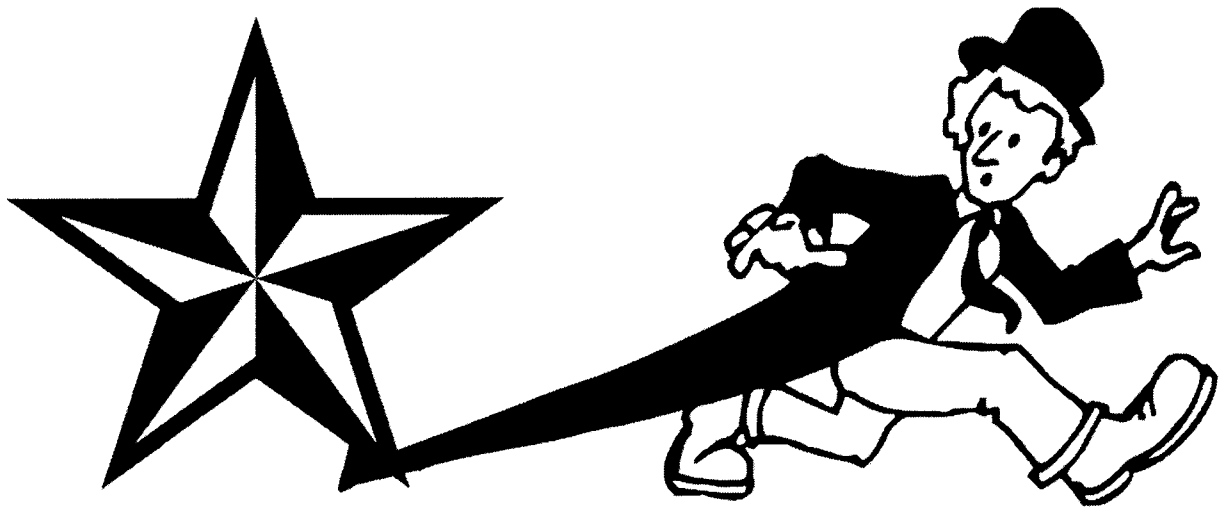




CHALLENGER 31

WINTER 2010

Art by
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CHALLENGER 31

WINTER 2010 | GUY H. LILLIAN III, editor

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CONTENTS

Editorial: Nice Day If It Don't Rain	GHLIII	3
Coming in from the Dark	Lezli Robyn	6
Boiler Explosion: Steampunk and 2010	Chris Garcia	9
Harpo Marx: The Spy Who Wouldn't Talk	Steven Silver (art by C. Williams & E. Silver)	12
Mr. Couch Potatohead	Lester Boutillier	16
50 Years with <i>The Twilight Zone</i>	GHLIII (illo by Dave Ryan)	19
Rosy's Photo Album	Rose-Marie Lillian	23
Anticipation Diary	Mike Resnick (art by anonymous)	24
The Moon and Buzz	Gregory Benford	33
The <i>Challenger</i> Tribute: Cathy Palmer-Lister		34
The Last Mary Jane Story	Tara Wayne (art by the author)	36
Mr. Couch Potatohead II: Morgus the Magnificent	Lester Boutillier	43
The Food Stamp Challenge	Rich Dengrove	46
The Future of Longevity	Greg Benford	50
Meteor, Inc.	Bill Wright	55
My Gang of 42	Mike Resnick (art by Kurt Erichsen)	56
Mr. Couch Potatohead III: Rocky & Bullwinkle	Lester Boutillier	63
A Tale of Two DeepSouthCons: Part One	GHLIII (illos by several)	64
The Chorus Lines	our noble readership	73
Harrowing Years	Mike Estabrook	100
Oh When the Saints...		105

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An Editorial: **NICE
DAY IF IT
DON'T RAIN**



Guy Lillian

On October 29th, 2009 I left the public defender's office early. Several of my co-workers had already gone and those who remained knew I lived some distance away and encouraged me to go. Outside it was raining and it was going to get worse. The latest in a series of bad thunderstorms was marching northwards towards Bossier City. Benton, the little town where Bossier Parish has its courthouse and I work, is only a few cattle-grazing miles beyond that. Bad weather isn't new to the corner of Louisiana known as the Ark-La-Tex, but the ladies in the office had been listening to the weather reports and one word kept flashing through their banter: *tornado*.

I have a *thing* for tornadoes that must emit from deep within my subconscious. For years twisters have been one of my common dream tropes, along with Niagara Falls, Hugo ceremonies, taxiing towards takeoff in an airplane, realizing I have a final pending in a class I've forgotten and wandering naked into a courtroom. For awhile I collected "twister porn," videos of terrible storms. I take special notice when I-71 takes me by Xenia, Ohio, site of one of the most fearsome tornados in US history. Before 10-29, I'd never seen a real-live tornado, and had regretted it, which when you think about it is a lot like regretting never having fallen off a tall building: it must be one helluvan experience but it's very likely to be the last one you have. Obviously, tornadoes must mean something *deep* to me. After October 29, that was indisputable.

As I do every afternoon, I drove "Little Red", my Mini Cooper, south on Old Benton Road. The extensive Festervan Farms and the clever cut-out of a steer they've placed by its fence fell behind. Far ahead, over Shreveport, a massive grey cloud avalanched our way – very dark, very big, very bad, but nothing worse than I'd seen a dozen times in the five years I'd made that drive. Strong rains came, off and on, but I wasn't concerned; in fact, I called Rosy at her teaching job at LSU-S and asked if she'd like a Subways sandwich for supper. Car dealerships, the common guardians of many an American suburb, appeared to my right, and the by-pass freeway, I-220, cut across the road just ahead. I finished my call to Rosy. The rain came again.

But now it was different. The rain came in fast hard waves, slapping my windshield one after another, driven by fierce winds – growing fiercer. The rain turned white. The white became opaque. I couldn't see the road. I hit my emergency blinkers and pulled over, hoping I wouldn't find a ditch. I recognized some of the twister porn I'd watched in the sudden white wind tearing hell out of the world. I said to myself, "Hell, I'm in the middle of it," because I knew what was coming inside that depthless white pall.

Well. "God, be with me," I said, out loud, and "I love you, Rosy!"

The wind tore savagely at the trees outside, which recoiled pitifully from its fury. A trashcan lid spun over my hood like a giant frisbee. It occurred to me that I ought to get out of there. I took a chance and pulled across the lanes, grateful that I could see the yellow lines. I floored Little Red and ran for it.

I called my office. The thing was headed their way. "Get under your desks!" I commanded. "Find a central room! *Right now!*"

Ahead the air cleared enough for me to see a line of stopped traffic. I did not want to stop. Safety seemed to me to be caught up in keeping moving. I pulled into a subdivision. Trees were down all over the roads. Though I was glad of a small, tough car to wend my way through the debris, I worried about catching a limb underneath the Mini and wracking out its undercarriage. The air was clear now and I could see trees split in the yards of the nice houses. The wood looked wounded, moist and living.

I turned back to Old Benton Road. The tall sign of one of the car dealerships leaned over the road, twisted like a pipecleaner. That just happened, I said to myself. The same thing hit it as hit me. A little ways down I pulled into a gas station. Everyone was on their cellphones. One pretty young lady wept into hers: "I was getting gas and ..."

Inside the 7/11 the nervous attendant called for last buys, since she was closing down. A fella who wanted to drive north to Texarkana showed me the weather on his Blackberry: a vertical line of glowing gold atop a map of the area. "Put up a sail," I said. "You'll be there in no time." A black lady led her just-over-toddler son towards the bathroom, haven for the storm-wary, because someone said another twister was on the way. The little dude picked up on everyone else's fear, and began to cry. I tried to squelch that with a smile.

I drove to my neighborhood. No damage: not even leaves on the ground. Rosy was safe at school – they'd canceled her movie class, so I wouldn't get to give my lecture on the chariot races in the two *Ben-Hurs*. I bought her that sandwich. At home, our yorkies were frantic but they calmed after I set out some chow. Rosy returned and we spent the evening listening to the storm bash itself out and watching the local weathermen earn their salaries. Shreveport made the national news for the first time since Josh Brolin got arrested here while filming *W*. The steeple on the downtown Methodist Church had fallen, crushing a car and injuring the driver.

I started to think about what had happened to me and how I'd met it. I hadn't been scared. Too busy. I'd saved myself. Thought of Rosy. Thank heaven for a small, low, heavy car with built-in stabilizers. But I couldn't stop thinking about it. Twenty-four hours after the tornado passed – Force 2, I found out later – I gave in to temptation and followed its route north. Though you couldn't miss the de-steepling of the downtown church, there wasn't much damage evident on Old Benton Road: a Century 21 placard hanging loose from its signpost, a little trash on the lawns, that sort of thing. Had I dreamed it all?

But once I reached I-220, the traffic thickened, and it was soon clear that it wasn't entirely due to rush hour. Cranes, phone repairmen, cops ... swarming. The nice houses along this stretch had been trashed. Fences were down. Trees had been ripped to pieces. Shingles lay on the lawns, and stacks of dying branches by every driveway. Blue tarp, familiar from post-K New Orleans, was beginning to cover roofs. Nothing could do that but disaster. It was real, all right.



In a way the October tornado capped 2009 – a most remarkable year. It began with a funeral and ended eating eggs benedict over lobster on Key West. It was the year I turned 60 – that still sounds ridiculous – that my mother died, Rosy and I became solvent, the Saints won and won and won, and we decided to look for a house. 60 or not, life goes on, and the lesson of the tornado is simple: treasure its every moment. Chaos is always looming. You can't control it., only how you face it. *Face it with joy.* And stay off the roads during tornado weather.



This issue of *Challenger* thrives with good writing. Lester Boutillier adapts his e-mail series about his early life in front of the TV, "Mr. CouchPotatohead". Steve Silver writes about Harpo Marx, supplementing his superb articles in other fanzines about silent film comedians. Mike Resnick contributes his worldcon diary – always enviable – and talks about his many collaborators. Speaking of whom ... If you want an example of a great person facing great challenges with great joy and great courage, you may find it in Lezli Robyn's "Coming in from the Dark", one of the most remarkable and beautiful memoirs I have ever read. *Challenger* is honored to present it. **LEZLI FOR CAMPBELL!**

Greg Benford looks to the SFnal dream of immortality and wonders, why not? Rich Dengrove adds *Challenger*'s dose of real-life politics for the issue, Rose-Marie whets our appetites for her Photo Album with a distinguished item therefrom, and Taral Wayne gives us our ration of satiric *Trek* fiction. As for me ...

It's funny to remember the exact moments when a life's loves are discovered. I vividly recall finding an issue of *The Flash* in a stack of magazines at my grandmother's house – an event which led to my first job, my lifelong friendship with a fannish legend, and – by convoluted means – to my doing *Challenger*. Likewise, the first time I saw *The Twilight Zone* is still resonant in my mind. Herein I celebrate a half-century of memories of the immortal series. I also look back – not *quite* nostalgically – at the first of two successive DeepSouthCons, one of extraordinary importance to fandom, the other of extraordinary importance to *me*. There's the issue; I hope it sits well with you.

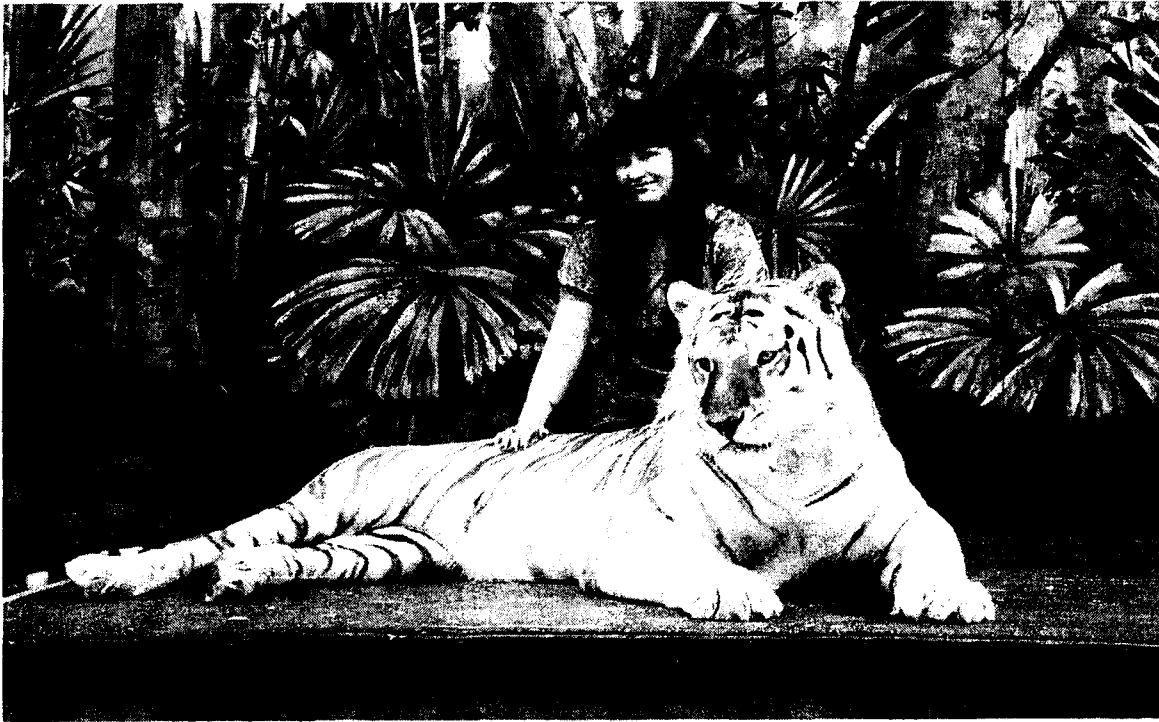
Next time? Haven't given it a thought, and won't for a while. Now that this *Challenger* is done, all of my creative energies must be focused on the NASFiC program book, which I've agreed to edit. Although I've done two worldcon souvenir tomes before, this is a more daunting job, because I must handle myself the tasks Geri Sullivan and Peggy Ranson so ably accomplished for the Noreason IV and Nolacon II books: establishing budgets and finding printers. *Challenger* #32 must ride a back burner till that task is done.

Nevertheless, I beg for your LOCs and your ideas for *Chall* #32. And if I come up with a theme, watch for an announcement in *The Zine Dump*, later in the spring.



Bid welcome, all, to Jodi's Princess Ginger Snap – a.k.a. **Ginger!** Following the death of my boss at the public defender's office, his widow offered to let us take this foxy little mama as companion to our male yorkie, Pepper. I'm happy to report that they get along splendidly. They'd already had one litter, and judging from their scandalous misconduct on our recent trip to Florida, may well be en route to another. Both Ginger and Pepper are AKC-certified purebred yorkie terriers, by the way, so if you're in the market for a thoroughbred woofer, let us know!





COMING IN FROM THE DARK

Lezli Robyn

It's been 14 months since my first story publication, and as I travel on the train to work tonight I realize my journey has been more than physical; my whole life has changed. Before that first story I had never written fiction; never let my imagination soar with the written word. But by 2010 I have made 8 professional sales to premier publishers in America, sold reprints to countries as diverse as Russia, China, Poland, Italy, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Greece, and I was a finalist for the science fiction short story category of the Aurealis Awards, Australia's premier achievement for that genre.

I didn't win that award, but how could I be disappointed? I understand now why people say it's an honor just to be nominated. I realized – even as the winner was being announced – that I would have loved to have been there with the rest of the Aussie science fiction community, even if I was never nominated.

It was then I recognized that I'd truly found a home. Writing fiction might be a way to let my imagination come to life and my soul to grow, but the sf community was where I could share those dreams with those of like minds.

For the past two years I have been going to Worldcon, where so many there have been incredibly welcoming to an Aussie lass who never knew this magical world of conventions existed until I bought a \$50 eBay book off my now-frequent collaborator, Mike Resnick. Now I have friendships that span the globe. I talk to writers, editors, publishers, artists and fans alike on a daily basis online, and received free (often signed) books in the mail so regularly I haven't had to buy a book on eBay in quite some time.

I was accepted into the diverse community – but more than that, I was encouraged to find my place there, to discover my love for writing, and was in the right environment to nourish it and let it grow. And yet at the same time I have been very aware that my entrance into the field has been very different than others. Instead of spending years writing and trying to get noticed as one of the hundreds of writers in a slush pile, my first sale was with an award-winning author. Since then I've sold every short story I've written, but oddly enough, none to my own country. That has produced mixed reactions. Some Aussie authors tell me it's wonderful that I've been able to break into the international market at the start of my career, because some of the markets I've cracked into are hard ones or well-paying ones. Likewise, other people have told me that I've taken the easy road into publishing by selling with Mike, as if I didn't do the work to make our collaborative stories saleable to the markets they were bought by.

Even prominent reviewers who have recommended the stories I have written with Mike for prominent awards omit my name as co-writer, which makes me wonder what they assume my contribution was. Now, in my opinion, I take it as a compliment if reviewers think my writing is good enough to be mistaken for being completely Mike's (considering his experience of 40+ years in the field and slew of awards for his talent), but knowing that some of the people *do* question my contribution, I've worked hard to make sure that I always offer more than my half share to my collaborations with Mike, and that I sell solo stories of equal quality.

I have a lot to learn, and I will no doubt make mistakes. But those are two things I have in common with other writers, as well as the dedication, perseverance and love to make my fiction work. So I started seeking out Aussie authors on Facebook; to find some home-grown members of the sf community I had grown to love. And I discovered at the Aurealis Awards that there is also a very strong sense of family among those who attended...

And I realized that I had still been holding myself back from the new family I have found.



I have been legally blind for the past few years, with a very unusual condition called *Keratoconus*, and only a few close friends within the field know about it, including the lovely publisher of this magazine. (Well, the dragon is kind of out of the bag now!) You see, I never wanted anyone to pity me or label me, or to see me as other than the bubbly, talkative – hopefully interesting – emerging writer that I am. I wanted to make good impressions on editors with my writing, and form friendships with writers online or at conventions, building upon our similarities, not singling out a major difference I have that can separate us.

You see, my eye condition is unusual in that it's described as being blinded by light. I see a multitude of doubles through each eye (although the left eye is worse) as well as ghosting and warping of images in general. When I see a light – even a small one – the compounding doubles cover everything around it, the halo often making it hard to see anything. I can't drive, I'm close to hopeless writing in the evenings (with all the artificial light around me), and in general not knowing exactly where the edges of things are makes me a total (but occasionally funny) klutz.

But it's not a condition where I use a guide dog or a stick, and so unless people *know* me, I can pretty much navigate myself around (although I'm a little vulnerable in crowded dark rooms)

without people realizing. And I've been very proud of the fact that, in general, people haven't noticed I have a vision handicap.

Well, at the Aurealis Awards I was confronted by how limiting my sight can be. Being new to the business, and never having sold a story to Australia, I was meeting everyone for the first time at the awards. I had gotten to know some of the attending Aussie authors on Facebook, but on the night I discovered that with the lighting and with so many people, I had trouble spotting any of them. (And my family had no reason to know who was who, as they were only there to support me.) So it made it hard for me to mingle, as I couldn't see who I was walking up to, and I had trouble navigating the room in general. So for the start of the evening I pretty much stood in the same corner of the room, for once at a loss of what to do. It was a very confronting situation for a social girl like me, who just loves to get to know people. I felt like I was missing an opportunity.

Then I was very lucky enough to recognise one person, and after introducing myself to him, he said "And have you met...?" and this lovely man introduced me to a lot of people I had wanted to congratulate (the winners), or get to know (editors and fellow nominees). And it meant that they in turn introduced me to others, and all of a sudden I could create visual cues (such as mine are) to be able to spot them easier in the future.

I realized then that *I* was the one limiting my participation in my own community by trying to hide my eye condition. Like the lovely man who helped introduce me to many people on the night, I knew others would have helped me if I had told them I was legally blind. That is part of what belonging to a community entails. I was effectively alienating myself from the sf family I have admitted has given me a second home, for fear of not being seen beyond my eye condition. I do not see myself as being disabled. I merely look at life differently than others.

What's in the future for me within the sf field?

To be honest, I'm not certain. Some more story sales. Possibly a chance to win the Campbell Award this year... Who knows?

What I do know is that even if I don't make another fiction sale, I'm officially a member of the sf community, and proud of it. I'm not hiding anymore.



Keeping up advised of the future of the way the future was in the past ...or something ...

BOILER EXPLOSION:

STEAMPUNK CONVENTIONS AND THE YEAR 2010

Chris Garcia

In 2008, Steam-powered was the first major Steampunk-centric convention, hosted in my hometown of Sunnyvale, CA. It drew more than 500 people, got rave reviews and showed that there was a market for a con dedicated specifically to Steampunk as a literature and a lifestyle. Folks came from all over, including authors and artists like Phil & Kaija Foglio, Greg Broadmore from WETA Workshop in New Zealand, Jeff and Ann Verder Meer, James Blaylock and the band Abney Park. It was a big deal, got a great deal in both local and national press, including mentions in *Wired* magazine and METRO, the Silicon Valley's Weekly Newspaper (which kindly included a mention of my talk at the con). Having been there, it was a great time.

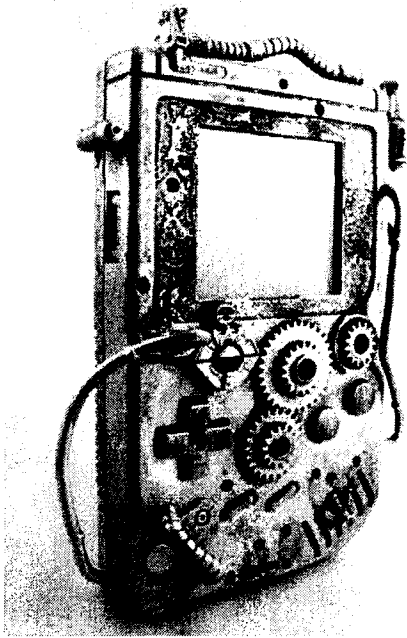
At Steam-powered, which had some management blow-ups after the con leading to no return engagement, there were flyers for SteamCon, another Steampunk con in Seattle almost exactly a year after Steam-powered. SteamCon announced that they'd got Tim Powers to be their Author Guest of Honor, which was a good name to draw with. They had a year of getting the name out and they drew well more than a thousand people from all over North America (and I think The UK as well) and while it had long lines for registration and the Saturday night concert, it was a very well-received con and one that's planning a 2010 return. I certainly had a wonderful time as a presenter and am planning on returning next year.

There was another convention, or as they called it a 'Convivial' that took place in the UK slightly ahead of SteamCon. It was called The Asylum and it was a very interesting, and much smaller, UK gathering of mostly European Steampunks. It also got strong reviews from folks, and there are plans for another edition in 2010.

And those are the first 3 Steampunk-centric conventions in the history of the world. While other cons have had a Steampunk theme (notably WindyCon 2009 and Baycon 2009), these were the only cons that were specifically dedicated to Steampunk from their founding. Supposedly, though I can't find solid info, there was a Steampunk convention in Spain and another in Russia, though that was more of a meet-up. Whenever something works for someone, others try to hop on make their name off of it, and that's exactly what's happening with Steampunk conventions in 2010.

First, there's the return of a BAarea Steampunk convention. The Nova Albion Steampunk Exhibition, which the cool kids are already calling SteamX, is planned for March in Emeryville. It's some of the team from the first Steampunk convention, including the programming team, and they've cut loose some of the less successful team members from Steam-powered. It's going to be a big deal con again, though I doubt they'll draw the sort of attention they drew in 2008. This is the first Steampunk con of 2010, and it was the first to start publicizing itself. It's in my wheelhouse, so I'll be there, giving my talks on Those Whacky Victorians and Charles Babbage.

The next big convention comes to Saint Louis in April. I haven't been able to find a lot of info on it other than a group of St. Louis Steampunks who were at WindyCon. It's likely to be small, or so they say, but St. Louis has a lively community that I've only been aware of through Dragon*Con's photo galleries. This, at least partly, feels like a "Me Too!" convention, one that sees that there's a community out there and they should start something, anything, to simply get in on it. These kinds of cons happen whenever some sort of fandom gets hot, sometimes with near-tragic consequences. There was a Firefly convention scheduled for LA in 2006 that went belly-up and took the money of a number of folks with it. There are large signing conventions in most areas of interest, and while some take a minor profit, some burn out in a way that eventually



involves the district attorney. I'm specifically thinking of the wrestling event in October of 2007 and the FedCon which was cancelled in the middle of the event. Of course, there's also JumpCon, which led to serious criminal convictions.

In May there are two events planned: one for Deerborn, Michigan and one for Piscataway, New Jersey. The Piscataway event is called The Steampunk World's Faire. There were a bunch of posts of folks talking about a Philadelphia convention, though this may be some of, or all of, the people involved with that event. The Steampunk World's Faire is set for May 14-16. It's an interesting weekend, but it can totally work. The event has a couple of dances, a cabaret, a tea party, a murder mystery dinner and they're teasing a Steampunk Rock Opera! That's awesome sauce. The later May event, on Memorial Day, is the World's Steam Expo. The names make it very possible to confuse the two events. They're also advertising a lot of similar events: a Mad Science Faire, a High Tea, a

dance and so on. It'll be very easy to confuse these two. Of course, there's also the difference that the Deerborn event is also tying itself with the fact that it's in Henry Ford's home town.

The confusion between the two is probably not going to affect either, but the fact that they're two weeks apart will likely hurt both of them. The fact that Memorial Day is also one of the biggest weekends for regional conventions like BayCon, MarCon, WisCon, MisCon and so on. It's a tough time. The fact that a new con put itself up against a raft of cons that have been around for ages is both ballsy and dangerous. MarCon has a strong Steampunk contingent. There is a tradition of cons trying to put themselves against established cons and failing. There's always the desire to tap into a weekend when folks are going to have time, but that idea has been around for a few decades and it means you've got a lot to work against.

After that, summer. The summer months are always packed, even for us Steampunks. Comic-Con in San Diego and Dragon*Con in Atlanta are both huge draws for Steampunk costumers and writers. There's also the raft of other cons, including the Australian WorldCon. That does seem to help Steampunk conventions due to the fact that it's a pricey con, and the Steampunk crew aren't the ones who would spend the money to fly out to Oz, though they might make the trip to wherever in the US. That would free up some con-going money for some folks.

In September, the people who brought us The Asylum, UK Steampunk Convivial, will be doing their second edition. That's interesting, but they're also talking about doing a smaller event over Easter weekend. Well, the UK has an extremely well-established convention called ... wait for it ... *Eastercon*. That's the British National Science Fiction Convention. It's also a tough time because there's World Horror Con in Brighton the weekend before. Still, every report I heard out of The Asylum from this year was wildly positive.

SteamCon II: Steampunk Bugaloo will drop in October again in Seattle. Now, this year's turn-out was much bigger than expected, and they've said they're planning on expanding, and that might be worrisome because there are other games in town and there was a pretty good sized traveling contingent that might not happen now that there are other options.

This can be seen with some of the Furry cons. There were only a couple of games in town and when more started popping up, the travelers started hitting only a couple of them instead of all of them. They'd do one of the big ones, Further Confusion or MidWest Fur Fest, and then their local Furry convention and not all of them that were out there. This could well be what we'll see with the Steampunk cons.

One that I think will have a serious shot at success because it's so different will be TeslaCon. It's a far more focused con, it seems, centered around the playing of roles and a murder mystery thing. They're even producing a film thing that looks like it's going to be pretty awesome. They had a great room party at WindyCon, with a giant photo backdrop. They were ready and since they have a solid concept, they can probably make a solid win by drawing in folks who aren't just Steampunk fans. They're solidly focused on hitting a more dedicated crowd. It's an interesting concept and I'm thinking they might just make it happen and have a regular run.

The thing is, these are groups that either have loose affiliations with SF Fandom or none at all. SteamCon was a major break from that as the Chair, Programming Head and Vice-Chair all regularly work with NorWesCon, though that's somewhat more isolated than most cons. This is an interesting notion, because they probably have little idea how cons have failed. As long as there have been cons, there have been problems, and the closer you are to SF cons, the better view you've got of how they happened and what they led to. There are reasons why cons don't typically do daycare, and there were a couple of the Steampunk conventions that were actively advertising that they'll provide all-day daycare. There are very good reasons why cons have the departments they have and why they put certain things in certain ways. These will naturally fall in line as they go along, but there's a good reason for having folks who have been in the trenches, because a first year failure is very difficult to come back from. Just ask the Bay Area folks involved with Con-X-Treme.

This also brings up a bigger question: are Steampunk fans SF fans? This is a serious question, as there are tons of folks I've met at the two Steampunk conventions I've been to that have no connection to SF at all. In fact, there were a couple of folks who had never heard of Steampunk as a written thing and only thought that it was a costuming thing. It happens. The thing is, if Steampunk is completely separate from SF, then you have to think that the sky is the limit. This would be an isolated crowd, the ups-and-downs of what we might consider 'mainstream' fandom would have little effect on this crowd. It also would draw folks who might attend SF cons but more attach themselves to Steampunk to stay away at a time when having more attendees at a WorldCon would be a very nice thing. Of course, that also means that the structures that many cons have to keep each other going are likely outside the realm of most of these cons.

The thing is this is just about the same point as 1970s fandom. There was a whole raft of new fans who came out of the *Star Trek* fandoms. Read some of the reviews from 1970s cons where *Star Trek* groups were coming up and you'll see the way they were often pulled in with open arms by con-runners, but many of the traditional fans were resentful to these interlopers. Of course, they also set up their own cons that grew quickly, so much so that companies like Creation came about and started making big money. These cons managed to stick around, providing a product that those of us in the mainstream of SF fandom typically don't prefer, but they drew lots of people.

Steampunk does have one thing going for it: the internet. There are hundreds of sites, Facebook groups, LJs and pretty much every other method of interacting without having to actually be in the same place with people. It has supported the community and grown it, giving a sense of community that you seldom see. Everyone knows everyone, everyone knows what everyone does. It's an amazing thing.

Let's see where it goes. I love Steampunk (the lit, not the dressing up, though that's another article) and I hope these cons go well. Who knows if the crowding of cons can last, but if they do, we'll be seeing a lot more in 2011!





Says the author: I had offered to let Guy run the sixth and final portion of my lengthy article on silent film comedians, covering Charles Chaplin, for *Challenger*. However, while the earlier articles appeared in *Reluctant Famulus*, *Chunga*, *The Drink Tank*, *Alexiad*, and *Askance*, by the time *Challenger* was ready to go to press, I had already run all six articles together (with additional information) in *Argentus*. Guy, therefore, asked if I had anything else for him. Figuring that I had already set a theme of silent film actors, I decided to look at a comedian who was known for being silent in talking films: Harpo Marx. However, rather than look at his life, or his career, I would look at a very specific six weeks in his life, and so I offer to Guy and *Challenger* readers:

HARPO MARX:

The Spy Who Wouldn't Talk

Steven H Silver

Art by CHARLIE WILLIAMS
and ELAINE SILVER

In 1929, the Marx Brothers released their “first” film, *The Cocoanuts*, based on their Broadway play of the same title. In fact, eight years earlier, the brothers tried their hand with film, making *Humor Risk*, which didn’t work well for them since so much of their comedy was based on quips and fast-talking. The film may never have been shown to a public audience and all copies of it have been lost.

In between those two films, the brother who was most suited for a life in silent films, Harpo (born Adolph, later changed to Arthur¹), made a film in which he had his only line of dialogue. In *Too Many Kisses*, Harpo played the role of the village Peter Pan, a nastier version of the scamp he played in so many films with his brothers. When he came across a tied up character who asked Harpo to untie him, Harpo responded, “You sure you can’t move?” before punching the character and knocking him down. Of course, two years before *The Jazz Singer*, Harpo’s line was presented only in the title cards and the film would be completely forgotten today except for Harpo’s brief scene, lasting less than a minute.

Following *Too Many Kisses*, Harpo and his brothers made thirteen films between 1929 and 1949, ending with the highly forgettable *Love Happy* (notable as one of Marilyn Monroe’s first roles). During that time, in between the release of the fifth Marx Brothers film, *Duck Soup* and the sixth, *A Night at the Opera*, Harpo found himself in a history-making role.

On May 19, 1924, after many years in Vaudeville, the Marx Brothers made their Broadway debut in the play *I’ll Say She Is*. The reviewer for the *New York Sun* wrote a glowing, if strange, review which was headlined “Harpo Marx and Some Brothers. Hilarious Antics Spread Good Cheer at the Casino.” On May 20, the reviewer sought out Harpo and the two became close friends. Alexander Woollcott was a member of the Algonquin Round Table and brought Harpo into that august literary ensemble, providing the only person at the table who actually spent most of his time listening.

Nine years later, Woollcott had a fantastic idea and he approached Harpo saying, “I’ve decided that Harpo Marx should be the first American artist to perform in Moscow after the US and the USSR become friendly nations. They’ll adore you. With a name like yours, how can you miss? Can’t you see the three-sheets? ‘*Presenting Marx—In person!*’” Less than two months later, Woollcott had managed to pull strings and Harpo found himself in Moscow.

¹ Although Harpo famously changed his name from Adolph to Arthur, most likely around the start of World War I, although it isn’t clear exactly when, in pronunciation, the change was from his being called “Ahdie” to “Ahtie.”

Working with the New York Intourist² office, didn't help and they decided that rather than book Harpo for any specific dates, they would simply give him a letter of introduction to the director of the Moscow Art Theatre and send him on his way. Woolcott also gave him a letter of introduction to Walter Duranty, the *New York Times* Moscow correspondent.

Harpo traveled to the Soviet Union via Hamburg. His initial plan was to dawdle in Germany for a little while, but as soon as he arrived, he saw rows of stores with Stars of David painted on them and the word *Jude*. The stores were empty, housing only the frightened proprietors. According to Marx, it was the first time he was conscious of being a Jew since his bar mitzvah and the first time he lost his appetite since he had the measles.

Upon arriving in the Soviet Union, Harpo's baggage was searched. The first suitcase didn't cause any problems, but the second, which contained his props of four hundred dinner knives, two revolvers, three stilettos, six bottles marked *Poison*, and a collection of wigs and bears, caused an uproar. They had Harpo remove his harp from his case and ordered him to play it, to prove he was a professional harpist. His fingers too cold, Harpo was not able to get any sort of recognizable sound from the instrument. Eventually, another traveler, a businessman with experience in the Soviet Union, showed up and corroborated Harpo's story and he was allowed to resume his journey to Moscow.

In Moscow, Harpo was assigned a handler, Comrade Malekinov. When Harpo suggested that he couldn't pronounce her name and would call her Miss Benson, she demonstrated a complete lack of sense of humor. According to Harpo, even when he was performing and the audience was roaring with laughter, Malekinov never cracked a smile.

Harpo discovered that Duranty was in Leningrad the first week of his visit to the Soviet Union. Undeterred, Harpo visited the director of the Moscow Art Theatre and gave him a demonstration. Harpo was required to audition multiple times and it got his dander up. Rather than continue to wait on the decision of the director, Harpo began making plans to leave the Soviet Union. Several foreign correspondents heard of Harpo's plans and tried to work around



Photo by Elaine Silver of display at the Statue of Liberty

the Moscow Art Theatre, including Ivy Litvinov, the English-born wife of Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov. Arrangements were made for Harpo to perform and he began rehearsals.

His debut, for a select group of international press, Americans, and the People's Culture Commissariat, was a big hit. It was followed by a more general show, also a hit, for members of the Communist Party. A review in *Izvestia* was even more flattering to Harpo than Woolcott had been in his initial review of *I'll Say She Is*. Shortly before Harpo left the Soviet Union, the critic who wrote the review would be shot for illegal exchanging rubles for hard currency. One of the

² Intourist was the official travel agency of the Soviet Union, founded by Joseph Stalin in 1929, it handled nearly all foreign travelers to the Soviet Union, including this piece's author, until 1992. It was also known for feeding information about said tourists to the NKVD and KGB.

high points for Harpo was when the director of the Moscow Art Theatre came backstage to congratulate him with tears of laughter still in his eyes.

The show Harpo put on was a revue, with Russian acts filling in the space around him. He would begin by playing "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" on a specially rigged clarinet which he could thumb to cause it to blow soap bubbles. He would then play a harp solo. His third piece would be a pantomime, which was based on the opening act of the stage play *The Cocoanuts* and *I'll Say She Is*, followed by another harp recital which would last as long as it held the audience's interest.

The pantomime failed miserably. Eventually a Russian writer who spoke English explained why to Harpo. The audience was looking for a story. What Harpo was presenting was anarchy without any sort of plot to back it up. The Russian offered to write a back story, without changing what Harpo actually had to do, in order to provide Harpo's gags with the context the Russian audience craved.

Harpo wound up playing his show for two weeks in Moscow, a week in Leningrad, another week of one-night stands, and finally two more weeks in Moscow. Just before Harpo left for Leningrad, he was visited by a Russian who was wearing a dark suit with a red stripe. Looking at the suit, he saw that it was made by a theatrical tailor in New York. Harpo asked where he got it. It was sent to the man by a distant cousin, whose son-in-law's brother had worn the suit. It turns out that the son-in-law was Chico Marx and the suit had once belonged to Harpo. One night the suit had disappeared from Harpo's dressing room, apparently so Chico's mother-in-law could clothe her old country cousins.

At Harpo's final performance, Maxim Litvinov managed to see the show. At the end of the performance, he appeared on stage to thank Harpo. When Harpo shook his hand, a cascade of knives fell from Litvinov's sleeve, reminiscent of one of Harpo's signature pieces.

The next morning, Harpo's final day in the Moscow, he met with Duranty at the American embassy. Joining them was the first American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, William C. Bullitt, Jr. Bullitt asked Harpo if he would deliver some letters to New York in person. Harpo agreed, and then Bullitt explained the catch. The letters would be taped to Harpo's leg, under his sock in an effort to avoid detection. Bullitt would not tell Harpo to whom the letters would be delivered, nor what was in them. When Harpo arrived in New York, the proper people would seek him out.

Harpo managed to forget about the papers while he prepared to leave the Soviet Union until he heard the news about the *Izvestia* critic who was executed. Once he heard about that, all he could think of was the packet of letters he was smuggling out.³ Once Harpo left the Soviet Union, he focused his attention on getting home and delivering the letters. He cancelled a trip to Paris and a visit to London, where he was planning on meeting up with Chico. He saw counterespionage agents everywhere he looked. On board the ship from Le Havre to New York, he remained in his cabin as much as he could.

Shortly before the ship docked in New York, there was a heavy knock on his door. Harpo opened it up to see two men, neither of whom he had seen on the ship. They told him that they had come to get something from him, probably something hidden under his clothing, and flashed Secret Service badges. Harpo removed the letters and passed them along. The men disappeared and he never found out what was so vitally important that he carry it from Moscow to the United States. The two agents escorted Harpo from the ship, flashed their badges, and informed customs that Harpo's baggage was tagged for diplomatic priority.

While in the Soviet Union, Harpo saw his name printed in Cyrillic on three-sheets. It appeared as XAPIIO MAPKC, which he decided should be pronounced as "Exapno Mapcase," a nickname he occasionally used afterwards with Alexander Woollcott.

³ Years later, I would smuggle a Soviet flag out of the country, wrapped around my torso, under my clothing. I traded a pair of my roommate's jeans for it.



