more.

Naomi Fisher claims Richard Dengrove's articles are "ALUM DRY"? Why does that remind me of the Ted Mark novel about Steve Victor, **The Man from O.R.G.Y.**, which contained the inimitable phrase, "Alum be damned!"? (It had left him saddle sore ...)

*And you know what he was talking about? Joe,  
I'm shocked!*

I'm not too wild about moving to *Islandia*. Note that the narrator spends all his time among the nobility. The common folk might be less enthusiastic about the glorious primitivism enforced by their rulers.

Rodney King was extremely drunk. I have been told that the police were afraid he was on PCP. The whole tape was shown on **60 Minutes**.

*Still no excuse. I've seen solitary cops take down guys almost King's size who were not only drunk, but infuriated – and once, one of those cops was female. Koon & Co. were just having fun.*

As someone else said, we already have a show called **American Gladiator**. However, real fight-to-the-death gladiatorial games will probably run into lawsuit problems. For cruelty to animals.

The trial of the Operation Pastorious saboteurs shows primarily how publicity-oriented the government security people were. Had they gone ashore in Britain, they would have been recruited into the Double-Cross System and used to feed misinformation to the Germans. But the FBI had already turned down the services of one already in place Double-Cross agent (see **Spy/Counterspy** by Dusko Popov for his story).

I remember running across Tantric sex practices in **The Harrad Experiment**. Looking back now, I think Rimmer [the author] now comes across as possessed of an engorged and tumescent ego.

*The Harrad Experiment is one of the great soft-core porn novels of all time – I still remember the leaf scene 30 years later. It's also idiotic to the extreme. What's sexy or liberating about putting a toilet in the middle of the living room?*

*Nevertheless, I've met people who took the book seriously ... even based relationships on its example!*

Oh boy, that great Platonic dialogue, the "Geezerdo": *Crit*: But Sokrates, was not education less good in those days? *Sok*: Your youth debars you from a proper appreciation. When I was of your age, to travel to school was a journey of

eighty stadia, through snow that reached to the height of our chins, struggling uphill for the entire route; and as much for the return. Had it not been for the slaves who carried us ...

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Wonderful commentary on your trip to Australia. "No Picnic at Hanging Rock" was especially enjoyable. Is there anything left for your DUFF report?

*Twenty days worth!*

**E. B. Frohvet**: "Insurance Law for Fun and Profit" — If I recall correctly, in a life insurance policy, suicide is only contestable for two years. I believe this is standard in every state. So, I question your comment that: "Suicide is excluded from almost all life insurance..." Otherwise, I enjoyed your article as I worked for an insurance company for 35 years. Part of that time involved disability claims and group health insurance.

**Joseph T Major**: "Robert Kennedy" is not a pseudonym of mine or vice versa." What's this about? Did I miss something in #17? We are definitely not the same person. We don't look alike. We don't write alike. We don't even live close together with you in Kentucky and me in California. And even though I do read a lot, I certainly am not able to read as fast as you. Nor do I have your memory and ability to tie various items together.

*You know who Joe resembles? Dave Langford.*

**Alexis Gilliland**: I believe the "little college in Eagle Rock, a suburb of Los Angeles" is Occidental College.

**Joseph Nicholas**: Evidently, you believe that an intruder has the right of first shot. A homeowner should not have to warn an intruder before shooting them. How do they know what the intruder might do? The intruder is there illegally. It's my understanding that Tony Martin was denied a home visit before he was to be released on parole because he is considered a danger to burglars. God forbid that a burglar should be permanently stopped from pursuing his chosen profession and never being able to burgle again. It is my opinion that an intruder takes all responsibility for whatever happens when they illegally enter a residence or establishment. If someone is killed, including themselves, then the

responsibility is that of the intruder. I realize that is not the law everywhere, and maybe nowhere, but that is the way it should be. Is it true that in England a sale or rental ad for a property cannot indicate a "scenic view" because it discriminates against the blind? Or that you cannot place an ad for "friendly" employees? I read this somewhere, but it is difficult to believe.

**Guy H. Lillian III:** Apparently you are in some agreement with me concerning trying persons in federal courts when they have been found not guilty in the state court for the same basic charge. My opinion is the same when they are found not guilty of murder, then they are tried in a civil suit and found guilty. The best example of this is O. J. Simpson. An incredibly stupid jury found him not guilty of murder. He was then sued in a civil suit and found guilty. As much as I believe he should have been found guilty and executed, that wasn't the case. That should have been the end of it.

*I was so happy that the law had stuck it to Simpson in the civil suit that I couldn't have cared less about double jeopardy. In any event, since the standard of proof in the civil trial was different from the criminal travesty, the possible penalty was so much less, and the party seeking vindication was different - Ron Goldman's family, not the state - there really was no violation of Simpson's rights. He's still being treated as a celebrity, you notice. That's a violation of cosmic rights.*

Currently, we have the case of two Inglewood, California police officers. They were tried for assault, among other charges, against a man they were arresting. The jury found one of them not guilty and hung (7-5 guilty) on the other. They are also facing state and federal civil rights lawsuits. The District Attorney has stated that he intends to again try the policeman who received a hung jury. The defense Attorney is going to request that the judge dismiss the case. We'll see what happens.

It is my position that only if a defendant is found guilty in the original trial should further suits be allowed.

The story of your arrest is incredible. Now you know how it is from the inside. Law enforcement has my fingerprints taken years ago when I went to work for the Los Angeles County Concrete Crew (curbs, gutters, sidewalks, etc.). I have had only two run-ins with the police (other than traffic tickets). They were both relatively

minor. Well, there was the time I was burgled while visiting friends. But, that wasn't a run-in. The first (1955), however, was a bit frightening for a few moments. The second (1956) was somewhat embarrassing. Actually, the very first was as a 16-year-old (or was it 14?) receiving my first traffic ticket. My mother and I had a personal interview with the Pasadena Chief of Police. He asked me if I should go to Traffic school. I said no. He sent me there anyway.

As for being chagrined about how easily you accepted being controlled, don't feel bad about it. Consider the situation. I highly recommend the book **Obedience to Authority** by Stanley Milgram (Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975). This is a paperback edition and it may have been originally published in 1974.

*Better to read about it than live it.*

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Hey, Guy, [#18] was a good issue. Thanks for sending it along. It's been 20 years since my trip to Australia, but many of the people I met and all the things I toured are still there. I have my own pictures from Hanging Rock, though mine include many people. We had a full fledged picnic, and afterward, Harlan Ellison disappeared into the rocks for hours, communing with the tapes of Zamphir pan pipes he'd bought in Sydney.

*Has Harlan ever written about the experience?  
That's one account I'd love to scan.*

I [found] Greg Benford's piece on visiting China and Japan very interesting, especially his thoughts on the Zen retreat in Kyoto. The puzzles and ambiguities of the garden there are kind of like life, don't you think? No matter how you look at any subject, like life itself, there are always pieces you can't see from your own angle. Even if you successfully put yourself in another position to see the hidden bits, you'll have lost sight of a few you



were able to see before.

E.B. Frohvet actually managed to write entertainingly about a potentially boring subject, insurance claims adjusting, and the most probably boring type of insurance claims, at that. However, I disagree with him about suicide being absolutely excluded from most life insurance. I work in insurance, too, although not life insurance, but I've taken classes on the subject. And after reading his article, I checked several websites of information on life insurance to be sure of my ground.

Suicide is excluded from most insurance policies, but only for the first two years of coverage (and in some states only for the first year). That prevents people from buying life insurance with the intention of committing suicide so a beneficiary gets the payout. After that, the assumption is that they didn't buy the policy with the intention of getting the payoff, and the insurance will pay.

Of course, insurance being what it is, I suppose there could be policies that exclude suicide no matter when it is committed. But I think it would be very unusual.

I enjoyed the rest of the issue, particularly Mike Resnick's piece on the ConJose I didn't attend (I was at a ConJose, all right, but it only slightly resembled Mike's).

*That's the neat thing about worldcons – if they're any good, everyone's is unique.*

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First, I would like to thank Joy V. Smith, Jack Calvert and Trinlay Khadro for their compliments. Guy asks me to tell you more about the Great Moon Hoax of 1835. I intend to.

I give my most extensive reply to Ned Brooks. By the way, I basically agree with his main point. There is no evidence for any extraterrestrials. It is all speculative. This is not as big a defect with me as it is with him. What I disagree with is the idea that primitive man could have alighted on a belief in extraterrestrials. I suspect few did. To think about extraterrestrials, you had to believe that the planets were planets like the Earth. And Astronomy had to develop before people could conceive of that. In the West, I wonder if this happened much before Ptolemy in 150 A.D.? Predating that, the planets were often beings, e.g., gods or dragons.

Even when people knew the planets and stars were large bodies, it was not obvious that their inhabitants were flesh and blood. People believed outer space was quite different from Earth. Literally heaven. Many later Ancient Greeks and Romans believed that spirits inhabited the Moon. The Chaldean Oracles claimed that the souls of men were made on the Moon, and placed in the body on Earth. That the Moon was inhabited by spirits was carried over to the Middle Ages. Also, that the planets were. According to Medieval theologians, the planets were inhabited by angels. When a theologian did not consider the planets to be angels.

Joseph Major is correct that the "flying saucers" have been observed to have all sorts of different shapes. I gather cigar shape is the biggest. Not even the first "flying saucer" was saucer shaped. When Kenneth Arnold observed several in 1947, he didn't say they were saucer shaped but just that they flew over water like a saucer would. They were more dishes than saucers. The press, however, treated the incident as if he had sighted a saucer. And that is how the idea of flying saucers was born. Also, all sorts of different aliens have been sighted. Including a cyclops in 1963 and its opposite, a three-eyed giant, in 1970. The Little Green Men, the butt of all sorts of jokes, were reported in Italy in 1947 shortly after the first sighting.

Erika Maria Lacey Barrantes wonders whether people several centuries ago believed that extraterrestrials were Christians. They tended to. According to their way of thinking, the Blacks in Africa were lower humans; and so could be non-Christian. However, we are talking about the highest life form on a planet. They had to be Christian. For the religious, often such good Christians that they were without sin. In *The History of Israel Jobson, the Wandering Jew* (1757), Miles Wilson, a vicar, envisioned creatures on Saturn who had an eye in front and an eye in back. Despite their monstrous appearance, they too were without sin.

*Who'd sin with them?*

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I stated in my review for *WS* that **Challenger** "deserves to win the Hugo Award one of these years." I'm a firm believer that most categories need either term limits or some other

restrictions, so that greedy people such as Charles Brown, Dave Langford, Bob Eggleton, and Gardner Dozois don't keep other worthies from their shots at Hugos. You would think with **Mimosa** doing reprints and **File 770** so irregular **Challenger** would have won the Hugo at Torcon. But, no, voters are too enamored by name recognition to consider worthiness these days. That's even true in the fiction categories. Neil Gaiman and Michael Swanwick have joined the ranks of Connie Willis and Mike Resnick as writers so personally popular that they almost have to fight to *lose* a Hugo Award. Mass-voting awards are rarely fair, and rarely relevant, in a field which has grown so large it is almost out of control.

*I really appreciate the compliment, but must disagree about Mimosa – it was fantastic this past year, clearly the finest fanzine published. I must also praise Dave Langford's statement from the Hugo dais that fandom "should consider giving the [fan writer] award to someone else" from now on. (Torcon marked my first meeting with Dave, by the way, and he is a great fella.) Gaiman's Hugo-winning story, "Coraline", is fantasy, without a touch of SF content, but spooky and beautifully written.*

The best – and scariest – article in **Chall 18** was "The Clink". I think deep in the back of everybody's mind – or at least in mine – is the fear that someday we will be arrested and thrown in jail either on a mistake, or on a trumped-up charge (such as a ten-year old traffic violation). While reading the article I kept thinking, "But Guy works for the public defender's office; surely he has enough connections to get out!" Unfortunately, I have no such connections, so I'd better stay out of any city whose jails intimidate for me. Getting arrested in Budd Lake might not be life-threatening since my fellow inmates would probably be more harmless than I am.

*You'd be surprised – Roy Logan and Brian Bibb looked harmless, and are probably the most monstrous people I've ever met. Best to cultivate a judge or two as personal pals; I recommend it.*

I also enjoyed Greg Benford's article about visiting China and Japan. But it was much too short! I wanted to read more about the country itself but, of course, part of that is my craving to immerse myself in things Chinese while realizing I will probably never get to visit the country myself.

*We ought to start a SSTCFF – pronounced "sisticuff," maybe – to get you there.*

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I didn't see "The 100 Greatest Movie Heroes and Villains of All Time" which you mention in **Challenger** #18. Gregory Peck in **To Kill a Mockingbird** seems like a good choice as the number one movie hero. However, that got me thinking. While I may be disremembering, I think Gregory Peck also played Dr. Joseph Mengele in **The Boys From Brazil**. That would give him a shot at a place on the villains list as well.

*Peck did indeed play Mengele in that movie, prompting Justin Winston to imagine the monster of Auschwitz – whom we then thought still alive – hearing about it. "Ach! Gregory Peck is playing me? I must be der hero!" "Uhh, Doctor ... he portrays you as a crazed and murderous psychopath." "Jawoul! Then I am der hero!"*

I suppose actors playing both heroes and villains shouldn't be too surprising. Basil Rathbone was the king of swashbuckling villainy and also made the perfect Sherlock Holmes. When thinking about movie villains I doubt one of my childhood favorites made it to the list, Charles Middleton as Ming the Merciless. There was a villain with absolutely no redeeming social value. He was just plain bad to the bone.

E. B. Frohvet's article on insurance law may lead to quite a bit of discussion and even more questions. There was one point that brought me up short. It was regarding the man who had his wife as his beneficiary, but she wasn't paid anything, because she had become his ex-wife by the time he died. My ex-wife was the beneficiary on my life insurance policy for several years after we were divorced. I wasn't planning on dying at the time, and there was nobody else I particularly wanted to make a beneficiary. I eventually made my sister the beneficiary. Had I guessed wrong and died while my ex-wife was still listed, I would have expected she would have received the money. What the heck, I'd have been dead, so I really wouldn't have cared who got the money. I guess the insurance company might have used the change in status to justify not paying anybody anything.

Mike Resnick mentions the thing I may remember most about ConJose, the prices in the eating establishments at the Fairmont. On looking at the menu posted outside the coffee shop, I think I uttered some of those unholy curses which they

were always using in old issues of **Weird Tales**. \$3 for a cup of coffee, Yog Sothoth preserve us. This became only the second time in my entire convening history where I ate no meals in the hotel where I was staying. This made me realize I make a distinction between normal hotel exorbitant and exorbitantly exorbitant. If the hotel charges 50% more than a coffee shop a block away would charge for the same meal, I will pay it. If they charge 100% more, I won't. There are things up with which I will not put.

Your jail anecdote brought back memories of the couple of years back in the seventies when I was involved in running the Van Nuys Jail. Your mention of the guy who must have been wandering around with marijuana stuck up his ass at the time he was arrested doesn't surprise me. Body cavity searches can be important. A couple of years before I was involved with the jail operation, a woman was booked into the female section with a loaded .32 caliber automatic in her vagina. With a little more work, she could have probably held a small convention in there.

As to dumb arrestees, there was one guy we had arrested three times for drunk driving in three days. That's pretty dumb to begin with. However, as he was leaving the station after the third arrest, he decided he was going to show us. He put his fist through a plate glass window. He certainly did show us. He bled all over our police station. Even at that, he was extremely fortunate. He could have had his hand taken off as easily as not. I walked by the broken window shortly after all this happened. If the average human has about six liters of blood, this guy had left about a liter's worth of his at the scene. They had to get back to the infirmary to have the doctor stitch him up before they could book him again.

**Martin Morse Wooster**  
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Many thanks for **Challenger** 18. First off, I'm really glad that you and Rosy had such a good time in Australia. I've had my problems with fan funds over the years; in fact, I side with the fen who feel that TAFF should be abolished, because traveling between the US and Britain is far easier (even in our permanent age of "heightened security") than it was in the 1950s when TAFF was created. But going to Australia is still hard, so DUFF still has a purpose. And I'm glad you won DUFF, because you work hard on your fanzine,

and you and Rosy are fine delegates from American fandom. *Now get to work on your trip report.* If you publish it, I will buy it.

*Another chapter rides this Challenger.*

On the topic of pros competing for fan awards: I find that pros who came out of fandom – like Mike Resnick, Jack Chalker, Dave Langford, and Darrell Schweitzer – are still fans. The fan Hugos should go to the best writers and artists for fanzines – even if their "day job" is as a professional SF writer. I don't have any problems with Dave Langford's countless wins for Best Fan Writer, because he is a very good writer and he produces a fanzine people like. What really troubles me are minor pros who get their friends to nominate them for fan awards so they can be on the Hugo ballot.