MR. COUCHPOTATOHEAD

Lester Boutillier

One of the first local TV shows I watched was *Captain Sam*. He's alleged to have been famous for saying, "Shut up, kid!" a lot. I either didn't notice that or don't remember that. What I remember most were the cartoons. First his cartoon was *Crusader Rabbit*, the very first made-for-TV cartoon and the product of Jay Ward and Bill Scott. Then, in 1957 and in the wake of Sputnik, the rabbit was replaced by a new cartoon, *Colonel Bleep*.

I was a big *Crusader Rabbit* fan. I had *Crusader Rabbit* comic books – which were actually, er, "novelizations" of the TV cartoons, and a *Crusader Rabbit* coloring book. And on that coloring book hangs a tale.

I was always coloring SOMETHING back then with my Crayola crayons. I used all the colors too. And the adults asked me what my favorite color was. I didn't have one favorite color, and I said so. But they kept pressuring me to name a FAVORITE color. So finally I said, "Black." This struck the adults as odd. So they asked me to name another FAVORITE color. So again I said, "Black." This went on for some time, until they finally gave up in frustration. They returned to the theme time and again but with less and less hope of achieving their goal, which was to make me name a "normal" color as my favorite.

Well. Since my favorite color was now officially black, I began using it a lot. And in coloring my *Crusader Rabbit* coloring book I colored almost everything...black. This was hard enough on my parents. But my older girl cousins visited my grandmother in the neighboring house, and a lot of the other kids from the block hung out there too. And they all had their coloring books and were all coloring away. Well, one day I got an idea. I whipped out my black

crayon and decided to help the other kids with their coloring. I went around madly coloring all their coloring book pages black. I was a speed demon too. Soon all the other kids were crying. I got a whipping, but nobody ever asked me to change my favorite color again.

When *Colonel Bleep* debuted he was a big hit with all us kids. His first cartoon on Captain Sam's show was on a Monday. It just so happened that one of the Cacamo kids across the street had a birthday party the next day, Tuesday. My mother took me. But of course being deathly shy I held back on the fringe and didn't participate in musical chairs or anything else with the rest of the kids. But when Captain Sam came on, everybody gathered in the TV room to watch his show. I stood at the back of the room against the wall. Everybody waited with baited breath for the second Colonel Bleep episode. BUT the captain announced that, because SOME kids MAY not have seen the first episode, he would run it again and not run the second episode until the next day. Boy, was I disappointed! But the next day I was all better.

Nothing lasts forever, all things must pass, and so it was that one day WDSU came to feel it no longer needed local kids' show host Captain Sam. They decided to replace him with Nebraskan import Wayne Mack as a new kids' show host, a character of his own creation, "Hollywood director" the Great McNut.

Sam's last week on the air saw a mysterious character come on to the set for a few minutes each day, do some little business, and walk off. Sam would act puzzled and ask the peanut gallery and the kids at home, "Who IS that strange man?" On the Friday show this new character walked onto the set, didn't say anything, just tacked up a banner proclaiming, "The Great McNut is Coming!" and walked off. Who IS that strange man?

The next Monday we all found out. The Great McNut was suddenly the host of the show. And instead of Colonel Bleep cartoons we got Three Stooges shorts, which The Great McNut would introduce by saying, "Lights! Camera! Action! Start the cotton pickin' program!" For the rest of the show he would mug the camera, goof with the kids, and promote Bunny bread ("no holes!"). Yeah, right! Bunny bread in those early days was always full of holes.

But what really captivated us kids of course was The Three Stooges. I was already vaguely familiar with the Stooges. I remember seeing a couple of the shorts with Joe Besser in the movie theatre. My mother, I know, couldn't stand them. But us kids went wild! On the second day of the Great McNut show, the selection was that classic with Curley in which the Stooges came to a rich matron's house to fix the plumbing, while she was having a party. Curley wound up concocting a Rube Goldberg arrangement of pipes in the bathroom, while Larry commenced tearing up the spacious lawn looking for the cutoff valve. It happened that little Marie Zuppardo was visiting, as she often did after school. And she, my brother, and I were understandably in stitches. My mother came rushing out from the kitchen to see what was so funny. When she found out it was the Three Stooges she harrumphed and went back into the kitchen.

All the kids I knew were very much into the Stooges. There were Three Stooges balloons. I had them. There were Three Stooges hand puppets. I had them. And there were Three Stooges bubblegum cards, which we all bought, traded, and collected. The "prize" cards in that set were the ones giving biographies of Moe, Larry, and Curley on the back. That's how I found out about Ted Healey and learned that Moe had started out as a Shakespearian actor. Yes, I read the "fine print" on everything. So imagine my surprise when I got one Stooges bubblegum card that mentioned a Three Stooges MOVIE soon to be released, *Have Rocket Will Travel*. Wow!

There were lines around the block at all theatres for that one and all other Stooges movie. And I did see them all, including *The Three Stooges in Orbit*, which we saw in Mississippi. In 1962 our family took a rare vacation, to the Mississippi Gulf coast. In those days movies always opened in Mississippi before Louisiana, although they always opened in Louisiana before New York, for complicated reasons that I never could figure out. Anyway the theatre in Biloxi was not crowded for the Stooges movie, so we got to escape the long lines that awaited it in New Orleans.

The most notable of all the Stooges movies may have been *The Outlaws Is Coming*, a western in which all the local kiddie show hosts of Stooges shows around the country had bit

parts, mostly as outlaws. Of course New Orleans' Wayne Mack was one of them. He had the best part of all the hosts' and wore the best costume and biggest mustache. The Great McNut showed footage on his show of all the kidshow hosts relaxing during a break in the shooting. Two things stood out. One, Mack was much older than the other guys. Two, he was the only one clowning around and hamming it up off the set.

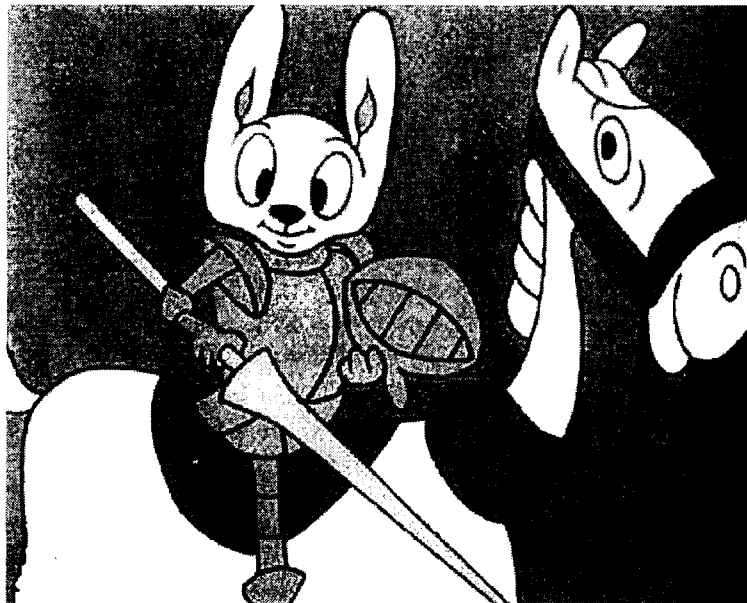
So, did I ever meet the Great McNut? Yes, I did. One day my parents took my brother and I to visit WDSU. It was one of those spur-of-the-moment things. There was no tour, but we got to sit in a section of folding chairs watching the station on a big TV. It came time for the Great McNut show to begin, and we thought we'd stay and watch it. It turns out that all the other kids there were part of a birthday-party group. And when it came time for the show to begin, the director called all the kids onto the set. My father told him we weren't with the group, but the director said to come on anyway. That's how I came to be on the Great McNut show. He did his usual bits, asking each kid if he'd washed behind their ears. I didn't know it, but I was told later by those who'd watched the show at home that I blushed furiously at this. Typical for me at age 10 – or 20 or 30, for that matter.

Or 40.

Or 50.

One final story of the Stooges. New Orleans in those days had some worldwide movie premieres, not many but a few. A Pat Boone movie premiered here, as did *The Nutty Professor* (with an onstage appearance by Jerry Lewis) and *The Busy Body* (with an onstage appearance by Sid Caesar). These were all at the Saenger Theatre. Word got around, and the Three Stooges decided to premiere one of their movies here. I couldn't make it to that one because I was sick, but I got to watch the Stooges on the local *Midday Show* on WDSU, where they appeared with Wayne Mack, Terry "Miss Muffett" Flettrich, and others. They were asked why they chose to premiere their movie here. Larry said, "We heard that this was a good town to premiere movies in," upon which Moe bopped him on the head and said, "This isn't a town, numbskull! It's a city!"

The Midday Show ran for many years, and most days a different women's club was guested, interviewed while sitting at tables on the set having luncheon. Once a group my mother belonged to, the Jolly Club, was on. My mother, as usual, had her wide, toothy smile on. When Wayne Mack came to her, he said, "Well! You certainly ARE jolly!"



*"DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO Doooooooooooooooooooo
DOODOODOOODEDODOOP!"*

50 YEARS WITH

The TWILIGHT ZONE

Guy Lillian
Art by DAVE RYAN

Something Marc Leeper wrote in a recent *MT Void* reminded me: October, 2009 marked the 50th anniversary of *the greatest science fiction television program of all time*.

No, no, say the trekkies: *Star Trek* didn't debut till 1964, so that milestone that won't pass until 2014! *Buffies* protest that the magic 50th won't come till 2047, and our young compatriots at Dragon*Con protest that *Battlestar: Galactica*'s Golden Anniversary – "Cylons are Golden, Golden ..." – won't come around till 2054 ... or 2028, if they count the Lorne Greene atrocity, and hopefully they don't. Second Fandom guys of my acquaintance grow misty-eyed at the memory of *Rocky Jones*, *Space Ranger*, and lament that we let the 50th anniversary of that antique masterwork – in 2004 – slip by.

All are misguided. There is only one greatest



science fiction television program of all time, and that first appeared at 10PM on Friday night, October 2, 1959. *I remember.*

Actually I *do* remember, but not the show's first broadcast. I didn't come on board until the third, two weeks later. The show was "Mr. Denton on Doomsday", and it's like I saw it last Friday. (Actually, considering how often *Zone* appears in syndication, I might have.)

"Mr. Denton on Doomsday" was a western – but in 1959, what wasn't? Westerns were everywhere during the last years of the Eisenhower administration; you either watched westerns or you didn't watch TV. I'd spent much of my first decade with *Maverick* (light stuff) and *Gunsmoke* (dark stuff) and *Cheyenne* (that great "glowing eyes" episode spooked the *bejasus* out of me) ... and *Sugarfoot* and *Bronco* and my favorite, *Colt .45* (I mourned when low ratings holstered that show). And many other tales of boots and saddles.

So the initial scenes of "Mr. Denton" seemed routine. A western street. A bar. Through its swinging doors sprawls the raggedy town drunk, Dan Duryea as Denton, followed by the lanky Martin Landau, playing the black-clad town bully. Landau sneeringly forces Denton to sing "How Dry I Am" to earn another drink, and leaves Denton unconscious in the dirt. His humiliation is witnessed by a traveling man across the dusty street, Henry J. Fate. The camera moves to Duryea's hand. Alongside which, from nowhere, *a gun appears.*

HOOKED.

I'm sure you remember how "Mr. Denton on Doomsday" played out. Henry Fate sells Denton, a onetime top gun, a potion which will restore his fast draw – but only for a few seconds. By accident, Denton disarms Landau – and finds the stones to punch him out. Sobered up, cleaned up, his dignity returns – but with it, his reputation. Pete Grant, a young gunfighter played by Doug McClure, comes gunning for him. Denton finds Fate, buys another dose of the fast-draw potion – but, when Grant squares off against him, sees his young opponent take a slug of the same stuff.

Both panic, draw, and fire. (Remember the flat punch of gunfire on *The Twilight Zone*?) Both are hit – in their gun hands. Neither will be able to hold pistols again. Denton realizes that fate – uhh, Fate – has played him his luckiest hand.

Me too. My life's path was set.

Friday nights at 10 became the focus of my entire week. Rod Serling's face – and voice – became the most familiar on television, and Bernard Herrmann's spooky theme the most welcome music on the screen. (Marius Constant's familiar "*DOO DOO DOO DOO*" wouldn't debut till much later. *Twilight Zone* always had wonderful music. Even the stock stuff was effective. Remember the suspenseful theme played as the flashlight approached the escaping families in "Third from the Sun"?)

I loved *TZ* when it was funny ("The Mighty Casey") and loved it, tremblingly, when it was spooky (e.g., "Room 22" and "The After Hours", *supra*). Once or twice it really juiced me – I nearly went into hysterics after seeing Jim Hutton sink back onto his pillow, and into oblivion, at the close of "And When the Sky Was Opened". (I first saw that episode at Mrs. Argo's house – she was baby-sitting me and my brother – and it freaked me so much I made her call my mama to come get us! I was 35 at the time ...)

So how come? What hooked me?

As I've grown old, and watched the episodes over and over and over again, I've come to appreciate the quality of the writing, the deftness of the direction, the excellence of the acting. They were excellent television. But such qualities were lost on me in my "tweener" years. Back then, when I first saw the episodes, I responded to the cool SFnal elements – and the primordial feelings they evoked. For there was a subtext to a lot of the best *Twilight Zones*.

For instance ... In his secret moments, in the longings and loneliness of his changing psyche, the pain of his new realization of mortality and the anguish of oncoming adolescence, every kid is a paranoid. He worries that he'll never be part of life. Robot and mannequin

episodes appealed to that common unspoken adolescent fear – that *you aren't real*. So when Inger Stevens suddenly realizes (in “The Lateness of the Hour”, one of the six videotaped episodes) that there’s a *reason* there are no childhood photos in the family album, we recognized her horror. It’s because of this adolescent alienation that I count “In His Image” as not only one of my favorite TZs but one of the best media experiences of my life. Writer Charles Beaumont not only shocks the protagonist with the fact that he’s not human, he also switches emphasis to his neurotic creator – and promises him, and the audience identifying with him, a happy new future as “a new man.” Rest in peace and glory, Beaumont – and George Grizzard, the great thespian who starred; you guys brought a classic, and a classic feeling, to life.

Other favorite episodes? I’ve got dozens. Among them ...

“Nightmare at 20,000 Feet” – Shatner at his hammiest – and best – taking on a gremlin on the wing of an airliner. *Greatest TV show ever*. (Go ahead, name a better one.)

“Little Girl Lost” – A little girl rolls out of bed and falls into another dimension. Don’t you love how Richard Matheson plots can be distilled into a single sentence? Great Bernard Herrmann music and incredible atmosphere. “What a mutt!”

“And When the Sky was Opened” – Rod Taylor and the crew of the X-20 yanked from reality by “someone ... or some *thing*”. *Yihh*. Mrs. Argo, call my mother again.

“The Invaders” – Agnes Moorehead fights pint-sized spacemen who are not as alien as they seem. I once showed this episode to Martina Klicperova, a Czech academic who had never seen *The Twilight Zone*, and was rewarded by seeing her jump through the ceiling when my phone rang.

“To Serve Man” – Who can forget Lloyd Bochner’s face when he hears his secretary shout “It’s a cookbook!”?

“Elegy” – Three spacemen (in reused *Destination: Moon* suits) land on a planetoid and find The Glades, a place where all your dreams come true – after death. Wonderful music splits your eardrums, and some of the extras can’t keep still, and I somehow missed that atomic war we had in the ‘80s, but Cecil Kellaway’s Wickwire is one of the *Zone*’s most charming denizens.

“Steel” – Lee Marvin takes on a robot prizefighter in a splendid fable of indomitable courage. Great job by the actors playing the automatons.

“Number 12 Looks Just Like You” – Collin Wilcox, the brilliant “victim” from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, plays her only other noteworthy role, a future girl resisting soulless conformity. By the way, she ended up with Number 8.

“The After Hours” – Anne Francis justified my lifelong fear and pity of mannequins in this tale of a store dummy who forgets who she is. The Nolacon II office was located above an old department store, and when we had to walk downstairs in the middle of the night (the elevators being turned off), we had to pass a dark, deserted section a *lot* like this episode’s 9th floor. Thought of this show every time, and – just coincidentally – got downstairs *really quickly*.

“The Lonely” – Jack Warden and Jean Marsh as man and womandroid marooned on a prison asteroid, an episode which touched the loneliness in all bright, imaginative kids, and when you think about it, provides a life lesson about living in one’s imagination.

“The Long Morrow” – The most poignant *Zone* stars Robert Lansing and Mariette Hartley as an astronaut on a decades-long interplanetary journey and the woman he loves, left behind on Earth. As physics it’s bushwah, but as ironic romance it’s good gooey stuff. “Stansfield, it may be the one distinction of my life that I knew you.”

“The Odyssey of Flight 33” – Oh, that dinosaur and “this strange feeling of ... *speed*”, accompanied by that wonderful spooky music ... Go on, mock me for my fear of flying.

“It’s a Good Life!” – Of course. Think good thoughts.

There were clunkers, of course. Not every TZ was a classic.

Looking back, the very best *Zones* were Richard Matheson’s and Charles Beaumont’s. Except for “In His Image” the hour-long shows were bloated and almost the entire fifth season – which reverted to a half-hour – was pretty lame. Quite a few of Serling’s *original* stories, as opposed to adaptations of other writers’ work, were hit-or-miss.

It’s too bad. I had the luck to see the original “Requiem for a Heavyweight” and the movie version of “Patterns” later on in life, and you know, when Rod was good, he was *really* good. He wrote some grand *Zones*, like the pilot, “Where is Everybody?”, and the aforementioned “Mr. Denton” (did you know Denton was originally supposed to be a meek schoolteacher?). And let’s never forget that the show was his idea in the first place. But his flaws ... Predictable Adam-&-Eve stories, spaceman-in-zoo stories, endless preachy monologues, and Nazis, Nazis, Nazis ... Serling would have starved to death if it hadn’t been for Nazis. “He’s Alive”, one of the hour shows, was the worst of this lot, even though it starred My Good Friend Dennis Hopper. (I can call him “My Good Friend” since I’ve met him twice.)

At St. Louiscon an ignorant but earnest reporter came up to me and asked me if any important SF writers were at the convention. He mentioned Serling several times. I said that though our crowd respected Serling – gave him three Hugos, which is respect a’plenty – he was regarded as a TV writer, not really one of *us*. I pointed him at Alan Nourse and Lafferty and Silverberg. But even if he was an outsider, Serling was one of the best “outside” friends science fiction ever had.

He tried again, with *Night Gallery*. Except for a splendid adaptation of Fritz Leiber’s wonderful “The Dead Man”, none of the episodes were very memorable, and some were downright embarrassing. Serling died in 1975; I remember young Kevin Smith calling me at my hospital job to commiserate over the loss. They made a movie, featuring a weak anti-prejudice piece that killed Vic Morrow and two Vietnamese children and ill-advised reworkings of “It’s a Good Life”, “Nightmare at 20,000 Feet”, and “Kick the Can”. (“What game would you like to play with those children?” “How about ‘Doctor’?”) Later, some ardent souls tried to revive the series, but despite having some good source material – such as Ellison’s “Paladin of the Lost Hour” – the shows lacked the pacing and punch of the original.

The Twilight Zone is now 50 years old, but with the exception of a few nuclear war tales and some of Serling’s blatant civil rights fables, the old show is still fresh. It certainly still jazzes me. I have all the episodes on video tape and am collecting them on DVD. They still appear regularly on the SyFy Channel (stupid name!), but SyFy hacks minutes out of each program to fit in extra commercials. So spend the money; it’s better to have them on DVD.

Or re-live them in your dreams.

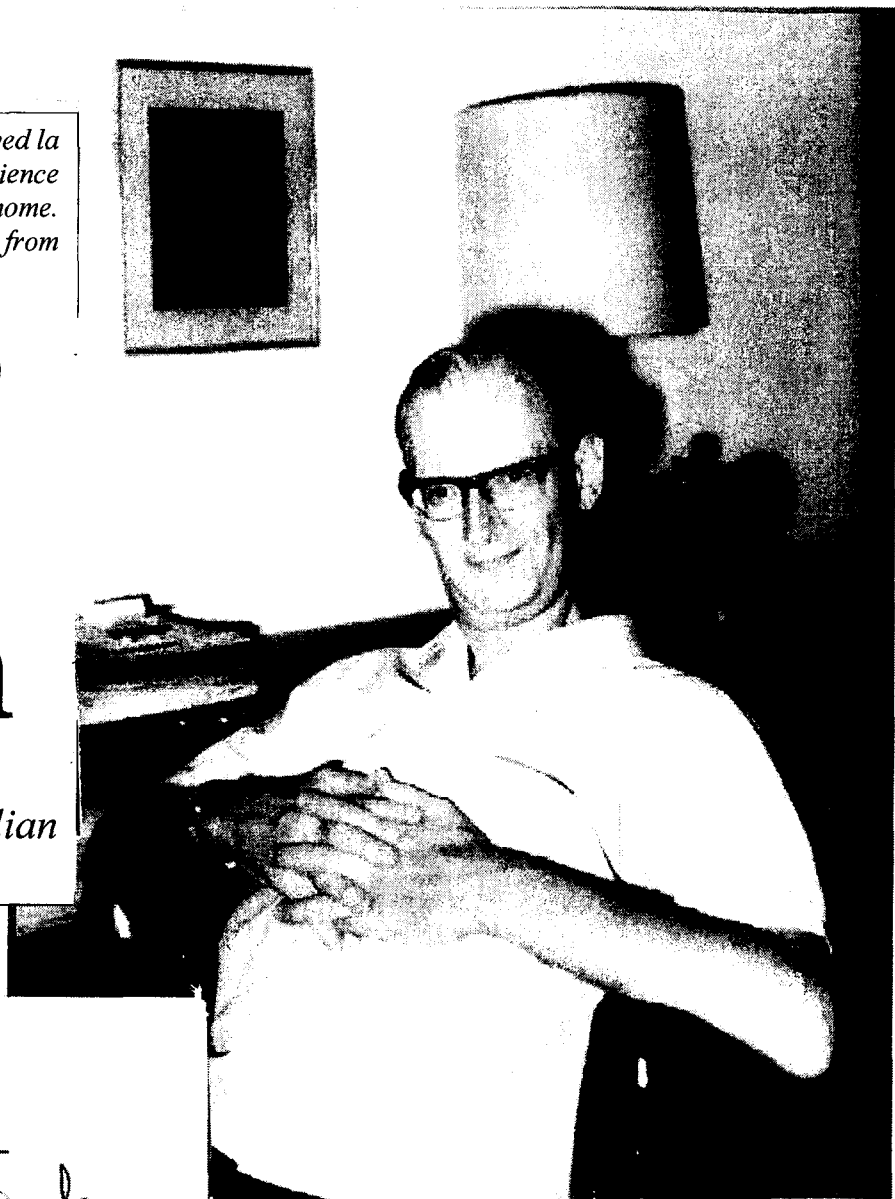
Now and forever, “there is a fifth dimension beyond that [*sic*] which is known to man ... It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man’s fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call the Twilight Zone!”

“DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO ...”

*Throughout her teen years, my beloved la
belle photographed the great science
fiction people who visited her home.
Herewith a highlight from*

Rosy's Photo Album

Rose-Marie Lillian



To Posie, with
all good wishes -
ach C. C. Clark

["What big hands
you've got, Grandma!"]

He wasn't "Sir" then, he was just Arthur. He was funny and friendly, but what I especially remember is that he was kind. He also was very, very smart. It seemed as if he could talk about anything, sitting with us at the dining room table. He probably couldn't, really, but the illusion was there because all any of us could talk about was the event scheduled for the next day. It was July 15, 1969, at my family home near Cape Canaveral. The next day Apollo 11 launched into history. The capsule may have held just three men, but we were all on board, including Sir Arthur.

*Here comes our main man again, putting more into a worldcon – and getting more out of it –
than anyone else...*

ANTICIPATION

DIARY

Mike Resnick

Tuesday, August 4. Carol and I boarded a smallish nonstop jet to Montreal in late morning along with Bill and Cokie Cavin, Michael and Roger Jordan, and Debbie Oakes. If the plane had crashed, that could have been the end of the venerable CFG (Cincinnati Fantasy Group, our home club). At one point, while getting ready to taxi to the runway, the pilot announced that there was a small leak behind Row 8, wherever the hell that was, and that we'd have to change planes. Five minutes later they decided that what the hell, it wasn't *that* bad a leak, and off we went.

We landed and took a cab to the Bonaventure Hilton, a truly elegant three-floor hotel. That's right, only three floors. But they were set atop a ten-story office building, and surrounded by gorgeous landscaping, coy ponds, redwood benches, winding paths through gardens, all of it ten and eleven floors above the ground. I suspect it's what the Anaheim Hilton, home of three previous Worldcons, had in mind with its Lanai level, but never came close to duplicating.

We unpacked, I picked up one-week Metro passes for me and Carol, Bill and Cokie, and three friends who were coming in from Edmonton: BJ Galler-Smith and her husband John Archer, and my latest collaborator, Lezli Robyn (who had a hellish, 40-hour trip from Australia, with one plane after another malfunctioning and requiring very tardy replacements.)

We'd made arrangements to meet Tony and Suford Lewis at L'Aromate, a stylish French restaurant on Peel Street –

we've been doing this at worldcons with them for about 40 years now – and had a delightful meal and visit. They came back with us to inspect the Hilton and stayed for a couple of hours. Lezli, BJ and John still hadn't arrived by midnight (they were due at 7:00 PM, but there were thunderstorms all across Canada), and we finally got word that they'd been forced down in Toronto and would be coming as soon as the storms broke.

I set up the laptop and started working on a short story, knocked off at maybe 5 AM, and went to bed.

Wednesday, August 5: Carol and what we euphemistically call "the girls" went off to spend the day at the Beaux Arts Museum. I got up at maybe 11 AM, checked with the front desk, and found that Lezli, John and BJ had made it to the hotel at about 5:30 in the morning. I figured Lezli had slept long enough – after all, this was a Worldcon -- so I phoned her, gave her a few minutes to get showered and dressed, delivered a bunch of books I'd picked up for her that she can't get in Australia and which would have cost a small fortune to mail, and we went off to register at the convention center. This required us to figure out how to get there: you could do it without ever breathing fresh air, as the subway stopped at the hotel's basement and the Palais des Congres – but the first couple of times we took a lot of wrong turns. (Okay, I took a lot of wrong turns, and Lezli was too polite to correct me.)

We got our badges and program books and I got a pair of Hugo nominee pins,

but once we'd done that there was nothing else to do. The 5th floor, where all the panels and ceremonies would be held, was closed off, and the dealers room and the art show hadn't been set up yet, but we did run into BJ and John. John was an almost legendary mystery man, for though BJ – whose publication of *Druids* was pushed back a couple of months to World Fantasy Con, a pity since she's a Canadian – has been going to cons for maybe 20 years, this was John's first. And he literally charmed everyone he met all week long.

Carol and I were supposed to have dinner with Ginjer Buchanan of Ace Books and her husband, John Douglas of E-Reads. They're old friends, and I'd sold books to them both in the past. Problem was, they were driving, it was an eleven-hour trip, and they weren't sure exactly when they were arriving, so we agreed to call Ginjer on her cell phone at about 5:00 and see how they were progressing. Problem the First: our cell phone doesn't work in Canada. So I borrowed Canadian resident John's phone. Problem the Second: Ginjer had crossed the border, and *her* cell phone didn't work in Canada either. So Carol and I went out to a little French bistro for dinner and came back to the Hilton, where I picked up Lezli and escorted her to the Delta (the party hotel). The designated party floors were the 5th and the 28th, but only the 5th was operating that night, almost everyone was in the Reno-in-2011 party, and it was just too damned crowded, so like any reasonable people we went down to the restaurant/bar area, where we ran into John Kenny, who edits *Albedo One*, an Irish magazine, as well as a small press, and had requested stories from both of us.

Over the next three hours our table became like Robert Sheckley's *Theory of Searches* in *Mindswap*. We sat there, and it seemed that sooner or later every member of the convention – well, those who had arrived – stopped by to say hello. Including Steven Boucher, Janice Gelb, and the rest of the Australian contingent, who were pleased that Lezli, a fellow Aussie, had made such a stunning start. (Last year, at Denver, she had never written a story. One year later she has

sold to *Asimov's*, *Analog*, *Jim Baen's Universe*, the major new *Twilight Zone* anthology, and a few other places.) Finally, at maybe 3:00 in the morning, all of us staying at the Hilton walked back to the hotel, and I went back to work on the story I'd started the night before.

Thursday, August 6. There was a *lot* wrong with Anticipation from start to finish. The first was Housing, which spread a very small Worldcon into ten hotels, thereby guaranteeing that everyone would spend a lot of time walking from one location to another and never come close to meeting everyone they hoped to meet. But the most annoying department was Programming.

Every potential program participant is given a form to fill out, asking what he'd like to do, what days he'll be at the con, what hours he prefers to be scheduled, if there's anyone he particularly does or does not want to be on a panel with, and so on.

The committee managed to totally ignore just about every participant's requests.

Example: I told them to schedule me for nothing before 1 PM and nothing after 6 PM. They promptly gave me 3 morning assignments and one in the evening.

Steven Silver was up for 2 Hugos. They scheduled him for a panel opposite the Hugo ceremony. (Obviously he had no interest in finding out who won.)

BJ is a Canadian writer, with a number of magazine sales, her first novel coming out, and is on the editorial staff of *On Spec*, a Canadian prozine. They gave her a single panel. At nine in the morning, when half the con was still asleep.

And it was the same with Bob Silverberg and every other writer I spoke to. In a convention that spread us over ten hotels, was a month late posting the electronic Hugo ballot, etc., etc., etc., Programming stood out for its ineptitude.

Another example: I've been reading at Worldcons since 1980. Usually I've had an hour, sometimes half an hour, sometimes an hour and a quarter – but I have never had to share a room and a reading with another writer. No one has. Until this year. And the

program committee thoughtfully neglected to tell anyone, so three writers, sharing a room for one hour, might each have brought a 45-minute story to read. I figured out early on that they were just incompetent enough to do something like this, checked, found out I was right, and contacted Kij Johnson, with whom I was sharing a reading, so we could coordinate our times. But a lot of writers didn't. Laurie Mann did yeoman duty trying to salvage things after the committee screwed them up, and she made some headway, but they gave her an insurmountable task.

Ah, well. Carol and "the girls", plus BJ and John, and Michael and Roger Jordan, went off to see the biodome and the botanical gardens (which Carol tells me were the highlight of her week), while I went over to the con center, where I met Bob Silverberg. We both grew up in Jewish areas of major cities (New York for him, Chicago for me), became addicted to deli food, and now live in areas (Oakland Hills for him, Cincinnati suburbs for me) where we're hours away from a decent deli...so we always scout out the best deli in each year's Worldcon city and have lunch there. This year it was Dunn's, where I had chopped liver and (I seem to remember) blintzes, and Bob had his usual pastrami. He'd just had a stint inserted back in January, but you'd never know it to watch him.

Then it was back to the con center, where I finally got a look at the dealers room – a meager 31 dealers, half of them selling books in French, less than 60 tables, compared to the 90+ at Torcon and the 300 we regularly get in the U.S. I had four new books out in the month before Worldcon -- *Stalking the Dragon*, *Hazards*, *Dreamwish Beasts and Snarks*, and *...Always a Fan*. I saw 4 copies of one title, none of the other three, in the room; dealers couldn't get across the border without paying an onerous tax on their entire stock, some of which might be refunded half a year or more up the road on unsold items. The art show wasn't any more impressive; not a single Hugo nominee displayed any work.

Lezli had her first-ever panel in midafternoon, and BJ and John, with whom she'd spent a week on her way to the con, cut

their trip to the biodome short to join me in the audience and support her. Eric Reynolds of HadleyRille Books had eight of his contributors each read from their stories – not the best venue, since none of them had time to read a complete story – but Lezli read an excerpt from one she'd sold to one of his anthologies just before flying over, and did fine.

I met Carol back at the hotel. She was still aglow from touring the garden – what horse-racing and naked ladies are to me, gardening is to her – and she described them in loving detail until it was time to meet Lou Anders for dinner. Lou, who is a close friend as well as my editor at Pyr, had recently become a father for the second time – I call his son Mike Junior, and his new daughter Michaelina – and bringing them along would have been just too much work for Xin, his wife, so he was flying solo. We went to a charming outdoors Italian restaurant right next to some old ruins, and had an excellent meal. Lou has bought ten books from me in the past five years, which of course endears him to me, and it looks like I'll sell him another one this fall.

When dinner was over I took Carol back to the hotel – she'd had a long, tiring day of playing tourist – then picked up Lezli, BJ and John, and we walked the 4 blocks (the map said one; the map lied) to the Delta. CFG had just opened its hospitality suite that night, as had Tor, Texas-in-2013, SFWA, and a bunch of others. I started taking Lezli around, introducing her to editors – those she'd already sold to, and those she should soon be selling to – and also began contacting all the editors I had to speak to on my own. We ran into Sheila Williams and Stanley Schmidt, who'd both bought collaborations from us ("Soulmates" for her, "Shame" for him); ditto John Helfers, who we hoped would have the bound galleys of the *Twilight Zone* anthology which has our "Benchwarmer" in it, but they hadn't yet arrived. Kept running into Steve Saffel, my editor from del Rey who is now at Titan, and Irish editor John Kenny, and John Douglas, and Ginjer Buchanan. At one point I came across Bill Fawcett. I asked him how his convention was going, and he replied that

he'd just sold a couple of anthologies. I asked what they were about, and he grinned and replied that we had to discuss it because I was co-editing them.

Four of us – BJ, Lezli, Nick DiChario and I – had decided to get together in BJ's room to read our latest stories, since the program didn't allow us the time we wanted. We were to meet in the CFG suite and then go back to the Hilton, but Nick had misplaced his current ladyfriend and opted to stay behind looking for her. (He misplaced her three or four more times during the con. I finally explained to him that he really must learn to be more careful with his ladies, that someday women may become scarce.) The rest of us went over and read for a couple of hours, and then I bade them all good-night and went back to the Delta until about 5:00.

I should note that Thursday night also witnessed the birth of a new fannish superstar. CFG's charming and vivacious Yvonne MacDonald seems to have hit a batch of parties, because the next morning the newsletter's party reporter kept mentioning seeing "Yvonne from Cincinnati" at this party and "Yvonne from Cincinnati" at that one, and the next one...and the following day's newsletter kept describing her with those same three words, and soon just about everyone was calling her Yvonne From Cincinnati. (Well, everyone but me. I figure I know her well enough to just call her Yvonne From.)

Friday, August 7. I slept late (well, early for me in the Real World; late for me at a Worldcon), and didn't get up til about 11:30. Carol, having toured the city for two days, had decided to spend Friday touring the convention. I explained to her that if we got there at 1:30 she'd be able to see everything of interest and still make our 2:00 lunch appointment. She didn't believe me, so we showed up at 1:00...and by 1:20 she'd seen what there was to see, and we just visited with friends until 2:00, when we met Steve Saffel and went down to the shish kebob joint on the main floor for lunch. I loved working with Steve a few years ago, and he's finally in a position to solicit some more work, so we

spent most of the meal putting our heads together trying to come up with a project. Nothing's set as I write this, but we think we're getting close.

I had a midafternoon panel with Gardner Dozois, Sheila Williams, CFG member Chris Barkley, and a couple of others, something to do with whether or not magazines (rather than short fiction editors) deserve Hugos. No dissent at all, which meant if we hadn't told stories and jokes everyone would have fallen asleep or left after ten minutes.

Then it was back to the hotel to meet Carol and show up for a 6:00 dinner with Bill Schafer and his Subterranean Press crew – Tim Holt, Yanni Kuznia, her husband, and her new baby. Bill and I have become very close friends over the past couple of years. He's published three of my books since last summer, he runs a Lucifer Jones story in every issue of his magazine – (Want to become my friend for life? Publish Lucifer Jones, my favorite of all my characters) – and I have two more books coming from Subterranean next year. I hope he isn't reading this, because I hate to say anything nice in front of him, but this guy is an absolute genius at his trade. How else can you explain a smallish Michigan press that has to compete with New York mass market houses publishing a line that includes Neil Gaiman, Dan Simmons, Ray Bradbury, George R. R. Martin, Jack Vance, Tim Powers, Philip Jose Farmer, Kage Baker, Michael Swanwick, Elizabeth Bear, John Scalzi and me, all in a year's time?

We had a delightful dinner. Then Carol, who'd bought along a bunch of rare British DVDs, went to the room to watch them on the laptop – she's not the party girl she once was, especially when I go to parties almost entirely to do business – and I took the Subterraneans over to the Delta. The Bragelonne party – that's the current leading French science fiction publisher – had begun at 8:00, and it was by invitation only...and since I'd been Guest of Honor at a bunch of French conventions I'd gotten an invite even though I hadn't ever sold to Bragelonne. We ran into Lezli in the lobby and she joined us.

Well, I got Lezli and myself in, and the guy guarding the door okayed Bill and the others on my say-so ...but after I'd said hello to a couple of French friends and then turned to introduce them to Bill and Yanni and Tim, I saw them walking away down the corridor. The party was just too crowded for them.

Suddenly I got a bear-hug from Jean-Claude Dunyach, one of my closest French friends (and probably the leading French sf writer these days), and he dragged me over to Bragelonne's editor, Stephane Marsan, who declared that it was past time that I became a Bragelonne author, which is the kind of thing it's always nice to hear, and we've taken steps to see that it comes to pass.

Pretty soon the party got to where even *I* couldn't take the crowd, so I picked up my stoic Aussie collaborator, who couldn't have been a lot happier with the noise and press of bodies than I was, and we hit a bunch of other parties – the SF Canada party, the Chicago-in-2012 party, the Angry Robot party, a handful of others – and finally we came to the SFWA Suite, where *Asimov's* and *Analog* were hosting their annual awards party. As usual, the main table held a couple of huge cakes that featured the current covers to the two magazines. We were just a few minutes from cutting the cakes and presenting the awards when hotel security burst in, announced that there'd been some noise complaints, that only the 5th and 28th were party floors – SFWA was on the 20th, though the hotel and the committee knew full well that it was a party suite – and we all had to evacuate *now*!

So we left under the little Caesar's watchful eye. And later found out that about a dozen SFWAns had remained in the suite's other room – and when the security guard left, Sheila and Stan carried out the ceremony in whispers, and everyone cheered the winners with the deaf gesture for applause.

We went back down to the bar where it was cooler and emptier, met some more

writers, some more fans, and some more editors, and then went back to the hotel a little earlier than usual. I remember that Lezli and I sat in a corner of the lobby for a couple of hours and discussed and plotted some stories we would be doing in the next few months to fulfill the requests we'd gotten for them.

I don't remember writing when I got to the room, so I guess I must have fallen right asleep.

Saturday, August 8. Another tourist day for Carol – some stately mansion or other, I can't recall the details. Lezli and I had a lunch appointment with an editor, so we met in the lobby and walked to the Delta, where John Helfers of Tekno-Books was waiting for us. He'd recently bought our *Twilight Zone* anthology collaboration, wanted more stories from us, and of course we wanted to sell him more. We went to the convention center and ate at one of the restaurants there, and spent about an hour and a half discussing some projects that we could do together. We'd pretty much limited them down to two or three that pleased all three of us and looked



lucrative enough in these days of shrinking editorial budgets, and we'll be following up on them the days to come until we hit on the right one. (It's always frustrating to write these diaries in a timely manner, because while most of my discussions

with editors eventually bear fruit, at this point I'm usually still guessing *which* fruit they will bear.)