As always, Mike Resnick's ConJose report was entertaining. I agree that the nerd who arbitrarily shoved the cast of "The Hugo Nominee" offstage for stupid scheduling reasons is a major-league dweeb. Have Mike and Janis Ian and the rest of the cast thought of doing their performance again in Boston, recording it, and selling the recordings for the SFWA fund for writers with medical emergencies? And his comment about facing 974 e-mails when he came home reminds me of Isaac Asimov, who came home from his one trip overseas and spent the next week typing postcards for 115 correspondents. (Could you imagine how Asimov's productivity would have fallen if e-mail had existed in the 1960s and 1970s?)

Guy's comments about missing the noises of Australia reminds me of the very pleasant day in 1999 I spent at a national park at the end of one of Adelaide's rail lines. I loved the noises from the birds and trees, and went to the local Australian Wilderness Society to buy a CD of bird sounds. I specifically asked for No New Age Music. So when I got back to America, I put the CD on the turntable and – yes, the birds were nearly drowned out by syrup guitars. I've never played that CD again.

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

Did you consider "Anvil Chorus" as the new title for the lettercol?

*No, but I love Shane Stevens.*

Earl Kemp's letter ... One wonders if Mr. Kemp ever considered not *doing* all those things

he kept getting arrested for, and then he wouldn't have needed so many lawyers ... Joseph Major on utopian writers for some reason puts me in mind of Oliver Cromwell, who was determined to impose the New Jerusalem of perfect virtue on England, whether anyone wanted it or not – for their own good, of course.

Happily, I never dream about SF conventions. Most of my nightmares involve being back in high school ... What Alexis Gilliland describes is exactly the tear-gas training I had in Army basic, except that we were not *asked* to participate. By the way, your clothes reek of it; pretty much everyone had to shower and change before being admitted to the mess hall.

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Your tales and pictures of Oz – Australia – give an enticing and tantalizing view of that far country. “No Picnic at Hanging Rock” very nearly gave me acrophobia, even as I wished I had been there. If I can't get there on my own; a good report is the next best thing. I think the real value of DUFF trips is in the personal interaction the travelers get with the people they meet. It's better than being the average tourist who sees only hotels and tourist spots; and the only locals they get to talk to are the ones involved with the tourist trade. With DUFF, you're meeting ordinary people; and even though you see the sights, you also see a lot more of the everyday life in the places you visit. I eagerly await the full report.

And speaking of travel reports, Gregory Benford gives us a fascinating, evocative look at one strange and foreign country (China) and one foreign, if not too strange country (Japan). It's an odd thing that China should be such a populated country, yet so unknown to most of us. Benford's portrait of China reminds me of reports from the old Soviet Union – the lack of mechanization, the necessity to read between the lines of Party doctrine parroted in the newspapers. I wonder how long their regime will last.

“Mike Resnick's ConJose Diary” was fascinating reading, as is usual with his WorldCon reports. There is a certain pleasure in reading that a convention you had to miss was not very well run. The worse a con was, the more smug you can feel at having missed the irritations and inconveniences. I'm sorry I missed ConJose in that WorldCon always has something to offer, but

if I had to miss one, this sounds like one of the better candidates in a while. One of the things I do regret about missing ConJose is hearing his Fan History tour. It was a highlight of MilPhil for me; if he did one at Torcon I missed it. I'll be interested to see what Resnick has to say about Torcon. He mentions ConJose being called “Nolacon II without the French Quarter”; Torcon's already been called “Nolacon II north.”

*You can find Mike's Torcon account within these very staples.*

“The Clink” is scary in its implications. There you are, a white, middle-class, educated man who is knowledgeable about the system – and you spend seven hours in jail for something that should have been cleared up right there in front of your house. What happens to someone in the same position who doesn't know what questions to ask and who to keep pushing?

*They get a lawyer. Hey, congratulations on being elected Official Editor of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance for 2004!*

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First of all, many thanks for your generosity in sending me **Challenger** 17.

I know what you mean about missing Worldcons. We've missed more than we've attended over the past 10 years. I haven't had to endure the Hugo suspense (although I'd like to), but being at home during the Labour Day weekend means you're missing out on seeing friends, and feeling that the SF world is passing you by. However, we are adjusting to it. We plan to go to Boston next year, and if we can, we'll go to Los Angeles in 2006, and if it's chosen, probably Columbus in 2007. After that, I think we're done with Worldcons. They are simply too expensive, they will be going to wonderful places we can't afford to go to, and we have to think more of our retirement. (Yes, we're getting to that age.)

The ideas of generational ships, and other plans to save our species and our planet, or go to Mars, seem to be the victims of pessimism so pervasive in our culture. I spoke to Ben Bova at a signing in Toronto last month, and many of the ideas he may have espoused years ago, he discards now. He's against terraforming Mars, and many of the reclamation projects in vogue for Earth. Not sure what he's *for* anymore.



The horror of 9/11 gave everyone new respect for policemen and fire fighters, albeit temporary. It quickly evaporated with layoffs in New York City, and the resumption of police-based abuses. I have respect for those professions, but none for those who would abuse the privileges and responsibilities that come with the badge. Is it the excitement of the moment that causes the calmest policeman to beat the hell out of innocent bystanders?

Comics never attracted me the way those gosh-wow SF stories did in my youth. Perhaps I was growing up in that time in the early 60s when comics were considered childhood mindrotters. I had a small comics collection on the go, and my mother was in the habit of cleaning up my bedroom by throwing things out. One day, my comics were simply gone. Mother said I hadn't been reading them lately, so she figured I was done with them. Later on, I found books, which are tougher to throw out. I also learned the only way to keep my things in order was to clean up my own room.

I think it's time for a group letter from fanzine fandom for the revival of **Proper Boskonian**. Is there anybody in NESFAland who might be interested in such a daunting project? How about that Bob Devney guy? He might be willing to take it on, if he doesn't feel sucked into the job.

I must agree with Greg Benford at the division of fans and pros. Granted, a lot of pro writers these days never had any connection with fandom, but there's still a few. One of the most active pros in local fandom here is Rob Sawyer,

mostly because of his own early days. I just think there's still some resentment over Dave Langford (both fan and pro) winning the Best Fan Writer Hugo for umpteen years. (Congratulations on your own showing, Guy, with 19 noms. I'm happy with 22, but I still have some hopes for next year in Boston.)

George W. Bush has become the most feared and hated man in the world, and because he has the closest to absolute power, I think he has become corrupted absolutely. I can hardly wait for the next US election to see if any Democrats can rise to the top and make the US a friend to the rest of the world instead of an alien to it.

*ABBA!*

I see you mention Irene Vartanoff, who I believe is still Scott Edelman's S.O. I got to talk to Irene and Scott a few years ago when Scott was a guest at our local convention. Irene was distant, but one Vartanoff I know very well is Ellen. We get together at most Worldcons, and she was looking forward to Torcon, but couldn't go. There's a lot of that going around.

*Ellen Vartanoff is one of the truly great ladies of fandom. She's destined for a Challenger Tribute one of these.*

**Cuyler W. "Ned" Brooks**  
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Re: "No Picnic at Hanging Rock": You've read **Lord of the Rings** and should know not to go adventuring without a bit of *rope*.

Fascinating account by E.B. Frohvet of the insurance claims adjustor's job – I wonder if it occurred to him that the vanished "Alfred" might have been abducted by aliens. I was sorry to see him fold **Twink** ...

*Me too. I've always regarded Twink as Chall's sibling among fanzines, and I will really miss that typeface.*

I bet Terry Jeeves didn't publish "Herb Garden" in any zine in England – he's fairly safe from the *punished* over here ...

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Linda Miller's "Darth Vator" cover illo is the kind of non-sequitorial humour that I like. According to the indicator arrow we are at street



level and, although the cabin is already in the cranial cavity, both eyes say the direction is up. Mentally setting the indicator to, say, level three with one eye pointing up and the other down adds a fugal dimension to paradox, causing the brain to spin in ever diminishing logarithmic spirals. After a few minutes of that I was more than ready to turn the page and look inside.

The issue contains articles and photos mentioning Me from your DUFF trip to Australia in April 2003. That helps, but it's not the only reason I like it.

Michael Estabrook's very welcome blank verse on page twelve is part of an honourable tradition of including poetry in fanzines. I particularly liked Michael's, "One of the times I scared the living hell out of my brother Kerry", a childhood memory that is interesting for its strangeness. Stefan, one of my regular contributors to **Interstellar Ramjet Scoop**, can also be a bit strange; but not as odd ball as his six-year-old nephew. Stefan writes:

Nephew #10 has these 'personalities' that he does from time to time including a old man named 'Cyril' who puts on a croaky voice and dodders around the place generally behaving as an old man would. On Saturday he was being Cyril when Nephew #8 asked me if he could go over to a friend's place. I said that, seeing Cyril was the oldest in the house, he would have to be asked. Nephew #8 went over and asked (you have to talk a bit loudly as Cyril is deaf). Following is the conversation as I remember it.

"Cyril, can I go over to Jacob's place?"

"What?"

"CAN I GO OVER TO JACOB'S?"

"Sit down here young fella, have I ever told you about the war? I fought Hitler you know"  
Me. "Cyril, did you really fight Hitler?"

"Yes, I dropped an atom bomb on him."

"An atom bomb, how did you lift it?"

"I used a crane."

"But didn't the blast hurt you?"

"Nah, I shut my eyes, there was another bloke there that was battling Hitler too. I call him the 'Roast Beef Guy'."

"Why that name?"

"Because when the bomb went off the fire cooked him and he smelt like roast beef. I got medals you know."

"What medals?"

"From the war, I'll get them."

Six-year-old 'Cyril' dodders off and comes back with a couple of medals.

"But they're *bowling* medals."

"I know, I got them for bowling the atom bomb at Hitler."

"I thought you dropped it with a crane?"

"That was another one."

Nephew #8 comes back in and tells us that Jacob wasn't home and asks if he can ring him later.

Me: "You'd better ask Cyril."

"Cyril, can I ring Jacob later?"

"NO!"

Me: "You have to be fair, Cyril."

"I am being fair, I let him ring him before..."

I have to try and keep a straight face while all this is going on. If it wasn't so funny, I'd stop it.

Now, *that* is sheer poetry!

Professor Gregory Benford's 'Asia Major' epistle reinterprets his role as an apostle of what he describes as "The Civilisation of SF". From his little swing through Australia's giant northern neighbours, China and Japan, the reader is led to the maybe-not-so-startling conclusion that our future world will be 'more Asian than we egotistical Westerners would like to contemplate'. According to Benford, we should write off the past, dwell not in myriad possible futures and live for now in love, friendship and fun. But that was only Benford's mood-of-the-moment at the end of a trip. For him, there was never a time when the future is what it used to be. Fresh visions of the future informed by what is believed, from time to time, to have happened in the past are essential daily fare for we denizens of the here and now. That is the very essence of science fiction and, I believe, Benford's unstated point.

Having spent a working lifetime in the insurance industry, a third of it in the actuarial department, I read E B Frohvet's autobiographical essay on "Insurance Law for Fun and Profit" with more than passing interest. Frohvet's experience is in claims assessment, which appears to be far more glamorous than underwriting assessment where I was more at home. His cases involve such exciting topics as missing persons and identity theft, whereas mine were more concerned with medical conditions affecting a proponent's eligibility for life and disability insurance at the outset. For example, it makes a difference whether an applicant's stomach ulcer was a duodenal or gastric lesion. For the former, rating depends on whether

haemorrhage, perforation or surgery occurred, the number of attacks and the time elapsed since the last attack. A simple ulcer present at the time of proposal is generally acceptable subject to an extra premium of one half of one per cent of the sum insured per annum for a limited period of from three to five years. On the other hand, multiple attacks with haemorrhage were, in most cases, unacceptable risks. The most successful operation appears to be partial gastrectomy, and acceptance at ordinary rates is probably acceptable if no symptoms present four or more years afterwards. No symptoms on assessment within four years of the operation attracts a limited extra premium.

Ratings for an ulcer of the stomach caused by hyperacidity of the gastric juice follow the same lines as for a duodenal ulcer. Gastric ulcers may be acute or chronic. Anaemia is common. Dangerous complications are haemorrhage and perforation, both of which need urgent medical and surgical intervention to save life. Premium loadings can be more severe than for duodenal ulcer in view of the greater risk of cancer developing. Life insurance underwriting as exemplified by such riveting medical dramas can be exciting stuff; but it is, I feel, unlikely to appeal across a wide enough spectrum of the work force to be popular as a day job.

There is an echo of John Bangsund at his best in Terry Jeeves's "Herb Garden" ... it's a treat to rediscover even a hint of the subtlety of the seventies in a fanzine of today. **Challenger**, take a bow.

I enjoyed your conversational-style lettercol and applaud its new name, "Chorus Lines".

*And we appreciate our hero from our DUFF trip joining in this issue's Chorus ... and hooray for you for distributing #18 downunder!*

**K-Rin Pender-Gunn**  
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Thank you for sending me **Challenger** 18.

I didn't even know you had been in Australia until after you had left! Julia Hilton happened to have mentioned it. I'm so sorry to have missed you. I could have bored you silly about Mr. Squiggle - I edit his web page on his behalf and am good friends with the Hetheringtons. It just shows how far out of fandom I now am.

*Nick Stathopolous' portrait of Norman Hetherington - and Mr. Squiggle - was pictured last issue, and our visit to the museum to see the actual painting is described in this one.*

The only time I have ever been in court was when some old gentleman took me to court after he had backed into my car and didn't want to pay for the damage. The whole case took about five minutes. The judge looked at the elderly gentleman, then at the papers I had prepared, then at me. He turned to the old fellow and said, "Just pay the lady and stop wasting the court's time." I think I got two of the three payments out of him in the end.

Maybe I'll meet you next time you're Down Under.

*Why not run for DUFF - and meet us at Noreascon 4?*

**Erika Maria Lacey**  
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The first thing that struck me about **Challenger** 18 was the large number of photographs. So many very different faces in many different places.

*Too bad one of them wasn't of you.*

I hadn't really thought about the skies from south and north hemispheres being different. As a child I used to read about that and keep an eye on the sky as we went over the equator. It never did occur to me that the reason I couldn't see any differences was because we were moving too slowly for me to see them. I wasn't exactly the brightest child.

Although not the brightest child, I did read a lot, and it was entirely because of my father that I became at all fannish; he was a fair bit of a reader for all that he didn't care about science fiction. He got SFnal books anyway when he couldn't avoid it and I would devour them from start to end.

I used to write a fair bit, too, although nothing really fannish in nature. They would all be short stories, although I thought them long enough to be novels. I have in front of me one example I've not had the heart to throw away - "The Case of the Bonfire". Told in first person, one Max is wanting a property but the current owner - an old woman - doesn't want to sell. To get it anyway she burnt the place down to the ground, and as cool as a cucumber went socialising afterwards ... and then got nabbed by her boyfriend the policeman. I am so amused by having written it, for I was going through a stage of Agatha Christie novels at the time. Especially of amusement was mention of Weight Watchers margarine. I was being indoctrinated by women's magazines at such an early age!

Another couple of examples were "The Daisy Chain", about a scared and pregnant young girl who ran off so as to avoid scandal but found upon returning that her parents weren't so mad as to disown her after all. A happy ending, as opposed to the previous. Then the last was my much longer and much more plagiaristic "The Summer Squall". Now that was fanfiction in the making - I got myself shipwrecked on an island and become a veritable handiperson in inventing all kinds of things to make life easier. That goes without mentioning my saving what seems to be half of the ocean population of seafarers by the time I stopped writing it. Unfortunately I gave that one away - probably was thrown into the bin shortly afterwards - so I haven't got it at hand to laugh at any longer. At least it kept me out of trouble.

Of all the places I have been to in the world, Asia hasn't been one of them. Well ... not quite; I did go to India, but although that's classified as Asia it's not really quite the same. I don't think that yachting it up past the Straits and to Asia is very good for one's health considering the pirates in the Yellow Sea, so it's by air for me, one day. I'll have to remember that vegetables have got human fertiliser used on them and either boil them really well or not eat them at all. I don't think I want to know what kind of illnesses one could get by eating things grown on human effluvia. Long I have admired the Japanese sense of style, but can't for the life of me implement it - I tried for a while but it just seemed to make everyone uncomfortable in its sparseness.

Most of those in my acquaintance seem to be more enamoured of clutter than of clean lines. It must be a fannish thing of messiness, for all those I know who are fans and when I visit have to traverse a minefield of clothing, books, and other strange objects strewn over floors. At least some seem to have gotten into the habit of throwing away old pizza boxes and alcohol bottles, although by no means this is a universal thing.

It's interesting what the DSM (not DSC) has to say about mental disorders. Dysthymia (not dysthmia) is one of those things which can be applied to almost everyone; I was amazed by how almost any character trait could be construed as a mental illness through the book when studying psychology.

It's also interesting to see how it affects insurance. Frohvet's stories about his work are amusing. There are interesting people everywhere;

one of the reasons why I talk to just about anyone who crosses my way is that I am so absolutely fascinated by people all over. Nobody is boring the first time you meet them. (After that they can be, but chances are not as well.)



Reading your piece on Hanging Rock, I

learn more of the area than I ever did know. I have never seen the film **Picnic at Hanging Rock** -- testament to my poor education in movies, for I have only seen a couple of those of Peter Weir.