As soon as lunch was over, Lezli and I went up to the 5th floor where all the programming took place, for a 2-man (well, one man and one woman) panel on "Long Distance Collaborations". (The truth is they're exactly like 100-mile collaborations, only longer.) So we talked about how we met (she bought a book from me on the internet), how we became friends (she couldn't find my stories in Australia, so I sent her a batch to read and criticize, and we began

corresponding almost daily), how we decided to collaborate once we met in Denver and made sure we liked each other enough (and got along well enough) to work together, and how we devised our methodology, which is totally unlike the way I have worked with 41 previous sf collaborators. The audience seemed to like it, and a few of them told or e-mailed me later that they thought it was the best panel of the con.

About an hour later I was on a panel with Ginjer Buchanan and a couple of others about how to pitch a novel. As usual, I heard a lot of misinformation (none of it from Ginjer) and false assumptions, as usual we corrected them, and as usual I'll hear them again the next time.

Then, as the panel let out, I met John Kenny, who had invited Lezli and me for a drink in the bar to talk a little business. We asked if BJ could come along, he said fine, and we spent the next half hour letting John buy us non-alcoholic liquids while he told us what kind of stories he wanted and looked at us as if only Yanks were crazy enough to turn down beer (though two of the three of us *weren't* Yanks.)

Lezli went off to have dinner with BJ and John, and Carol and I met my long-time agent, Eleanor Wood, and her son and assistant, Justin Bell, for dinner at the Hilton. (How long-time? I hired her when she was pregnant with Justin, at the 1983 Worldcon.) I told her the gist of the conversations I'd had with book editors (I handle my own short fiction), she told me that she'd just put a couple of checks and three contracts in the mail to me, and that the last of the 14-month-overdue Polish money was supposedly in transit. (Go be a writer and try to budget. I dare you!) And then we just talked about anything except business for a very pleasant hour.

After dinner was over Carol decided that since she hadn't seen the CFG suite yet, or indeed been to the Delta at all, she should pay it a visit, so we walked over there. She took one look at the biomass on the 5th and 28th floors and decided to avoid it at all costs, and went to CFG. I hit a few parties, saw a few more editors, and went back to CFG

about 12:30 AM, whereupon Carol asked me to walk her home, since she'd gotten an early start touring. So I did, and then began walking back to the Delta to escort Lezli and BJ to more parties. However...

In 2004 I went blind in my right eye. And I don't have good night vision in my left eye. As I was walking down the darkened streets to the Delta, I didn't see a curb and took a hell of a flop onto the street. Got up right away. Inspected the various body parts. Right elbow skinned and bleeding. No problem. Right knee ditto: skinned, bleeding, no problem. And I thought that was it. Until I tried to lift my *left* arm. Couldn't do it. Not a mark on it, not even a swelling, but I couldn't hold anything heavier than a pen in my hand. (It got progressively better each day. It's still not functioning perfectly – I'm writing this at about 4:30 AM on August 15 – but it's improving enough that I probably won't be visiting the doctor after all. I could lift a 60-pound box today. What I still can't do is bring a fork to my mouth or turn a doorknob. Go figure.) Serves me right for racing through the dark to take two pretty ladies to a bunch of parties.

Anyway, we hit the HadleyRille suite, where Eric Reynolds made some assignments, and the NESFA Press party (I'd just written an intro to their Poul Anderson collection and picked up a copy of it), and Tor, and Chicago, and Reno, and Texas (which was now officially San Antonio), and some others, and finally one of the ladies or the other insisted we go back to the Hilton before my arm fell off. (But they were looking at the bloody one, which didn't hurt at all.)

So we did.

Sunday, August 9. This was a *long* day. I got up at maybe 9:00. (I say "maybe" because I'm too groggy to know what time it is in the morning. Carol tells me to get up, and pulls or pushes me out of bed when that doesn't work, and eventually I'm on my feet, even if I don't know my name or what city I'm in.) She'd made me a cup of coffee, I downed it, and then I took the Metro to the con center.

At 10:00 I had a reading. Originally there were three of us scheduled to read,

thereby guaranteeing that no one could read more than a 2800-word story, but Jo Sherman – our third reader – had cancelled out of the con a couple of weeks earlier, so Kij Johnson and I split the hour. She went first and read a charmingly funny horror story about a little girl who dismembers a magical horse (Honest! And if you haven't read Kij's wonderful 2009 Hugo nominee, "26 Monkeys, Also the Abyss", shame on you), and then I read one that I think has a decent shot at next year's ballot, "The Bride of Frankenstein", which is the first of the more than 250 stories I've written that I plan to expand into a novel.

At 11:00 I went to my kaffeeklatsch. I like to please my fans, so before every Worldcon I ask my various publishers to send me dust jackets and cover flats that I can autograph and give away. (And I'm *still* giving away signed trading cards from Chicon VI.) They outdid themselves this year: I think I must have given away close to 80 covers and flats of maybe a dozen titles. Then we talked about what books and stories I had coming up, and Lezli popped in after finishing a panel of her own that was opposite my reading, so I introduced her and spent a few minutes telling them about our collaborations, both current and future, and then the hour was up, and I went out into the corridor and met Rob Sawyer and Steve Feldberg, with whom I'd be having lunch.

Rob has been my friend for maybe 25 years, and he was floating on air, since he'd just sold his book to television and been greenlighted for 13 episodes. Steve is the science fiction editor of Audible.com, which bought ten of my books during the past year. Rob and I are two of Steve's better sellers, so he thought he'd kill two birds (spaceships?) with one stone (zap gun?), take us both out together since he knows we're friends, tell us Audible's plans for the future, and solicit more contributions from us. (It worked. That was the 60-pound box I carried into the post office earlier today.)

Then, at 2:00, I had a panel on "The Invention of the Canon", which never quite decided what was canonical and what was a

classic and how they differed, but it was pleasant enough.

Carol showed up at the end of it, and we went downstairs to eat at a ground floor restaurant, since I wouldn't be free again until after the Hugos. (Some Worldcons lay out a veritable feast at the Hugo Nominees' Reception before the ceremony, so you don't have to worry about dinner. Somehow we knew this one wouldn't.) We stopped by the shish kebab place, which we really liked, and got each other up to date on what we'd been doing and who we'd met. We noticed Lezli wandering by and invited her to join us for dessert, and then I had to go up to the dealers room to sign autographs. I thought I'd be five minutes and out, since none of the dealers had any current American books to speak of, but a number of fans had brought my books along to the con and it actually took me about 45 minutes to work through my line. While I was signing, Michelle Sagara West came by with her husband, Tom. I hadn't seen them in years – she doesn't come up for air very often when she's grinding out 3 or 4 thousand-page books a year for DAW and for Luna – so we got to chat while I was taking care of the last autographs. And at the very end of the hour, a Japanese fan presented me with a "chop", a wooden signature stamp with my name in Japanese, a very thoughtful gift I'll be bringing along to future Worldcons, since I always sign a few Japanese editions of my books. (I'm told it's legal everywhere but Japan, where I must register it before using it.)

Then we went up to the Hugo Reception, where we got to visit a bit with Tom Doherty and my long-time Tor editor Beth Meacham, and where I saw a number of friends, both writers and fans, that I had somehow missed seeing all weekend. As usual, they showed off the Hugo – the rocket is always the same, but the base differs every year. I think I was the only person in the room who wasn't wildly impressed with it. Which doesn't mean I didn't want one. Or two, as the case happened to be.

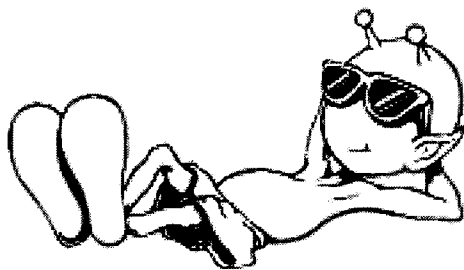
We posed for official photos, each category's nominees together, and finally it was 8:00 and we went down to the ballroom

or whatever it was, where the Hugos would be presented. I was totally unimpressed with the toastmastering; there was absolutely no routine, not even a flawed or failed one, no humor at all, and two minutes after the ceremony began Dave Kyle was handing out the Big Heart Award. Some of the Hugo wins were unsurprising: you don't invite Neil Gaiman and Dave Hartwell to be your Guests of Honor and then vote against them in their categories. Some were outrageous: Sheila Williams bought 7 of the 15 short fiction nominees, no other editor bought more than 2, and she came in 3rd. And some were startling: *Locus*, which has won something like 29 of these things, was beaten *very* thoroughly. I lost two more Hugos, but at least I lost to nice stories.

When it was over we all (and by all, I mean maybe a thousand of us) walked from the con center to the Delta. We were supposed to go out for a light dinner with BJ and John, Nick DiChario, Lezli, and Guy and Rosy Lillian, but we all got separated on the trek to the Delta. I went to the lower level lobby, which is where the Hugo Losers Party was, and with my lousy vision couldn't spot any of them, so I checked the Baen party (and introduced Michael Jordan, who'd sold her first novel to *Jim Baen's Universe*, to Baen book editor Jim Minz), hit some of the other parties, and finally Carol announced that she was getting sleepy, so I walked her home to the Hilton and got back to the Delta a little past midnight. I ran into Eleanor Wood and Justin Bell, and since they hadn't been to the Hugo Losers Party yet and needed a pass to get in, I escorted them there...and bumped into BJ, who wondered where I'd been. I told her. She explained that she, John and Lezli had been at the party all night. But you needed a pass to get in, I said; that's why I didn't look more thoroughly. We just said we were friends of Mike Resnick and they passed us right through, she said. It was dimly-lit, and I still couldn't see John or Lezli until she

pointed them out ... and while I was walking over to greet them I bumped into Guy and Rosy, so we decided to go out for a bite after all. Along the way we ran into Rich and Nicki Lynch, who joined us. It was after 1:00 AM on a Sunday night in a Catholic town, and the only thing open was a 24-hour Tim Horton's about a block from the Hilton, so the eight of us piled in there and spent the next two or three hours regaling BJ, Lezli and John with funny stories about conventions past (and of

course everyone had a favorite Harlan Ellison story), and by the time it was over Guy and I didn't mind losing our Hugos quite so much. Then we all went home to our rooms, where it occurred to me I hadn't seen the inside of mine for close to 20 hours.



Monday, August 10. The con was all but over, and this was *my* day to tour.

Actually, there was only one thing I wanted to see, and that was the Notre Dame Basilica. Carol had been planning to go, but she was feeling touristed out, and the die-hard atheist of Jewish extraction (me) actually likes churches a lot better than the lady who was brought up Catholic (her). Debbie Oakes wanted to go, and so did Lezli. Debbie's ankle was bothering her, so we cheated and took a cab.

The place was magnificent. I've been to Notre Dame in Paris, and I like this one better. Lezli spent about an hour and a half taking a few hundred photos, and on the way out we bumped into Sheila Williams, who once again told us she wanted solo and collaborative stories from us, and since she said it right on the steps of a church we'll assume she was telling the truth.

We cabbled back, I helped Carol pack for awhile, and then we took yet another cab, this time to the Place d'Armes Hotel, where Baen's Jim Minz had invited some of us for dinner: Sharon Lee and Steve Miller, Carol and me, Lillian Stewart Carl, a couple of others. We had drinks on the rooftop terrace –

real drinks for everyone else, soft drinks for Carol and me – and we went downstairs to the highly-rated restaurant, The 701, just as the sky was filling with rain clouds. Wonderful meal, wonderful conversation, and finally we walked over to the Delta for a final visit to the CFG suite. Somewhere before midnight BJ and John decided to go back to the Hilton, and Carol went with them. Lezli and I stuck around another hour or two, going on one last hunt to scare up some business, and finally wended our way back to the Hilton, where I found that my financial disagreement with the management had finally been resolved.

The disagreement? I had reserved our room back in February with my PayPal debit card. Reason: it's not tied into my bank accounts, and I like using it in other cities and countries, since if it gets in the wrong hands they can't use it to pull money out of my checking accounts. Never a problem with it. Until this year. I check in, give it to the desk clerk, he runs it, and says it's been refused. I can't imagine why, so I go to the business center and check the PayPal account. The Hilton has pulled \$1,900 out of it while I was in transit, and there isn't another \$1,900 in it. Well, first of all, the damned bill, even with all the usurious tourist-gouging taxes, is only going to be about \$1,400, tops, for the week. Second, I print out my up-to-the-second PayPal statement, and it *shows* that they've taken the money. He says no, the money hasn't been taken. Well, unlike debit cards drawn on your own checking or savings accounts, PayPal debit cards -- there are maybe 175 million of them in the world, so of course he knows nothing about them – take about 3 days to transfer the money. I point to where it says "Pending", which means it's been approved and the money's in transit. I spend half an hour with him, but I cannot make him understand that "Pending" is not a synonym for "Refused".

I see that Carol's getting tired of sitting in the lobby waiting for our room, so I reluctantly give him a debit card drawn on my business checking account. It's good, they take out the money, and we have a room for the week. But every day I check the PayPal account, and every day it is still short \$1,900.

Finally, on my last night there, as I'm packing the laptop in its case, I check one last time, and lo and behold, the Hilton has returned my PayPal money, plus the extra \$500 of my business account money they took for ghod knows what reason. It was a gorgeous hotel, it truly was, and all's well that ends well, but I know a certain desk clerk I'd like to slowly strangle.

Tuesday, April 11. We get up and meet Debbie in the lobby, because we're going to share a cab to the airport. I'm hoping to see BJ, John and Lezli to say good-bye to them, but my companions are in a hurry, and I gather we leave about 90 seconds before they show up.

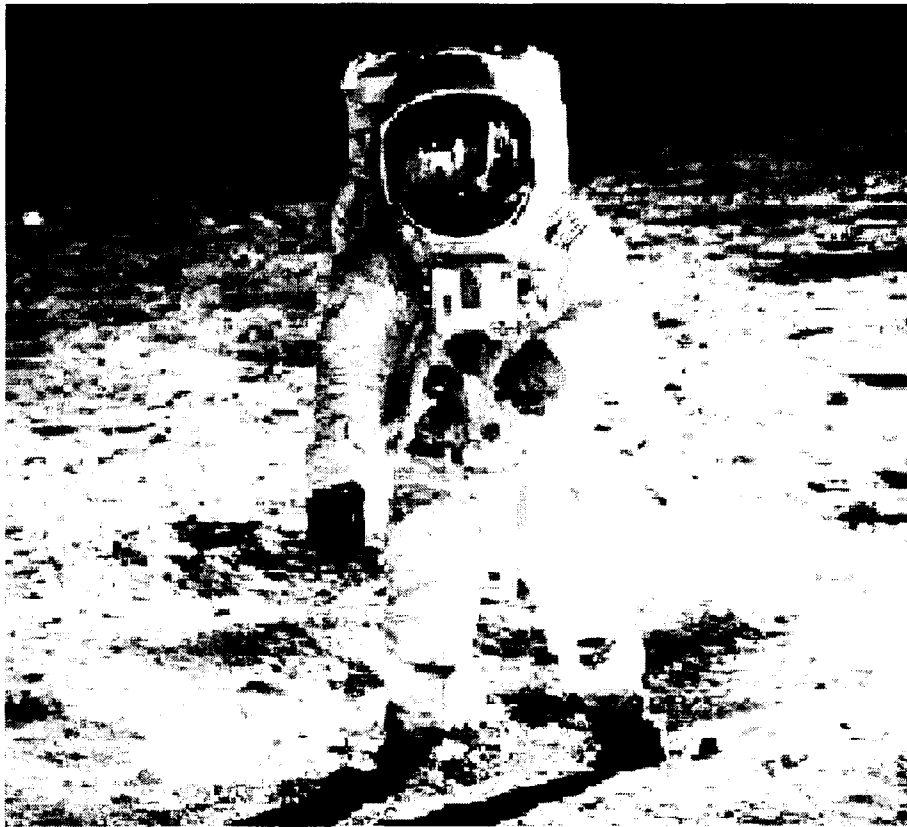
Our Delta gate at the airport is almost a rump con. Lee Modisett, his wife, and some California fans are on our flight, and will transfer when they reach Cincinnati. Lou Anders and Paolo Bacigalupi, fellow Hugo losers, are departing from the very next gate, so we all sit together and visit for a couple of hours.

I suppose it is a nice flight home. Having averaged about five hours a night for a week, I sleep right through it, content in the knowledge that I don't have to bomb the Bonaventure Hilton after all. Laura picks us up for the usual – I fill her gas tank and buy her a meal on the way home, which is still cheaper than parking for a week – and then we are home, and I realize that I have been going to these things for 46 years and even when they're in unfortunate venues or run by less-than-competent committees I still love them. I love seeing stars like Nick and Michelle that I've helped along the way, and budding superstars like Toby Buckell and Lezli that I've helped more recently, friends of four decades like Tony and Suford Lewis and friends of three days, and as always I feel this overwhelming sense of community, and of satisfaction with the life and livelihood I chose so long ago.

I'm ready to go again next week.



When you're Greg Benford, you get to meet the most interesting people ...



THE MOON AND BUZZ

Gregory Benford

Buzz Aldrin asked me to hold out my hand. I did.

He walked across the room with what I saw – for the first time in my life, not just a literary phrase – was classic catlike grace. He looked at my hands and even I could see a slight finger tremble.

“That’s why you’d

never make a fighter pilot,” he said. “Everybody who went to the moon had absolutely still hands, perfect coordination, and –” he grinned – “by the way, was an Eagle scout.”

So much for my fighter pilot dreams. We were in his home in Laguna Beach in the 1980s and he wanted to talk about writing a novel with him. I was skeptical (and later the deal didn’t work out). Still I was awed by the guy I’d watched leap joyfully in the moon’s gravity, while Robert Heinlein and Arthur Clarke commented. So I said, “With all that capability, where would you have liked to go next?”

“Mars,” he said. He spoke of the Bonestell covers on *Collier’s* magazine, accompanying the von Braun articles. The sharp paintings of the Mars fleet – insectoid landers, spherical fuel chambers naked to the view. A utilitarian armada.

“I thought I was going to go to Mars,” he said. “I thought that for years.”

“When did you stop?”

“When I saw the shuttle designs.” He shook his head.

“A space ship designed by a committee,” I said.

“Yeah, a committee of lawyers.”

“If not Mars, how about going back to the moon?”

“I’d like to be buried there.” He smiled but the eyes were distant. “In a few decades, unless we get our asses back in gear, nobody who walked on the moon will be alive.”

“Being there, that was the peak?”

He chuckled. “No, coming back was. I was pretty damn sure I would go out again. I knew I could do it and wanted to again.”

I couldn’t think of anything to say. I still can’t.





THE CHALLENGER TRIBUTE:

CATHY PALMER -LISTER

Captured between Joe Major and
yhos here find **Cathy Palmer-**

Lister, editor of the Montreal SF Association's fine genzine, *Warp*, and patron saint at that city's worldcon of 2009's Fan-Eds' Feast. The Feast's success was almost entirely due to her. This *Challenger's* tribute is an altogether inadequate bow of thanks. And here's the great lady herself:

GHL: Set the scene with who you were and what you were doing when you discovered fandom.

CPL: I was a teacher, home alone on a weekend in the fall of 1990. The radio was on, and I heard one of the reporters signing off with the comment that she was off to a science fiction convention. The DJ asked her what that was all about, and I picked up my ears: They have conventions for fans of SF?! Believe it or not, I had no idea there was any such thing. I fed the dogs, and ran out the door. It was Con*Cept, and I fell in love. I wandered about looking at scale models of Eagles from Moonbase Alpha, somebody gave a talk on *Godzilla*, there were folks in costumes – I was in quite a daze. In August of the next year, Creation came to town with Nichelle Nichols. I found it boring compared to what I had experienced at Con*Cept, but on the plus side I discovered – Fan Clubs! And joined 3 of them on the spot, and a fourth one later. Only MonSFFA remains of those clubs, sadly.

GHL: What kept you in fandom?

CPL: I dove into the deep end of the pool! I have a habit of letting my enthusiasm get ahead of my abilities. When the next Con*Cept rolled around in October, I was gophering, wearing my Klingon uniform for KAG/Kanada. I was having so much fun! I wrote my first articles for the KAG zine, *Disruptor!* I guess it was that sense of fun, the socializing with other fans that drew me. There were some very intelligent discussions going on at MonSFFA meetings. I discovered members were artists, scientists, writers, readers, and they were welcoming to newbies like myself. They were the founders of Con*Cept, and I quickly found my niche as a chronic volunteer.

GHL: What have you done in fandom?

CPL: Well, as I mentioned, I was a member of 4 clubs at one point. I was president of MonSFFA for 3 years, and I am currently the editor of the club zine, *WARP*. As a member of KAG/Kanada, I rose to be captain of a Klingon ship, winning a lot of honours and glory along the way. I was on the concom of the Science Fiction Festivals, which regrettably only lasted two years, and the one-off Dr. Who convention. I was also involved in TransWarps, which were little minicons run by all the SF/F clubs in Montreal

together. They were great fun, but too many clubs disintegrated and the TransWarps went with them. I became the registrar for Con*Cept, and then took over the big chair in 2001. (I have a co-chair this year – I call it progressive retirement.) I won an Aurora Award for organizing Con*Cept, but it will likely be my last Aurora as I am now on the committee and consequently ineligible. Of course, I found other conventions, and I attend a few every year, especially World Con.

GHL: How did you enjoy Anticipation?

CPL: It was a thrill to have World Con in Montreal, but knowing me, you won't be surprised to hear I missed a lot of panels as I was too involved in business meetings and the MonSFFA room party. For once, I used my head and did not volunteer to work at Anticipation, which turned out to be a good thing as my mother became ill at this time and this cast quite a pall over convention for me. One highlight was meeting all the zine editors for the Fan-Eds Feast. Thanks for that, Guy!

GHL: I'd like to know more about *WARP*.

CPL: *WARP* is the club zine for MonSFFA, the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, a club I joined in 1991. MonSFFA was founded in 1987, and the first *WARP* was published soon after. It was a cut-'n'-paste job, but IIRC, it had photos even as far back as that. We've always been keen on the *look* of the zine – lots of artists in the club! I became editor in 2003. I had absolutely no experience with publishing zines, but common sense never stopped me from volunteering, and no one else was stepping forward ... so I said I would take it on provided I could be free to "experiment" (in other words, learn on the job) My first issue was *WARP* 54, Spring of 2003, and I made it look a bit like a tabloid. One of the headlines was: ***WARP* has a new editor! See "Drunk with Power", page 3.** The new format, 17 X 22, folded and stapled down the centre like a real magazine, was welcomed by members, so I made the covers of the next few issues parodies of real magazines. You can see some of them here:

<http://www.monsffa.com/monsffahtml/warp.html>.

Fortunately, MonSFFA has many active members who are illustrators and writers so I seldom have difficulty putting together a really good zine. To cut costs, we are now on-line, mailing paper copies only on request. Since we have fewer to print, our president was able to swing a deal with his employers, and he is able now to print *WARP* in full colour at minimal cost. My only problem is time – I'm over-extended, and *WARP* is not being published on schedule as it should.

GHL: How do you like the other zines you see?

CPL: Until I met you, Guy, and starting getting *The Zine Dump*, I had not seen many zines. What most astonished me was the wide variety of topics. I had always assumed, since most zines I had seen until then were club zines, that fanzines were about SF/F. Some zines are totally unrelated to the genre, which I still find very strange, but none the less make for very interesting reading. Fans are never shy to speak out on anything and everything! Of course, having met some of the editors makes the zines more fun to read. I do find it hard to read zines off the computer, but that is the way of the future, I think, for all of us.

&



THE LAST MARY JANE STORY^I

Taral Wayne

It was 14 p.m. by the ship's clock – intergalactic metric time – and the fixed stare Spock was maintaining into one of his hooded instruments meant he was relaxing his usual way, during his coffee break. The other officers on the bridge drank their coffees in silence, having long ago tired of sniggering at Spock. A Condition Mauve was bleeping monotonously above the background hum of engines, twittering computers, and crew muttering under their breath about the alarm. It had been bleeping for over a quarter of an hour, and no one was apparently in the least concerned.

Morale was low on the *Enterprise*.

The turbolift labored to open its doors, and Kirk broke into the bridge, a smear of lipstick incompletely wiped from his cheek.

"What is it, Spock. Are we under attack?"

"No, Captain, we are not."

"Does Scotty dinna ken if the engines are going to hold up under the strain again?" The usually meant that the engineer was drunk at his post, and might at any minute destroy the ship. "Or have the Klingons fired a disruptor across our bows?"

"The engineer is sleeping peacefully in the tank, Captain. Neither are we on an accidental routine reconnaissance stray into Klingon Space. I requested you to the bridge because we are receiving anomalous signals from the surface of the planet below."

"What? Is that all?" said Captain Kirk, his eyes darting to the situation board. A small, muddy planet of Class M wobbled on its axis there. Another of the unaccountable number of Earth-Analogs the galaxy seemed so fond of throwing in the way of the *Enterprise*. "A call for the Captain of a starship to come to the bridge is tantamount to a Red Alert. But this is only a very low priority Mauve alert, Spock. That mud ball on the screen barely justifies even that." Kirk dismissed the miserable object with a thumb over his shoulder. "You could have had Uhura look after it." A raspberry sounded from the communications station.

"Pass it by, helmsman," he ordered. "Those Earth-Analogs are always more trouble than they're worth."

"Captain, we have strict orders to investigate all unusual objects while on regular border provocation. The planet looks unpromising, to be sure, but it might be of political value someday, if the governing body can be manipulated to invite our protection. Shall I open a channel to Starfleet, to confirm orders?"

This meant, as Kirk well knew, that Spock would go over the Captain's head, if necessary, to have his own way. The ship's science officer was resorting to blackmail too often for Kirk's comfort, lately, and he was wondering who was really Captain on the *Enterprise*. Spock, for the moment. Kirk would forge a request for Spock's transfer at the first opportunity. Burning Man VI perhaps. So far, though, there'd never been a time when Kirk had known for sure that his science officer was absent from his station. From there he was able to monitor all ship's communications without Kirk knowing it. Spock couldn't fail to notice his Captain's attempt to ditch him, and that could get very ugly. Sooner or later, Kirk swore, the Vulcan would have to sleep. Surely? But the Vulcans had sexual

intercourse once every seven years. Suppose they only slept... Kirk cut that line of reasoning short for the hundredth time, then turned to Sulu to repeat Spock's instructions as though his.

Once in standard orbit, Spock nailed down the signal frequencies, and piped the primitive radio message through the bridge's intercom. Kirk wasn't sure if there was a sly look of smug superiority on the Vulcan's face or not.

"Greetings fellow intelligent beings of the universe," a low, nasal voice spoke from the intercom. Although heavily distorted by solar wind, it was easy to make out its meaning. "I am transmitting to you from the planet Earth."

"They're all called Earth," Spock explained. Unnecessarily, since everyone on the bridge knew it just as well as he did. It was in the Starfleet manual, chapter one, and even the enlisted men read that far before skipping the rest from boredom.

"If you are listening," continued the cheerful voice, "but don't understand English, decipher this fundamental mathematical series, and I will begin teaching you how to communicate through universal laws of nature. One, three hundred and thirteen, one hundred and eleven thousand six hun - "

"Turn it off, Spock."

"A highly unusual salutation, Captain. I have a fix on the location. Shall I beam the sender aboard?"

"Not again? Why, Spock, why?"

"It is time, Captain."

"But we had a Mary Jane last week!"

"Not for the three weeks preceding, however. We are still below the quota set by the Organian Treaty. Shall I open a channel with Starfleet, and confirm orders?"

"No, no," relented Kirk, who knew when he was beaten. "Have it your way. I'll be in the transporter room."

"Fine, Captain. And give my regard to Yeoman Rand when you see her again. Her choice of lipstick colour is improving."

The turbolift door closed on the sight of the Captain wiping the wrong cheek with a perfumed silk handkerchief.

A Mary Jane was the biggest headache to a



starship's Captain and crew. For whatever reason she was beamed aboard, she invariably turned out to be thirteen to eighteen years old, and much too precocious for her age. It would be awkward enough just having a strange alien aboard. But regulations insisted on their return as well. Yet, the existence of the Federation, and intelligent life on other planets, had to be kept from the alien at all costs. Official contact could only be made with a world when a Starfleet Diplomatic Attaché/Psychological-Warfare Officer had decided the proper moment had come for it. That these were mutually incompatible directives was self-evident to everyone but policy makers.

Some Captains found a solution to the problem by reporting an unfortunate misalignment of some of the vector parameters of the transporter beam, resulting in an unforeseen defocusing effect which redistributed the passenger's mass uniformly throughout the length and breadth of the galaxy. The computer log was notoriously uncritical. However, Kirk was slow in shedding his principles, and still returned Mary Janes more or less intact.

Merely returning a Mary Jane where she belonged was problem enough for a starship Captain. But for Kirk there was an added complication. Inevitably, the Mary Jane fell head over heels in love with his First Officer, instead of the Captain. Whether or not this was in any way connected with Spock's insistence in the matter of hailing all Earth-Analogs that swam into the *Enterprise's* screens, the Captain had never made up his mind. He was only 117th in a class of 119 in his ROTC, after all. He still believed that Vulcans only had sex once every seven years.

Kirk arrived in the transporter room a few minutes later. Unknowingly, he still had Yeoman Rand's lipstick on his other cheek, clashing badly with his gold uniform. The transporter operator paid no mind to the Captain's eccentricities, however. He'd been aboard the *Enterprise* for the better part of a year, and was resigned to any sort of lunatic behavior on the part of her officers. He went about his job with a practiced negligence that was the envy of his superiors. (They were generally incompetent at anything apart from protocol, and the minimum management skills needed to keep up appearances.) The Captain was no less envious of the Red Shirt's competence than was his pettiest-officer. But discipline demanded he not show his frank astonishment that a vulgar enlisted man could operate anything more complicated than an electric sono-shaver. Even Kirk occasionally vibrated a tooth out of its socket with his own shaver. But if he couldn't follow the crewman's complicated adjustments on the transporter board, he could at least pride himself that he didn't show any admiration either.

The crewman, however, read Kirk's face like a book, and easily guessed what ran through the Captain's mind. Yeoman Rand mostly. The Red Shirt was thinking – only eleven months, three days, sixteen hours left before I'm demobbed. Do *nothing* to stand out and be assigned to a detail.

Already, a column of twinkling, silvery motes swirled on the transporter pad. A shrill electronically generated tone rose in volume, and pierced the ears quite unnecessarily. A figure firmed up, and appeared to be a short, dark man in black. He was oriental to boot, looking more Klingon than Federation. This was a Mary Jane? (I can't wait to see Spock's face, Kirk thought, showing more imagination than usual.)

"Greeting!" said the dumpy but happy figure in black. He was only wearing jeans and t-shirt, and not as sinister as he had first seemed.

"Oh no!" said Spock from the door. His ears seemed almost to wilt in disappointment. Quickly recovering his composure, he asked the visitor if it was indeed he who had been transmitting signals to the *Enterprise*.

"You bet! I tracked you with my sky-scan program. I take it that you're the first in command," said the visitor to the First Officer, knowing authority when he saw it.

"*I'm in command here!* Let me introduce myself. I'm Lt. Commander James T. Kirk, graduate of Starfleet Academy, Captain of the starship U.S.S. *Enterprise*, Registry Number NCC 1701, gross tonnage –"

"Welcome to the *Enterprise*. I am Spock. And you?"

"My name is Raymond Dim Sum. Everyone calls me just Ray. Hey, how come you guys speak English?"

"As Captain, I'd be glad to show you to your temporary quarters. As soon as I can arrange it I'll..."

"It's quite simple, really, though I could take several minutes, and use so much technical jargon that I'd barely be using the same language, to say that basically all Earth-Analogs speak English. It's a law of nature, apparently."

"Hey, uh, that's really convenient. Do all Earths speak the other 8,000 languages we have too? Do you speak Chinese? Nay mehn buk, muh?"ⁱⁱ Do they all get our reruns on TV?"

"We'll have to return you at the earliest opportunity, mister... er... Sum..." continued Kirk, "But we might, er, that is, I could personally conduct you on a tour of -"

"Later, Captain," said Spock. "Mr. Dim Sum?"

"Call me Ray."

"Call me Mr. Spock. I wonder if you would come with me. We have a lot to discuss. Eight thousand languages did you say? Fascinating. I've never before heard of a planet where more than one language was ever spoken... Hmmm."

The turbolift doors closed on Spock and the strange new Mary Jane, leaving Kirk with the aloof transporter operator.

The new Mary Jane was a computer hacker, and wanted to know everything about the ship. Everything about known space as well. Kirk was pathetically eager to please Ray Dim Sum, even to the point of letting the Mary Jane take the helm at warp speed. Spock acted more responsibly, and threatened to open a channel to Starfleet whenever the Captain became entirely too accommodating. (Such as when he allowed Ray to carry around a working phaser.) The First Officer outright rejected Ray's request to vaporize a passing Klingon picket. Despite Spock's keeping a tighter rein on Ray's impulses, they got along famously. Spock learned much about a planet that seemed impossibly complex, and Ray learned everything from how to psych out a ship's computer with paradoxes, to how to build a tractor beam from a transistor radio. Out of spite, Kirk began reminding his science officer about security regulations. He was easily put off, by the cannier science officer. Spock had to know more about middle-eastern religions, the nature of political ideologies, the fantastic variation of musical scales, and the superfluity of brand names. Knowledge of the Enterprise and its support technology was his stock in trade.

On the second day of his arrival aboard, Ray had switched his black t-shirt and jeans for a crewman's uniform. On the third day he asked for and got an officer's uniform. On the fifth day he simply appeared on deck in a gold shirt, complete with officer's braid, and a phaser that he gotten from somewhere. Spock shot a dirty look at Kirk, but held his peace.

Seeing control of the Enterprise slipping through his fingers to Spock was nothing new to Kirk. But now it occurred to him that it was slipping away to the newcomer as well. Kirk changed tack, from accommodation to resistance. He suggested to his Spock that the time had come to return the Mary Jane to his proper environment. As always, Spock outaced Kirk. But the balance of power had subtly changed, and he knew it. So far, Kirk hadn't realized that it was *he* who could open a channel to Starfleet, and confirm orders. It was *he* who could blackmail Spock into getting *Kirk's* way, to return the Mary Jane at once. The Vulcan shuddered at the thought.

Why, he'd only scratched the surface of what there was to be learned from the Analog-Earthling. It was as if the planet were the Platonic Ideal, and all other Earths, including the capital of the Federation, were just shadows of it on the four-dimensional walls of a cosmic cave. Then too, there was the belief-defying fact that all the adventures of the Enterprise, including some highly sensitive covert operations were more or less available to the general public, thinly disguised as an entertainment media called "science fiction". Call it "The Foundation" instead, or a "Stargate", or an "Ansible", it remained a fact that the people of this Earth shouldn't know about *any* of these things. Yet they did. It was vital for the sake of science to know more. It was vital to the security of the Federation. What's more, it was vital to the satisfaction of the Vulcan's curiosity.

Spock would sooner part with the Captain than with the presumptuous Ray Dim Sum. "Fascinating," he reflected on his own thoughts... "Fascinating."

Kirk's arrest came three days later. Ray and the Captain were taking the promised tour of the ship at last. Ray had already seen most of the Enterprise by that time. But Ray had made his first acknowledgment of the Captain in days, and Kirk saw it as the awaited opportunity to make his move. He virtually dragged Ray down into the hydroponics section. Ray protested that he'd rather start with the engineering room, or weapons bay. But Kirk said, "No, there's too many people up... uh, there's too great a radiation hazard, I mean. Besides, hydroponics is the basis of the Enterprise's ecosystem. Any effort to understand the complex ship's organization must begin with hydroponics! First lesson in the executive officer's textbook."

"I didn't see anything about hydroponics until chapter nineteen."

"A unrevised edition, no doubt, Mr. Dim Sum. I especially recommend a closer look at this specimen. Don't mind the spiky bits or the missing section from the safety perimeter. I'll have that fixed in the morning."

"Isn't that a Denebolan Carnivorous Cobradendrium, Captain?" said Ray, wisely going nowhere near the thing.

That was the exact moment when four husky security men, armed with phasers, stepped out onto the catwalk over the malt yeast, two in front of Kirk, and two behind him. Spock appeared from behind one of the giant brewer's vats.

"You almost spoiled my coup, Captain, but one of the agricultural hands reported you here, instead of engineering, where I logically expected you to start. Put your hands up and you won't be harmed."

"Is this mutiny, Spock?" Kirk blurted, slow on the uptake as ever. "You can't get away with it! Men, arrest Mr. Spock and disarm yourselves!"

"It won't work, Captain. I chose these men to obey my orders without question. They're the survivors of that party of Red Shirts you had beamed down to Philbin IX to be eaten by the Gompant Gnorl. Remember?"

"That was an accident, men! There are many planets where a stew pot is a welcoming gift, and gnashing teeth is a gesture of friendship. It won't happen again! If you perform your duty, and arrest yourselves, I'll drop charges. I'll even give you a week's shore leave."

"Screw you, Captain," said one of the grinning crewmen.

"You'll be lucky if we let Spock take you prisoner, without first phaserizing your kneecaps on full setting," growled another, with a fearsome scar on his face. "The last liberty we had was on a planet inhabited by energy beings. They turned half the shoreleave party into clockwork gizmos, and nearly wiped out the other half, forcing them to be pieces in a giant game of chess. I got this scar before that, on the Man-Eating Amazon planet. We can do without one of *your* shoreleaves."

"Hardly any different from any of your missions," added the first Red Shirt.

"You still can't get away with it, Spock." Kirk struggled desperately to appeal to the Vulcan's logic. "The computer log will show an illegal transfer of authority. Your mutiny will be discovered, and you'll get a reprimand on your permanent record. And you men can kiss your asses goodbye – you know what happens to mere enlisted men who mutiny? Phoot! Right out the main airlock, without as much as a jock strap to keep your balls from exploding!"

"We have considered that difficulty," said Spock. "It appears that there is a way, after all, to circumvent the theoretically tamper-proof safeguards that prevent changes to the log. If you had ever read the log back to yourself, you might have noticed that, over the last few days, Dr. McCoy has noted a disturbance of your personality profile. After a board had properly convened to hear your case, and had been advised by the Good Doctor that, in his professional opinion, your condition was deteriorating, you were legally suspended from active duties. Tomorrow it will read that you were shot while trying to escape from a medically supervised area."

Kirk knew when he was beaten. He turned to Ray, raising his hands slowly. "It's no use, Mr. Dim Sum. They have us."

"What do you mean *we*, White Man?" said Ray through the most shit-eating grin of his life. "Who do you think falsified the computer log? I'm the new Captain of the Enterprise."

There was a better use for Kirk, actually, than shooting him, whatever the records said later. Still rubbing his backside where he was given the amnesilin injection, Kirk was prodded onto the transporter pad. He was dressed in a black t-shirt and black jeans. In less than twenty minutes he'd forget everything he had learned in the last twenty years.