*Almost all are essential films, for almost all deal with the clash of cultures and have a significant and fascinating undertext. **Picnic** is best, but **The Last Wave** and his Oscar nominee, **Witness**, are both superb. His current movie is **Master and Commander**, and possesses neither a clash of cultures nor any undertext, but is exceptional commercial filmmaking.*

Climbing all over natural formations is fun indeed. Makes me want to go to Hanging Rock and mooch about myself. Part of the fun of doing most things is the danger, I think; it adds a frisson that the safe never has. I once climbed a dam - not a natural one - just for the fun of it. I push myself in exertion to get a buzz. Drugs don't do much for me, I find; alcohol is bland, marijuana is too, but give me a good hour's worth of trekking around and that does more than any kind of substance ever would!

Reading Mike Resnick's adventures with the dolphins reminds me of when I traveled on a yacht as a youngster. I can agree that whales aren't dangerous; we would spy whales as we travelled all along, and sometimes got nervous that one would decide to rise directly beneath us, but it never happened. We heard tales of yachts being butted gently by whales, out of curiosity I suppose, but never experienced it for ourselves. Often enough they'd rise up, blow a fountain of water, and then disappear, only to come back soon after. They would follow us around. Very curious creatures.

Dolphins would do the same, follow us for miles, only they would do it directly beneath us and

in front of us. They'd chase the bow, diving and leaping and carrying on while myself and my brother watched in glee. It never got old.

The only ones we really did look at all out for were killer whales and a type of very large dolphin. I don't remember what the species was anymore. They had rather shaky reputations – if annoyed they were known to have butted yachts and done structural damage. We were lucky. Others were not.

I must groan at Terry Jeeves' short story. Thyme machine indeed. It smacks of Piers Anthony's **Xanth** series with his penchant for puns.



FRAGMENT OF ILLUSION . MR

Michael Morbius' comments on skeptics who have no respect for their opponents can be widened further to any kind of disagreement. There are far too many people for whom not believing the same thing or liking the same thing is a reason to disparage the other person's choice and attempt to belittle. It's not like they like it done to themselves, and so it boggles me. Just because something is a little out of the ordinary is no reason to dump upon a person. It's not like being nasty ever changed anyone's opinion – if anything it's more likely to make one firmer in their stance for if they believe something and it needs defending then they had better adopt it fiercely. Nobody ever likes to admit they are wrong.

When doing psychology it was rather surprising to see how people caved to authority. There's a classic study by Zimbardo and a bunch of his students about roles of gaolers and prisoners. They randomly allocated students to the role of gaoler or prisoner, and got those allocated prisoner to be arrested – handcuffed, the works – in front of their house or somewhere public. Just as if they were really going to gaol.

Instead they were taken to the lower levels of a building on their campus, which had been made to look like a prison. Within a couple of days the gaolers had become vicious and played mind games with the prisoners, who in turn became downtrodden and timid. Bear in mind that they could have left at *any* point in the experiment. The experiment was terminated because of how everything was turning out -- and interviews afterwards showed that the "prison guards" mostly didn't feel negative about their experience even if a little shocked at how they behaved, whereas the prisoners invariably were traumatised. How's that for perceived authority and giving in to it? Human psychology really is primed towards bending to others' wills, only most people do not get to see this in such a blatant way.

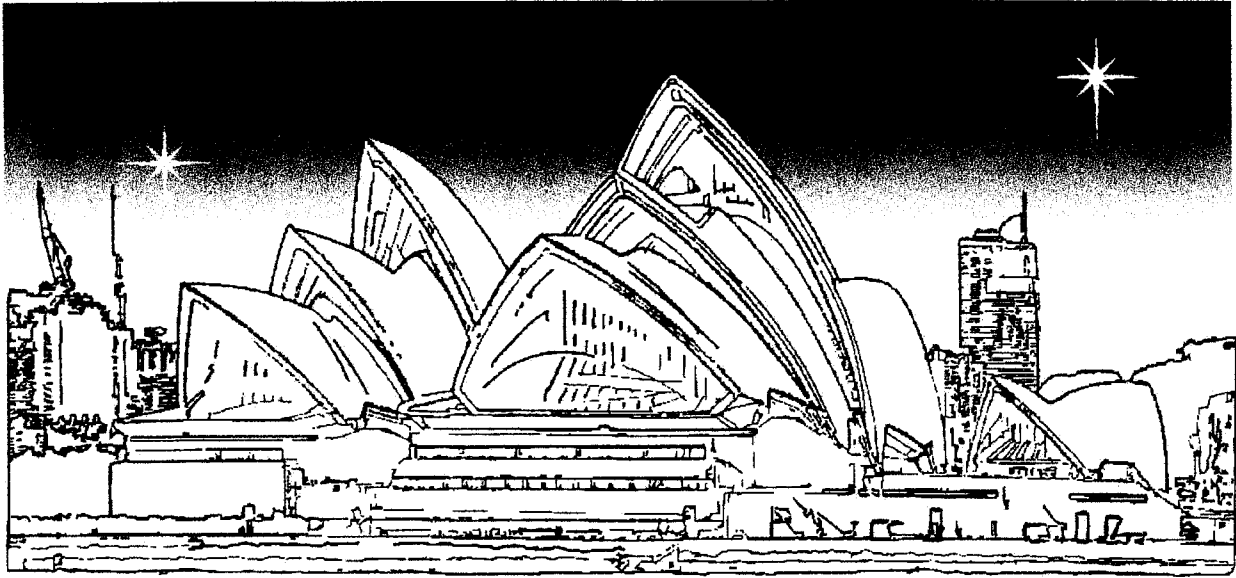
I look forward to news that your DUFF report is available. What you have so far said about Australia has piqued my interest. More people should compose fan fund reports – it's a nice way of almost being there.

*We couldn't have enjoyed Australia more – unless we'd visited the Red Center, the Barrier Reef, and seen lots more fans. Melbourne in 2010! We'll be there ...*

My favorite response to **Challenger** came not from a fan, but an old friend. Toni Coplan was Toni Skinner when she worked on our high school newspaper – lovely (like a young Audrey Hepburn), smart, sweet, truly a class act. Classmates.com brought us together again, and after reading **Chall** #15 she sent me an almost devastatingly complimentary note. "When are you going to write for **The New Yorker**?" she said. She enclosed a pretty Italian journal, bound in gold leather. Its pages are blank ... as if she wants me to fill them. Isn't that nice?



*You know, I dream about going back to Australia.*



# *PPIDE* OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

*Guy Lillian*

*art by Charlie Williams*

*Sydney was a celebration of the Arts.* Of the four cities on our Australian journey, Sydney was the busiest, noisiest – a Chicago downunder; an antipodal New York. But if there was a common element to our experiences there, it was, indeed, *Art*.

As if to get us into the mood, our train from Canberra traversed a slew of aesthetic sights – the Goulburn tower, the streets of Bundanoon, and acres of sheep sheep sheep, fleeing in great puffy waves from the iron horse choochooing through their midst. I kept my eyes out the window, trying to catch sight of the last marvel we hoped to see during our DUFF excursion – Sydney Harbour. I had to settle for a second's glimpse of the “coathanger” bridge. Then the towers of Australia’s most populous city rose about us.

After exploring the high-ceilinged train station, we were met by Nick Stathopoulos, 1986 DUFF winner, 1999 Hugo nominee, and our patient host. Barely a week had gone by since Nick had last put up, and put up with, unexpected visitors, but he was a former DUFF delegate himself, and a trooper. He conveyed us to his grandmother’s terrace in Sydney’s bohemian district, Paddington, a home he was in the process of renovating. He apologized for the “Dickensian” mess of the place, but our bedroom was comfortable and wherever we turned – even in the laundry room – a clever sculpture or a powerful painting came under view. Nick is, as everyone downunder knows, a professional artist of profound ability and humor. In fact, we had to squeeze past a huge self-portrait in his entryway.

Though we'd see a lot of Sydney on our visit, Nick told us, we wouldn't see much of Sydney fandom. There wasn't much Sydney fandom to see. It was fragmented, he said, and uncommunicative. As we sat at his kitchen table, however, sampling tasty jams made from his backyard cumquats, Nick himself was anything but. He listened to our tale of Hanging Rock, inquired about the Natcon we'd attended in Perth (he's won a shelf-ful of Ditmar Awards), and chatted about his artistic career. He showed us the contrast between the Australian version of a book cover he'd done and the American. The vast difference in quality was not to America's benefit. Of course, with the Iraqi war just underway, we also touched on the real world. Nick opened our eyes further to the vast distinction between the way America sees W's hideous adventure, and the world's perspective – a *world* of difference indeed.

One neatness: long ago, he told us, Nick had passed his exams to become, of all horrors, an *attorney*. But he was saved from the barrister's life of despair and travail. As he descended the stairs from signing his license, he'd been met by a friend, who asked if he wanted to paint mattes for *Star Wars*. He's never looked back.

Outside on the street as sleep overcame us, we heard cats, dogs, people ...



... children's voices, and small planes. Daylight. Morning. We were anxious to move. Sights awaited us in Sydney that had roiled in our dreams for many years.

When we hit the streets, Nick led us onto a bus headed for the most famous area of Sydney: The Domain. His excitement grew as we approached the Art Museum of New South Wales. After all, he had a painting hanging there.

Every year Australian artists compete for the Archibald Prize in portraiture. Nick's submission had been one of the 32 finalists. His work was undoubtedly the most popular on display – it had made the feature page of the local newspaper and had the most avid crowds grouped before it. "Here's Mr. Squiggle" depicted the puppet star of an adored kids' show – still on the air after umpteen dozen years – in the gentle paternal embrace of his genius creator, Norman Hetherington. It's a sweet, jolly piece; later, Nick volunteered to autograph museum postcard reproductions to auction for DUFF.

After photographing the smiling artist in front of his charming work (much to the museum's displeasure), we took a quick tour of the other galleries – including a number of pieces by (note this well) Norman Lindsay. My favorite painting: George Lambert's "Across the Black Soil Plains", a team of packhorses pulling a wagon across the outback. It resounded of Australia to me, and the finest quality we Americans share with it: the frontier. Then we were off, through squads of joggers, through the Woolloomooloo Gate and into the Royal Botanic Gardens.

The Gardens are a wide expanse of elegant horticulture cut with manicured pathways, a remarkable urban forest. Nick tapped me to indicate a tall pine hanging with huge, sinister fruit – bats; flying foxes. Beneath lower branches spiders the size of a woman's hand spun webs elaborate and deadly. One specimen stood alone within a cylindrical cage: the rarer than rarer than rare Wollemi Pine, one of only 38 known in the world. Safe as it was from nefarious nurseries seeking cuttings, I rather felt sorry for the little Wollemi – trees should be touched, smelled, climbed. Or walked around – like the Wishing Tree, just down the path: circle it three times forward and thrice *backward*, and you'll get your wish. We did it. So far, so good – Rose-Marie is still with me.

We stopped at a café to eat, talk about Batman and laugh at the ibises who leapt atop the tables to scrounge among the dirty dishes. We figured their curved beaks had evolved to poke into take-away (Australian for “take-out”) containers. Lunch over, we walked to the end of the Bennelong Peninsula, the glorious harbor spreading before us. Nick pointed out a ship seized by the Australian Navy which had been hauling drugs for North Korea. Then we rounded a corner and there it stood.

I cursed the dullness of my mind. For such an experience, every sense should be needle sharp. There had been many sites I had wanted to visit during DUFF. Two were *essential*: Hanging Rock – and the Sydney Opera House.

It’s one of the most famous buildings in the world, strikingly modern, exciting and original, exotic, beautiful. Wowed to our *teeth*, Rosy & I paid for a tour – the guide’s name was Gillian (“Guide Gillian,” right). Sitting in the vast concert hall, a space dominated by the largest mechanical organ in the world, *ten thousand pipes*, we got the lowdown literally from the inside out.

In the late 1950s, we learned, someone noticed the Bennelong peninsula of solid sandstone jutting into Sydney Harbour, hard adjacent to the “Coathanger” Bridge. The space, then occupied by a tram station, seemed the perfect site for a cultural center, which would serve as a symbol of the city. That decided, a competition was held for its design.



Most of the 233 entries were complex and detailed blueprints – but one was a mere drawing. The Danish architect Jorn Utzon had been inspired by the many sailboats cruising Sydney Harbour, and put forward a simple sketch – *this* one. The Aussies were, in a word, wowed. On the basis of that single drawing, Utzon won the contract to build the most famous edifice in the southern hemisphere.

The Sydney Opera House had a design – but no real plan. Bringing Utzon’s scribble to solid reality presented challenge after challenge. For instance, the arched concert halls. The sail-like arches – chunks from a sphere – were only susceptible to Lego-like, segmented fabrication – a million-plus ceramic tiles, triple-glazed off-white so as not to blind onlookers. With such hassles abounding, it took 14 years to build the Sydney Opera House, and cost over a hundred million dollars, Australian. It was financed by a lottery. But the result is a wonder.

The complex fills its cultural duties magnificently – five theatres! – but its history is not without controversy. Both Nick and Gillian described the conflict before the SOH opened between operatic and orchestral factions, each demanding the largest hall. The orchestra won – and its enormous theatre features unmatched acoustics, abetted by soft timber ceilings and sound-deadening rings over the stage, their purpose to protect players from the distraction of their own music. Apparently there is no superior example of the science of sound on that side of the planet. The opera theatre seemed too small for a full-scale Broadway musical, but the designers had built its stage deep to compensate for the lack of wings. One had to imagine how *Carmen* would resonate in such an intimate setting, for the only music from the stage that day was the clamor of stagehands, erecting a set.

However fascinating the history and interior of the SOH, it was the exterior that kept us enraptured. We eyed and photographed those thrilling arches from every conceivable angle, dazzled by one of the last century’s ultimate architectural achievements. It dominated our days in Sydney as it dominated the

Harbour itself, drawing attention from every other charm the city had to offer. More than once, prowling about it, Rosy turned to me, or I turned to her, to say "Look where we *are!*"

But it was also the source of *lament*. Before, the Sydney Opera House was a dream, a fantasy, an unattainable corner of paradise, as distant as the stars in the Southern Cross. Now, the dream was a *place*. A sign by a stairway lacked a few letters. The men's room needed toilet paper. A beautiful place, an incredible place, a unique and marvelous place – but a dream no longer. Now, the Sydney Opera House is a *building* ... and we've *been there*.

We walked around the Harbour, where multitudinous tourist boats dock, and underneath the staggeringly huge Harbour Bridge, where, Nick said, scenes from *Dark City* had been filmed. We wandered the Rocks, Sydney's tony shopping and restaurant district, and flaked at various shoppes until Nick's favorite Japanese restaurant opened. With conversation about SF (Rosy) and sketching (Nick), the day slid into night. We thought we had exhausted our awe. Hahaha.



Nick began our day by presenting Rosy with a *Neville* clone. Neville is a koala bear, two inches long, who grips the visor on Rosy's SUV (okay, he's a toy). We forgot to bring him to Australia (Mib the Panda had to stand in for all our stuffed animals) but this cousin was most welcome. He wore a blue vest marked "Melbourne", and Nick suggested she name him that, but Rosy prefers "Sydney," since that's where he comes from. (As I write Sydney sits atop our bedroom chest of drawers, holding fast to a skinny vase of metal flowers, the tackiest – and my favorite – wedding present from my first trip down the aisle.)



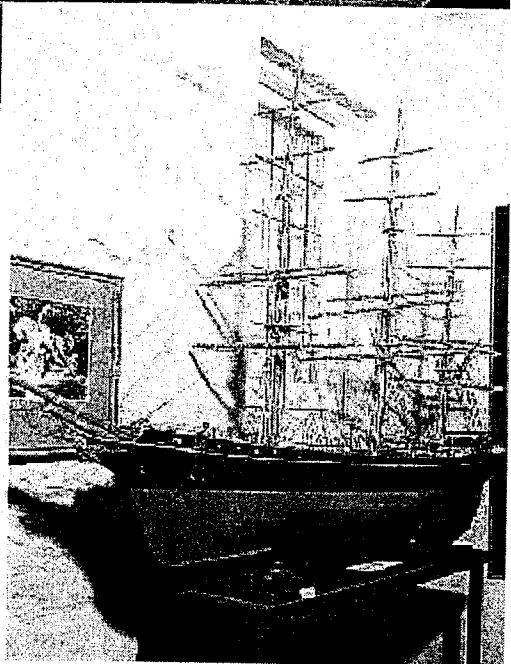
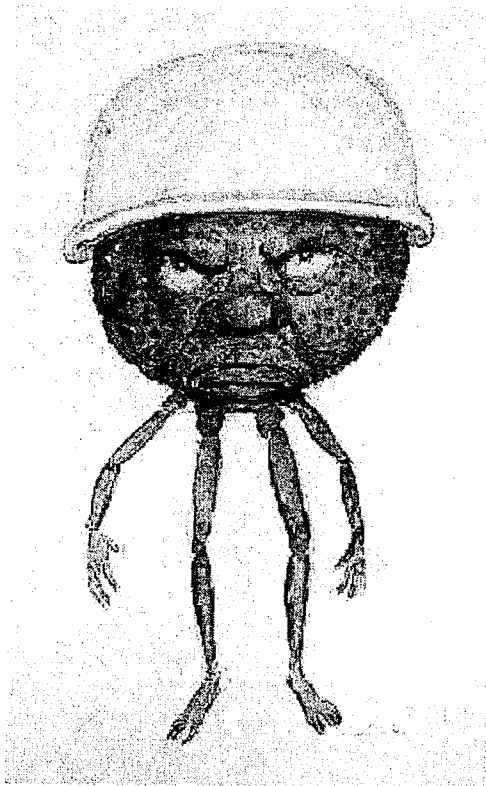
Stathopoulos returned us to the train station for our next epic journey – west, into the Blue Mountains. We had been assured: any stop in Sydney would be wasted which did not include a trip into the midst of those mountains, and the home of Marilyn Pride and Lewis Morley. They were Nick's best friends and DUFF compatriots, and since he wanted us out of the way so he could prepare for a weekend convention, he was glad to set up our visit. How glad we were that he did.