"It won't be so bad," said the new Captain.

Standing by Captain Dim Sum's side, Spock wore a smug smile. It was the first smile anyone had seen on his face. On anyone else's face, the smile wouldn't have raised comment, but for most of the crew present it was unnerving. He was still amazed by how much better an Earth-Prime hacker was at re-programming a ship's computer than any Federation expert.

Captain Dim Sum continued, "I doubt you can do my job back home. But maybe you can take over my office as treasurer of the science fiction club I'm leaving behind. It'll all seem strangely familiar to you, probably."

"And who knows," added Spock, twisting the knife in the wound. "Perhaps you can use Captain Dim Sum's radio apparatus to attract the attention of another starship. If the universe is full of Earth-Analogs, it should also be full of Enterprise-Analogs. I calculate that one should happen along within 300,000,200 years, more or less."

"Thank you... Mr.... Uh..." replied Kirk, looking and sounding more vacant than usual.

"Pipe the prisoner off the ship," ordered the Captain, in a crisp, assured voice. The transporter operator snapped to attention.

"Aye, aye, sir!" Pipes skirled ceremonially.

"He never came to attention for me," were Kirk's last thoughts as the drug took away his memory, and he began to dissolve from the scene.

Captain Dim Sum had almost forgotten Spock's last words to Kirk, but never quite. They came boiling to the surface of his thoughts several weeks after the coup. He and Spock had come to an understanding, by then. Dim Sum was Captain, in both name and deed, and the science officer had been dissuaded of any thought of command, either by himself or through a puppet. Otherwise, Spock was pretty much free to do as he pleased. Research whatever he wanted. Investigate anything that came to his attention. Have access to any and all resources of the Enterprise in his pursuit of knowledge. If anything, Spock seemed to respond positively to a strong leader, as had the entire crew. They had only winked at the sudden disappearance of Captain Kirk, and connived in the fiction that Captain Dim Sum had always been in command. Morale on the Enterprise was much improved.

Even so, Spock's final words to Kirk were resonant in some way that Ray couldn't place.

The memory nagged him when he joined Spock in the officers' lounge for their weekly game of chess. He found the science officer already at play with a tall, lean man, who might almost have been Spock's twin. But where the Vulcan had pointed ears and slanting eyebrows, the stranger was clearly human. He was dressed in an odd, old-fashioned way as well. But otherwise they had the same aquiline nose, grave expression, and air of intense concentration. The other player broke his attention from the board, and spoke to Spock.

"You are, if I am not mistaken, in check from three directions, and you will be forced to capitulate your knight to me in four moves, if you wish to avoid checkmate. This four-dimensional chess offers considerably more challenge to a man of my intellect than the traditional game. I am in debt to you for your introduction to such an agreeable pastime."

"They even talk the same!" exclaimed the astonished Ray.

Spock and the stranger noticed they were under scrutiny.

"May I introduce Mr. Sherlock Holmes, Captain," said Spock. "Consulting detective, and memorable character from 19th Century fiction in the English language."

"Very kind of you to say so, Spock. My pleasure, Captain." The detective offered his hand. Ray shook it, absently.

"Wh- ... who ... where?" was all he could say.

"Mr. Holmes was discovered by me on an Earth-Analog much like yours, but in a state of probabilistic flux that permitted less likely states of existence. Such as Mr. Holmes' London of 1885."

"Yes." Holmes looked up from the game again, "A traveling companion and I were close to participating in the final moments of my world, when Mr. Spock and, *ahem*, the late commander of this vessel opportunely arrived, and effected our rescue. Putting our heads together, your brilliant science officer and I deduced the cause of my world's troubles. My companion was not Watson, as you may think. He was from another continuum than mine, you see, and his presence was destabilizing. He was restored to his own parallel world. I elected, however, to remain with the Enterprise for a while, at least until my being here should begin to have adverse effect on this reality." He returned his concentration to the middle level of the game, effectively dismissing Ray.ⁱⁱⁱ

Another Mary Jane, of a sort.

That's when Ray's concerns came flooding back. Holmes and Ray hit it off tolerably well, after the rather cool introduction. Holmes concentrated like a fiend, and the effort blocked nearly everything else from his mind. But that the Great Detective should be aboard his ship at all bothered the Captain. As did the thought of a bewildered Kirk, waiting for a passing doppelganger of the Enterprise. Could what had happened twice, happen three times?

It could. A few weeks later, somewhere beyond the Spes Major system and a little to the left of the Consular Nebula, Spock was at his science station. He turned to the command chair, and solemnly announced the reception of a signal of unknown origin from a nearby M-Class planet. The science officer didn't have to quote regulations at the Captain. Ray ordered a standard orbit around this newest Earth-Analog. Spock did, however, find it necessary to snap the Captain out of a deep funk with a stimulating nerve-pinch before he would give the order.

Shoulder numb from the pinch, and unable to think the unthinkable, Captain Dim Sum was led to the transporter room by a mystified Spock. Doors opened and closed, air hissed somewhere out of sight, lights flew by, and without quite knowing how he got there, Ray was standing before the transporter pad. He watched the figure materialize that would replace him. It was short. It was dark. It even spoke with a low, nasal voice.

"Oh, Mr. Spock!" she cried. "I love you!" Spock looked more self-satisfied than anytime Ray had seen him.

The newest Mary Jane was a Mary Jane after all. This time...

ⁱ This story was originally, "**dedicated to Lt. Comm. Lum**", for what occasion I no longer recall. A birthday? My old friend Do Ming is as curious a job of work as always, but tries very hard to appear respectable. It occurred to me that he wouldn't be very keen to be identified to the entire world as the Commander Lum who appeared in this story. Out of consideration, I have changed the name. At the same time, I didn't wish to rob the story of whatever intent it was I had at the time I wrote it. So, although it can only be found in this humble footnote, "**The Last Mary Jane Story**" is still dedicated to Do Ming Lum.

ⁱⁱ The words are Toy Shan Cantonese, and ask "do you understand"?

ⁱⁱⁱ The incident with Holmes is actually from an earlier story I had written, called "The Miscarriage of Heaven and Hell". Holmes described his part in it with admirable brevity.



One of the unique and wonderful moments of Nolacon II came when we brought New Orleans' Sid Noel – a.k.a. Morgus the Magnificent – to the attention of fandom ... and he gassed us! Here Lester tells his own story of the master of the Ice House...

Mr. Couch Potatohead II: *Morgus the Magnificent*

Lester Boutillier

As 1959 went rolling along NBC continued to have us kids corralled with its Saturday morning lineup, three straight hours beginning with *Howdy Doody* and ending with *Sky King*. I don't know what CBS had on opposite, but nobody was watching it. ABC barely

tried. It only had one hour on Saturday mornings. Wisely they put their show on after NBC went off. For a while they came up only with clinkers for that hour, which began at 12 noon Central time. Then, in the fall of 1959, they took a chance and gave a break to the host of a local kiddies' show in Detroit, a guy named – you guessed it – **Soupy Sales**.

Filled with sight gags, bad puns, and other outrageousness, it was just the thing to keep us kids indoors for one more hour before going outside to play. Of the many running gags on the show, the best was White Fang and Black Tooth, which had Soupy doing the voices of dogs as if the dogs went barking and woofing in human English cadence. It was wild! It was great! In the middle of the show, about 12:30pm CST, Soupy would sit down to eat lunch, hence the show's title Lunch With Soupy Sales. That's when I would have my lunch. Every week my mother would try to give me lunch before that. And every week I would say, "No, I want to eat lunch when Soupy sales eats lunch!" and so I literally had lunch with Soupy Sales.

All my best friends watched Soupy too. And between the long-established NBC lineup and Soupy's show I thought I'd had the best of Saturday TV all scoped out. But I didn't know everything. And my best friend Jerry Seregni put me onto two Saturday shows I'd never heard of. One was *Flash Gordon*, a science-fantasy half-hour loosely based on the Alex Raymond strip. Filmed in Europe and dubbed into English, it was a pretty good science fiction series whose adventures spanned the solar system. Doctor Zharkov was in it, but not Ming the Merciless. There were other villains instead, like the evil queen of Neptune. I actually learned some science from this show, like when Flash and a bad guy duked it out on a methane world without space helmets. We were told that methane was poisonous to humans and that no human being could hold their breath for more than three minutes. The fight was then a contest for survival. The first one to open their mouth for air would inhale methane and die. The bad guy gave in first. His last breath



was a dying scream of agony as the methane got to him. The stronger Flash then hurried back to the ship.

The other Saturday show Jerry turned me onto was an afternoon entry, Paul Winchell with his dummies Jerry Mahoney and Fahrferd. The show was brought to you by Nestle, and in the commercials Fahrferd would get the last word. "N-E-S-T-L-E-S, Nestle's makes the very best – choc, late!"

But the biggest debut on Saturday television in 1959 came late at night, after primetime, after the local news on WWL. This was the legendary local show *The House of Shock* starring **Morgus the Magnificent**. Local shows around the country showed old horror movies and bad science fiction movies, with wraparound host segments by the likes of Elvira. But Morgus was the best, bar none. A lisping, hunchbacked mad scientist with a perpetually dirty lab coat, goofy teeth, huge mole, and frightwig hair, he weekly conducted "experiments" in his lab, preposterous schemes that would be equaled only decades later by the animated *Pinky and the Brain*. Aided by a talking skull named Eric ("yesss, Master!") and a nonspeaking giant dressed like a hooded hangman and called Chopsley, Morgus ruled the roost of local TV for years. But us kids watched more for the movies, which we'd never seen before. These included *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *Bride of Frankenstein*, and *The Werewolf of London*, among others. The show began at 10:30 and went off at midnight, an unusually late time for 8-year-old me to be going to bed. I remember going into the kitchen for a glass of water right before going to bed and seeing the kitchen clock say 12:01. Wow! I was awestruck! Going to bed after midnight!

Shortly after that, my mother took me to the ear-nose-and-throat doctor, where we met another mother with a little girl my age. I boasted that I'd stayed up until one minute after midnight. The girl smiled sweetly and said that she often stayed up until 2:00am on Saturday nights! There must have been more little kids like her than like me back then, because WWL soon added a second feature to the *House of Shock*, this one hosted by Morgus' mother, Grandma Morgus (played by the same Sid Noel), who painted "art" on a canvas while hosting the second movie. The double feature was divided this way. The first movie, hosted by Morgus himself, was a science-fiction movie, like *The Day the Earth Stood Still* or *The Invisible Man*, while the second movie, hosted by Grandma Morgus, would be a horror movie.

The first of these double features had a last-people-alive movie in the first slot. It starred Peter Graves and four others who were the only survivors in a big city of what they thought was a man-caused atomic disaster. It turned out to be the work of alien robot invaders, and the five survivors began fleeing from the frightening, menacing robots, who began to mow them down one by one. In the end the Army arrived to save the day. One robot was captured and dissected, and it was thus learned how to end the threat. Pretty good stuff for an 8-year-old! The second movie, Grandma Morgus' first entry, was *Dracula's Daughter*. I went to sleep a couple of minutes into it. I wasn't used to staying up that late! Next week at school Jerry told me he'd slept through the science fiction movie but woke up in time to see all of *Dracula's Daughter*.

As time went by I acclimated myself and was able to see all of both *House of Shock* features. One highlight was the double feature of *House of Frankenstein* and *House of Dracula*, the second movie picking up right where the first one left off. Eventually the entire series of *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *Wolf Man*, and *Mummy* movies were shown. As for Morgus himself, his most famous "experiment" had him use plastic surgery to make Chopsley handsome. But the experiment, as always, went awry, and Chopsley's face wound up even more hideous! Chopsley went berserk and chased Morgus into the alley next to the WWL studios. The cameras panned around as Chopsley tried to kill Morgus! End of show! Wow! Next week however everything was back to normal.

How popular was Morgus? Well, a local rock 'n' roll group had a smash record of a Morgus song. It contained these lines. "I don't really want to roll and rock! I get my kicks from *The House of Shock*! Morgus! The magnificent!" And the local magazine *Louisiana Life* did a long article on Sid Noel and the origins of Morgus. It turns out that Momus Alexander Morgus

was a real life "alchemist" in the middle ages, and the article contained a woodcut of this original Morgus. Morgus' reputation was spread nationwide, and one day my father brought something home for me that he'd stopped off after work to buy, that week's issue of *TV Guide* with a two-page-spread article, complete with photograph, on – you guessed it – Morgus the Magnificent!

There was also a Morgus movie, produced here and shown only here, at a series of neighborhood theatres. (I saw it at the Bell.) And for a while WWL let Morgus do the weather report Monday thru Friday afternoon. This was actually a second Morgus show, five minutes long, five days a week. Oh, he gave the weather alright. (He gleaned the humidity by squeezing a dirty rag into a dish!) But he also did experiments, like once when he invented a teleportation machine. He went into the machine and disappeared! No one knows where he went, but when the machine opened out came Uncle Henry Dupre from *Popeye and Pals*, who wandered around Morgus' lab scared to death for being in such a weird place. Great TV! And it was all local too!

Then there was the time Morgus ran for president. But that's a story for another time.



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In memoriam, **SOUPY SALES,**
a.k.a **MILTON HINES,**
in memory of many a great pie in the face.



Says Richard: *I wrote the following for an APazine dated July 2007. Guy liked it at the time. However, I wanted to wait until the legislation mentioned at the bottom was passed. That didn't transpire until nearly a year later, April 2008. By that time, the project was forgotten. Recently, however, I remembered it. I admit it all should be ancient history. W is no longer President, and President Obama is unlikely to veto generous increases in SNAP (i.e, Food Stamp) benefits. However, thinking it over, I find a political fact of life the media, and the public, would prefer not to talk about. That alone is worthy of an article.*

THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

Richard Dengrove

Recently, newspaper after newspaper has been reporting the Food Stamp Challenge. I do not know what food activist organization first came up with it; there is a whole army intent on feeding the poor or reforming our nutrition. However, the first person to get widespread publicity for taking the challenge was Ted Kulongoski, the governor of Oregon. The idea behind it was that you eat on \$3 a day, the average Food Stamp allotment. On the one hand, you can't use your larder to carry you over. On the other, you could go to a soup kitchen and that would not be counted. To great publicity, Ted took the challenge for a week. As many people after him, he found that it was difficult to eat on \$3 a day. For him personally, the diet left him dissatisfied, hungry and fatter.

Ted was accused of taking the Challenge for publicity. It didn't help that he said he was doing this out of a strong belief that people should not eat on so little. However, the Republican leader in the Oregon Senate, I believe, backed him up: he said he had always been a straight shooter. Later, Ted lowered suspicion by saying his achievement, such as it was, would be forgotten and he didn't care.

Ted was followed by Congressman James McGovern of Massachusetts and Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri. They were in turn followed by other Congresspersons. It was the occasion of a mini-scandal when Eleanor Holmes Norton, D.C.'s nonvoting Delegate to Congress, was caught cheating on the Food Stamp Challenge. Meanwhile, people not in the political spotlight were taking the Food Stamp Challenge. A whole slew of New York politicians took it. Meanwhile, ordinary people in States as diverse as Utah and North Carolina took it. The joke in my agency was that if we wanted our Under Secretary to get in the news, she should take the Food Stamp Challenge. Several colleagues added she is so petite she should have no trouble with it.

The Congresspersons certainly had political aims in mind. As part of the Farm Bill, the Food Stamp Program is up for renewal this year, and they wanted a hefty increase in the Food Stamp allotment. The above Congresspersons are Liberals; and I imagine many who voted for them are on Food Stamps, or socially conscious. On the other hand, an increase in Food Stamps is something the Bush Administration definitely opposes. It is Conservative and its constituents definitely would oppose an increase in Food Stamps.

Thus, mere ideology and constituency would explain these positions. However, there have been changes in the social and intellectual climate that the Congresspersons have hitched their wagons to. Because of a Conservative act, the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, those on Food Stamps are less often seen as welfare cheats and most often seen as the hard working poor. The Republicans, as often happens in politics, are the victims of their own success.

Also, McGovern and Emerson have hitched their wagon to the Obesity Epidemic. The Obesity Epidemic justify more money for food?! In years past, it would have sounded crazy, and Conservatives would be able to laugh them off the stage. In recent years, however, a Liberal ideology has often hijacked the anti-obesity campaign. Its advocates say fast food is responsible for the poor being inordinately

overweight. A diet of it contains too much fat, salt and high fructose corn syrup, and too few fruits and vegetables; yet it is the only food the poor can afford.

To many this argument is lame, but politically it is a juggernaut. Although State after State passed laws outlawing Big Mac lawsuits, where fat people claim damages from fast food companies, those lawsuits won't die. Also, Kraft, McDonalds and other big food companies have been laid low and have promised to reform, i.e., make healthier food. The soda companies have 'voluntarily' promised to fill their school soft drink machines with more healthful fare too.

To take advantage of this divine wind, the people who have taken the Food Stamp Challenge have argued they were not, during that week, able to afford nutritious food. In addition, they were continuously tired and hungry. Curiously, while a more balanced diet is touted as a cure for obesity, most claimed they lost weight. Kulongoski was an exception. This contradiction, none have responded to.

Right Wingers, both aware of the politics and not, have tried to derail the Challenge. The Administration pointed out that the \$3 a day is the average Food Stamp allotment not the full benefit. It is for people who are working and expected to supplement their Food Stamps with money earned. The full benefit, which goes to people who cannot work, is about \$5 a day. I have only seen the Administration rebutted in one place, North Carolina. There, a food activist replied that people's expenses have been radically underestimated, and often there is no money to supplement Food Stamps. No question \$3 a day, and even \$5 a day, is a niggardly sum to eat on.

Another way Right Wingers have tried to derail the Food Stamp Challenge is to call it a cheap publicity stunt. I know my big boss believes that it is, in fact, the Food Stamp Stunt; but, in public, he is more tactful. Actual members of the Hard Right have had no such compunctions. Of course, to a Liberal constituency, the Food Stamp Challenge represents heart felt beliefs, and is anything but a cheap stunt. Many ordinary people have taken it themselves privately, without any fanfare.

A third way Right Wingers have been trying to derail it is by claiming that a person who planned his meals right could live easily on \$3 a day. They promote their usual belief that the poor are prodigal. Several such Right Wingers promised to take the Food Stamp Challenge. One Oklahoman Right Winger claimed he could get organic milk for \$1 a gallon. On what planet? Whatever their claims, I have never read any further about them. They just faded from even Right Wing media. On the other hand, a few Liberals have agreed with these Right Wingers. They are health advocates or those into the simple life. Sally Squires, who writes the Lean Plate Club column in the Washington Post, agreed based on advice from a dietitian. I frankly don't believe it. The Oregon governor and the Congresspersons often had dietitians helping them.

Now I am going to complicate the situation even more. We have been talking about how more fruits and vegetables in our diet are nutritious and will fight obesity. An economic interest also promotes fruits and vegetables, the fruit and vegetable growers. Their voices are really loud in California and Florida. That their product has been ballyhooed as healthy has not been lost on them either. In fact, since this campaign is more vociferous now, they are wondering whether it won't help them get subsidies for their product. If this means lower subsidies for others' crops, so be it.

The situation is currently reversed: the bulk of subsidies go to Midwest growers of wheat, corn and soy, and the Southern growers of cotton. We are still under the 2002 Farm Bill, which was a high point of the farm subsidy giveaways. The subsidized farmers have been living the life of Reilly. It doesn't seem that they have to suffer any economic losses.

Whether fruit and vegetable farmers will back increases in the Food Stamp budget ala the Food Stamp Challenge is another thing entirely. Farmers hate welfare. What they get themselves, they do not see as welfare. However, they will back feeding children in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Will they overcome their natural Conservatism and form an alliance with the advocates for the poor? Food Activists from the Left are courting them. Two books, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan and *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser have trumpeted how bad nutrition is subsidized while good nutrition should be subsidized.

However, the fruit and vegetable farmers could always go in the other ideological direction. The Administration is courting them too. It desperately wants to cut subsidies to wheat and corn for two

reasons. First, it is looking to cut the budget and stanch the deficit with as little political fallout as possible. It is proposing a sizable purchase of fruits and vegetables for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. In exchange, the fruit and vegetable growers would support cuts in the wheat and corn subsidies far greater than the purchase.

The second reason is the Doha Round. We have been negotiating tariffs, subsidies, etc. worldwide with many other nations of the world. The subsidies for wheat and corn are safety net subsidies, where a farmer is saved from many losses. If we lowered them, the Administration believes we would be in a better position to bargain for changes in other nations' agriculture. While the fruit and vegetable purchases would be subsidies too, they would be less objectionable to the Doha nations.

Nothing is for certain. I bet an increase in Food Stamp funding will pass the House and Senate, but the President's veto power makes it a wild card. And it might not be for the Food Stamp provision that W vetoes the Farm Bill; there are quite a few other provisions he might cotton up to even less. If the Fruit and Vegetable Growers go with the Administration and not the Food Activists, it will hurt the prospects for an increase in Food Stamp funding.

The provision the Fruit and Vegetable Growers seek is up for grabs too, and the Wheat and Corn Growers may yet keep their jackpot of subsidies. Congressman Collin Peterson, the chairman of the agriculture committee in the House, adamantly opposes lowering them. In the Senate, however, Tom Harkin, the chairman of the agriculture committee there, just as adamantly supports lowering the subsidies. The Doha Round might be the deciding factor. After the Administration proposed its Farm Bill, the Doha Round started up again. However, Brazil and India refused to budge on tariffs, and the talks fell through again. It is going to be harder for the Bush Administration to play its world trade card in the Congress.

I hope I haven't confused you with this little score card concerning the Food Stamp Challenge. Everything, as you can see, is related to everything else.

The media did not brace us for what was about to happen. Two factions broke out of the boxes of their beliefs or vested interests, the big city Liberals, who promoted the Food Stamp Challenge, and the subsidized farmers, who promoted their own subsidies. They made a deal, and whipped W's butt. For their pains, the Liberals got higher reimbursement for school meals and greater Food Stamp benefits; and the subsidized farmers kept a good deal of their subsidy. Others did not make out as well. The fruit and vegetable farmers allied themselves with the subsidized farmers, and got a pittance, business from the Federal school meal programs. I have to say nobody was offering them more. On the other hand, the Conservatives who opposed the deal tooth and nail were blind sided. Strangely, nonetheless, they did receive a crumb: the Food Stamp Program was renamed with the un-euphonious name, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Benefits). For some reason, the Liberal/farmer coalition bowed on this one microscopic issue.

The media took a hit: it once again showed it could not predict its way out of a paper bag. However, the fellow who suffered most was George Bush. I am sure he had thought he could depend on more Republican congressmen from farm states. Ideology, he thought, was blood; and it was thicker than water. Because of that, he felt secure that his veto power would form an insurmountable barrier to what, I bet, he considered fat cats and welfare cheats. It is true his strategy stalled the Farm Bill (The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008) for many months.

However, not permanently. After trying to deal with him, the farm leadership in the House and Senate did some compromising with their colleagues. That allowed the Farm Bill to pass by majorities of over 80% in both houses. These majorities were sustained too. When W vetoed the bill, the same majorities proved more than enough to override. Perhaps W and the media could have learned a little something from history. This wasn't the first time a Farm Bill had overridden a veto. It happened to Eisenhower in 1955. It wasn't the first time Liberals and Republican farmers had gotten together either. I take it that is why Robert Dole and George McGovern had been such good friends.

In addition to a lack of history, W and the media suffered from some naivety. It is hard to believe in this age of muckraking and exposés. I guess the one great illusion that is left is that Congressmen will

never give up lesser beliefs or vested interests for greater beliefs or vested interests. That would be untrustworthy and execrable. Everyone is aware of it on a small scale. Politicians are always wrangling spending in their district, which, I am sure, they have an intense vested interest in. For that, they are willing to exchange their vote on bills that they are wavering on, which they hold a lesser belief or vested interest in. Even on this small scale, people disapprove – as long as the spending is in someone else's district. The press and pols scorn the final product as 'pork'; and politicians never fail to anathematize the other side's pork.

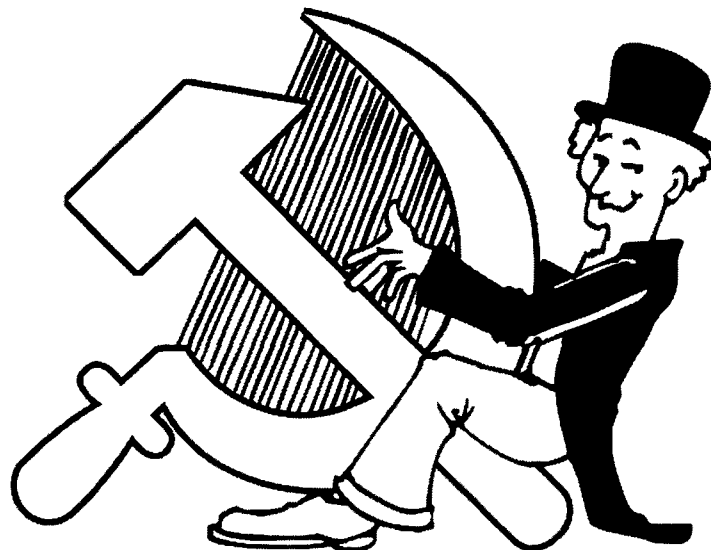
This was small change compared to the Farm Bill. With Liberals, farm subsidies are not even a lesser belief: they are something they hate because they consider them payments to fat cats. This is a position they held way before Michael Pollan. Nancy Pelosi's district certainly disbelieved intensely. She received a lot of flack for supporting the farm subsidies in the Farm Bill. On the other hand, I suspect, like the fruit and vegetable farmers, well-heeled farmers with subsidies hate Food Stamps. For them, they are the home of welfare cheats.

Yet the Liberals and the farmers held their noses and got together for some horse trading. For the sake of their greater beliefs or self-interest.

With such an ethical leap, it is no wonder this left a bad taste in many people's mouths. An editorial writer in the Christian Science Monitor reflected the general attitude when he asked whether the Congress couldn't have enacted an increase in Food Stamp benefits without the farm subsidies. In other words, whether it couldn't have enacted both the greater good and the lesser good. He, and the public, would just as soon not hear the answer, i.e., a resounding *No*. As I said, W stood in the way with a veto, and the still sizable Republican membership to back it up. No way was there going to be such an increase by more ethical arrangements.

A few, however, embraced this deal with enthusiasm. For Nancy Pelosi, this wasn't just one bill; this was part of a whole legislative strategy. As a Congresswoman, she voted against Farm subsidies. However, as Majority Leader, she felt she represented the party as a whole, and that meant not alienating the farmers. She stated in an interview that she remembered times when there was an unbridgeable chasm between farm and city in the Party; and the Republicans won almost every time. To her, this squabbling was over lesser beliefs and interests. She swore she wasn't going to allow the Party to stumble over them on her watch.

What can I say? I can't support farm subsidies. They are, as the man says, subsidies for fat cats. Farmers, and these are large farmers, should be able to get along without them – like most other businessmen do. On the other hand, I am a damned bleeding heart Liberal, and think it is a good thing that Food Stamp (SNAP?) benefits were increased. Thus, unmistakably, I am in a quandary. I guess there is no such thing as 100% satisfaction in politics.



"And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever ..."

THE FUTURE OF LONGEVITY

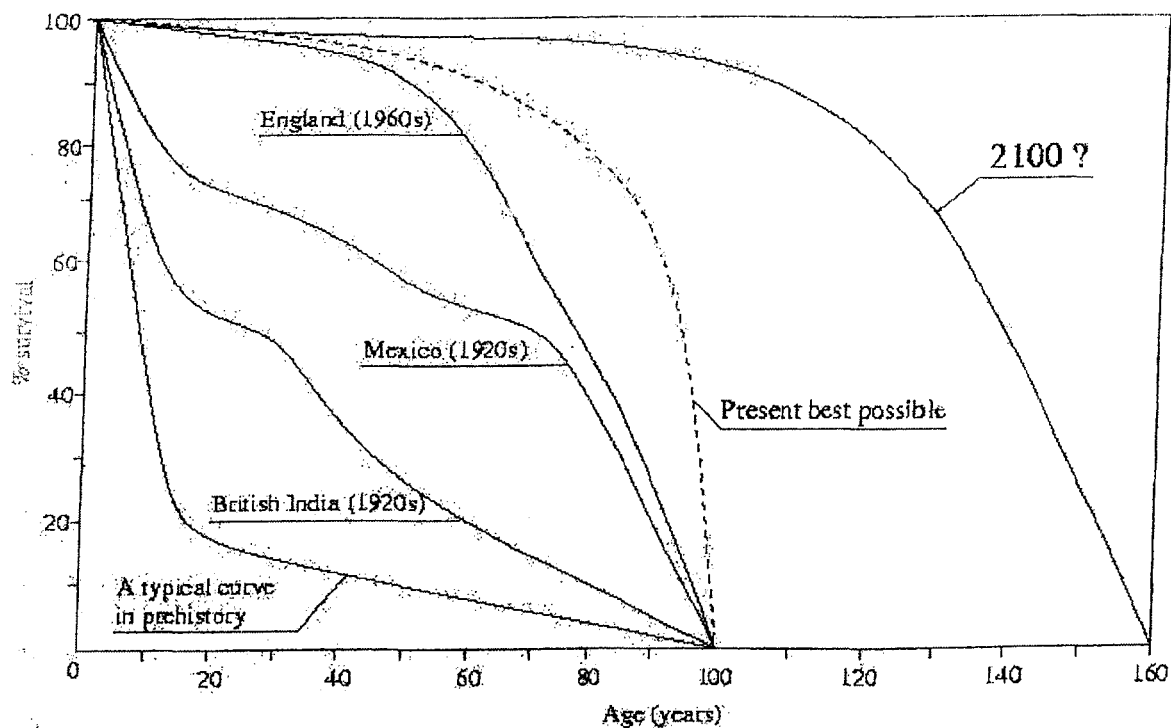
Living Long, Living Large

GREGORY BENFORD

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The oldest person whose age is reliably known was Jeanne Louise Calment of Arles, France, who lived from 1875 to 1997, achieving 122 years, 5 months. As a girl she had sold pencils to the young, unknown Vincent van Gogh—her first, true brush with immortality.

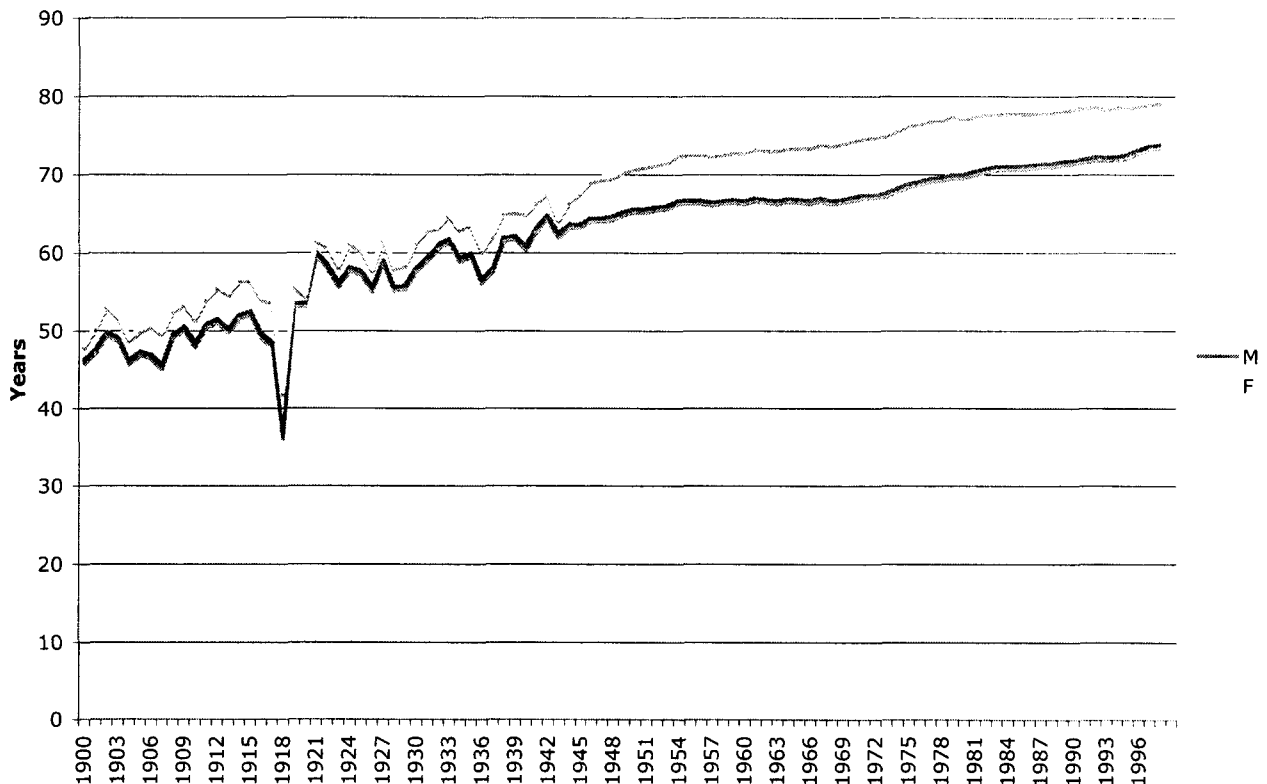
Aside from such exceptional cases, the lot of humanity is shown by the mortality curve we give here. As it shows, there are two major stories taught by history about improving longevity.



First, the dramatic improvement of modern times has come mostly from the better survival rates of children. In a state of nature, children fall prey to cold, disease and accident at high rates. Better sanitation, medicine and nutrition have made their gains throughout the 20th century. This explains why the curve for Mexico in the 1920s differs greatly from British India at the same era: India had yet to enjoy the improvements slowly diffusing from the advanced nations, while Mexico had. Note that the difference between England of the 1960s and Mexico of the 1920s came mostly from better child mortality rates.

Second, the elderly death rate has shown some improvement, but not a lot. There is still a fairly solid “wall” around age 80, and beyond it, the population declines roughly exponentially. One might term this the “fragility wall” where people become prey to any passing microbe or severe accident. Their resistance and resilience has eroded until they are easy marks.

Mean lifetime, 20th Century, US/



The Longevity Quest

We all take extending longevity as a good to be sought. Some will carp about increased costs to Social Security, or population growth, but getting more out of a single life also promises huge gains, many of them economic, as people work to greater age. Given the search for more years, it is surprising that there is so little research into the deeper questions of how to push back the age frontier. Is there a basic limit? And is it the same for us all?

Consider the graph of mean lifetimes in the USA, where the upper curve is for women, the bottom one for men.

Before 1940 there are many bumps in the curves, notably for the Spanish flu of 1919. These ups and downs apparently arise from inability to deal with lesser diseases that come and go. The curves smooth past 1940, the modern era of penicillin, vaccines, etc. This is a significant transition, because the upward rise in longevity steadies thereafter, driven by science.

Notably, since 1900--when the death rates of the sexes were just about the same--women have consistently gained extra years of longevity over men, until now they live about 10% longer in advanced societies.

Few take note of this remarkable inequality, which is still increasing after a century. Females in advanced societies consume more than two-thirds of health care budgets, and are consistently heavier users of health services throughout their lives. This is most visible in the supercentenarians, those over 110 years old. Worldwide there are 76 currently known supercentenarians, with 72 female and only 4 males, ie, 6%. Upgrading male longevity to the level of females' in the advanced societies would improve the average human survival more than, for example, completely eliminating cancer. This strongly suggests that social forces have a great deal to do with improving our expected lifespans, beyond the reach of technologies alone.

The other major factor affecting longevity is prosperity. Rich societies fare better through their medical technology and through generally better diet and habits. Today in prosperous nations low fat diets, little smoking and conscientious exercise can extend longevity. Most of these improvements come from better education, not technology.

Will augmented people have longer lives? Even obvious mechanical aids like better legs and hips could prevent the often devastating falls among the elderly. Certainly radical technologies like nanotech would profoundly affect longevity, allowing replacement of cellular materials and direct, pointed interventions in major causes of death today, diseases like cancer and arterial blockage

The survivor percentage curve labeled *Present best possible* is a guess at what might be achieved by present technologies on all fronts. Shoring up the elderly could plausibly lead to the dashed curve within about 50 years.

After all, in the advanced nations the average longevity has increased 50% in the last century. A similar improvement would take us to a curve that terminates somewhere between 100 and 110--a cotton-topped future. But technology changes, and the advances from augmentation plausibly can keep making inroads on the many causes of our mortality.

The curve labeled *2100?* is of course a pure guess, building on the successes of the past century. It assumes the "fragility wall" around age 80 has been thoroughly broken down, with another 50% increase beyond the *Present best possible* curve. This line is not a serious prediction, but rather a suggestion of how much augmentation could change us. Certainly replacement organs (transplants or outright mechanical organs) can prevent deaths.

But with the advent of efficient, inexpensive genomic analysis, we have a vastly better tool.

Selection as Supercomputer

Love and death are the greatest themes of our kind. *Romeo and Juliet* captures this beautifully.

I have followed such issues over decades. I have a contract with Alcor, a cryonics company.

I had made money from novels and consulting, while a professor at UC Irvine. I had the ability to do something about the yawning prospect of the dark abyss, so I did.

In February of 1980 a Canadian biologist, Michael Rose, began breeding five large fruit fly populations that have ever since been selected for postponed aging. Michael moved to UC Irvine and we became friends. I saw the implications in his work. In 2006, four years after my wife's death from a genetically inherited disease, I started a startup biotech company with a cofounder, Genescent. We bought Michael's Methuselah flies and read their genomics.

Genescent corporation now owns, controls, and uses these longer-lived organisms. The genetic information they revealed Genescent uses to improve human longevity. Rose's use of artificial selection through over 700 generations of fruit flies is the first use of selection as a "supercomputer" that can reveal genetic pathways that increase longevity.

Aging is the loss of adaptation in adulthood. This loss means that animals beyond the age of reproduction suffer from no selection pressure, and hence lack the information to avoid failure.

This insight dates for William Hamilton in the 1960s. This logic closely parallels the role of

information in economics: markets use vast stores of information, while government allocation does not, relying on managers. Thus socialist countries are not as efficient and productive as market economies. Similarly, without information about what works to extend reproduction and longevity, death is inevitable. The mortality rate climbs inexorably after reproduction stops.

Postponing reproduction therefore forces early acting, damaging genes out of a genome—animals die before they can pass on the bad information. Keeping adults from reproducing, through many generations, will yield longer-lived individuals. The idea came to Rose from reading Robert Heinlein's *Methuselah's Children*, a classic case of science fiction influencing science.

Using this, Genescient has developed fruit flies that live 4.5 times as long as ordinary flies. Through over 700 generations, taking the eggs away until half or more of the population died, gives us valuable information about what genes confer longevity, because we can now read genomes. A similar experiment with humans would take 20,000 years. So we must learn from the Methuselah flies.

Using artificial selection like this, we can then reverse-engineer from the Methuselahs to develop anti-aging therapies for humans, for those genes shared by both flies and humans.

Genescient uses these evolutionary resources to quickly produce products that can attack some causes of aging.