Up we chugged out of the suburbs and into the mountains, rounded and wooded – much more like the Smokies than the younger Rockies. Though our train stopped at many suburban towns on the way, we got a definite sense of *country*; perhaps not the outback wilderness Rosy so wanted to see, but definitely, the city was left behind.

Marilyn met us at the train station with Leela, an adorable pup named for a companion of Dr. Who. Marilyn was familiar – she, Nick and her husband Lewis had been DUFF delegates to Confederation, the Atlanta worldcon in 1986. Long of hair and skirt, she seemed the eternal Earth Mother as she walked us up the hill to their abode. There we found their cool fannish friend Sue Batho – and a house of wonders.



**NORMAN LINDSAY** was a complete artist – a genius in everything he tried. Sculpture – drawing – writing (that’s the title character in **The Magic Pudding** below) – even ship modeling!



You can reach his museum at  
**14 Norman Lindsay Crescent**  
**Falconbridge, via**  
**Springwood 2776**  
**New South Wales, Australia** – or come to our  
DUFF auction at Noreascon 4!

It would have been an astonishing place even with a mundane household – built as it was on a beautiful wooded hillside, with gorgeous crimson rosellas – parrots – mooching grain from plates left on the verandah. Within, earth colors, huge round windows, and wooden walls and furnishings blended the house into the nature about it. But there was little natural about the *décor*. A bust of Yoda sat on a bookcase. A unicorn skull hung from the central support beam. The head of the boar from **Razorback** loomed over the bathroom door, and everywhere, demons and monsters surged from the walls.

All fibreglass and latex. Lewis is a special effects artist, as well as a first class carpenter, and most of the frights on their walls and shelves were props from films he's worked on. (In fact, that was why he wasn't here; he was in Sydney, making an alien tuba for a scene in the next **Star Wars**.) In Marilyn's very Australian term, they had "*heaps* of stuff," and cool, scary stuff it was, too.

In the basement, where Lewis and Marilyn have their studios and workrooms, the heaps were stuffed onto dozens of shelves and hung from every pillar and post. Toy robots, dinosaurs, puppets, *bones* ... and Marilyn's righteous comic book art. She led us into basement rooms where twisted latex Igors fought for space with aliens and demons ... I was utterly enraptured, and Rosy was impressed, but she wondered how anyone could sleep in a house so liberally adorned with horrors. Easily, methought – all the nightmares were on the walls!

It would have taken a lot to expel me from a haven of such imaginative delights. Words that could were, "Norman Lindsay's house? That's right down the road."



The artistic sentiment that took me to the movie **Sirens** came straight from the lizard brain. *I wanted to see Elle MacPherson naked*. Truly, it was a sight worth the foreknowledge of death. But the film had a serious point, celebrating the sensualism of the great artist Norman Lindsay, on whose estate it was made. That estate, his home, studio and gallery, was indeed right down the road from Marilyn's house, and Sue drove us there, a place instantly recognizable, a place almost supernaturally joyous.

A beautiful one-story house on a hilltop dotted with statuary – a satyr grasping at a nymph – a crouching sphinx – mermaids cavorting in a fountain with fabulous oceanic steeds. Some are Lindsay's originals, cement molded over chicken wire, and some replacement bronze copies, cast to preserve the great man's work from the elements. Lindsay spent 60 of his 90 years here, and the place *bulges* with his passion and his talent – oil paintings, sculptures, watercolors, furniture, ship models, books. The children's stories he wrote and illustrated, like **The Magic Pudding**, are classics, but let's face it, it was his contemplation and reproduction of the undraped female form divine that lives on in our minds and hearts.

Lindsay's nudes are neither the insipid dreamgirls of **Playboy** nor **Hustler's** raunchy gynecological exhibitionists. His soft but defiant figures possess strength and power as well as stunning sexuality. Check out **Ladies of Olympus** or **The Amazons** or my personal favorite, **Solly**. These aren't weak or pliant people. These are women you have to *win* – women of confidence and substance. They compel your commitment, to them and to life in the world. Their rendering influenced Frazetta and Finlay, I am told, and they influence artists of today – Nick, for instance, called the house at Springwood one of his favorite places on Earth. If it's a pagan effect they produce, then so be it: Lindsay's instincts sing to the soul.

Among the pen sketches on display were two drawings done 40 years apart – the last when Lindsay was quite elderly. It was sharper, funnier (humor rollicks about this artist), more complex ... this guy's genius just kept on growing. In his studio, abandoned in 1969, the year of Lindsay's death, two unfinished paintings sat on easels, as if awaiting the return of the artist's brush. They made me want to *cry*. He

wrote a wonderful epigram into **The Magic Pudding** – one we could adopt for the whole of our DUFF experience: “*Who would have thought there was so much to see in the world?*”

We were not finished. The work of an even greater artist awaited us.



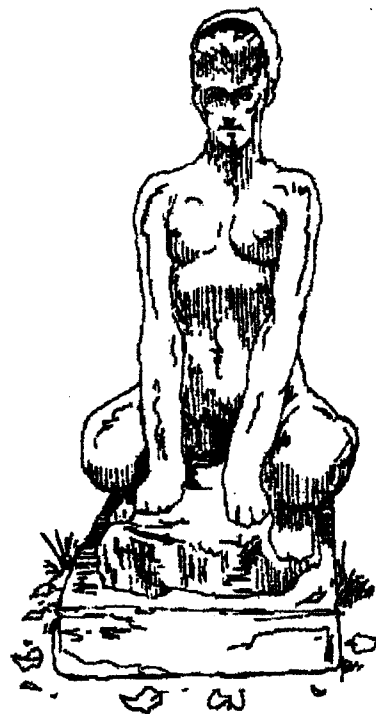
Sue drove us to the end of a road out amongst the low brush of the bush. We stepped over the barrier and walked along the rutted, puddly dirt path to a sandstone platform – broad, relatively flat. Sandstone is soft and teenagers have been carving names and dates and rude messages there for decades. Beyond ...

Beyond was the incredible expanse of the Jamison Valley. The view stretched from Mount Solitary, miles opposite, to the Three Sisters rock formation, miles to our right. Thick and green was the valley below, and I mean *below*; the cliff face was without rail, and sharp, and sheer, and the treetops from which the bell birds sent forth their penetrating *tinks* were hundreds of feet down. How far across to Mount Solitary, bare rock broken by growth – the mountain on which the Sirens of the film had given us its last, unforgettable image? I say miles. It seemed infinite.

I approached the edge. A *long* way down – one step more and I’d learn all there was to know about infinity. And wasn’t that a *wrecked car* nestled amongst the trees? I scrambled back, begging Rosy to do the same – but she and Marilyn had more nerve than Sue or me. They approached the precipice on hands and knees and peered over. “There are *three* wrecked cars down there!”

We moved on to the Wentworth Falls, another site replete with awesome scenery and charm. Marilyn related fairy stories about its Banksia trees and I spotted a single kookaburra, sittin’ in its old gum tree. We drove to the touristy town of Leura, and a sensibly railed observation platform by The Three Sisters, stone monoliths reminiscent of the great columns which flank the Grand Canyon. Bell birds kept up their uneven percussive symphony from the valley below. Finally, as night was upon us, Sue led us to another abutment of sandstone, literally behind her house, where centuries before aborigines had carved images of their sacred tribal totem – the emu. We shone torchlight onto the etched outlines, eying eternity in those works of men long dust. They’d cast their faith into material they felt would last forever. Well, blokes ... so far, so good.