We have three stages of life: development, aging (when mortality rates rise with age, and late life (when mortality rates stabilize). For example, if we could hold the mortality rate to that we have at age 50, we would live to 150. This late life stage has not been exploited, so far; it was discovered about 15 years ago by Rose and collaborators. It promises to give methods that achieve late life in better condition.

Specifically, Genescient flies have vastly greater health and robustness at these later ages. These "Methuselah Flies" populations are well-known in the scientific community. They show a qualitatively distinct pattern of survival. (Figure 3)

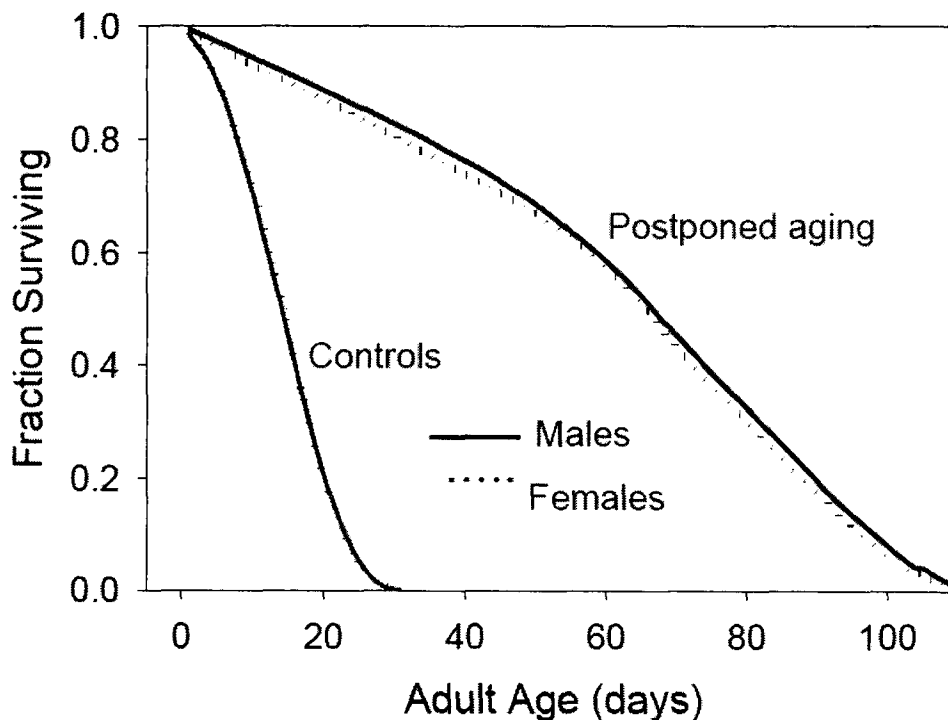


Figure 6. Age-specific survival of male and female fruit flies selected for postponed aging along with their control counterparts, indicating a very striking increase in effective longevity.

Animals with selectively postponed aging are the key to postponing human aging. Genescient takes this path.

Physiologically, these Methuselah flies have everything that people want for themselves: a greatly prolonged lifespan, sustained mobility, enhanced resistance to stress, lasting sex lives. They even look better at later ages, because their bodies literally do not fall apart, as the bodies of older fruit flies normally do. They have deliberately engineered “negligible senescence.” Genescient’s long-term goals are to achieve such a radical slowing of aging for human subjects.

It will do so, starting with products derived from the underlying genomics, in 2010. The company works to find harmless substances that can affect our longevity, and then tests them on lab animals to see if they work.

Please visit our website at genescient.com for more background. This is a challenge we can do something about in our time.

Future Prospects

Large longevity extensions will change our views of the human condition.

We already see that young people are delaying education, marriage and other social goals beyond those typical of people in the first half of the 20th Century. This may be come from their sense that they have plenty of time, since they see their parents leading vigorous lives into their 70s and even 80s, a phenomena nearly unknown only a century ago. Such subtle changes go unremarked because they are intuitive.

How far can this go? We have no true idea of an upper limit on lifespan. If we eliminated all aging, so that we faced no “fragility wall,” eliminated diseases, and could avoid all causes of death except accident (including suicide), how long could we live? Most people, when asked, guess at ages like 120, or 150. The answer, gathered from studying the causes of death in actuarial rate tables, is astonishing: close to 1500 years! This seems more plausible when one reflects upon how many friends die of accident. Typically, one knows only a few who die in accidents before age 50, from a total of, say, 1000 friends. This translates to a death rate from accident of about 1/1000 per year, or an average expected lifespan of about 1000 years.

With only a century or less of life, humans have developed many social forms to deal with this span, and nearly none that look beyond it. Take just a small step into that immensity: Imagine living to 150. How would you plan a career? Could you keep interested, if the job (like most) had a fair level of routine? And what about marriage?

Some argue that the divorce rate is high these days because people know they face a far longer span together than they did a century ago. Perhaps marriage itself can be redefined to set term limits, an idea which Robert Heinlein called “contract marriage” in the 1940s – and never caught on.

What of children, as well? As we live longer, the population growth problem worsens if we keep reproducing. Our lives will be less family-centered because our children will be adults, with their own lives, for a larger fraction of our spans.

We will learn to treat longer life as a resource, not just a goal. We can then exploit its benefits, like wisdom and equanimity, while focusing medicine and lifestyle changes on extending health and productivity, rather than dragging out the last bedridden months.



I doubt that many human pursuits of modern times – archaeology, environmentalism, SETI – would occur in even a technologically advanced society, if people lived to, say, only 40 or 50. Certainly our concerns for our eroding natural world and the climate change now accelerating would mean much to such people.

So longevity will give us greater time horizons, and perhaps wisdom as well.



Greg's latest book is BEYOND HUMAN, writ with Elisabeth Malartre, 2008.

Meteor inc – funding a permanent SF institution & research collection in Australia

	<p>Meteor Incorporated ABN 51 672 398 723</p> <p>President: Paul Bray Vice-President: Mark Loney Treasurer: Carey Handfield Secretary: Bill Wright Committeeman: Rob Gerrand Committeeman: Russell Blackford</p>	 <p><i>Vires Acquirat Eundo</i></p>
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The culmination of years of planning came to fruition on 25 April 2008 with the launch of a website for Meteor Incorporated, an incorporated association under the Victorian Associations Incorporation Act 1981 that was formed in August 2008 to accumulate cash donations & bequests until enough funds are available to

- preserve and manage a collection of science fiction and fantasy memorabilia (books, magazines, fanzines, and electronic media) through acquiring premises and hiring qualified librarians/custodians; and
- provide a resource for research into science fiction and fantasy literature and culture.

This is not a new idea. It was eighteen years ago that Mark Loney, recognising the long term benefit to Melbourne fandom from having a permanent home that could be used for a library/archive as well as a meeting place, proposed that twenty Australian fans should each contribute \$1,000 to make a down-payment on an inner suburban property. That deposit would have had to be augmented by the Australian Science Fiction Foundation (ASFF) to secure a mortgage loan on the premises that could have been paid out over time by institutions like the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, literary discussion groups and SF conventions.

Aussiefen listened respectfully but had other things to do with their hard earned at the time. But the idea took hold of me. By the turn of the millennium many of the Jants of Fandom who ran the first Aussiecon in 1975 had accumulated vast collections of memorabilia that, through death or incapacity, they could no longer look after properly. Universities said they could help but their collections tend to dissipate when the interested academic moves on. At the turn of the millennium I decided to Do Something, all by my cotton-pickin' self.

For five years, I spent thousands of dollars pursuing the chimera of a charitable trust, but the entire edifice came crashing down when, in 2006, some truly horrendous capital gains tax implications became apparent.

By August 2007 I had spent as much money again on different advice, only to find that I should have settled on an Incorporated Association like the ASFF in the first place. I contacted seventeen like-minded fans to form Meteor Inc, rustled up a Board of Directors that includes two Ph Ds in Literature and endowed it with 50,000 shares in a speculative biotech research company valued at \$15,000 today but having a potential worth of millions of dollars in five years time if its pipeline of anti-cancer drugs now under Phase II human trials succeeds. Mark Loney is Vice President and I have taken on the role of administrative secretary.

My contemporaries tell me that, whilst I've done the right thing setting up Meteor Inc, they doubt if younger SF fans, being financially strapped, will take to the idea any more enthusiastically than their illustrious forebears. I counter by pointing out that the mere existence of Meteor Inc is a plus. Fandom may not embrace it now but the fund will still be around in years to come to be re-launched by a later generation of fans.

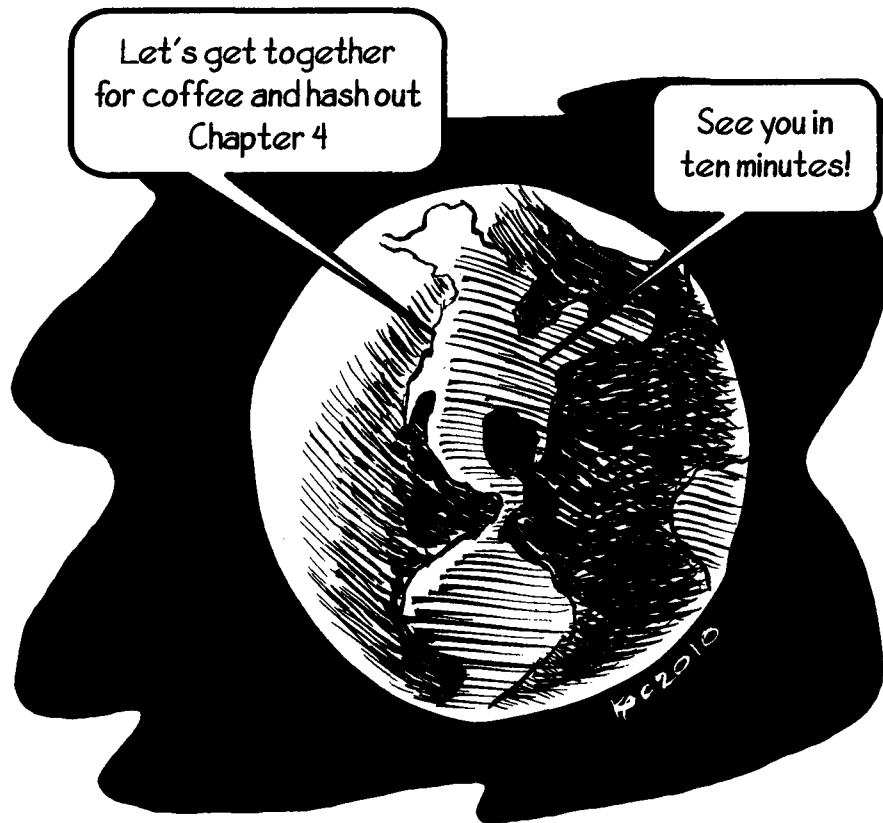
Meanwhile, as Larry Niven puts it in *'The Mote in God's Eye'*, the horse might sing. Every effort will be made to balance the investment profile of the Meteor fund from *'all risk'* to *'a balance of risky and conservative'* investments by means of donations and bequests from supporters; but... who knows? ...the speculative investment might come good and pick up Meteor Inc's small share of an estimated US\$48 billion per annum that is a market estimate for the biotech's leading drug candidate. If that happens, fandom will have a secure repository for the ongoing management of SF collections that might otherwise disappear without trace.

To view in glorious Technicolor the full page ad for Meteor Inc that appeared in the Aussie Natcon (Swancon 2008) Programme Book, please google <http://efanzines.com/IRS/index.htm>

Bill Wright

And what is *The Answer*? Ask Resnick.

My Gang of 42



Mike Resnick

Illos by KURT ERICHSEN

It began back in the 1960s, when Paul Neimark, who later wrote *She Lives*, and I were laboring in what has come to be known euphemistically as the “adult field”. One or the other of us would get a book assignment, and since we both hated writing these novels we’d collaborate. We’d flip a coin, and the loser had to do the sex scenes that comprised 25% of the book, and the winner got to write the 75% that contained the plot and

characters and all the other stuff that our particular readers weren’t interested in.

We did a *lot* of books that way – we lived two miles apart in Highland Park, Illinois, and our record for a single novel was 14 hours on a long Saturday back in 1968 – but eventually I got out of the field and never looked back.

Move the clock ahead to 1980, and I’m living in Cincinnati. My closest friend

there is Legendary Lou Tabakow, the mustachioed and white-haired God Emperor of Cincinnati fandom. Lou was retired and kept vampire hours, and like many writers so did I. So when he'd get restless at one or two or three in the morning, the one person he knew would be awake, sitting at a typewriter, was me, so he'd call and ask if I'd like to take a break and meet him for coffee at one of the dozen now-mostly-vanished all-night restaurants and coffee shops between our two houses, and unless I was on a tight deadline I always agreed.

Lou wasn't really a writer, but he'd sold a few stories in the 1950s and 1960s, and one night he told me this truly clever idea he'd had but didn't know how to handle. It was a one-punch story, and I couldn't see any way of getting more than 750 words out of it, and there wasn't much of a market for stories of that length. But the next night he had another 700-word idea, and a month later a third, and finally he asked me to help him get them into shape, because he was a little rusty. I suggested that selling them to different markets would be a Herculean task, and that what we needed to do was come up with a unifying theme and sell them all to one market, something like *F&SF's* Ferdinand Feghoot, but with a Fredric Brown-type punch ending rather than a pun. And finally I suggested that what could unify them was a character, maybe a world-famous writer/scientist named, for instance, Isaac Intrepid. Lou wrote Isaac Asimov and got permission (not that we needed it for a parody character, but Lou and Isaac were old friends and it was a courtesy) and we wrote and submitted nine Isaac Intrepid stories, one a week, to *Analog*, which bought four of them. (Lou died a year later, and a few years after that I sold all nine to another magazine, and surprised his granddaughter by mailing her a copy of the magazine and a check for half the money.)

It was interesting, but the stories were pieces of fluff, and I was just helping an old friend.

Move the clock ahead another nine years and Jack Chalker and I got to talking about the great old round robin stories in

obscure 1930s fanzines, and decided to write a round robin novel. Of course, we needed a third author for that, and on the night George Alec Effinger won his Hugo at the Boston Worldcon (I'd won my first one a couple of minutes earlier), we tackled him and wouldn't let him up until he'd agreed to join us. The conceit was that we'd change the writing order every three chapters, write a 12-chapter book, and each writer would try to stick the next guy in line with a major problem. The book, which we sold to Tor, became the very funny *The Red Tape War*, with a delightful cover by Kelly Freas. (What *isn't* funny is that of the four of us – me, Jack, George, and Kelly – I'm the only one still alive, and I was the second oldest.)

It was a lot of fun, and reasonably lucrative, but even though we shared the byline it wasn't a *real* collaboration, since each of us wrote our chapters in splendid isolation.

Okay, move the clock ahead to 1991, and I'm editing an anthology called *Alternate Kennedys* for Tor, and like all my anthologies, it's by invitation only. And in comes an uninvited story by a newcomer I'd never heard of named Nick DiChario, who'd found out about the book in a workshop led by Nancy Kress, who *had* been invited. I opened up the envelope and thought I'd read a page or two just to see how bad it was before returning it with a note telling him not to crash closed anthologies – and by Page 4 I knew I was buying it and that nothing could keep "The Winterberry" off the Hugo ballot (and indeed it made the ballot, and the WFC ballot, and Nick himself made the Campbell.) When I finally met Nick at the Orlando Worldcon in 1992, I asked him why he'd sent the story to an anthology, rather than a magazine where it would get much more circulation and notice. He replied that it had received a form rejection from every magazine in the field, which merely meant that not a single slush reader had read it or was perceptive enough to pass it on to an editor (who would – theoretically, at least – recognize the quality therein.)

We became friends, and about a year later Nick sent me a novella titled "Unto the Land of Day-Glo". He thought it was pretty good, but again, it had been turned down everywhere, and would I please read it and tell him what was wrong with it? I read it, found it to be as brilliant as "The Winterberry", and realized the only thing wrong with it was that Nick was still relatively unknown in the field and that it simply wasn't getting read. A couple of weeks later I got invited into an anthology that Nick's novella fit perfectly; I agreed to write for it if they would agree to consider Nick's piece. They did, and of course they bought it (it's the basis of his 2008 novel), and I began to think that if the field kept treating him like this he was going to move to mysteries or espionage or somewhere else and we were going to lose a major talent, and that he'd better get some encouragement soon.

So when I was invited into another anthology the next month, I asked Nick to collaborate with me. He sat down and produced a fine draft. I polished it a bit, fixed the ending a bit, and changed the title from "Darwin's Dragon" to "Birdie"; it was accepted, and it was a hit. Over the next year and a half I collaborated with Nick four more times, always assignments where if we didn't screw up beyond belief they were sure sales. Over the years, long after he no longer needed me or anyone else to get him into print, we collaborated on another six, and the eleven stories were eventually collected in hardcover and trade paperback as *Magic Feathers: The Mike and Nick*

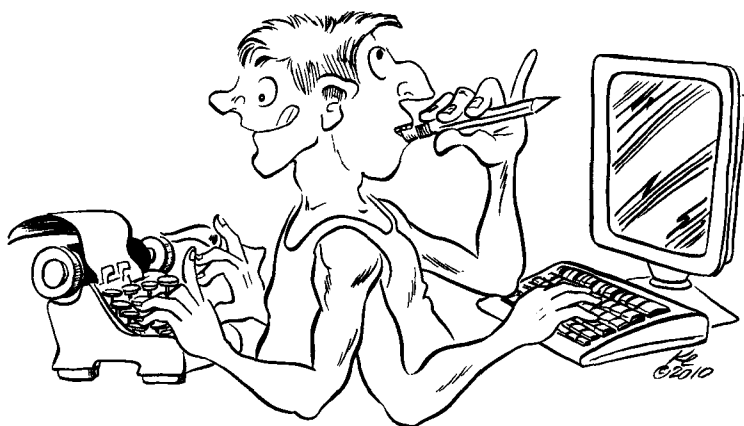
Show.

While I was doing the early collaborations with Nick, I found that my friend Barry Malzberg and I had each been invited to write a story for a Riverworld anthology, and that neither of us had read a word of the Riverworld series. So we decided to share the research – I would read Books 1 and 3, he would read 2 and 4 – and share the writing. We quickly gave up on the books – it's economically counter-productive to read 500,000 words in order to sell a story, so we bought the Gurps Riverworld game book and read the series synopsis instead. We came up with a pretty nice novella titled "Every Man a God", and Phil kept giving us little linear notes correcting minor things to agree with the books, and adding in each note: "Didn't you read the stories?" We didn't have the heart to tell him that he'd hit the nail on the head. We did the same thing – shared research and shared writing – with "Ghosts" for an anthology based on Keith Laumer's Bolo stories, and eventually we collaborated not only on a third story but on 46 (and counting) Resnick/Malzberg Dialogues for the *SFWA Bulletin*.

About this time I realized that I *enjoyed* collaborating, seeing how other people's minds worked, learning their totally different methodology, and bonding with friends who lived halfway across the country. So I looked for more people to collaborate with, almost always on anthology assignments, because I never wanted them to work on a story that could be turned down.

I'd been tutoring and editing Barbara Delaplace for a couple of years over on the Compuserve network. She'd gotten a pair of Campbell nominations, won a HOMer award, met her husband (Jack C. Haldeman) in the pages of one of my anthologies, and we'd become good friends. So I asked her to collaborate, she agreed, and we sold it.

I saw Lawrence Schimel almost every night on the GENIE



network back when he was attending Yale (and probably setting all kinds of records for selling stories while still in college), and we collaborated on and sold three stories.

After that it was Katie-bar-the-door, as we were in the heyday of the original anthology, I was getting maybe a dozen assignments a year, and I had no shortage of willing collaborators for those stories I didn't want to write alone. Among those who collaborated with me in the mid-1990s were Linda Dunn, Lyn Nichols, Ron Collins, Louise Rowder, Josepha Sherman, Jack Nimersheim, Adrienne Gormley, and Ann Marston. (After Nick, Barry and Lawrence, I limited myself to one story with each partner. Until 2009, anyway.)

Then one night Susan Schwartz sought me out in one of the GENie conference rooms. She needed to pick my mind about Kenya and Uganda. I answered as best I could. A couple of nights later she found me again. She had this very powerful story to tell – I agreed; she'd discussed it with me in our previous chat – but she couldn't tell it properly without months of research unless she had a collaborator who had actually been to East Africa and spoke a little Swahili and did I know anyone like that, did I, Mike, huh, did I? So I agreed to collaborate, we produced the novella "Bibi", it was a Hugo and Nebula nominee, and won the HOMer Award and topped the *Science Fiction Chronicle* Poll.

As we neared and then reached the millennium, I collaborated with Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Catherine Asaro, Tom Gerencer (one of my Clarion students), Tobias S. Buckell (another Clarion student), Mark Stafford (a third), Robyn Herrington, B. J. Galler-Smith, M. Shayne Bell, Janis Ian, Kay Kenyon, Susan R. Matthews, Michael A. Burstein, and Bob Faw.

I'd been hired by Capella International to write a screenplay based on my novel *Santiago*, and one night, when they were driving me crazy telling me they wanted "the poetry of language" and then hating every Bradburyesque prose poem I faxed them, Carol happened to be passing through the room, so I gave her the phone

and told her to see if *she* could figure out what they were talking about. She listened, dictated something I would never have written, we faxed it, they declared that I finally understood the poetry of language (a combination of sentence fragments and exclamation points, structured like advertising slogans), and at that moment I insisted that Carol become my official screenplay collaborator. We also scripted *The Widowmaker* for Miramax. Neither got made, but we were well-paid for both.

A few years into the new century I got to collaborate with my boyhood idol and good friend Robert Sheckley a year before his death. And with Harry Turtledove, and Paul Crilley, and James Patrick Kelly, and Ralph Roberts, and Bob Faw, and Nancy Kress, and David Gerrold, and Pat Cadigan, and Linda Donahue, and Kevin J. Anderson, and Eric Flint.

Which brings us up to November of 2007. I was selling off some books for the late Mary Martin, octogenarian surgeon and longtime CFG member, and one of them was an autographed Anne McCaffrey first edition. The auction closed with no buyers, and a couple of days later I got an e-mail from Australia, from a girl named Lezli Robyn, who asked if it was still available. I said it was, and she bought it. After receiving her thank-you e-mail I told her of my initial meeting with Anne McCaffrey, and she mentioned that she had *thought* she recognized my name. She explained that my books were difficult to find in Australia, and so she couldn't give me an opinion of my writing because she'd never read me. I said "We can't have that, can we?" and promptly e-mailed her fifteen of my stories. She read them, and made some very perceptive and incisive comments, so I e-mailed her another twenty, and we began corresponding every day. Since she had a beautiful turn of phrase it wasn't too long before I asked her if she'd ever considered writing science fiction. She admitted that it had been a childhood dream, she'd even written McCaffrey as a teenager to ask how to go about it, but life had gotten in the way and now in her mid-twenties she still hadn't gotten around to it.

So it was time to help another newcomer. I offered to collaborate with her. She suggested we meet at Denver first. So we did (and Denver wasn't just her first Worldcon, but her first con of any kind), and we hit it off, and she went back home, and we collaborated on a story.

One of the things I loved about collaborating with Nick was that he was like R. A. Lafferty. Remember those old books for science fiction beginners, the ones that said "If you like Asimov, read Clement" or "If you like Sheekley, read Tenn"? And then you'd come to "If you like Lafferty, buy everything of his you can find before no one writes or thinks remotely like him." Until I discovered Bob Jeschonek last year, Nick was the only other guy you could say that about. We'd get a dragon assignment, and he'd write about the one who coached Darwin and Einstein. For a book about kings, he'd write about King Kong, who'd fallen on hard times and was driving a bus in upstate New York. Seeing what Nick's brain produced next was always an adventure.

Lezli was exactly the opposite. Despite the fact that we are different sexes, and are 40 years and 17,000 miles and two cultures apart, I have never found anyone else who sees things almost exactly the way I do, who words sentences the way I do, who wants to tell the same kinds of stories I do. When I've proofed the galleys to our stories, I have been unable to tell which of us wrote which parts, and that has never been the case in any prior collaboration.

So we collaborated again, and again, and still again, selling to the top magazines as well as anthologies, and in a little over 13 months now we're up to six collaborations, all sold, at least two of them award quality, and we're committed for at least three more in 2010, plus a series of Young Adult novels. And I haven't been carrying her; she's sold some outstanding stories on her own as well. Anyway, I didn't set out to find a permanent collaborator in 1967, or 1980, or 1991, and I certainly wasn't looking for one in 2008, either – but I think I've found one anyway. We'll continue to do our own separate stories and books, and I have a

couple of contractual obligations for collaborations that don't involve her – for one thing, Eric Flint and I owe Baen Books the first novel in a trilogy, but our work on *Jim Baen's Universe* and his heart surgery have made us a couple of years late with it – but other than such obligations, for the next few years when I collaborate, it'll almost certainly be with Lezli.

So much for the history. Now: how (I hear you ask) do I collaborate?

Since I get the assignments or make the sales, I insist on doing the final draft; that's been true of every collaborative story I've worked on. In a majority of the cases, my collaborator does the first draft, sometimes after consulting with me, sometimes on his or her own, and I do the rewrite/line-edit/polish. Those would include the following:

Nick DiChario (ten times), Barry Malzberg (once), Lawrence Schimel (three times), Lou Tabakow (nine times), Barbara Delaplace, Linda Dunn, Lyn Nichols, Louise Rowder, Josepha Sherman, Ron Collins, Adrienne Gormley, Tom Gerencer, Tobias S. Buckell, B.J. Galler-Smith, Robyn Herrington, Mark Stafford, Kay Kenyon, Susan R. Matthews, Paul Crilley, Linda Donahue, Bob Faw, and Harry Turtledove.

Sometimes it's a half-and-half draft. My partner writes the first half of the story and I write the rest; or we write large alternating sections, depending on our areas of expertise. Those would include Barry Malzberg (twice), Nick DiChario (once), Susan Schwartz, Jack Nimersheim, Ralph Roberts, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Catherine Asaro, Michael A. Burstein, Dean Wesley Smith, Robert Sheekley, James Patrick Kelly, Nancy Kress, David Gerrold, Eric Flint, Kevin J. Anderson, and Pat Cadigan.

Janis Ian and I wrote a story that is just an extended sexy joke, and we just took turns building on the joke until we reached the end.

Lezli and I collaborate more like Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore, almost finishing each other's sentences. I keep vampire hours and she's halfway around the world, so we're usually awake at the same

time. I doubt that either of us has written as many as 800 words before the other started editing and building on it.

There are a number of collaborations I *haven't* tried yet. Other than writing a *Conan* comic book eons ago, I've never really collaborated with an artist; certainly not the way, say, Alfred Bester did with Jack Gaughan in *Golem-100* (which was a failure, but an incredibly ambitious one).

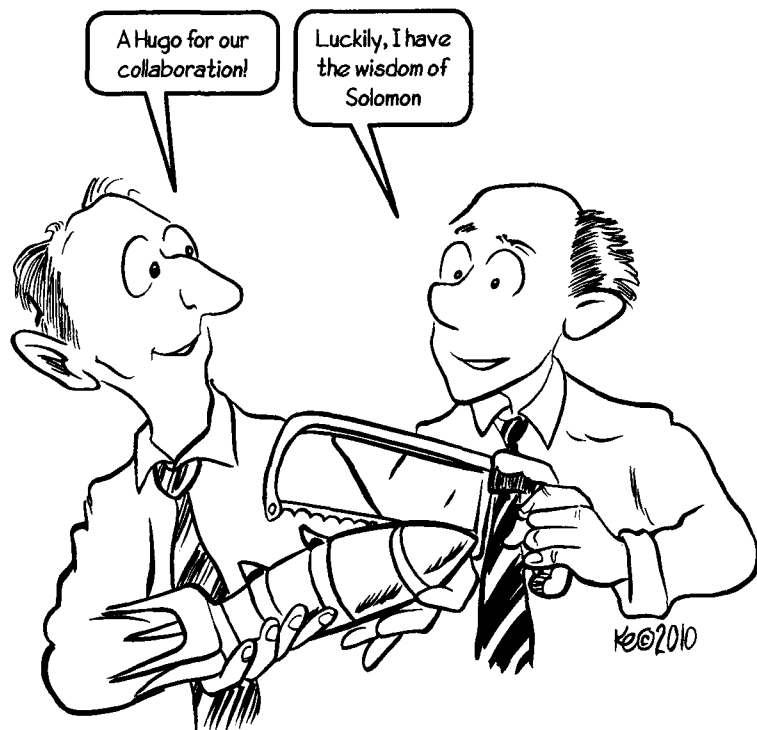
I *did* do one other round robin, but I don't know if it counts. It was "The Nolacon Visitation", done for the 1988 Worldcon Program Book, and while it's not quite a classic of science fiction (nor was it ever intended to be), at least it gave me a chance to share a byline with friends like Raymond E. Feist, Janet Kagen, Walter Jon Williams, Michael Kube-McDowell, Joel Rosenberg, Jack Chalker, Pat Cadigan, and others.

Looking back over the years, that is a *lot* of collaborations, and with one or two exceptions I enjoyed every one of them. It began as a way to keep beginners happy by getting them in print more often than they could do on their own...but somehow, subtly, it changed and became a way of keeping *me* happy.

Almost everyone I have collaborated with is a friend, and what is nicer than sharing your art, your work, your thoughts, and a paycheck with a friend?

1. with Lou Tabakow
 "Isaac Intrepid #1" (*Analog*)
 "Isaac Intrepid #2" (*Analog*)
 "Isaac Intrepid #3" (*Analog*)
 "Isaac Intrepid #4" (*Analog*)
 "Isaac Intrepid #5" (*Starshore*)
 "Isaac Intrepid #6" (*Starshore*)
 "Isaac Intrepid #7" (*Starshore*)
 "Isaac Intrepid #8" (*Starshore*)
 "Isaac Intrepid #9" (*Starshore*)
2. with Jack L. Chalker
 The Red Tape War
3. with George Alec Effinger
 The Red Tape War
4. with Nick DiChario
 "Birdie" (*F&SF*)
 "Working Stiff" (*F&SF*)
 "Alien Radio" (*The Ultimate Alien*)
 "Pleasantly Pink" (*The Ultimate Dragon*)
 "The Sweet Sad Love Song of Fred and Wilma" (*Science Fiction Age*)
 "The Most Beautiful Girl Alive" (*The Shimmering Door*)
 "Squonking" (*Orphans of the Night*)
 "The Joy of Hats" (*Killing Me Softly*)
 "The Arrows of Godly Passion" (*Olympus*)
 "The Fighting 35th's Last Stand at the Delores Proud" (*Magic Feathers: The Mike and Nick Show*)
 "Apple Valley School for the Blind" (*Magic Feathers*)
 "Fascinatin' Rhythm" (*Magic Feathers*)
5. with Barry N. Malzberg
 "Every Man a God" (*Tales of Riverworld*)
 "Ghosts" (*Bolos at War*)
 "Approaching Sixty" (*Fantastic Fate*)
6. with Barbara Delaplace
 "Trading Up" (*Battlestation*)
7. with Lawrence Schimel
 "Super Acorns" (*Superheroes*)
 "disILLUSIONS" (*When the Magic Stopped*)
 "The Shiksa" (*Ancient Enchantresses*)
8. with Linda Dunn
 "Meridius" (*Castles Fantastic*)
9. with Lyn Nichols
 "Heart of Stone" (*Pirate Writings Magazine*)
10. with Jack Nimersheim
 "My Brother's Keeper" (*Urban Nightmares*)
11. with Susan Shwartz
 "Bibi" (*Asimov's*)
12. with Louise Rowder
 "The Starving Children on Mars" (*Don't Forget Your Spacesuit, Dear*)
13. with Josepha Sherman
 "Of Flame and Air" (*Lamps on the Brow*)
14. with Ann Marston
 "Sagittarius Rising" (*Zodiac Fantastic*)

15. with Ron Collins
"STAN" (*Mob Magic*)
16. with Adrienne Gormley
"Me and Galahad" (*Out of Avalon*)
17. with Kristine Kathryn Rusch
"Full Circle" (*Space Colonies*)
18. with Catherine Asaro
"Boot Hill" (*Civil War Fantastic*)
19. with Tom Gerencer
"Ocean's Eleven" (*Oceans of Magic*)
20. with B. J. Galler-Smith
"Like Father, Like Son" (*Vestal Review Magazine*)
21. with Robyn Herrington
"Like Small Feet Following"
(*Vestal Review Magazine*)
22. with M. Shayne Bell
"Flower Children of Mars" (*Mars Probe*)
23. with Tobias S. Buckell
"The Shackles of Freedom" (*Visions of Liberty*)
24. with Mark Stafford
"The Demons of Jupiter's Moons" (*Sol's Children*)
25. with Dean Wesley Smith
"A Moment of Your Time" (*Microcosm*)
25. with Janis Ian
"Water-Skiing Down the Styx"
(*Fictionwise.com*)
26. with Michael A. Burstein
"Reflections in Black Granite" (*Tales of the Wall*)
27. with Ralph Roberts
"Inefficiencies on the Dark Continent" (*You Did What?*)
28. with Kay Kenyon
"Dobchek, Lost in the Funhouse" (*Life Without a Net*)



29. with Susan R. Matthews
"Swimming Upstream in the Wells of the Dessert" (*ReVisions*)
30. with Carol Resnick
Santiago screenplay
The Widowmaker screenplay
31. with Robert Sheckley
"Game Face" (*Postscripts #2*)
32. with Bob Faw
"A Muse with Burning Eyes" (*Poe's Lighthouse*)
33. with Harry Turtledove
"Before the Beginning" (*Future Shocks*)
34. with Paul Crilley
"The Hermit of the Skies" (*Liftport*)
35. with Kevin J. Anderson
"Prevenge" (*Analog*)
36. with James Patrick Kelly
"A Small Skirmish in the Culture War"
(*The Future We Wish We Had*)
37. with Linda Donahue
"The Last Actor" (*Future Americas*)
38. with Nancy Kress
"Solomon's Choice" (*Fast Forward I*)

39. with David Gerrold

"Jellyfish" (*The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction*)

40. with Eric Flint

"Conspiracies: A 937-page Condensed Novel" (*Sideways in Crime*)

41. with Pat Cadigan

"Not Quite Alone in the Dream Quarter" (*Fast Forward 2*)

42. with Lezli Robyn

"Idle Roomer" (*Clarkesworld*)

"Soulmates" (*Asimov's*)

"Benchwarmer" (*Twilight Zone 50th Anniversary Anthology*)

"Shame" (*Analog*)

"Report from the Field" (*Is Anyone Out There?*)

"The Close Shave" (*Blood Lite 2*)



Mr. CouchPotatoHead III: ROCKY & BULLWINKLE

Lester Boutillier

Well, what can I say about *Rocky and Bullwinkle*? It's all been said already, in books and so forth. Needless to say, it was one of my favorite shows – and still is. It wasn't always easy to find, as it kept jumping from one inconvenient time slot to another, and often the local affiliate had its own idea of when to run the show. Finally, in the early 90's Nickelodeon ran the whole series all the way through, *Rocky and His Friends - The Bullwinkle Show*. I taped every episode on my VCR. And I finally saw the episodes I'd missed the first time around. It wasn't bad seeing the other ones again. And even though they were old, I still was amused. And once I even laughed out loud at an episode I'd first seen thirty years before. This was during the Mooseberry Bush adventure, when Boris and Natasha were chasing the moose and squirrel down the Potomac in canoes.

"Stroke! Stroke! Stroke! Stroke!"

"Bail! Bail! Bail! Bail!"

In the early 60's I was such a fan that I got all the merchandise I could, including the Golden record album which, among other things, had Boris singing a bad guy's theme, "Do something to somebody quick!" And the Dell/Gold Key comic books weren't bad. Unlike most comic book adaptations of animated cartoons, they were actually funny. One of the first ones, a Gold Key Giant, *Rocky and His Fiendish Friends* #1, was written by the show's writers. Later issues featured writing by legendary comic book writer John Stanley of *Little Lulu* fame.

And like I did with *Ruff 'n' Reddy*, I tried to draw each episode of the show, "panel by panel," freehand. My drawing was good, my memory of the dialog less than 100%, more like 20%. I got started on this ambitious project with the Upsidaisium adventure and gave up about halfway through. I still liked to draw the characters - Rocky, Bullwinkle, Boris, etc. - and did so often. It was my default doodling. My best friends at school, Jerry and John, got in on the act. They'd seen me draw the Hanna-Barbera characters freehand and tried their best to do the same. They really liked my Rocky and Bullwinkle. I literally taught Jerry how to draw with those cartoons.

Those shows still stand out today, fifty years later, and probably will fifty years from now, when I'll be 108. They weren't perfect, and they weren't exactly 100% original. Captain

continued on page 72

*"From the stratosphere, to the now
and here
From the way-out blue direct to
you
It's Rocky the Flying Squirrel!"
"Hi!"
"With Bullwinkle the Moose!"
"Doo-da-doo-doo-doo-doo!"
"And a host of others!"
"Bah-hah-hah!"*



DEEP SOUTH CON 21

\$10
TEN

SATYRICON



Fabulo Frenzenii & Charlie Williams

A TALE OF TWO DEEPSOUTHCONS

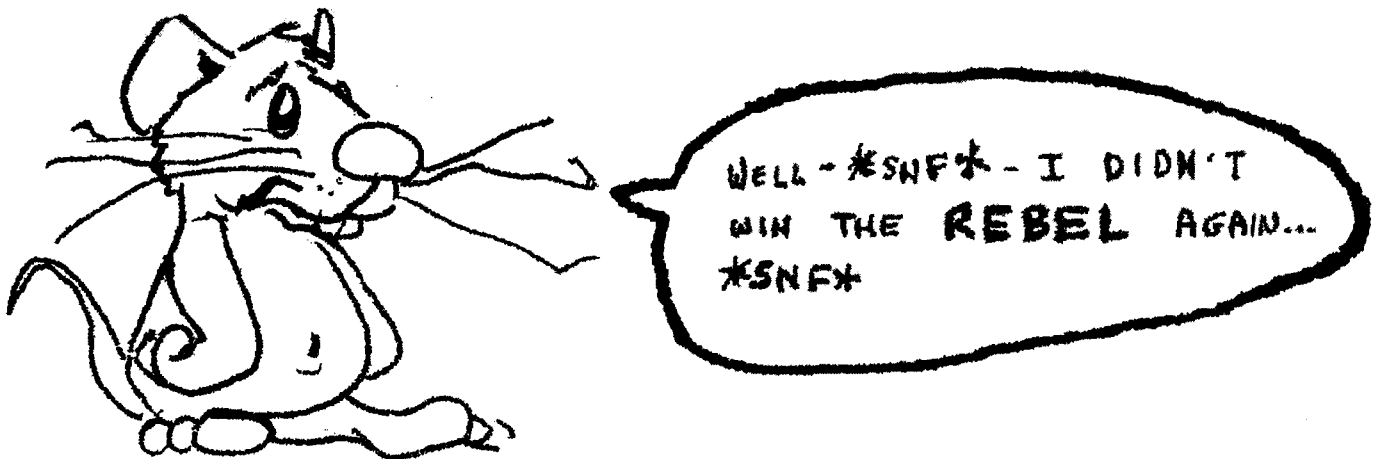
Part One

Guy Lillian

The DeepSouthCon was founded in the very early sixties, when Huntsville, Alabama's David Hulan hosted a gathering of four fellow fans in his garage. At the next year's event, attendance soared to six – including west coast BNF Lee Jacobs and a gawky local kid named William Gibson. They had 19 attendees the year after that, when the DSC was actually held at a motel, and attendance rose steadily for decades, as the convention rotated among the various cities of the South, and became the central Southern fan event. To an extent, it still is.

What makes the DSC unique among conventions are its traditions: the Hearts Championship of the Universe and the Phoenix and Rebel Awards. (Since the time covered by this article, these doodads have been supplemented by the *Rubble* Award – another story.) These give the con its identity. The Hearts Championship is self-explanatory. The awards are meant to acknowledge and honor the region's unique fannish history. The Phoenix is given to a professional writer or artist or editor whose body of work has reflected credit upon the South. The Rebel goes to the fan whose work has etc. etc. Southern fans – at least those of my aged ilk – consider the Rebel validation for your whole fannish career. It is a Big Deal.

In my first decade of Southern fannishness – the '70s – I saw the Rebel presented ten times. I've always been one of those sad sacks who needs and covets the approval of others, and feels rejected when I don't get tangible proof thereof – like an award. So I *wanted* it. Year after year, finer fans than I claimed the prize – Jerry Page, Rich & Nicki Lynch, Lon Atkins, etc. etc. *ad infinitum*. But I kept my sense of humor ... or pretended to. See here. It seemed like every post-DeepSouthCon issue of my SFPazine, *Spiritus Mundi*, carried this collaboration: illo by Jerry Collins, whine by me.



Poor Guy!

Caterwauling aside, when the 1983 DSC came around, I had other reasons to look forward to the con. At a party in Knoxville a year or so earlier, the convention chairman had approached me to talk about his plans. Andy Purcell was one of those bolides who flares briefly across the fannish sky, leaving a trail of glorious ambition ... and then vanishes. But that night he was blazing. The DeepSouthCon deserved to rank among fandom's great regionals, he said. The 1983 DSC would be the start of a Bold New Era, he said, when DSC would become the equal of Westercon and Boskone and Disclave, he said ... and by the way, *how'd I like to be Fan Guest of Honor?*

Through my rush of flattered pleasure at that instant, I remember thinking of all the great Southern SFers who hadn't been DSC Guests – and came *this close* to arguing their cases to Purcell. But the bennies also surged to mind, chief among them the fact that, were I Fan GoH, my then-wife and I could attend the DeepSouthCon *gratis*. Giggling with gratitude, I blathered acceptance.

Domestically, 1983 was a time of changes. Sick of the condescension with which our yuppie landlady treated my wife, itchy underneath the civil service jobs I'd occupied for the past nine years, and missing New Orleans like crazy, I'd decided to go back there – and attend law school. My then-wife obviously didn't like the idea. To move to Louisiana from North Carolina would be, for her, leaving Home. But she said nothing and refused to discuss it – a sure sign that something unfortunate was going on.

Further evidence of this came when we began making our plans for the '83 DSC, and then-wife invited along a guy she knew from her job – a guy she'd been spending *a lot* of time with. *Earth to GHLIII ... wake the hell up!* But I denied the reality before my face. As we crossed the Smoky Mountains on North Carolina's border with Tennessee, passing the looming face of Grandfather Mountain, cloud shadows crawling over the slopes like living things seeking the sun, I was too absorbed in my dreams ...

**

Speaking of dreams, I had a memorable one months before the convention. In it, I was part of a tour group visiting the home of a second-string horror writer. It was a rambling, spooky building in a dark, wooded valley. Through the window, over a hill, I glimpsed an enormous, ancient, black-walled castle, encircled by clouds of dark-winged birds. "That's Stephen King's house," we were told. "We're going there next."

I had reason to associate Stephen King with the '83 DeepSouthCon. A few months after inviting me to be Fan GoH, Purcell had folded and the Loonies of Jonquil Lane had taken over the con. Such epic souls: Rusty Burke, Charlie Williams (whose artistic genius I still tap for my fanzines), "Fabulo Frenzenii", Steve Trout ... and chairing the event, Vern Clark. (You can read more about these glorious maniacs in "Gangway! Hot Organ!", *Challenger* #28.) Vern kept my invitation to be Fan GoH intact, but had his own ideas about the Pro Guest of Honor spot. "Go for the gold," he told himself. "*Stephen King*."

The gold said, "Sure."

King should have been no stranger to Southern SF conventions. Some years before, when he was only the most promising horror writer in America, he'd been GoH at Khen Moore's Kubla Khan Ate. There he impressed me as a bright, chatty guy, a bit shy and a bit cautious, handling fame gingerly, dubious of the crazy fans he found himself among, but growing into the Guest of Honor role with verve. (Will never forget his horrified reaction to seeing Cliff Amos do the Time-Warp. Said the creator of Barlow the vampire, "My God!") But that was then – he'd just published *The Stand*. Now was now – Stanley

Kubrick's movie of *The Shining* had just appeared. King was more than a best-selling writer. He was one of the most famous men in the world.

DSC '83 was where he learned what that entailed.

You can see the Knoxville Hyatt silhouetted against the moon in my opening illo. When DSC '83 went there, metaphors sprang promiscuously from attendees: "a man-made mountain," "a giant Selectric," "They build a dam and miss the river?" Its best feature was its cathedral-like atrium – fandom had discovered these magnificent vaulted spaces at '78's Iguanacon, and would learn a new definition of awe when it faced the 40-story Atlanta Hyatt lobby at Confederation.

Vern Clark had taken advantage of the Hyatt in a commercial he'd had made for the DSC to be shown on the local PBS. They filmed in the dead of night, to avoid background traffic. Local fan John Mayer, who bore a *frightening* resemblance to Jack Nicholson, sat at a typewriter in the middle of the darkened lobby. Clackety-clackety-clack-clack. He looked up, a crazed gleam in his eye. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy'," he intoned. "Join Stephen King at the Knoxville Hyatt ..."

I understand the commercial never made it to the air. But we made it to the hotel, where the first persons seen were R.A. Lafferty and Karl Edward Wagner, confabbing in the lobby. It hurts now even to write their names, but in 1983 Karl – the con's "Surprise(d) Guest" – was at his best, a huge orange bear of a guy, brilliant and booming, Kane incarnate – and Ray ... Well, in *Fourth Mansions*, he described himself in the guise of Bertigrew Bagley: "Bertigrew Bagley was fat and ungainly, grown old disgracefully, balded and shaggy at the same time, rheumy of eyes and with his mouth full of rotten teeth, discredited, violent and vulgar: an earthen pot, and a cracked one at that. But he *knew* things ..."

I'd loved Ray for years, and in '79 had done a chapbook about him for that year's DSC. I followed him up into the "mushroom," the elevated bar abutting the lobby. There we heard a voice that has never failed to light the world for me: Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's.

I'd met Quinn on the pivotal science fiction night of my life, when Harlan Ellison came to a meeting of the Little Men to debate and discuss *Dangerous Visions*. If I may say so, both Quinnie and I had impressed him. Thenceforth she had been my "spiritual mama," and one of the best pals I've had in science fiction. I knew she'd be at this DSC – after all, we'd written each other's bios for the

program book – and here she was. It was a wonderful reunion. She read my palms. She said my future was "fine," but warned of depression to come. (No kidding.) She called on her tablemate, Dennis Etchison, to verify her findings, and he nodded sagely. Later, I bought a copy of Quinn's *Messages from Michael*, another insight into one of the finest and wisest people I have ever known.



KARL EDWARD WAGNER

Quinn – then as now best known for her novels of Count St. Germain, the gentlemanly vampire – and Etchison were but two of the horror fantasy novelists Vern Clark invited to his DSC. Peter Straub was also there, a pleasant, balded guy, whose writing I’ve never taken to, and Whitley Streiber, ducking “Greys” – and Charles Grant, and Alan Ryan. And Stephen King, who came bounding up the stairs.

Tall, rangy, blackhaired, bucktoothed, wearing jeans, sneakers and a tee promoting *Cycle of the Werewolf*, King joined Quinn – he always warmed around Quinn – and the writers with her, Etchison, Grant and Ryan. And a single fan, me. The writers talked shop. I took photos – which annoyed King. I have a picture of him flipping me the bird – but I promised then that I’d never publish it, and I won’t. (I already printed the photo of him talking to Quinn – with his finger up his nose. It appeared in *Challenger* #20, in its tribute to Quinn. Maybe he knew I was taking the picture, but I prefer to think that he didn’t.)

Despite his relative innocence of fannish ways – remember, this was only his second convention – King was open and informed on stage and tolerant beyond belief of the hordes seeking his autograph, even as soon as Thursday night. The poor guy couldn’t show his face in public without being dunned for his signature ... even when fans were kept at bay. At the private Guests’ reception that evening, I sat near him in the hallway as he grooved on J.K. Potter’s horrifying photomontaged illos for Ramsey Campbell’s *The Face that Must Die*. They chilled him, he said, “bone-deep.” He noticed I was sitting by a stack of his books. “I take it you want me to autograph those?”

I told him I didn’t want to bother him; I’d already seen what was happening. *But ...* as long as he volunteered ...

I was up at the ridiculous hour of 7AM. Exploring the hotel that morning, I found I was the only DSCer awake – except for Lafferty, whose great sad solitary self toodled slowly about the lobby, looking for ... *something*. Some geniuses are thronged by fans, and some geniuses wander alone through hotel lobbies in the dawn’s early light.

For me, Friday at DSC was an untrammelled success (as opposed to a *trammeled* success, I suppose). Friends appeared, local TV prowled (interviewing me; no doubt it was fear of a new sexual revolution that compelled them to leave my visage to the cutting room floor), the superb hucksters’ room opened, so despite a thunderstorm that rang the Hyatt like a kettle smacked by buckshot, we lurched happily and hopefully into opening ceremonies. Barbara Mott – then Barbara Wagner – was toastmistress, beautiful, warm and wonderful as ever. (Where is she now?) As Fan GoH I sat on the dais, next to Quinn, herself next to King, who was enjoying himself. Two kids who had read *The Shining* teased him, “Are you staying in room 217?” “Naw,” he rejoined, “there’s something wrong with the shower!”

I had my own good moment some time later, when I was to give a spiel on “the coming of age of Southern fandom.” Rather than stick with this lame theme, I enlisted the talents of Birmingham photographer Frank Love, who had recording Southern fandom on film for years. I scanned his slides beforehand and made up an on-the-spot comic narration. Got a few laughs, but the best reward came when a familiar voice spoke up out of the dark: Liz Schwarzin. I hadn’t seen her for five years. With her, her partner – Jeff Copeland. It was our first meeting.

That night held parties – and connections. Through a window on an upper floor I watched lightning blast a path above the mountains with the lovely SFPAn Elizabeth Stewart and her beau, Jacques. At a party I strove vainly not to ogle Laura Modine – first meeting with her, too – a beautiful 19-year-old who wore a handkerchief-or-two’s worth of thin pink gauze and a pair of quarter-sized blue stars. Everywhere she

went she was followed by a gob-smacked turbaned Indian kid, who'd obviously never seen anything like Laura in his life. Jane Boster sported a cast on her broken foot. I autographed the cast: HA HA YOU CLUMSY TWIT. My then-wife? Down at the dance in the atrium, boogying everybody off their feet. Friday ended, absolutely terrific.

Saturday began well, too. Dennis Dolbear, then Official Editor of SFPA, organized the collation of the great Southern apa's 113th mailing. We kept having to chase away non-members who thought the SFPazines were freebie give-aways. King appeared on a terrific panel on horror fiction with the other pros present – Quinn, Straub, Wagner, Grant, Streiber, Alan Ryan, and Dave Drake, another first encounter. Dave Pettus, the con co-chair, ably chaired the incident, giving everyone – even the unknown Ryan – opportunity to talk. King drew the last dumb question, and a laugh: "What's your idea of the ultimate horror novel?" "An eternal panel just like this one!" said he.

King might well have preferred such a panel to what came next.

There were two autograph sessions at Satyricon II, and they became, in a word, infamous. The first featured a line that began with fan Charlie Williams – neither the artist nor the beautiful girl, but the other one – and wound around, and around, and around. This DSC had attracted 900 people, a record at that time, and I swear every single one of us was there, clutching copies of *Cujo* and *Christine* and *The Shining*. And since King insisted on personalizing every individual book, his arm got a workout. Quinn sat next to him, facing a respectably onerous line herself. Even I got asked for my autograph – by a gorgeous teenager who asked me to inscribe her convention tee shirt ... *while* she was wearing it. (In understandably shaky script I scrawled "Heaven's above!" right where you'd expect.)

For me, the highlight of any convention is the Awards Ceremony, probably because, as I said before, I've always been one of those sad sacks who covets the approval of others, and awards are just that. Vern had told me at the outset that no way should I expect the Rebel this year; being Fan GoH was honor enough, and more would be, in his terms, "rank cronyism." But the idea kept tickling – what if he was putting me on? At one point he'd cackled that I'd hate him for what he had planned for me at the ceremonies. What? A pie in the face? (It had happened.) Or perhaps ... a "gotcha" Rebel?

But my hopes crashed. Dave Pettus cornered me just before the ceremony and told me I'd been tapped to *present* the Rebel. I sighed. Denied again. A shadow fell over DeepSouthCon.

Said shadow did not linger long, however, since once inside the ballroom and upon the dais, I was seated next to King. While we waited for the room to fill, we chatted a bit.

I found that my first impression of King, from that Kubla Khan several years back, was accurate. A good guy, reticent, a little cautious, uneasy still with fame. But he paid me the compliment of saying I was a good guy, and chatted easily about fan pressures, Hugos (he had one by then, for *Danse Macabre*), and joined me in my disgust at *Timescape* not being nominated the year before. "Oh yeah, I'm a fan," he said. He let me call my then-wife to come up and meet him, which she did with a twinkle.

I won't go into much detail about the ceremony that followed, except that Stven Carlberg presented his apa Southpaw Awards and Phoenix trophies went to Artist Guest of Honor Doug Chaffee, a fine fellow, and Joe Haldeman, who was alas, absent. My petty gloom over the Rebel vanished when Vern Clark told me the names I'd be announcing: Lynn Hickman and John Guidry. It was an honor to hail Hickman, whom Vern idolized and who had been spreading the fannish word throughout the South since before I'd

been whelped. The only shame was that he, too, wasn't there. But it was a raw, screeching hoot to give the Rebel to Guidry. In fact, by the time I finished, I *was* screeching.

"What can you say," I extemporized, "about a guy who has helped found the Southern fandom Confederation – and who has chaired two DeepSouthCons? What can you say about a guy whose motto is 'I Take Care of My Friends' ... and means it? What can you say about a guy whom you have come close to *murdering*," as I had, with a tire iron, "... yet whom you love like a brother? What can you say about a guy who tells you that Billy Carter is as phony as a five-dollar bill?" I'd actually heard John say that. I was howling now. "What can you say but '*John Guidry we love you and here's your Rebel!*'"

Watching John lope forward to reluctantly claim his trophy – an inscribed brass bow l– was a grand moment. Vern had been smart: he knew that Guidry probably wouldn't travel all the way from Nawlins to Knoxville on his own, so he enlisted John's friends – Justin Winston, Dennis Dolbear – to bring him there. And they were smart in turn. They called John's father, explaining what Vern had in mind – and that, like I've said, the Rebel Award is a Big Deal. John's dad made it possible for John to come – if not mandatory. Guidry figured it out – "Oh No! These idiots are going to give me the Rebel!" – but said nothing, knowing that he was Doomed to endure the love of his friends and the accolades of Southern fandom. Which he did, reluctantly but gracefully.

I finally found out what Vern meant when he claimed a horrid surprise awaited me at the awards. As a gift to the guests he brought forth tall, elegant crystal decanters, each beautifully inscribed to by Fabulo Frenzenii. Gee, I wondered: could I fit *my* decanter into my suitcase?

Turned out not to be a problem. King, Wagner and Chaffee all got their elegant crystal decanters. I got a water class from a hotel bathroom. Clark collapsed in hysterics.

At least it was inscribed. "My *cup* runneth over!" I remarked.

The day passed into evening. I joined DSC's New Orleans contingent in the creation of a crazed radio show for ~~Justin Winston's~~ Faruk von Turk's "Oriental Fox Trot Museum", a marvelous program of antique oriental fox trots (well, duh) interspersed with silly skits. This was the special at-the-con production of "Salem's Turk", as idiotic as it sounds. Jeff Copeland – who was *really taking to* this fandom nonsense – and I impersonated vampires ("Bluh! Bluh!"), and I offered the voice I'd created in numerous shower rehearsals, the moronic pre-teener Wicky Wacky Woo. Well, I had one appreciative listener. I laughed so hard I hurled.

Barfing aside, this was what I wanted. To be among the krewe – the Sons of the Sand. I missed New Orleans. I was ready to go back, to join my friends of decades standing, to go to law school, to hang with the Sons, to do radio shows every week. I looked forward to it with blind delight. Emphasis on the "blind." My then-wife came to the recording – but didn't stick around.

During a lull in the taping I went down to the lobby level. No challenge to find Steve King. All I had to do was follow the long, long line of autograph seekers, each burdened with a huge stack of books, to the patient, beleaguered figure in a white suit, leaning over a table, signing and signing and signing...

He would be there for hours. This was awful. King was being inundated – no Guest of Honor should be asked to jump through such hoops. What to do? Dave Pettus and I conferred, joined – on his own invitation – by an angry youngster who kept insisting that *he* could run this autograph line better than the concom, and wouldn't let the convention vice chairman and its Fan Guest of Honor try to save a terrible situation.



In the midst of this, I invited Steve to come join our taping – he smiled and took Justin's room number, but never showed. That was the last I saw of him.

Joining Quinn, Doug Chaffee, and Charlie Grant, I judged the masquerade – Jim Brooks did his classic Rod Serling imitation (his Carl Sagan was even better), and though the costumers had just met a few minutes before, a terrific Superman and a fine General Zod won Best of Show. Laura Modine was more modestly clad here than at the party Friday night, but $\frac{3}{4}$ of us still gave her a special – and despicably sexist, bad, bad! – award. Quinn's look of recrimination made me shrink in shame. But she retaliated, giving an equally sexist award to some twitchy teenager. Hmmph!

Well past midnight, Saturday at DeepSouthCon '83 came to an end in the con suite, where we watched fog glut the city below us, as inner fog glutted my mind ...

On Sunday morning, I was elected president of the Southern Fandom Confederation, succeeding my great friend Meade Frierson. It was a heady moment. I was full of great plans. Afterwards, a spirited contest for the '84 DeepSouthCon took place between Chattanooga and Birmingham, and as could have been predicted, the closer city won. The '84 DSC would be chaired by Irvin Koch, in Chattanooga.

For a melancholy bit I sat with Quinn, Straub and a few others in the mushroom – that elevated bar above the lobby – listening to them talk shop, until Quinn had to leave for her return flight to Berkeley. Her parting declaration of faith may have been meant for my forthcoming assault on law school, but it was more valuable than she could ever know. A last tour of the atrium, a run by Vern Clark's house for a pizza party, and then my wife and I headed back through the mountains to North Carolina. The next morning I awoke to the sound of sobbing. My wife told me I would be moving to New Orleans alone.

No one had any idea that such an autograph-avid avalanche would descend onto Steve King – but the concom should have figured. What could they have done? Run a lottery? Have sign-in sheets for places in the line? Restricted the quantity of books each fan could lay before the author? Such were the

solutions found by Anticipation, when Neil Gaiman was Guest of Honor. But DSC '83 had no such model to go by when handling a mega-famous GoH, and what resulted was Disaster.

Vern Clark – an incredibly enthusiastic and able guy – never handled another chairmanship, and gafiated. Dave Pettus sent King an apology for allowing him to be so crushed by autograph hounds. King was understanding in his reply – even he had no idea it would be so bad – but if he's attended another fannish event in the 27 years since Satyricon II, I haven't heard about it. I believe wholeheartedly that the endless autograph lines killed any attraction fandom may have held for Stephen King.

DeepSouthCon continued ... and continues. Next issue I'll talk about the year that followed, and the DSC that capped it, which – I don't think I'm kidding! – saved my life.



Continued from page 63

Peachfuzz' voice was an imitation of Ed Wynn's, and Bullwinkle's was similar to Red Skelton's as Clem Kadiddlehopper. (Imagine Clem with a cold, and you get Bullwinkle.) But they came pretty close. Among the bits I remember are these. Boris tries to lure Bullwinkle away from the action with a robotic female moose who says, over and over, "Hello, handsome *click* this is a recording. Hello, handsome *click* this is a recording." And when Boris, disguised as the mayor, turns up the next day with a different disguise and still claiming to be the mayor, Rocky points out the discrepancy. But Boris says, "That was the old mayor" (he pronounces it "mare"), "but I'm the new mayor." Then Boris and Bullwinkle say, in unison, "And if you had an old gray beard, you'd be the old gray mare, yuk, yuk, yuk!"

Then there was the time when Fearless Leader, in a conversation with Boris, calls him "Leibchin." Boris, nonplussed, says, "Leibchin?" This was adlibbing by the voice actors, but it was left in! And oh those punning titles of the next episodes! Be with us next time for... "Avalanche is Better than None, or Snow's Your Old man"...or "The Midnight Chew-Chew, or Stick to Your Gums"...or the one that even had narrator Bill Conrad groaning as he said it, "Fifty Cents Lost, or Get That...Half...Back!"

Yes, William "Cannon" Conrad was the narrator of the Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons, and most of the other voices were supplied by Bill Scott, June Foray, Paul Frees, Daws Butler, and Hans Conreid, with Edward Everett Horton as the narrator of Fractured Fairy Tales, Charles Ruggles as the narrator Aesop in Aesop and Son, and Walter Tetley as Sherman in Peabody's Improbable History.

Coming in during the first rerun season, I missed only the first few episodes of the Mooseberry Bush adventure, which I saw on their second rerun. After that came their second adventure, about the Box-Top Bandit, then Upsidaisium, and then The Monstrous, Menacing Metal-Munching Moon-Mice Mystery. In syndication however the Moon-Mice serial is always run before Upsidaisium, which probably confuses newer viewers. At the end of Upsidaisium, Mr. Big refuses to let go of an ingot of the anti-gravity metal and is lifted to the moon, supposedly never to be seen again. At the end of the Moon-Mice serial however we see Mr. Big on the moon and still alive. To run these two serials in reverse order is dumb. Yet the syndicators have been doing that since 1972 at least.

Well, I have a lot more to say, not just about Rocky and Bullwinkle, but about the 1960 presidential election and the new fall TV shows of 1960 as well, but I'm out of time, though not out of luck. But that's all for now. Just remember...

*Let a potato be your umbrella
And sit right on the couch
Let a potato be your umbrella
And do not be a grouch*



The CHORUS LINES

*I once teased a young fan editor that taking on the existence of God may have been a little much for his first fanzine. From the reaction to **Challenger** #30, it seemed the question was a little much for one's 1,048th! Nevertheless, we got some great letters. Let's start with late responses to issue #29...*

Richard Dengrove
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I liked *Challenger* 29. Nonetheless, I wouldn't have been so hot for you to publish my article on Nicholas of Cusa in the Sports Issue. I thought it was going to be in the Religion Issue. That would have been right up Nicholas' alley: he was a faithful servant of the Pope. On the other hand, after I re-read the article, I started wondering whether it was worth publishing to begin with. I hope I'm my own worst critic.

About James Bacon's article on Philip K. Dick covers, I'm curious as to whether the covers have anything to do with the books. One had something to do with *The Man in the High Castle*, and another only to the extent that it had swastikas on it.

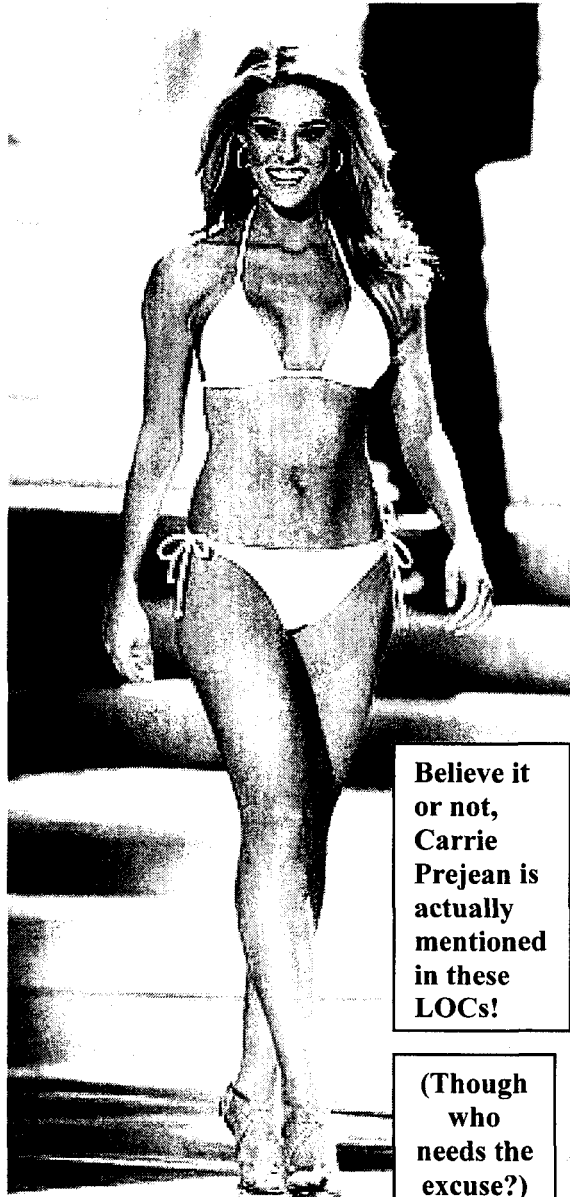
Also, *The Time Machine* cover sort of did: it had something to do with clocks. I remember

Catherine Asaro gave a speech where she claimed the covers publishers gave her novels rarely had anything to do with them. It has been rumored, that, in the Romance field, the more flesh on the covers; the more sex inside. She said that was untrue for her science fiction romances. A semi-nude cover of muscle and breast didn't foretell any sex at all inside of the novel.

About Greg Benford's article on how science fiction has attempted to become literary, I say Forget it. The literary novel, while respectable, is a bad example to follow. While I won't say it is deadlier than a doornail, it has succeeded in ghettoizing itself so only a small minority read it. As long as science fiction is not literary, it will remain vigorous and speak to many people. Far more even than Chick Lit.

About your article on Jimmy Connors, I can believe Will might win over Technique. Technique is often not what it's cracked up to be. In fact, there is a question whether it is anything? I admit I don't know much about tennis. I do know something about golf.

Alan Abel, the hoaxer, had never played a game in his life, yet he decided to create his own technique. The important thing was it had to impress the hell out of golfers. His



Believe it or not, Carrie Prejean is actually mentioned in these LOCs!

(Though who needs the excuse?)

spiel worked. Some golfers said that his technique really improved their swing.

I have to say this about Warren Buff on his article on bridging the faanish generation gap. There is a lot of baggage on both sides, and I'm not certain he hits the most important baggage. I suspect people aren't going to admit to it. It's the nature of animosities that you don't want to tell the enemy too much. On the other hand, I get another impression: this generation of young people is more open to bridging the generation gap than mine in the '60s. In the '60s, there was no past. Young people today at least know there was a past.

About John Purcell ranking my article on *Edison's Conquest of Mars* as one of his favorites of *Challenger* #28, thanks.

About Curt Phillips' comment that science fiction is more and more mind candy, it is possible to exaggerate the virtues of the past. For example, the 1960s gave us novels from Badger publishing, which Lionel Fanthorpe churned out once every 12 hours. 150 of them for a public that craved science fiction. These include the famed *Galaxy 666*, which some believe the worst science fiction novel ever written. Of course, P. T. O'Leary's *The Clones* competes with *Galaxy 666*. It's hard to beat this line: "Get your hands off my clones!!" *The Clones* was also from the '60s.

As was the true "worst science fiction novel ever written," Werewolf vs. the Vampire Woman by Arthur N. Scarm, with lines like "She dug her teeth into Sandy's neck who screamed."

Dave Langford devoted an entire Thog's Masterclass in Ansible to the book, which - I'm proud to say - I introduced to him.

Dave Schlosser
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Having gotten the critical bit of comment on my contribution out of the way in a previous email, I can get along with commenting on some of the better articles in the last *Challenger*. [Dave means #29, the sports issue.]

In talking about NASCAR, Laura Haywood-Cory reminds me that pretty much my exposure to auto racing back in my youth was from weekly viewing of ABC's Wide World of Sports. It certainly served to pique interest and

explain what was going on in all those weird activities they were showing.

I also have to wonder if, considering what this article was about, if the north side of town was the "wrong side of the track". "...it doesn't get more boring than a bunch of cars driving in a circle..." What about horses running in said circle?

"Circle"? I thought cars and horses raced in an oval. You're confusing me here, Schlosser..

Cheryl Morgan's comment about how the length of a cricket match (and the variabilities of weather and fortune that can entail) allows more drama to unfold is also true (if not over quite as many days) for golf tournaments where it takes four rounds of play (over, usually, four days) to determine a winner.

While a Jimmy Connors only comes along once in a while, I have to think that the closest I've seen to that fire in a tennis player of more recent vintage belongs to Andre Agassi. He was certainly not afraid to lay it all out on the court, on any surface. And the fact that he was a dead-on contemporary of one of the best ever (Sampras) only shows how far that fire was able to push him along.

I hated Agassi until the Wimbledon where, before our eyes, he matured into a man, stopped dicking around, and won. His autobiography sounds interesting

Now, on to #30.

Joy V. Smith
<http://pagadan.livejournal.com/>
<http://pagadan.blogspot.com/>

Great cover! Good mixture of textures. I'm glad you were able to get the permissions to share it. It certainly works well with the themes.

I'm so sorry about your mother's passing. Great tribute and lovely photo. (Cute kid, btw.)

You should see him nowadays.

Let there be light... I think that light can be thought. And I don't think that many people would say - Let there be darkness.

It would be great if you inspired Mr. deKunffy to write about his escape from Hungary. Congratulations to Lezli Robyn! I'm really impressed, and I love the kangaroo illo! Great article by Richard Dengrove. I always appreciate his articles and their historical

background. Good point about the Emperor's new clothes, which explains a lot in life.

Thank you for the article and the essay about the church shooting tragedy. It was a wonderful tribute to the church and community. I'd sure like to see that reprinted. Is it online?

Olivia Spooner's complete essay, with footnotes, is available at www.25.uua.org/uuhs/index.html.

A lot of stories are optioned that never even make it to film, but Mike Resnick's *The Branch* certainly was a unique odyssey. Good article on John Henry Faulk. I always gnash my teeth when I think about the blacklist and the people whose lives were ruined. Btw, I had an uncle who was a John Bircher and often talked about the Communists in our midst and gave me lists of Americans who were Communists. I was aghast. It was practically everyone! Including the president (Eisenhower), the editor of the *Christian Science Monitor* (Edwin D. Canham), and more that I can't remember, but it was a heck of a list.

Thanks to Taral Wayne for the background on *How to Murder Your Wife*. I was never interested in seeing it before. Good background on being a real cartoonist too. There were, of course, more interesting and informative articles, with letters and illos to top them off. Thank you – and Rose Marie – for putting it all together.

Rose-Marie holds me "all together."

Charlie Williams
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First – *Best. Cover. Ever.*

Re: "Tomorrow"/"Everyone Welcome"--The fateful production of *Annie Jr.* at the TVUUC touched everyone in Knoxville. Even I had a tenuous connection: the cast was wearing t-shirts I'd produced for the play.

There's a melancholy tone to much of this ish, excluding the upbeat articles by Copeland, Green, and Lillian. The essays on faith by amateur scholars were a study in contrasts: Mine was written thirty-seven years ago by a naive undergrad; Hughes' article provides a fine overview of evolving monotheism, but ends as an inevitable endorsement of nominal Christianity, which I think went off the rails in the 4th Century. Benford's piece seems a sigh of defeat: "Screw it, I'm not Job."

Taral's story left me – as a cartoonist – feeling uneasy and unfulfilled, as I guess he intended. So did Cathy Palmer-Lister, who shoulda rounded up a few big friends to put the fear of God in the Stalker.

I've got a son with a disability, so I read Susan Whitmore's story with a mounting sense of dread – I went to check if Chuck had taken his morning meds.

But I've gotta tell you – Mike Estabrook's "Songs of Betrayal" is the single creepiest thing I've ever read in *Challenger*.

Sheryl Birkhead
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Can't do much better than a *Freas* cover. For several years I worried over some first day covers of the Skylab stamps – the mission for which Kelly had designed the patch – and of which I had collected two sets. I had given one to him and I was sure I had asked him to autograph the set I kept. Problem was, in the move, I couldn't find them.

As an alternative, I looked online at any *Freas* artwork that was up for sale. I could not afford any of it before his death and after his death it was all out of the que\$tion. So, I gave up. A few months later I remembered the elusive first day covers and made one last search. Aha! They now reside in a nicely framed group where they can be enjoyed ... and I have a memory of a wonderful artist.

You certainly do (ahem) draw a terrific cadre of fanartists. Way to go.

A nice tribute to your mother – my condolences.

Wow – *Lezli's* entrance into fandom truly was a whirlwind. May her future be as wonder-filled as the past year and a half (or so).

I'm among many, I hope, nominating Ms. Robyn for the Campbell Award

Ellie's Tale – It was nice to see some of *Peggy Ranson's* artwork. I am guessing that there may be a mention of her (relatively) recent medical adventure and perhaps a comment on *Joe Haldeman's* condition.

This shows one good use for the Internet – making medical information much more available.

My nephew (who now drives a big rig and is taking flying lessons) was normal until about the time he began to walk. At that point the talking stopped ... along with other developmental markers. There was a myriad of testing and diagnoses. I recall one diagnostic result that was over 200 pages long – documenting partial hearing loss in one ear (not actually accurate – but an inability to process part of what was heard on one side of the brain, and a whole list of faulty (or almost non-existent) biochemical pathways. Over the years my sister and her husband developed ways to minimize the effects, but for quite a few years it was obvious that there was a way to go. Now he functions on his own and seems as happy as the proverbial clam. As is pointed on in Ellie's story, happiness is the ultimate goal.

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Amazingly striking cover image, even more so in print than it was on the computer screen. Freas was a freaking master artist, there is no doubt.

Sorry to hear of your Mom's passing. (Loved the photo you used.) It's been a couple of years since Cindy's dad died here after several years of breaking down with dementia and physical problems. The memory of the problems and hassles of dealing with the final years do fade away, and you mainly retain the good stuff from their full life.

Regarding the writings in this issue regarding faith: some I read, some I just couldn't make my way through. Recently I heard a quote from comedian Lewis Black that I think sums up my own feelings on the subject: "I would love to have faith, but I have thought." And I have found that thought is indeed more than enough to live my life by. 'Nuff said.

But, while I've not much to say on the question of faith, I can say I thought Taral's story of artistic inspiration was wonderful! The "How To Murder Your Wife" view of the life of a cartoonist is similar to how most movies treat creativity. It *has* to be big and active. We see the painter at his easel from the back, watching the wild, huge movements of his arms, or the

illustrator at his table, making broad strokes, then are given a few of the finished, tightly detailed art being "created". And how many movies do I have to see about writers where, rather than simply going with the reality that most writers can literally sit there and make things up in their head, we have to have scenes where something external happens to them, and then they work it into a story? Creativity is a lot of staring into space with a vacant look, then suddenly going "oh, yeah", and getting it down on paper. Not that exciting to film.

Now, an exciting visual image of artists was that photo of Wally Wood and Kelly Freas – wow, two gods of art, sitting around talking like us normal folks!

Martin Morse Wooster
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Many thanks for *Challenger* 30. I am very sorry to hear about your mother's death, and I hope you are all right.

Mama's passing released her from the sadistic decay of Alzheimer's, so I couldn't regret it. The funeral was affirmative and I felt okay. But it took a while for residual feelings of anger and loss to work themselves out. I think that's a universal reaction to the death of a parent. Fortunately, Rosy and my pals put up with me and got me through it.

The Kelly Freas cover was very cool, and you were right to get permission to publish it. Do you have any idea what year Freas did the painting. I don't know enough about him to know how his work evolved, but it seems to me to be a late work.

I know a lot about the painting, but one of the conditions for my using it was a zipped lip.

I've enjoyed Joe Green's reminiscences, both in your zine and in *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, and you should encourage him to write more of them. [Done!] I wish he hadn't, however, repeated the old canard that Charles Manson was somehow encouraged to become an evil murderer because of *Stranger in a Strange Land*. I'm fairly certain that this has been disproved as an urban legend, and that there's no evidence that Manson read Heinlein or much of anything else.

*Leslie van Houten told me herself that she had read **Stranger**, and the way she said it made it sound as if it was common around Spahn ranch. But no one would ever say that it "encouraged" Manson in his lunacy, any more than the Beatles' White Album, or that his neighbor's dog really told Son of Sam to kill, kill, kill.*

Curt Phillips asks how to get young people interested in SF. Part of the problem is that there doesn't seem to be juvenile SF writers as energetic as Robert A. Heinlein. (My father, who exchanged several letters with Heinlein and jointly wrote a letter that appeared in *Science*, told me that Heinlein told him that he wrote his juveniles as if they were adult books and his adult books and his adult novels as if they were juveniles.) There's no SF counterpart to J.K. Rowling, for example. With lots of energetically promoted young adult fantasies out there, young people are naturally more drawn to fantasy than SF.

*And SF is easily available to today's kids through visual media, something that wasn't true when I, anyway, was their age. See my piece about **The Twilight Zone** elsewhere.*

As for Chloe Airolti's interview, can we make it clear that there's nothing "conservative" about evil murderers like Jim Ray Adkisson? Everyone – right, left, whatever – should condemn evil men like Adkisson. Murder is evil – and *all* murderers deserve harsh punishment. No American should condone killing another person because of his or her ideas – or faith.

Adkisson claimed a political motive for his attack on the Unitarians, and you can judge his sincerity from his "manifesto." (I'll forward a copy to anyone who asks). But I don't buy it. I think he was simply a psychopath justifying his impulsive obscenity through political rhetoric. Does this let winger media off the hook for his and other violence? Not at all. It should simply warn them – all of us – that rhetoric has unintended consequences. More of Martin's letter later.

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You have some very heavy topics in *Challenger* #30. You start right off in your editorial with the heat death of the universe and

God. As topics go, you can't get much heavier than that. We can be pretty sure there isn't anything good you can say about the heat death of the universe. If I had a vote in the matter, I would vote for the steady state universe. I always did like continuity. Unfortunately, the universe isn't a very democratic place.

Since I wasn't raised in any religion whatsoever, I wasn't raised with the idea that God was a necessary thing. However, I did eventually start wondering about some philosophical issues. Self awareness removed me from a purely mechanistic universe. You couldn't explain self awareness by the mere interaction of particles. Presumably other people and entities were also self aware, and that sounded like having a soul to me. Awhile later, I heard about a Jewish idea from the eleventh century that God was the collective mind of the universe. That was a conception of God that I could and did accept. Creation is the act of pure thought, and God does it because it is his nature to do it.