The incredible day was all but done. Our friends – and they were that, now – returned us to the station. While we awaited our train back to Sydney we dined at a pizzeria run by a pretty blonde and her daughters. The tables came with crayons so customers could draw on the placemats, and the walls were covered with the efforts of previous vacationers and visitors, local teenagers and other members of Australia’s friendly and happy people. Not etched in stone, nor worth millions, maybe, but to us, more great Australian art.



## TO CLOSE ...

As I've fondled and tweaked the masters for this **Challenger** (every bit as obscene, but nowhere near as erotic as it sounds) I've fought back a strong sense of *incompletion*. Missing from its pages are two of **Challenger's** signatures: public defender stories and political rants. Since I still love my work and still loathe W, I have no explanation – except sheer exhaustion. Fortunately, I have friends with greater energy, like **Jeff Copeland**, who writes:

I was taken to task recently by an old and dear friend for my arguments *in favor* of the war. And frankly, I was completely wrong in those.

We had Colin Powell providing evidence to the UN that Iraq still had a WMD program. We had the president address accusing Iraq of attempting to buy uranium in the State of the Union. [And ignore the administration's attacks on Joseph Wilson, former US Ambassador to Gabon, who *at the behest of the CIA* went to Niger last fall and determined that the uranium reports were forgeries. In the process, "senior administration officials" intentionally outted Wilson's wife, Valerie Plame, who was an undercover CIA agent specializing in WMDs.] We had Ari Fleischer on April 10th saying, "[Weapons of mass destruction] are what this war was about."

And yet, now that we've declared victory, there's exactly no evidence of any real WMDs. It was the immediate threat of those weapons that drove the administration's urgency. Worse, the press is running around concentrating on the pedigree of the uranium accusation in the State of the Union address, utterly ignoring the pattern of behavior on both sides of the Atlantic spinning intelligence to fit the preconceived notions of the Bush administration.

This is a pattern of behavior unmatched since the CIA was modifying intelligence reports during the Reagan administration, to paint the collapsing Soviet Union as a greater threat than they were, and to drum up congressional support for an invasion of Nicaragua. And I, for one, fell for much of it.

So we had our war. A war of fascinating video-game violence in jerky stop-motion images transmitted by satellite phone.

We declared victory when the Iraqi people tore down a statue of Saddam Hussein. Except that the US military needed to do it for them. And the crowd of Iraqi people in the square at the time numbered about fifty. And those fifty were mostly members of the Iraqi National Congress, the exile group headed by Rumsfeld's buddy and convicted bank fraudster Ahmed Chalabi. And the American soldiers draped the statue with an *American flag*, which was in such poor taste under the circumstances that it made me sputter. We've declared victory, but [except for finding Saddam Hussein], we've actually met exactly zero of the stated goals of this war: we've not found WMDs, we've not brought democracy to Iraq – the puppet governing council whose every decision has to be ratified by the US administrator doesn't count as democracy – we haven't prevented a resurgence of al Qaeda – you'll note there was a major al Qaeda attack *in Riyadh* (talk about biting the hand that feeds you!) during the war – we've done no building of democratic institutions, can't consistently keep power on or get water running in Baghdad or Basra, and we keep flip-flopping on removing Baath Party functionaries from government posts.

To top it off, we've got the likes of George Will complaining that fighting this war makes Shrub a traitor to the conservative cause because the last thing a real conservative wants is to be involved in nation-building. (Here's a clue George: we still aren't involved in nation-building. At the moment, we're occupying Iraq, not restoring its institutions.) Roughly speaking, the American people were *rolled*. I seem to remember using the phrase "excuses not reasons" to describe the arguments put forth by my government beforehand. Now, I'd like some elected official of my country to tell me why we *really* undertook this war.

**Jeff Copeland, 3243 165th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98008**

As for legal stuff, I have an article in the works describing my most challenging court work of the past several months. But the story deals with clients accused of *child molestation*, and is – as you can imagine – grim, grim, *grim*. So here's *this* little tale, infinitely more cheery, about the client I'll call Marlon.

About a year ago, two St. John Parish deputies were cruising past an all-night car wash at a bit

past I AM. They spotted a car parked away from the bays. They stopped, tapped on the windows, and asked the two black fellas inside to step out of the car. Marlon was the passenger – and he did as he was asked, stepped out and stood there. The driver stepped out – and *hauled ass*.

The cops tackled the driver and brought him back to the car, which, he admitted, belonged to him. His running gave the *gendarmes* the right to search the car, and search it they did. Sure enough, in a pocket of the passenger side door, one of the deputies found a wad of cellophane, wrapped around four irregular pieces of stuff that looked like taffy. Ah, he said. Crack cocaine.

Is this yours? they asked the driver. Hell no, he said. Is this *yours*? they asked Marlon. He said nothing. So they charged them both with possession of narcotics.

It took six months for the state crime lab to test the rocks and determine that they did, indeed, contain cocaine. It took more than a year to bring Marlon to trial. During which time he sat in jail.

Aside from the unconscionable delay in getting Marlon in front of a jury, do you see the problem with this case? I certainly did, and so did Marlon. When the District Attorney finally made plea bargain offers, Marlon turned down a deal which would release him in three months. He turned down a second deal which would release him *immediately*. I agreed with his decision. He was on parole for another dope case and a plea would not only force him to do that entire sentence, it would make him a second felony offender. And the case was a winner, because *they had no proof*.

Yes, they had cocaine. They had a guy *next* to the cocaine. But they had no proof – fingerprints, confession, DNA, anything – that he *knew* the cocaine was *there*.

It was an almost embarrassingly thin case – but the state insisted on presenting it to the jury. “There was only one way that cocaine could have gotten into that compartment in that door,” the D.A. opined. “Marlon threw it there when he saw the police!” My counter-suggestion? that Marlon was only hooking a ride with the driver, and didn’t know about the cocaine? “Pure supposition.” \*Sputter! Pfff!\* I was talking “pure supposition”?!?!?

I *wailed* in front of that jury. I wrote “COCAINE” on a slip of paper and had it sitting in front of them when they sat down. They were as close to it as Marlon had been to the genuine article in the car; were *they* guilty of possession? Damn it, you have to *know* about a crime to be responsible for it! For isn’t the difference between our society and Saddam Hussein’s that in America we require *proof* beyond a *reasonable doubt* before we subject a man to chains and bars and the bite of the whip because we are not yet a dictatorship and James Madison, writing the Bill of Rights, stood at his full four feet ten and declared that America stood for the undying principle that better one guilty man go free than a hundred innocent men go to jail – or something like that – and and and ...

And so Marlon’s fate went to the jury of six country people, black and white, male and female, and I began to sweat. Worst trials for a defense lawyer: an innocent client, or at least, a client who was certainly *not guilty*. Would the jury agree?

My spirits plummeted when the six-pack came back with a question about the crime scene. Which way was the car facing? How many times did the police car cruise past? The judge sent them back with regrets: they’d heard all there was to hear. Sounded bad to me: surely the jury was *trying* to find a way to convict Marlon. I was mortified. *Miserable manipulated fear-sucking wannabe-yuppie yes-men* ...

Then they came back., for real, with a verdict. Marlon was acquitted.

One juror knew me from a previous trial, and put it like this: my boy dodged a bullet. The jury had no doubt that he and the driver were up to no good, but the D.A. just had nothing on my guy. If he’d ditched the dope as the prosecutor claimed, it had worked – and so, Marlon was free.

There. Happy ending. Some cocaine off the street and the rights of man protected. Wasn’t that a nice story? What’s that you say? You *want* to read about alleged child molesters? Well, “Kicking a Kitten” will show in **Challenger #20**. Warning, though: it makes the Iraq War seem like comic relief.

Lastly, but far from leastly, a message for “fandom’s faddah” – *get well, Julie!* I’ve been following Julius Schwartz’ medical woes on Harlan Ellison’s blog, and there have been times, I admit, when “His Favorite Guy” despaired. But Schwartz has devoted his whole life to showing us that miracles happen – that “despair” is a word we should all forget. *C’mon, Julie ... do it again.*

*My Great-aunt Cora* was one of the most remarkable people I have ever known.

When, last November, she left this world in her sleep, it was the end of a life that had embraced 95 years, taken her to England during World War II (where she once served lemonade to the King and Queen), brought her a full career with the Red Cross, and delighted many lives. On this page see four of them – my father, me, and my nephew Steve and my mother.

Perhaps her long life bore some pain. She hated outliving my dad, and how my mother's Alzheimer's disease took their friendship of decades away. Diabetes took away most of her



sight in her later years, although she still knew me by voice last summer when Rosy and I surprised her with a visit. She had superb taste, wonderful consideration for others; she was a class act from start to finish. All of our lives have been blessed for having known her.

*Miss Cora Lillian*

*ca. 1908-2003*