In Greg Benford's article, we move on to heaven and evil. Very early, I realized paving the streets in heaven with gold would be a very dumb idea. For a person with my vocal talents, singing in the choir eternal would be an even worse idea. Spending the rest of eternity in a nightshirt hanging out with a bunch of Jimmy Swigert followers would be completely beyond anything I would consider as heaven.

In any afterlife, we probably would be non-corporeal. This probably wouldn't be bad after we got used to it. The idea of evil was just a survival thing from our corporeal existence. What evil could there be without fear or hatred or greed.

Unfortunately, the article on stalking in fandom does sound familiar. I've known of similar things in Los Angeles fandom over the decades. Trying to regulate social interaction is very difficult at any time. One difficulty is that you probably shouldn't try to stop simple dullness. There was once case of a guy who was overwhelmingly dull. He was so dull my toenails start curling when I think of him. Unfortunately, he really liked to talk to females who attended LASFS. Public minded fans of both genders started forming groups around female visitors to keep this particular fan at bay.

There was another case of a male who was a lot more than dull. Before we finally threw him out of LASFS altogether, there were two allegations of rape against him. He wanted women to be his mommy. While this is a non-standard approach, it doesn't sound dangerous. You have to find out this guy hated his mommy, because she was the one who put him in the nut house when he was a teenager. Even getting rid of this guy wasn't totally easy. At one con which I was chairing, a woman presented a restraining order against this particular male. The male in question arrived at the con before the woman in question. While I would have been delighted to throw the bastard out, I didn't feel that my powers as con chairman extended to enforcing restraining orders. I told the woman she would have to call a patrol car and let the officers figure it out. I don't believe she did. After we dumped him from LASFS, I don't think he showed up in fandom again. I certainly hope he didn't.

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As you and I have discussed over the years, I'm a long-since lapsed Catholic. We chose to raise our children as Unitarians as an inoculation to the predominant mega-church Baptists we found ourselves living among in central Texas. And as the kids have grown and we moved away from Austin we've continued to be involved with the local Unitarian church in our various postings.

So, Olivia Spooner's essay about the attack on the Tennessee Valley Unitarian-Universalist Church struck home for me in several levels. Our new minister here, Marian Stewart – native of Greensboro, graduate of Berkeley – was hired a year ago in May, and found herself giving her first sermon that September in the aftermath of the tragedy. I don't remember many of her words from that day nine months ago, but I do remember her themes: forgive those who attack us, our first principle is that we believe in the inherent dignity of every other human, we cannot give up in the face of such attacks, believe in what is right even when challenged so brutally, that above all, as Unitarian-Universalist Association President William Sinkford so eloquently put it, in response to the shooter's professed hate for Unitarians

because we're open to homosexual members in our congregations, we choose to stand on the side of love.

(As an aside, Sinkford tossed that line off in response to a question from a reporter about whether the shooting would affect UU's historical openness and our first principle. A musician visiting UUA headquarters that day heard him and built a hymn around the line.)

Olivia interspersing of lyrics from the interrupted performance of *Annie* brings to mind the most moving part of Marian's first service: Jenny Mason, one of the talented members of our choir, closed the service that day with a rendition of "Tomorrow", which left not a dry eye in the house.

So thank you for including young Ms Spooner's essay, a view from the ground at a tragedy, the sort of reporting that acts as a first draft of history.

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My condolences on the loss of your mother. If words could ever be enough at a time like this. It's been fourteen years for me.

After actually reading what Gnostics said, not what modern writers projecting their own views onto what Gnostics said, I don't have quite so sanguine a view of that doctrine. The impression I get is that the surviving works are based on a set of images, definitions, and assumptions that were intensely personal. The original writer might have communicated these to his disciples, leaving them to comprehend the written works. Or perhaps he didn't.

It's like alchemy. Alchemists seem to have put more effort into cleverly hiding the methods and materials they used behind an elaborate construct of allusions, ambiguities, and abstractions than they actually did doing any sort of experiment. But then the sorcerer's stone (this is the U.S. understand where concepts like "philosopher's stone" are incomprehensible) is more virtual than real.

I could take a stab at doing what Curt Phillips doesn't think he can do, but it would

entail doing things he doesn't want to contemplate.

Binker Glock Hughes should be aware of the principle of "abrogation"; anything said in a later sura (later by composition, not position; the Qur'an is sorted longest to shortest) abrogates anything said in the earlier ones. Allah could change His mind up until the Qur'an got compiled, you understand. So all the nice ones about cooperation have been abrogated, and instead we get the apes and pigs and "fight until unbelief does not exist."

Knowing the origins of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, it strikes me as ironic that people like John Henry Faulk would only disapprove of it when it turned on his kind of people. But I know about Samuel Dickstein.

Who was the founder of HUAC (or its predecessor) in 1938, investigating fascist and Red groups. He's been accused of being a paid Soviet agent. A Democrat, by the way.

I understand Taral's complaint about how the income of cartoonists in the real world never quite seems to live up to what they have in films. These were the same people who had a divorced working mother living in a upscale neighborhood (*E.T.*) and a welder in a tony loft (*Flashdance*). That was how all the people they knew lived.

"The Holy Inquisition ... burned Jews who wouldn't convert to Catholicism." Well, no, not exactly. The charge was *Judaizing*; not "not converting to Catholicism" but "not *really* converting to Catholicism". Pretending to be good Christians while actually sinisterly covertly practicing Judaism, that was the key.

Incidentally, when the *reyes Católicos* expelled their Jews, not all of them went to the Ottoman Empire. One Christian prince offered to let them live in his domains, "permitted to lead their life, free from interference from Christians, to continue in their own rites, to gain wealth, and to enjoy many other privileges." He was even Spanish – His Holiness Pope Alexander VI, *né* Roderic de Lançol y Borja. "And besides, Cesare, I hear that some of those Jewish women are *muy caliente*."

Ah. "The Predictions of Robert A. Heinlein". [*In writing this LOC, Joe said "I had to wait for Heinlein's birthday."*]

The back-story of *Revolt in 2100* is based on a passage in Heinlein's unpublished (at the time) first novel-length work, *For Us, the Living*. He describes there the rise of Nehemiah Scudder, with, however, somewhat less success than in the later work. *FU,tL* is an interesting work, though not particularly readable. It contains the origins of some of Heinlein's later works; for example, *Beyond this Horizon* is based on the same ideas and there is even a character in the book who is in the same position as the POV character of *FU,tL*. Or other things, as when his girlfriend walks around her house naked during a blizzard; evidently they don't have to worry about paying power bills. Or the depopulation of Europe in *Methuselah's Children*, which also appears in the earlier book.

Unsurprisingly I agree with Curt Phillips about the worth of children's reading Heinlein's juveniles. Though I would, since I wrote a book about that topic.

I liked the US hardcover edition front cover of *Saturn's Children*. I printed out a copy and put it over the front cover of my SF Book Club edition as I thought that cover was, well, dorkier.

Bored college students would do anything, even set up a 43-Man Squamish team. However, there was fortunately a version for smaller schools, 2-Man Squamish. The object of a 2-Man Squamish game is to lose, which makes it a very appropriate game for today.

And finally, a wonderful pair of Father's Day stories. Though why does Chris Garcia's father seem so much like our local live-action murder mystery organizer Todd Fluhr? I remember reading Chris's obituary on his father and being horrified. Mr. Garcia was younger than I am.

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Thanx for the in-print version of the new *Challenger*!

There's an awful lot about religion in this issue. Permit me to make my own observations.

In one of the most famous first encounters between great minds in the last century, William F. Buckley met Ayn Rand at a dinner party. Ayn Rand, famous for not wanting to waste words,

opened the conversation not with a hello or pleased-to-meet-you but with, "You're too intelligent to believe in God."

Buckley, no slouch at verbal badinage himself, immediately replied, "You're too intelligent *not* to." Rand was rendered speechless.

After a long journey away from God in general and the Catholic Church in particular, in which I too in my arrogant haughtiness thought I was too intelligent to believe in God, finally in my 50s I came back to God and Church. This was a mostly intellectual, although also emotional, journey back for me, like a similar journey back taken by Anne Rice as chronicled in the afterword of her book, *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*. As part of the process I waded through all the secularist attacks on God and on the Church, *The God Delusion* and the rest of it, as well as the direct rebuttals to these manifestos written by both theologians and scientists. At the end I found that those "on the side of the angels" had made their case convincingly, even overwhelmingly. With all due respect to Greg Benford and others like him, science has *not* proven that God doesn't exist. In fact, real science – as opposed to politically-motivated science – has actually proven that God *does* exist.

I'll not try to summarize any or all of the learned scholars I've encountered along the road I've taken back "home" – and I won't begin to try to compete with all the highly articulate wordsmiths that fill the pages of *Chall* #30 – but I can and do recommend the following books.

What's So Great About Christianity by Dinesh D'zouza

America's Secular Challenge by Herbert London

How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization by Thomas E. Woods, Jr.

Icons of Evolution [I forget the author's name]

Here are some books that present the proof, scientific and otherwise, for the existence of God.

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism by Dr. Timothy Keller

The Dawkins Delusion? by David C. Dalin

The Cell's Design: How Chemistry Reveals the Creator's Artistry by Fazale Rana, PhD

The Edge of Evolution by Michael Behe

Atheists and agnostics can claim that they "don't need" to read the above books and certainly not cover-to-cover because they "already know" blah-blah-blah. This of course is closed-minded arrogance. Atheists and agnostics who refuse to expose themselves to the reasoned arguments on the other side are deliberately living in an information vacuum.

At any rate, Guy, I wish you well. And I'll pray for you.

Dominus vobiscum.

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I've been reading your fanzine reviews in *Planetary Stories*, and find the field well covered in the reviews of that wonderful new netzine.

I found Greg Benford's article fascinating, a biographical piece full of honest soul-searching to which, I think, many could relate. He covers the feeling of existential angst wrought by the great war well. Though I disagree with one thing about the piece – I always liked the simply myths of my youth, and think they had their truth in terms of the real life we live. But this age, the last century and this one, is surely a time of incertitude, and religious trauma are a part of living in it.

I liked also your statement that life permeates the Universe. More thought should be given to this ... but has anyone the time or incentive for thinking along those lines?

It was interesting to read Michael Resnick's article just after "Soulmates" in the latest *Asimov's*.

In response to Alexis Gilliland's letter, I find that the new generation of fans are made of hard science and know of nothing but accelerated progress.

I liked all the discussion of philosophy and religion in the issue and will be interested to see where it goes.

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When Curt's copy of *Challenger* 30 arrived in the postbox on Friday, I was quite taken

aback to see the issue's cover. The chalkiness of the portrait against its blood red backdrop was startling. Seeing that Frank Kelly Freas work for the first time set me full circle with myself – back thirty years to the first time I worked for Kelly and Polly at a little regional convention held in Roanoke, Virginia.

Each autumn for three years I spent most of the convention hours in the art guest of honor room listening to amazing stories about their early days and tales of the Dismal Swamp, getting unsolicited pointers from Kelly about painting, hearing Polly say that it is good. I appreciate how science fiction and fandom are an important part of Curt's life and character because many wives seek to eradicate or exorcise it. I could suddenly remember drinking coffee in a high school art room, munching on one of the dozens of cookies I had baked for the last weekend I got to spend with them. Kelly liked the chocolate chunk-n-chip cookies, Polly the sand tarts, and Fred Pohl the oatmeal (that Curt had made). Whenever I bake those three kinds of cookies, I think of lessons in star painting and adding an extra half-head to the length of a body to give it a more ethereal life on the sketchpad. A spaceship casting light from a sun or a moon onto one person in a painting while casting a shadow from its underbelly on another person has once again personified itself and caught my attention.

Where has all the time gone? I quit baking cookies for conventions without really noticing. Now that daughters EmilySarah and Amanda are in the throes of higher education, I've found myself chin deep in a career I could not have predicted – teaching seventh graders the fine art of reading and writing as well as speaking both formally and informally. My unction that I would one day become an artist and an author didn't come to fruition in the way I had imagined. Artistry came in the form of creating curriculum so that kids discover the wonder and magic of the imagination in print.

It's interesting that Curt has written in "It's All About the Kid Stuff" about how his school librarian got him started on science fiction, Heinlein in particular. I teach in a middle school where the only thing worse than illiteracy is *aliteracy*. Our school library is a joke, and I have kids from all over the building coming to me for "something good to read." Teachers even send

them. They look at autographed pictures that authors send me. There are always words encouraging them to read and think. They read book reviews that my students have written about the books on those shelves. Nearly every morning at 7:30 during the school year, there are one or two students wanting to talk about books or seeking a quiet place to read. My classroom library, thanks to Toni Weisskopf and Baen Books, has the best science fiction collection in the county, and my students do what Curt did. They try reading something they pull off a shelf. If they don't like it, they bring it back and try something else. More often than not, my students will bring a book back and open to the first or second place they struggled. They will ask questions, make comments, and think before they either try the book again or ask for help finding another. My critical thinkers and tinkerers read science fiction and/or fantasy. They function on a different plane from their peers, and we gravitate toward each other.

The biggest problem we have as youthful readers is this: there's not much out there for the early adolescent. Baen Books has taken Heinlein classics and reprinted them in trade editions with incredibly appealing covers, and I'm grateful for that. I'm working on a literacy reader's guide for *The Rolling Stones* so that kids are naturally trained away from multiple-choice models. H. G. Wells has become more popular as of late; so has C. S. Lewis – thanks to Hollywood. Lately, it's Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson that has my kids on fire for reading. I've had kids get sent to the office this year for reading instead of paying attention in class. Not texting. Not cheating. Not talking. Reading! Luckily, the assistant principal appreciates irony.

This spring when Curt went to Seattle for a convention, I was up to my eyeballs in papers to grade, and I caught myself wishing I was with him. During one of the panel discussions about fans' other hobbies (Curt's being Civil War Living History), I logged onto a webcast and chatted with others who monitored online. Somehow, we got off the subject of reenacting and onto reading. Someone (either on the panel or online) commented on a general move away from reading. Greg Benford happened to be online, and we chatted about how two of my students were devouring *Beyond Infinity*. He gave me some

excellent book recommendations, and now there are two ex-reluctant readers out there who frequent the local bookstore. Talking online to the caliber of people who were chatting that afternoon in March made me realize that I've spent thirty years in isolation. I found myself thankful for the Internet that has kept Curt connected to those who can have instant, meaningful exchanges with him when he's thinking beyond me because parenting and teaching somehow occupied so much of my time that I didn't even notice myself drifting away from fandom. It's as though I've been floating in space on the end of a fandom tether with enough oxygen to survive the ebb and flow.

Fandom is at a gentle fade-in right now. I'm thinking about those cookies I used to bake. I'm thinking about the con suites, talking and listening to people who have something significant to say, working with guests of honor at conventions, remembering cool things like staring at Miss Piggy with Isaac Asimov or frowning at John Brunner's vehement tirade at fans (including Curt) who questioned his guest of honor speech at *that* Baltimore Worldcon. I remember creating monsters with Gordy Dickson and Kelly Freas at a writing panel. I remember walking down a brand new sidewalk with Ted Sturgeon to get a book from his car. I remember flashes of fandom, and I try to focus on each of them individually because they form the constellation of my "in-the-background" fandom. I know I've been coming back into orbit, gently so, for about a year. I suppose it started last June when many of Curt's list serve friends spent a day or two at our house talking, eating all kinds of food (including cookies). Funny thing is, I didn't see it coming. The cookout was a catalyst of sorts. Some portal opened itself to possibilities.

A couple of months after the fan gathering, I had a big decision simmering on the back burner. It wasn't earth shattering, but it just goes to show how the awareness of fandom creeps back in and makes itself at home in your conscience. The first year Curt and I were married, he gave me a telephone for Christmas. It was 1979, and we lived in a remote part of the county where four families shared a party line. Well, our identity was tied to 703-628-3269, then 540-628-3269, and finally 276-628-3269. In 2008, our entire family had cell phones, and I just couldn't see

paying for land line service. I agonized over it for weeks. What if Harlan Ellison called our house again to talk to Curt about fannish history or wanted to come to our house to visit if and when he came to Abingdon with Neil Gaiman to visit Charles Vess? What if Harlan Ellison tried calling and got that "*This number has been disconnected or is no longer in service...*"? I'd be no less than mortified knowing I'd upset the fandom continuum. After all, I do have lasagna and lots of dough in the deep freeze just waiting for fannish guests. And Guy, I have an index card in a file box that says I should fix Banana Split Cake when you next visit.

Wonderful! (But don't tell Rosy. She thinks I'm too fat.)

I'm glad I stopped working on a lesson design and took a look at your zine. It is a lovely zine that has brought me full circle in a journey. And even though it's embarrassing to admit this, I'll tell it. *Challenger* 30 is the first fanzine to arrive in the postbox that I've read cover-to-cover since I stopped editing *Myriad* with Curt.

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Good heavens, where do I begin loccing this zine? I could conceivably comment on everything ... So the best strategy is to loc the items that really caught my interest. Oh, wait. that *is* everything. *fout* Okay, the most interesting items and limit it at that. Here goes...

The front cover by Kelly Freas is very striking. It appears this hooded gent is staring woefully into space, which makes me wonder what catastrophic event has depressed him. Chances are he's mourning the death of his mailbox after receiving yet another issue of *Challenger*. Speaking of art, the bacover is cute, too. Wally Wood has long been a favorite artist of mine. Ever thought of doing a portfolio of work by him? Something like that would be fun to see in your zine, Guy. I have been thinking of doing that sort of a deal in *Askance* for the past few months: showcasing the work of fan artists. Fan-eds have done this sort of thing before, and I always like such a feature.

So do I. Sheryl Birkhead has assembled several such portfolios for me and other fan-eds; feel free to contact her.

I am sorry to hear of your mother's passing. She was a lovely woman – in fact, she looks a lot like my mother, but that's due to the hairstyle, which was very popular at that time. My thoughts and prayers go to you and your family.

Amen, Mama was a dish ... the belle of Woodruff County, Arkansas. My father had good looks, too. So what happened to me?

The thematic element of this particular issue – faith – made me think of how I view this aspect of human existence, and raises three questions: Do I have faith in a higher power? Is the scientific view itself a faith-based system? Or is faith just simply a means of giving oneself something by which we can form a reason for plodding onward through life?

While I would like to think that a Higher Power of some sort is watching over me, I highly doubt it. There is too much randomness in my life and the world to think that a “god” is deliberately manipulating things. I tend to agree with Marx's view that religion is the opiate of the masses because it provides a relatively easy handle on happenings that are otherwise hard to understand and accept. No, I can't do this. If anything, maybe I am more of a Deist: that if there is a Higher Power who started it all, He/She now is just sitting back and watching it all unfold and having a jolly good laugh. Even then, I can't accept that line of thought. No, too much randomness involved.

That very same randomness allows for the scientific view of things – Big Bang Theory, expanding universe, evolution, and everything else – and even then one must operate on a certain set of beliefs to make this view work. You know, that there was this massive kaboom about 20 billion years ago that brought everything into existence and eventually things will peter out into a fizzle of star dust aeons hence. My question is simple: does there *have* to be a beginning and an end? Why can't we simply accept the fact that we

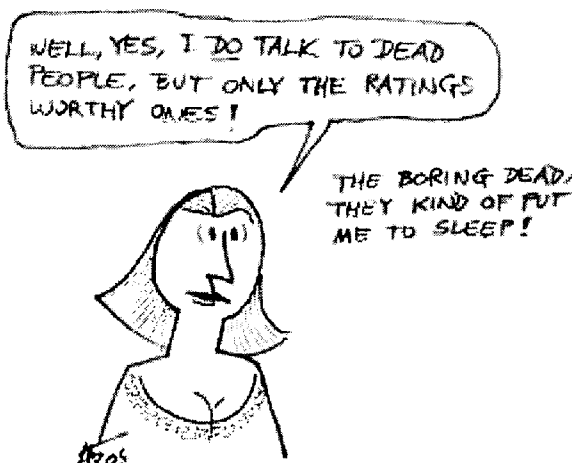
can never know a damned thing about this stuff and just get on with our lives? But, it's human nature to ask these questions and attempt to determine our place in the grand scheme of things. I suppose if humanity never did ask or challenge itself then world religions, cathedrals, scientific inquiry, and SF conventions would never have come into existence. It does give one pause.

As for my last question, I have long felt that people love to categorize things because it simply makes life easier to understand. That's why there are things like organized religions, games, baseball leagues, political parties, subgroups here and there, and Us versus Them all the time. We creatures of finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite so we attempt to place limits on it in order to understand what little we can understand. I have always loved Carl Sagan's statement (allow me to paraphrase here) that we are the stuff of star dust contemplating itself. That image kind of blows me away. It's poetic, and quite possibly true. But who knows, really?

At least, those are my disorganized thoughts about faith and Life, the Universe, and Everything Else. The articles by Charlie Williams, Greg Benford, Rich Dengrove, Binker Glock Hughes, and Mike Resnick are all interesting and thought-provoking. No one of them really stands out above the rest, but they do complement each other very well. Good editorial-type work there, Guy.

In a completely different vein, Curt Phillips' little story about

Forry Ackerman and Julius Schwartz had me laughing. I can see this happening. And Joe Green's article about Heinlein's predictions was excellent. Most science fiction writers play down their prognosticator abilities (hell, they're not oracles like the ancients wanted/needed), so it doesn't surprise me that RAH missed the boat on many of his “forecasts.” Still, a good article that reminds me I need to rebuild my collection of early Heinlein (pre-*Stranger in a Strange Land*) books.



A quick note regarding my LOC: About a month ago I received a Christmas card from David Schlosser in the mail. No joke! It was his way of saying hello and reconnecting. I will have to write back to David. He's a good guy. Plus, it was fun to see that he and his family live in Eureka, California. That's my favorite TV show! If things there are as screwy as what I'm seeing on television, he should consider moving out. Looks like a dangerous place to live.

With that, it's a wrap. Many thanks for another wonderful and interesting issue, Guy. I hope to see you and Rosy again soon, so in the words of my favorite 20th century philosopher, Red Green, "Keep your stick on the ice."

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Thank you for the latest issue of *Challenger* and condolences on the death of your mother.

In regard to Joseph Green's commentary on Heinlein's predictions, I have always been fascinated by the wide-spread failure to predict pocket calculators and personal computers. Many had the equivalent of the Dick Tracy phone, but rarely the pocket calculator. Now I have a pocket calculator, Dick Tracy phone, digital video camera, MP3 player, web computer, and other stuff in a small device clipped to my belt. Now, that is the stuff of science fiction.

Good luck to the Whitmores and the search for a solution to Ellie's disorder. I've always found that you are better off seeing the doctor/mechanic/contractor after you already have a good idea as to your problem.

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I liked *Challenger* 30. Of course, I had some comments – lots and lots of comments. Let's start with the religion part.

Charlie Williams and Greg Benford seem to have unknowingly ganged up on Binker Hughes. Binker says to believe because the Bible is coherent and never contradicts itself. Charlie says it is incoherent and contains contradictory ideas. Greg says that, even if the Bible isn't

contradictory and incoherent, we do not need the Bible's main message: God is hope. I think Binker would have been better off if she depended on faith and not logic or facts. With regard to the Bible, logic is baggage, as far as I am concerned. Of course, given my essay on this subject, I would say that. Others have agreed on this too. In fact, Christianity conquered a good deal of the world with only faith. It only later felt it had to claim the facts and logic. The 11th Century at most. That so many people need God for hope rebuts Greg.

Far from being foreign to us, as people seem to suppose, our emotions, and faith, come rather naturally to us. For example, Robert Heinlein, for all his science, chose emotions about Mars rather than facts. This, Joe Green does not mention when he analyzes Heinlein's predictions. I have heard that, in 1950, Heinlein said we would find canals on Mars and intelligent life. Thus, ignoring forty years of telescopic and spectroscopic observations.

That doesn't mean people cannot take the facts into account even when they are very emotional – nay, fanatical – about something. Socrates was fanatical about his abominable Republic. However, at one point, he was willing to admit the fact, as he saw it, it wouldn't last all that long. Alexis Gilliland mentions this in his article giving Plato from a college kid's eye view. Socrates admitted his Republic would be a short interlude in the cycle of Democracy, Tyranny, Aristocracy and Plutocracy. I imagine it would appear somewhere between Tyranny and Aristocracy.

Also, we hope others wrapped up in their emotions can be affected by the facts. For instance, those overcome with anger, like Jim David Adkisson. He might not have decided to kill Unitarian Universalists if he had realized that it would more likely have created sympathy for them rather than cheering for him. It is a fact he could have easily gleaned from people's reactions to other "holy" killers.

Of course, the best thing we can do in life is what Jeff Copeland's and Chris Garcia's fathers did. Jeff's father took things easy all his life. A lot of problems go away if we do that. Chris Garcia's father was always ready to help his fellow man no matter how bad things got for himself. While it wasn't so great that he was in trouble so much of the time, helping others in such circumstances was

virtually divine. If more people did that – if I did that – other problems would go poof as well.

Going back to the topic of religion, I have an additional comment about Charlie Williams' article. My suspicion is that Christianity's division of the world into the realm of a good being and an evil one came from Zoroastrianism. Also, the belief in heaven and hell, angels and devils, and Judgment Day. These beliefs have all been found in the Avesta, which experts usually date to around 1400 B.C. Zoroastrianism influenced Christianity by first influencing Judaism. There is actual evidence of it in present day Turkey a few centuries before Christ. By the time of Christ, many Jews in Palestine had adopted Zoroastrian beliefs. From there, they got transferred to the early Christians.

While those beliefs are common place today, belief in the true Old Testament Messiah is not. Mike Resnick did OK presenting the true him in his novel *The Branch*, because we live in a nation of relative freedom. Josep Guirao courted disaster because he tried to make a film adaption of Mike's book in very Catholic Andorra.

Not that people don't suffer for their views in the States. One who did was John Henry Faulk. It is too bad. He sounds like a true Liberal and a true good guy. He was a fellow whom you could make your guru without reservation.

Unlike Paul Goodman. Paul came to the Boston University campus in the '60s. While he had written books that interested me at the time and I was looking forward to seeing him, he turned out to be an egotist of the first order. Not only did he want everyone to bask in his greatness; you didn't dare disagree with him.

A person who was even more unreal was Stanley Ford. Taral Wayne reminds us that he was the character that Jack Lemmon played in *How to Murder Your Wife* (1965). It is obvious that it was a send-up of illusions about cartoonists, marriage and high living. It was one of many send ups produced during the '60s. However, Taral was twelve and he believed it was all real. Since then, he has been disabused because, unlike many people, he has grown up.

In ending, I wish to thank Joy V. Smith for her compliment on my Nicholas of Cusa essay.

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What can one say when you lose a parent? Yvonne's been through it once, and I still have both my parents. I'm going to need Yvonne's experience to stop from going completely mental when I lose one of my parents. Both are in their late 70s, so I hope they still have lots of time left. Yvonne's mother is starting to exhibit the first signs of Alzheimer's, and the family is taking steps right now. It might also be some of her medications that could be causing her very faulty memory; we'll be finding out shortly.

I don't often think about a superior being somewhere in our cosmos, and whether or not he is jealous enough to want all of our worship on a regular basis. We are logical beings (more or less, sometime much less), and we want to be shown some proof. This is a healthy doubt, and I can't help but feel that some deep measures of faith are a lapse of rational thought, or an inability to accept reality. I was not brought up in a religious household, so I like to think I can look at religion from a generally impartial viewpoint. I still like the line that God is alive, but has gone on to work on a more ambitious project.

That is a beautiful cover, and I am glad there's new (to most people) Freas after all these years. The skin and eyes are extraordinary. I may be one of the few fans not to get a portrait from Kelly, but then, I don't see myself as especially artworthy. "FUBBO" has new meanings for me...

To explain: "FUBBO" is a term of whiny self-pity I once created, standing for "fat, ugly, bald, broke [and] old". I don't know your financial situation, but I'd deny that you are fat (relatively), bald (particularly), nor old (very). "Ugly"? Well, your wife likes you, and who cares about anybody else, right?

Welcome to Lezli Robyn, and hope you enjoyed the Montréal Worldcon. You're very lucky to get this kind of assistance to become a pro writer; there's a lot of others who have looked and looked for help and tried to turn pro, and just couldn't. We could all use a mentor to get to where we want to be.

Good for Curt Schilling on his words to school children. It is one thing to honour and remember those who have been lost to war, and

another to glorify such killing. Today's children would soil themselves if they ever had to join the killing in Iraq and Afghanistan. I hope that as much as I dislike what's happening in those countries, the soldiers who must return in coffins are heroes to be celebrated, not sneaked back home in the middle of the night the way the Bush regime did.

God is the image of what humanity can be if only we wish it to be. With death and pain and inhumanity in the world, we don't wish or want hard enough. The average human life seems to have less value than honour, victory, achievement, winning a game, or even money. We throw those less fortunate away like so much garbage, and what appears to be valueless life dies for want and lack of our care. We kill others because they've dissed us, which is a horrific return to the scenario of the bully in the schoolyard. God can be our zenith of our aspirations and care. We just need to value our fellow man a lot more.

I've never seen an article by Cathy Palmer-Lister anywhere but in *Warp*, so great to see her here. I do not defend stalkers to any degree, but I get the feeling there's an awful lot of lonely men out there who'd like some female company, but have never figured out how to get it, or just don't have the patience or the attraction to find that companion. No wonder dating services do well, but often don't find their clients anyone. Loneliness is a curse on our species, and I've been there, and I do not ever want to be lonely any more. I would hope that these lonely men be taught how to find true companionship or at least friendship without creeping out anybody, or breaking the law.

I hope that you got a chance to see Benoit Girard at the Montreal Worldcon. I'd contacted him to find out if he was going, and he was there, enjoying his return, I hope. He didn't get in touch with too many people... I think many of the people he may have been looking for weren't there.

I think I saw Benny in passing at Anticipation.

Fandom misses that "funky frog."

I grabbed a copy of Laura Haywood-Cory's *A Change of Heart* at the Montréal fanzine lounge, and I will be writing a loc on it. I gave a copy to an old friend of mine, Randy Barnhart. Randy was into fanzines for a while, and then tried his hand at being a short story writer. He suffered a stroke and a heart attack, and now is

legally blind. His loving wife Barb is very worried about him, and I thought *A Change of Heart* might cheer him up, and give him a few ideas.

I direct those interested in heart health to Laura for a copy of her brilliant fanzine.

Ed Meskys is proof that a massive change in life, like losing sight, need not change your life permanently.

Hello to Susan Jones! I'm missing *Tortoise* [Susan's fanzine], but it can wait until you've your thyroid problems under control. Yvonne's on levothyroxine every day, and her thyroid is doing fine.

Me and mine too.

My father is still alive, and there's a lot of things I could lay blame on him for, but that isn't constructive in the least. To accept all his faults and love him anyway? I'm not sure I could do that. Chris Garcia, you're a better man than I am, and Guy, you're right, that's a beautiful story.

My own little report on Anticipation ... man, you should have had that silver rocket. I get the feeling that *Electric Velocipede* asked its readers to vote, and they did by rote. I thought the fanzine lounge was successful, in spite of the lack of space it got, the fan-ed's feast was fun, even if I couldn't stay too long, the Aurora Awards banquet was great, and handing out a Hugo award was one of the best things I've ever been able to do at a Worldcon. Of course, being a presenter also meant the pre-Hugo and post-Hugo festivities. It was one of my favorite Worldcons.

You did a great job with the Anticipation fanzine lounge and I'm glad you enjoyed the Fan-Eds' Feast. I was astonished at the turnout. I hope to host another one in Melbourne - and that Joe Major can do the same in Raleigh!

We have tentative plans to go to Reno, but we need to convert to full attending. As soon as the wallet says okay... The two of us were both just a mere nomination off the ballot for Best Fan Writer. May we get that nomination and more for Australia.

A 100+-page fanzine is a true rarity these days, and to receive it is a joy. Many thanks for your kindness in sending it to me, and I hope this LOC is at least an acknowledgement of this gift. Many thanks for more good things to read, and each succeeding issue sounds like it will be better than the last. Sure hope so.

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What a coincidence!

I'd just finished reading the zine earlier in the day yesterday. I greatly enjoyed Jeff Copeland's article about his father. He hinted that there was more story to tell, so I hope there will be more. At night I sat down to watch the latest episode of *History Detectives* (PBS). One of the three stories was about the search for an artist who had done a marvelous pencil sketch of a soldier in a POW camp during WWII.

The man in the portrait had been shot down flying a B-17 in 1944. He'd had the misfortune of parachuting down to a location very close to the Germans who shot the plane down. He was taken to Stalag 17-b, and that's where his portrait was done by a man he remembered as Gil Rhoden. The *History Detectives* representative investigated and managed to find the artist, except his name was actually Harold Rhoden and he was unfortunately deceased. But they were able to locate one of his sons, who confirmed the fact that Rhoden had been an amateur artist.

There was just so much about this story that was similar to that of Jeff Copeland's father that it was uncanny.

We too saw that show – really great tale.

But let me now backtrack and extend my sympathy for the loss of your mother. My mother is still living, but I dread the same thing happening to me – losing my mother, that is.

I don't understand why Rich Dengrove had such difficulty obtaining a copy of the Book of Mormon. They give them away freely. I've seen ads in magazines where all you had to do was write or call for a copy. I think I might have obtained my copy that way. I eventually read it, okay skimmed it. I don't know why Rich thinks it's patently fraudulent. I agree with him, but I don't see how just reading it would make someone think it was a fraud. Obviously many people have been taken in. Are they all just that stupid or naïve? My main gripe about it is that it is so boring compared to the Bible.

Olivia Spooner's account of the attack on her church was excellently written. One passage grabbed my attention. This is where she talks about the story of Sadako and the Thousand Cranes. It's because one of my aunts was named

Sadako. I actually learned about the Thousand Cranes when I was on jury duty once. I saw another woman folding cranes one after another, and I asked her why she was doing that.

Reading Joseph Green's analysis of Heinlein's writing, I came across a term I didn't recognize – *slipstick*. I never heard it before. Heinlein wasn't the only writer that got the computer thing wrong. I think Asimov, or some similar author, had future people using slide rules. I don't think anyone predicted the incredible miniaturization that has taken place.

Joe Major doesn't like pizza?!!! I knew there was something not quite human about him – his incredibly fast reading ability for another. I thought pizza was one of the fannish food groups.

By the way, in my LOC, you typed my name. There's no period. The R isn't an abbreviation but part of the first name. There's a hyphen.

I found the articles by Jeff Copeland and Chris Garcia about their respective fathers deeply moving and appreciate their sharing their stories with me.

Charlie Williams' article about deities was very interesting. My beliefs are so very different. Some have said that I believe in a god-like being, but it certainly wouldn't fit Charlie's definition.

I enjoyed Taral Wayne's article about *How to Murder Your Wife*. I'll have to try to catch that movie sometime. It sounds good.

Susan Whitmore's article about her daughter was telling. I've known for ages that doctors know very little and are basically mechanics for the human body, not even engineers. This is because I have doctors in my family. My grandfather was an ob-gyn and delivered both my sister and me. My maternal uncle is/was an ophthalmologist; I don't know if he still practices at all. My sister is a paediatrician. I grew up with a very healthy (IMHO) scepticism about the medical profession. My personal experience mostly bears that up, though I've been extremely lucky for the most part with my doctors. Or is it that I know how to pick them? My heart goes out to Susan; it must be extremely difficult knowing that the offspring of your body may never develop into an adult.

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Thank you for *Challenger* #30, fat at over 100 pages and sporting a really wonderful Freas cover. As you said, Susan Whitmore's "Challenge at the Cutting Edge" is a very strong piece of writing, recounting her ongoing attempts to play out the hand life dealt her. Our son, Michael, who was born August 2, 1963, came with a full set of hernias, inguinal, umbilical, and esophageal (though the latter -- which triggered intermittent projectile vomiting, wasn't noted until years later), requiring corrective surgery at five weeks and again at five months after the inguinal hernias recurred. There were other problems, of course, but the two operations had put him off schedule so they weren't immediately apparent.

By the time our second son, Charles, was born on December 27, 1965, however, it was clear that Michael was a long way from being normal. The short version is that he never learned to talk, never became toilet trained, and only grew to about four feet tall. We went on the waiting list to have him admitted to the DC Crippled Children's Center -- the least evil choice, and several years later, when he was 7, he became a ward of the District of Columbia. I thought the worst was over, but stress is cumulative and a year later, Dolly developed ulcerative colitis. She died in '91, Michael died in '98, while Charles, except for being a confirmed bachelor, seems well adjusted and normal. I wish Susan luck in finding a cure for what ails her child.

Says "Susan": "The situation 10 years later is essentially the same. Ellie is no longer 'interesting' to doctors, and even the therapists gave up on her after a few years. But she does make progress, albeit very slow, and we hope to keep her whole in body and spirit in case a cure is found. So far, so good. She does get enjoyment out of life, and shares her enjoyment with others. I'll also add that community and government support (partly thanks to Bush I era disability laws & much lobbying by parents) is much better these days than when Alexis was dealing with his problems, so that keeping a non- or marginally medically involved delayed child or adult at home is much easier now. The evolving problem is what do you do when the caregivers pass away, and various programs including creating

'microboards' (not a form of torture, but small boards of directors) to help coordinate care is something that's catching on in some states."

The discussions of theology are interesting, but the practical (if not the main) purpose of religion is to regulate human behavior in regards to other humans, giving a well-regulated religious group an evolutionary advantage over a poorly regulated group. In the day there were any number of Jewish sects floating around, but Christianity, under the influence of Paul, was the one most open to converts. It grew, while Jewish sects such as the Essenes grew extinct emphasizing their purity of essence.

When Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire (on his deathbed in 337 A.D.), it was because the Christians had been thriving for three centuries while the Pagans (who favored male children to the extent of practicing female infanticide -- producing a ratio of 140 male to 100 female in Italy, Asia Minor and North Africa) had been in the process of dying out, a fact noted by the Imperial census takers.

We also note that the Old Testament is a collection of oral tales, which had been well established before they were written down, while the New Testament was equally an oral history, which had had a chance to evolve up to the point where a state religion required a single unified text. At which time the authorities went through what amounts to an enormous pile of religious fan fiction to keep what they considered useful while discarding the rest.

The Book of Mormon (which Mark Twain described as "chloroform in print") and the Koran, in contrast, did not evolve, being the sacred texts of a single author, preserved by the devout, though the Koran is the transcribed speech of Mohammed rather than his own writing. Binker Glock Hughes is mistaken when she attributes Mormon polygamy to Joseph Smith "being in puberty," by the way. Smith was married, and when he knocked up a housemaid, he changed his religion to make his actions kosher.

Did messing with their women sit well with his congregation? No. At least half the mob who stormed the jail (where he was being held on the charge of treason) in Carthage, Illinois was Mormon. Facts to the contrary notwithstanding,

these holy books all derive their authority from the word of God.

So what is there to say about God, He who is omnipotent, omniscient, and just? Mostly it should be sufficient that a belief in God justifies the religion, and minimizes cheating by the faithful when the religion calls for altruistic as opposed to selfish behavior. The Book of Job was originally an attempt to reconcile the observed injustice of the world with the recently conceived omnipotent, omniscient and just God. A thing it did by introducing an afterlife, in which God got to balance the ethical books. This idea proved so popular, being embraced by the masses, that the question of God's justice, which had concerned the Talmudic scholars debating the issue, became subordinate to the promise of life everlasting.

In the end a "just" God was handing out infinite rewards and punishments for finite deeds and misdeeds and nobody worried about it. From a theological perspective, Greg Benford invokes theodicy, the problem of evil, to wonder why bad things happen to good people. He concludes that God is not exactly as advertised being "either impotent or evil or simply non-existent." As a scientist he evokes evolution, which has given us genes that benefit the group at the expense of the individual. I have no doubt that the genes for altruism, self-sacrifice, and bravery are conserved because we humans fight a lot of wars. Thus the evil of war may be responsible for those good qualities we so admire. Absent the evil of predation, the dove evolved into the dodo, fat, flightless and stupid.

What else? You had a lot of good stuff in the issue, and I particularly enjoyed your piece on John Henry Faulk, reminding me of how nasty the right wing was in those days. I don't suppose it is any less nasty now, only less potent.

Let's hope.

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Thanks for sending *Challenger* 30. A meaty issue.

All this discussion of theological matters causes me to reflect, as Gregory Benford is clearly doing, that the road *from* Damascus is the harder one. It is much more difficult, and requires considerably more intellectual effort, honesty, and

very likely emotional pain, to reject a religion than convert to it. After all, the religion is offering you the answers. It is an excellent substitute for thinking, or for taking responsibility for your actions. The atheist is slowly coming to the conclusion that there are no answers other than what human beings can produce. This is a matter, in most cases, of breaking the programming that has been imposed upon you since childhood. One way to do it is, indeed, by looking at those deep-sky images from the Hubble telescope and realizing that with the billions of galaxies out there and the billions of planets to be found in each one, that it is damned arrogant of us to assume that the creator of the universe took such interest in one infinitesimal speck to incarnate as a carpenter in Galilee 2000 years ago. At least the Buddha, sitting under a tree, claimed to have come to an understanding of the nature of things, rather than that the entire universe focused suddenly on him.

Then there is the whole matter of comparative religion, and the history of religion. Humans have been defined as the only tool-making animals, but that is not true. Some apes have been observed making tools. No, humans are god-making animals. That is, we are the only species capable of projecting our imaginations (usually in our own image) onto the external world. We have created gods over and over again, and are unlikely to stop any time soon. There is no reason to believe the current version (the Hebrew Jupiter merged with the Romano-Persian sun god and then made more abstract) is the last word on the subject. Another characteristic of human beings is that they discard gods as rapidly as they create them. You could write an amusing, *Unknown Worlds* type story on the premise that we have discarded one too many, and the real one was several divinities back. What if Moloch was the real god? What if some primitive tribe up the Amazon has the real one, manifested as a wooden carving they won't let outsiders see?

Something else you learn from religious history is that the Hebrew Jupiter underwent his various evolutions for reasons that often have more to do with chance and politics than theology. How did Jesus get to be fully divine, "begotten, not made, one in being with the Father"? The answer is that it happened because Constantius II, the last surviving son of Constantine the Great,

caught a nasty cold in A.D. 361 and died suddenly, just before he was to square off with Julian the Apostate in a civil war. Constantius was an Arian, which means he believed that Jesus had been created at the specific moment that the Holy Spirit had impregnated the Virgin Mary, and had not existed before that time. Therefore He could not be the same as the Father, and could not be the creator of the universe, but more of a demi-god or super-angel. Now it so happened that in the murderous shell-game that was the 4th century Roman Empire, Constantius's brothers and other rivals were all eliminated, and he became, for a few years, sole emperor. He made Arianism orthodoxy. Some writer of the period complained that they woke up one morning and all the world was Arian. During this time, about 350-61, Athanasianism, what we now think of as Orthodox (or Catholic) Christianity was the heresy. It still had its followers, but even the pope had to waffle on this point. (George Scithers once challenged me to find out who was the first pope *not* to become a saint, and that proved to be the answer. It was the one contemporaneous with Constantius II. He did what he had to to keep his job, and lost a heavenly crown.)

It also so happened that during this brief period of Arian supremacy, missionaries were sent to the Germans. It may well be that the Arian version of Christianity was easier for the barbarians to understand, and that Christ as a kind of junior god was an analog to Thor's relationship to Odin, but the most important fact for many centuries thereafter was that Constantius suddenly died, Julian (who had converted to paganism) recalled the Athanasian exiles in hopes that the Christian factions would fight it out and destroy one another, and then Julian suddenly died and Athanasianism took over, permanently this time. The result was that the Romans were Catholics, the Germans were Arians, and the two peoples could not merge. No German could become emperor.

All of history would have been very different, if Constantius, who was 40 at the time, had lived another 25 years or so and been succeeded by a capable Arian son. His empress was pregnant at the time. (It was a girl.) He tended to win his civil wars, and would have likely made short work of Julian. There but for a well-placed sneeze, Christ would have remained "made, not

begotten, different in being from the Father" and we would speak of the Athanasian Heresy, which was refuted by Saint Arius. Of course a Christian today would insist that this was the will of God, working through history, to make things come out the way, but the rest of us can see how it was a very near thing. Religious history also could have been changed any number of times by a stray arrow. What if Constantine the Great had been killed by a stray shot at the Milvian Bridge? What if Mohammed, who was allegedly once wounded in battle, had been killed by a random shot?

In case you're wondering, yes, I finally did write an alternate history story more or less based on the survival of Constantius and continued Arian supremacy. It is called "The Last Heretic" and I sold it to *Postscripts*.

We can also wonder: if Theodora had lived longer, would the majority of Christians today be Monophysites? Thoughts like these tend to make you realize how arbitrary such developments are. It is also hard to comprehend how the creator of a billion galaxies could actually care whether Constantius the Second sneezed or not. Lovecraft point this out. In a cosmic perspective, all human activity, including religion, seems trivial and purely a local affair. It is also purely arbitrary, on a cosmic scale, that the Earth was not destroyed by an enormous asteroid at the same moment that Constantius got sick.

This may not be knowledge that most people can handle. It may well be that religion is what James Branch Cabell called a "dynamic illusion," a lie that most people need to keep going. Indeed, it would be exquisite cruelty to rob a dying person of this comfort when they need it. Even as science is not for the masses – we are living in a country where most people don't believe in evolution and a lot don't know the difference between a star and a planet, and this has no immediate impact on their lives – it may well be that only a small circle of enlightened philosophers can come together around the conclusion that gods are one more human-created illusion. It may be that this is a revelation you only achieve after many years of hard work and sincere truth-seeking. The conclusion is, alas, we made God up, not once but many times. We're on our own. We are like passengers in a bus discovering that no one is driving. The majority of passengers will never know this. But those who

do have to decide whether to take the wheel or not. Best to whisper this. Most people are simply incapable of handling it without extensive preparation.

On other matters, I hope Lezli Robyn realizes how fortunate she is – and how unusual. Many people struggle for decades to get where she is now. Many who struggle all those decades, never get there. I know any number of people, now in their forties or fifties, who have been writing since their teens and have yet to make their first sale. It does not follow that success will come rushing in even if you do sell a couple stories. My wife Mattie began writing in her teens, almost gave up in her thirties (but she wrote to Ray Bradbury and he wouldn't allow her to give up), sold her first story when she was forty-four, and now has two novels out. She has several more unpublished. I just heard from another writer complaining that he had worked for fifteen years to sell a story to a certain magazine, finally succeeded, and then the editorial regime changed and he can't publish there anymore. (I pointed out to him that he had in the process learned to write well enough to sell stories elsewhere, including some that had once been accepted by the first magazine. So he must look forward, not back, and just let his initial goal go.) But it does not follow that success comes quickly. Kevin Anderson mentioned in an interview I did recently that he sold his first story to *Space and Time* in 1982. I hadn't realized that. But he's famous now. Charles Stross explained in another interview how he was an overnight success after twenty years of work. Only a very few writers make a big splash immediately. The more common pattern is that the first sales are made to marginal markets and no one notices, except possibly in retrospect, many years later. We *now* are interested in the stories Stross published twenty years ago. Ms. Robyn is very, very lucky. I congratulate her. I'll look for her work.

Joseph Green's article reminds me of the fact that you can always start an argument – or a fight – in science fiction circles with the question, “When did Heinlein go bad?” Remember that special Heinlein issue of Peter Weston's *Speculation*, about 1970? There was quite a range of opinion in there, ranging from the eternal greatness of all Heinlein's work, to the grim pronouncement by M. John Harrison, “The

answer is Chicago,” referring to the Chicago Police Riot of 1968 and implying that Heinlein personified all that was wrong with American society.

I'm more of a moderate, of the “Heinlein went bad about 1959” school myself, and would draw the line in front of *Starship Troopers*. I confess I am not an admirer of *Stranger in a Strange Land* and always recommend that people reread *Stranger* alongside Gore Vidal's *Messiah*, which is not only shorter, but by far the better book. The thing is, Vidal understands religion and its historical roots. Heinlein did not. He once commented that theology “is a science without a subject,” which is true enough, but a very superficial way of looking at things. Heinlein understood religion as a form of social manipulation, best used cynically. (This is an idea that was very current in the Golden Age *Astounding*, stemming from John Campbell's unpublished “All”, the central idea of which turns up in *Revolt in 2100*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, Leiber's *Gather, Darkness!* and quite a few shorter works by other writers of the period. It was realized in real life by L. Ron Hubbard, whose Scientology is basically an *Astounding* story gone bad.) He made the profound mistake of focusing his book on his actual messiah, which, of course, he could not produce. We spend most of the book taking people's word for it that Valentine Michael Smith is so wonderful, but we can't actually be convinced. Vidal understood this, and got his messiah out of the way quickly, then concentrated on how the church formed around the subsequent infighting and opportunism of the disciples.

As for the Heinlein-Manson connection, this is an old canard, with some basis in truth, but not much. Heinlein hired a lawyer to interview Manson in jail and the lawyer reported that Manson was virtually illiterate and had read few books and had never heard of Heinlein. But in *Grumbles from the Grave* there is a letter from Virginia Heinlein to their literary agent describing how Robert had received a fan letter from a girl in jail, kindly answered it, and then was horrified to discover that this was one of Manson's women. Indeed, there was a baby in the Manson tribe named Valentine Michael Smith, so *somebody* in Manson's acquaintance read Heinlein's book, and very likely told him parts of the story. If you really think about the dark core of the book – if

Stranger were more honestly written, it would be a horror novel – you realize it's a power fantasy about a self-appointed messiah who gets all the girls and has the right to arbitrarily “disincorporate” anyone he pleases – even as Charles Manson disincorporated Sharon Tate and several others. It's certain that Manson didn't actually read the book, but he probably would have taken it to heart if he had, and he may well have been influenced by its ideas.

*As I said earlier, Leslie van Houten told me that she had read **Stranger** – in fact, it was the only SF she'd ever bothered with. She was quite taken aback when I told her about RAH's Annapolis background and military manner.*

Heinlein himself backed off from the implications of his subject matter, added a trivializing fantasy element at the end, and assured us that Valentine Michael Smith's “disincorporations” (i.e. murders) didn't really matter and were a bit of a joke. This also trivialized the death of VMS himself – a blunder Vidal would never have made. (Vidal's messiah is murdered by members of his own cult, who realize the historical necessity for his death. Messiahs are much more powerful dead than alive.)

As an actual predictor, well, Heinlein was wrong more often than right, but he was smart enough to realize he was playing out possibilities like choices in a catalogue, and that any given scenario was not *the* future. Any successful science fiction writer has to realize that, if only so he can write more than one type of story. We actually seem to be living more in Philip K. Dick's future than Heinlein's, and I suppose we should all be glad for that, given Heinlein's certainty that a nuclear war with the Russkies was right around the corner. I don't doubt that he influenced the survivalist movement, but the rest of us can hope that those wackos will just grow old quietly in their hovels in the woods. Heinlein's more constructive influence has been in the pro-space movement. We do not really have space capitalism yet, but if we ever do, it will be to some degree due to Heinlein.

But as a science fiction writer, Heinlein's real success – and merit – comes from his realization that the texture of the future – the everyday details – will be quite different from the

present, but that the people living in that future will not notice this. Hence the famous “the door dilated” sentence. The importance of this is that no one says, “Wow, that's amazing! The door dilated. How did that work, Professor?” Instead they take it for granted, the same way I take for granted that the light outside my back door has a motion sensor and goes off after a while if nothing moves. There's a pretty good description of a credit card in *Double Star* but this, specifically, doesn't matter. What does matter is that the characters just use it, as part of their lives, and go on with the plot.

Heinlein's actual predictions haven't turned out very well. He was convinced we would have proof of life after death by now, and that the military would have a corps of psionics users, and quite a few other things which we can see are the result of either basic human wishes, or of fads of his time. But he was superb at what editors call “future feel.” He wrote the texture of the future very well, and made it different from the present. That is something that SF writers still need to learn from his work.

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Well, now, I couldn't let paragraph 3 from “A Closing Word” go without a comment, could I?

This is the paragraph in which you paint the entire conservative movement with the broad brush of vigilante extremism and hatred. Hoo-hah! Does the left know a thing or two about fear and loathing and the climate of hate! From Rosie O'Donnell to Jeanne Garofalo to Bill Maher to John Stewart to George Soros and MoveOn.Org to People for the American Way to Al Sharpton and Jeremiah Wright to Perez Hilton, and on and on and on, the left-wing has been drenched in spite, venom, loathing, and hate for the past nine years. All that “Hate Bush,” “Kill Bush,” “Kill Cheney,” “Hate Palin,” and on and on and on. How about that play that offered a fictionalized assassination of Bush? A play which, when seen by leftist audiences, provoked wild and enthusiastic applause? That's not hate and loathing? Don't make me laugh.

I wouldn't dream of making you laugh, except with a joke at a New Orleans party, but

I've never seen any generally accepted liberal spokesman advocate murder of any of those people. I never heard of that play you mention and as a liberal, reject any association with Al Sharpton, Perez Hilton or Jeremiah Wright in any way other than our species, our gender, our nationality and our common language. But it is a fact that the Secret Service has reported a 400% increase in threats against the President since Obama took over.

As far as "suggest(ing) any direct involvement" of any conservative spokesman in "the murder of that (sic) abortion" doctor, I assume you're referring to Bill O'Reilly. There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever linking O'Reilly to the horrible act. And to suggest otherwise, as the left seems obsessed with doing, is to run dangerously close to libel and slander. As a lawyer, you should know better. As for that line, "Right wing rhetoric stokes their fires," I haven't encountered such outright B.S. in a long time.

As for wedges and demonizing, those words describe the left's strategy and tactics to a T. The left just loves to create wedge issues to drive people apart and pit one group against another. That's the whole idea behind identity politics, reverse discrimination, class warfare, the deliberate polarization of the country on the issue of gay marriage, etc. You accuse the right of "demoniz(ing) all those who are not themselves"? You have a lot of stones to say that! The left is all about demonization. They demonize Christians (especially Catholics, Evangelicals, and now Mormons). They demonize white southerners, midwesterners, lower-class whites, upper-class whites, increasingly Jews, and on and on and on. And in the case of prominent and popular conservative leaders, the left's demonization shrieks to high heaven and is relentless. Look at what the left did to Sarah Palin, Joe the Plumber, and Miss California, just to cite three recent examples.

Sarah Palin was a candidate for national office. Her words were fair game in a political contest. How was she misused? She exposed herself as a bubbleweight through her insipid answers to harmless questions and had no one to blame for the reaction but herself. I disapproved when David Letterman made snide jokes about her family, but Letterman is just a tasteless comic, not an agent of the Left. Joe the Plumber was a

Republican political operative, sent by the party to waylay Barack Obama with a question the GOP hoped would prove embarrassing. Obama politely took time to speak with the phony and the attempt went nowhere. As for Carrie Prejean, Miss California – and I said she'd be mentioned in this lettercol -- I agree. She was badly mistreated by the media. During her beauty contest, she answered the question put to her about gay marriage honestly and politely. Those who called her names for her opinion were louts who should've picked on somebody their own size.

As for these "Sons of Reagan," I don't know who the hell you're talking about. It sounds like a 60's rock group. Wasn't there a San Francisco band called the Sons of Champlain?

As far as murder and mayhem go, yes, the murder of the abortion doctor was morally reprehensible and indefensible. And I know of *no* conservative who thinks otherwise. *But* what about the countless murders that are committed each year of the unborn? Why doesn't the left rise up in outrage against that? Where is the left's much-touted "empathy" there? The left doesn't want fewer abortions, not really. It wants more abortions. The left embraces a culture of death. They don't believe in God, so for them liberalism (or radicalism, or progressivism, or whatever you want to call it) is their substitute religion. It's not a religion that concerns itself with morality, certainly not with moral absolutes. It concerns itself only with ideology, politics, and power. In this religion the end justifies the means, and everything from vote fraud to smearing one's opponents, is a treasured part of the arsenal – as Saul Alinsky outlined long ago in his Rules for Radicals. And in the secular leftist religion abortion is a sacrament, while anyone daring to politely express their opposition to gay marriage is vilified as expounding "hatespeech."

In brief, if the left wants to inveigh against hate and hate-mongering, it had better look in the mirror.

Abortion is not murder. Murder is a legal term for the unlawful killing of a human being. The law specifically excludes medical abortion – legal in the United States – from that definition. E.g., "The offense of feticide shall not include acts which cause the death of an unborn child if those acts were committed during any abortion to which the

pregnant woman or her legal guardian has consented ...” La. R.S. 14:32.5. Extending the definition of murder to include abortion is contrary to law – and dangerous. Here is a perfect example of how excessive, inflammatory speech can serve as a spur to the unbalanced, as the number of murdered doctors, bombed clinics, and terrorized patients bears witness.

*And in response to my Anticipation report, **The Panoramic Route** (available on eFanzines, thenkew Mr. Bill Burns) ...*

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And then, the ghostly image of Khen Moore floats over the proceedings, lending its air of bereavement to an already melancholy year. But enough of that.

Oddly enough, our journey began the first day of August, but we went south, to Lisa’s family reunion in Cadiz, Kentucky. Saw some of my relatives, too.

You hit mists in Tennessee, we did so in Central Kentucky, veiling the familiar sights of Bullitt County. Fortunately, the road was clear, but the green hills and the trees were ... hidden. Came the Sun, a blazing lover ... er, well, we got down to Elizabethtown to have breakfast. (Curiously enough, our ultimate destination that day had once also been named “Elizabethtown”. That was Hopkinsville’s original name, before the founder found out he had been beaten to it.)

I wonder how the current occupant of 423 Summit, Hagerstown, feels. Do they still get strange foreign mails? Does the tapping of endless typewriters resonate in the night? When we went by there, workmen were clearing out the place. I pondered going in — but was reminded I might be arrested for trespass.

Next time we visit Gettysburg, next year, I will be sure to have ham for dinner that night. Or salt my steak. Or something. The sweating took more out of me than I thought.

One of the things I got was a DVD of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Reunion. There were two thousand veterans of the War there. Things

being as they are, I suspect a fair number of them were veterans of the western battles, or even (as seems to have been the case with the “last surviving Confederate veterans”), spurious vets. Oh well. And now, such is the advance of time and space, that it is a mere four years to the **150th Anniversary**. I remember the Centennial, which started out dramatically enough (for example, that was why MacKinlay Kantor’s *If the South Had Won the Civil War* was published) and sort of sputtered out.

There’s never enough time ... we haven’t seen much of the Devil’s Den [*ye editor highly recommends it*], and never have gone to the Cavalry Action, where Elon Farnsworth took part in stopping Jeb Stuart’s attack. Now that’s an interesting career. He was a captain, then he was promoted to Brigadier General, and three days later he was killed.

The Cavalry Action was coordinated with Pickett’s Charge; the idea was to strike at the Union center from both sides. Unseemly.

There weren’t as many people when we went to see the Cyclorama, so we got a better view. What did you think of the preview movie? (Lisa and I committed a *faux pas*; we took rear seats because they were handy and untenanted, and it turned out they were the handicapped seats.)

In a way, it’s better to see the Cyclorama last, so you have your memories of the line along Cemetery Ridge to compare it to; now and then. Some of the veterans wept when they saw the picture for the first time.

Perhaps it should be a two-day visit, and then you can go see the Eisenhower farm next to the battlefield. Like I noted last year, the Eisenhower Museum lacks the personal touch the Truman Museum has, but Harry stayed around while Ike bugged out.

We stayed in Kitchener. The motel was small and cluttered but handy – and quiet. Also, it was on the corner, and cater-corner to a Tim Horton’s.

The guy in *American Gods* got what he deserved. His wife was walking, albeit dead. Tucker published (aagh, to have to use the past tense) *Le Zombie* whenever a zombie walked. And the guy drove through Bloomington and didn’t stop to help Tucker, who was getting on and could have used help. Perhaps I should have printed up

and given to Gaiman that scene I wrote where he ran into Roscoe, Ghu, and Herbie — fannish Ghods should be just as real in that universe, too.

I see you felt the same way about the parties. The only person I only saw at a party was Sue Mason, who looked pretty beat. They were, as you said, crowded and full of strangers.

NESFA also had my book. Sold all three copies; I autographed the last one, which was being held for its purchaser. If they'd remembered her name I would have done that too.

Fan Editors: I'm probably repeating myself, but I really think we're seeing a shift from "participants" to "consumers". I was at a NOTA meeting (there's a long story behind that name for the club) yesterday and a couple of the attendees were boosting Dragon*Con. One of them said she'd heard that they had tried to buy the name "Worldcon". (!) And that their NASFiC had been very good, which was *not* what I had heard at the time.

For all that one gets at Dragon*Con, there doesn't seem to be any, well, participation. And that is what concerns me.

As for *Steam Engine Time* and its Hugo chances, I hope that AussieFandom is more respecting of their own than CanFandom is of theirs. All the fine Canadian fanzines that existed in 1993, and none of them got on the ballot at Winnipeg. And so on, even unto today, not to mention the disgraceful scene where No Award won the Prix Aurora Award for Best Fanzine. And as much for the Best Fan Writer.

Indeed, Opuntia's Dale Speirs deserved both.

However, in an act of at least honesty, *Electric Velocipede* has re-categorized itself as a semiprozine. Now we have to go through two more years of work ...

Visiting *Anne of Green Gables* land: I'm glad Rosy was not as troubled as Lisa was when she finally got to Chincoteague, all those years ago. She had grown up reading *Misty of Chincoteague* and its many sequels, and had this image of the place as a remote, almost pastoral, island. There was a vast support structure for the vast influx of visitors that came because of the books, and the feeling was pretty much gone.

One of my cousins in Virginia told me how she had grown up reading the Little Colonel books, set in Pewee Valley, Kentucky. Which is just outside of Louisville. She wanted us to go

there and see what it was like. I never did; I didn't want to have to tell Becky that the place was no longer as it had been.

We didn't even have that much of a problem getting back into the States. The guy barely looked at our passports. Now I haven't been in Maine in over forty years. It was the last long trip my father took before he got sick. I remember going to the Henry Knox home, and only then thinking of how *isolated* it must have been then in winter; on the coast, a far way away from any town, particularly then.

You should have told me you were going through Frankfort; we might have bestirred ourselves, broke and tired, to shuffle over there for a rendezvous with Tom Sadler, relocated to Owenton, Kentucky, where he puts out splendid issues of *The Reluctant Famulus* (oh do I remember that lovely cover you so extolled) just down the road from a meth lab.

And then you guys could have stood around and watched me sleep. We were zonked when we reached Frankfort!

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I well understand your need to have Pepper [*our yorkie*] come along on the 3-week trip. I miss my dogs when I'm just away for a weekend, and judging from their mad fits of joy when I return from a quick 3-hour book-hunting trip around town, 3 weeks away would probably be impossible for any of us to deal with. Don't they allow dogs on leash at the Gettysburg Battlefield Park? I can't remember.

You speak well of The Old Dominion and as a native Virginian I approve and appreciate. As T. S. Eliot once wrote, there is indeed a bond between a man and his native land that can be felt as strongly as a man's devotion to his family. It is a rare thing today to feel that bond and rarer still to act upon it, but in Lee's day it was the primary bond that an honorable man based his life on. I fear that few would understand this today. I'm glad to see that you're an exception.

Ah! I see that you visited Abingdon briefly on your trip. [*Passed through, actually.*] If you went all the way through town on US 11 then just before you passed the Martha

Washington Inn in the middle of town you may have noticed a rather large new fountain in the middle of town. Fantasy artist Charles Vess (who lives in the area) created this and it was only finished a few months ago. It celebrates Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Nights Dream*, and you'd really have to stop and look it over closely to catch all the intricacies. I invite you to do just that on your next trip through Abingdon – and as long as you have time to stop and look at fountains you might as well call me too...

Knoxville to Gettysburg in one day is quite a drive. Abingdon to G'burg is bad enough, but of course, Gettysburg is a destination well worth the journey. Please tell Rosy that Little Round Top is my favorite part of the battlefield too. I always encourage first time visitors to first go to the Devil's Den down below and examine the ground between it and Little Round Top. Longstreet's Confederates must have thought it daunting ground to take, but not impossible. It's only when you then go up to where General Warren stood (and where his statue stands now) and look back towards Devil's Den that you see all the hidden natural rifle pits and other obstacles that made the Confederate assault up that rocky slope so deadly. Longstreet knew better; Lee should have too. I think – *think*, mind you – that there *is* a monument on LRT to the 20th Maine that cites Col. Chamberlain. I have a photo of myself taken there but can't remember the inscription in detail. It's at the far end of the 20th Maine lines well down the slope of LRT amongst those large boulders and it's easy to miss if you don't know where it is. But the 20th Maine veterans themselves picked that spot for their monument so I assume that they felt it was the right place. The better positions further up the slope were held by the 97th PA Volunteers and I think they have a more prominent monument up there somewhere. I was only really interested in Chamberlain's 20th Maine when I visited there and didn't even go farther North than the crest of LRT.

On the backside of LRT where few tourists go is some of the most beautiful scenery to be found in the Gettysburg region. It's rough ground but worth the trouble to walk it. I and a re-enactor friend once camped most of a night there several years ago and got caught up in a small bit of trouble ourselves that resulted in

scaring the Hell out of 4 tourists and causing my friend and I to cut short our visit and scamper quickly off into the night. But I digress (and I've written it up already for a fanzine a few years back).

You noted the “first working drive-in” that you've seen in the 21st century in Pennsylvania. Actually you drove right past another one just south of Abingdon; the Moonlight Drive-in Theater between exits 10 and 13 of I-81 and quite visible from the Interstate. Very good theater. Liz and I go there every now and then. The snack bar has outstanding French fries.

You write well (of course), captivatingly (but of course), and entertainingly (*c'est magnifique!*) – Morticia! You spoke French! – of Anticipation and the eternal process of Fandom coming together once again to celebrate what we are and what we do. I wish I'd been there in more than spirit. I'm a little surprised to learn that there was a Southern Fandom Panel at Anticipation, though had I been at the convention I'd surely have attended it myself. I'm intrigued to know that the Fan Writers panelists named several “good fan writers” that you'd never heard of. This somewhat reinforces my belief that fanzine fandom in the 21st Century is rather more segmentalized than most of us probably realize. I only read about 20 zines regularly and I suspect that a *lot* of us also have our own lists of preferred zines, all of them different and some of them isolated from others. The “winner” of the fanzine Hugo this year – *Electric Velocipede* – would seem to be a case in point. I've never seen a copy, most of the people I know who also read zines have never seen a copy, and so far *all* of my zine-reading friends who *have* seen a copy agree; *Electric Velocipede* is not a fanzine. Not as we who populate the fanzine hobby understand the term to be interpreted. Yet it won the Hugo. Why? Who voted for it? Were those voters actual fanzine fans that we would know? Maybe, but I suspect not. Well, it wouldn't be the first time that bloc voting swayed a Hugo result.

That pretty “Canadian” girl you noticed bidding furiously for the Neil Gaiman Tuckerization in the fan-fund auction was probably the Australian fan Clare MacDonald – who's in charge of Membership for the upcoming Australian Worldcon next Year. She's written on

line about bidding a huge amount for that Tuckerization only to lose it at the last moment. Clare stunned me the weekend before by turning up in Columbus at Pulpfest where she surprised me while I was sorting out the lots to be sold during the Saturday night auction. She realized after she got to America that she had time to squeeze in a quick trip to Columbus and as easily as that she rearranged her flights and diverted across half a continent to say hello. I took her to the PEAPS (Pulp Era Amateur Press Society) party later that night where she was a great hit with the fellows. She seemed to have a good time herself. And you're right; Clare **is** cute as a ladybug.

I wish I'd heard your panel on "How to read for pleasure". **I** could have come up with plenty to say about that. (First rule: never try to read a book out in public, because sooner or later **someone** is going to see you reading and come over and interrupt you to ask, "whatcha doing, reading a book?") I sometimes think that most of the marching morons out there are convinced that anyone off by themselves reading a book must be lonely.

You wrote a compelling and somewhat heart-wrenching account of the Hugo preparations and ceremonies. I see that I'm far from the only one who sees a fundamental flaw in the process that resulted in *Electric Velocipede* winning the Hugo for Best Fanzine. It's simply not right and I'm looking to future WSFS committees to correct this situation. I mean, it shouldn't take a rocket scientist to see the problem.

"...Riviere-de-Loup, which sounded like a city full of werewolves..." I love it!

I've never read any of the *Anne of Green Gables* books – there are several – either but they are consistently one of the most sought after groups of books at the used bookshop in Abingdon where I occasionally work on weekends. Very steady sellers and almost no one ever brings them back to trade in. I enjoyed your account of the Prince Edward Island portion of

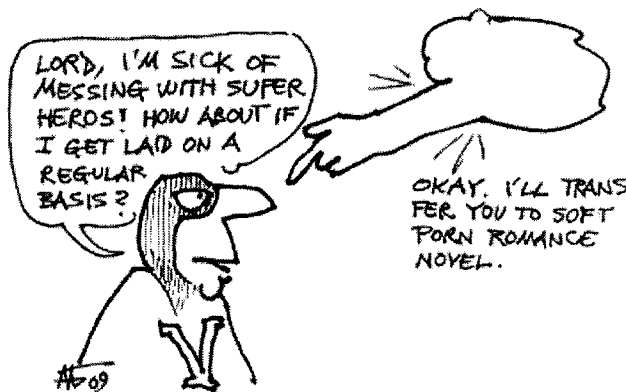
your trip. There's something very satisfying about knowing that a writer has such a lasting impact on their community and aside from the obvious tourist aspect, it's nice to see that a writer **can** be a tourist attraction. (Hmmm ... I wonder what plans Harlan has for his house 30 or 40 years from now?) Great photos from that part of your trip too.

Your visit to Concord NH and the grave of Christa McAuliffe strikes a chord with me. January 28 1986 was a day that marked a huge change for me personally. I was at work at Raytheon Co., a defense contractor that made

guided missiles. On that morning I was sealed in a white room (an ultra clean facility) working with some guidance sections for Maverick missiles when one of my co-workers called in and told me that the Space Shuttle had blown up. "Smart-ass" I thought as I hung up. What a tasteless, stupid joke.

And then I started worrying. Was it possible? Could something have happened? I called home and Liz answered on the first ring. "I was just trying to decide if I should call you," she said. "Have you heard the news? It's on TV right now..." She'd been watching TV at the time and as soon as it happened she had the presence of mind to pop a tape into our brand new VCR and start recording. In all she recorded 5 tapes worth of the coverage and I still have them. It still makes for very painful viewing.

But just after I spoke with Liz on that terrible morning; just after I hung up the phone, I sat down in a little locker room attached to that white room and held my head in my hands. There I was building missiles meant to kill somebody, somewhere, while elsewhere in the country, good people had climbed aboard a missile meant for the purpose that missiles **should** be built for – to take mankind into space. I had taken that job 7 years earlier thinking that at least it was a step into the aerospace industry and that I'd at least have **some** connection with spacecraft. Sitting there surrounded by killing machines while pieces of



the *Challenger* were literally still falling to Earth, I finally realized that I'd deceived myself. There was no way at all that what I was working at would ever lead to working with actual spacecraft, and I knew then that somehow I'd change careers and do something that made some sort of difference to people somewhere. And that's what started me on the path that led to becoming first an EMT, then a Firefighter, and then a Registered Nurse. It's still far removed from my childhood dream of becoming an astronaut, but it's far better than what I was doing on the morning of Jan. 28, 1986.

An excellent trip report, Guy. We should get up a fund to keep you on the road more often if you're gonna write reports as good as this one.

A splendid suggestion!

Lloyd Penney
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CANADA M9C 2B2

I am streaking (ooo!) [*yihh!*] through all kinds of zines as the SFnal year 2010 arrives, so I have now come to your Anticipation trip report, *The Panoramic Route*. There's a lot of things to talk about, remember and correct, and I'll get to it all immediately.

Yorkies are great fun. I've never owned one, but some neighbours of ours had a Yorkie named Rocky (perfect name for a Yorkie, no?), and Rocky would be brave, for a fraction of a second, anyway. Rocky would race up to people, stand his ground, bark bravely, and then run, yiping all the way. The neighbours had another name for him ... Psychopuppy.

Rose's idea of checking to see if Pepper could cross the border with you was indeed a good idea. Many people don't realize that these things must be thought of ... you are crossing and international border, and things are bound to be a little different. The US had guards to check with people as they cross, and so do we. The most common misconception about crossing our common border is that people think that you need a passport to come to Canada, which automatically makes Canada the bad guy, and Yvonne caught flak for that a couple of times. Actually, you don't need a passport to come to Canada, but you do need one to get back home, and I need one to enter the USA. The Department

of Homeland Security demands it. We truly live in a post-9/11 era.

I would like nothing better than to go to England myself. I know Chris Garcia is going to a future Novacon, I believe. One year soon, I hope.

Crossing into Canada at the Thousands Islands bridge is the best thing you could have done. It gets you onto the 401 fairly quickly, and there's not much highway between there and Autoroute 20 and Montreal. For every surly Canadian guard I hear about, I see a surly American guard when I cross into New York state for a con or two. And I have never heard "out" pronounced "oot" by anyone, let alone a Canadian. "Shedule" rather than "skedule" shows the difference between American English and British English, and I am quite used to both.

Canadians do *not* denote their money as 1,00\$ or 2,00\$. That is the way it's done in Quebec, but that's because of the French way of denoting currency. English speaking Canadians will write down \$1.00 or \$2.00, same as you. You're right about the toonie, the outer ring is made of nickel, while the interior is mostly copper. I think the mint saw how common bimetallic coins were in Europe.

(I have seen that children's show you wrote about, with characters dressed very Cats-style, as cats, monkeys, etc. Seems to be popular with French-language and French-immersion kids.)

I'd met Marc Garneau some years ago ... he remembers Yvonne and the super-volunteer at various space conferences. Wish I'd gotten to some of the other events, but the ones I did get to were special.

I gather a number of tuckerizations for the Fan Funds have been assembled. I can only imagine what kinds of bids will come across ... a few of us have deep pockets. The Hugo rehearsal was a weird time, but fun for chatting with Dave Kyle. Ask me some time how Claude Degler got into the Best Fan Writer *melée*... How did I get involved with WOOF? I got a nice letter from John Hertz, asking if I would be shanghaied into reviving this wayward apa. I said sure enough, and brought equipment to put it all together. Julie Czerneda's translator for the Hugos and other events she toastmastered was none other than Quebec SF writer Yves Meynard. Yes, we'd like

to be nominated, and we'd like to win. We all have our dreams. Maybe, one day...

You must have driven the Confederation Bridge to get to PEI ... for the longest time, a ferryboat was needed to get to the island ... If there's anyone who loves Anne Shirley [a.k.a. *Anne of Green Gables*], it's the Japanese. They come to PEI in droves every year; they love her red hair, and red's a lucky colour.

Every Canadian knows his Tim Horton's ... gimme my Timmies, and no one gets hurt. That bottle of blue from PEI ... I remember the maker as Seaman's, and it's probably a bubblegum flavour.

Happy that you enjoyed Anticipation...we had ourselves a marvelous time. We have supporting memberships for Australia, but that will be all we can afford there. The saving up for Reno has already begun. I am looking forward to the 31st *Challenger*... See you then!

And on The Zine Dump #24 ...

Chris Garcia

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Another great issue of *The Zine Dump* and I thank you very much for the kind words. Just got news of the Novas and Claire Brialey and *Banana Wings* took the awards for Best Fan Writer and Best Fanzine while Sue Mason won another Best Fan Artist. Good for them, I say!

You know, I think my favorite thing about *Banana Wings* is when they stray. That two part article about the Films of Ancient Rome and the one where Tanya Brown talked about finding the right Dictionary were my personal faves. Claire and Mark are so solid as writers that it really doesn't much matter what they write about.

Electric Velocipede winning the Hugo was a shame, but really, it's the voters. Either 1) no one wants to read fanzines anymore and since *EV* wasn't really a fanzine, it gets lots more eyes than we do and they rewarded it for not being an actual fanzine or 2) People just think that what they do is better than what we do or 3) John Klima and Co. are just more popular than the rest of us. I tend to lean towards the last in that trio. Still, I'm glad John's declared that he's a Semi-prozine. Even though I shared a room with Chris Barkley at WindyCon, we didn't have a chance to

chat about the Semi-Pro Renovation Project he's heading while we were there.

Martin Morse Wooster
address above

In *The Zine Dump* #24, you talk about how John Klima refused to trade zines with you. I think in all the controversy about his undeserved fanzine award, I haven't heard from any voter who said, "You know, *Electric Velocipede* is a very good fanzine." I gather *EV* has now declared itself to be a semiprozine, but the way to defend fanzines is not to whine or pretend to be part of an elite, but to get to work introducing people to zines and trying to get new fans to read and write for them. Semiprozines have their fans that successfully (and in my view, rightly) managed to save their award. Where are the fanzine fans with similar energy and persuasion?

John Hertz

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Los Angeles CA 90057

Thanks for *Zine Dump* 24, with your kind treatment of *Vanamonde* [John's *Apa-L zine*].

You send applause, so I can't complain,

But letters of comment not;

The fanart too gets overlooked

Though I think it's pretty hot;

And each 5th ish a lettercol,

Both small and great it's got.

Let me say a word on apa comments,

Which I work so hard to jot.

You might yet find them full of meat;

They've been praised by Art Hlavat';

I try to write so you needn't know

Who's who or said what of what;

I try to put form and substance both

A-stewing in the pot.

You might think which is *lagniappe* for which

Next time you give it a shot.

WE WERE GRATIFIED TO HEAR FROM:

Wendy Braxton, Ned Brooks ("I think I'm getting too old to read zines this size"), Gary Brown, Mr. Charles deKunffy, Mike Estabrook, Harlan Ellison, Al Fitzpatrick, Reverend Gordon Gibson, Joe Green, Susan Higgins, Binker Hughes, Mary Pack, John Purcell, Alexander Slate, Jim Stumm, Kat Templeton, ShelVv Vick, Michelle Zellich

HARROWING YEARS

Michael Estabrook

I steeled myself for the possibility of losing you

For 2 years I had done my very best
to prove my love for you.
But if you needed something more,
if you needed someone new,
all I could really do was shrug and step aside.

You owe it to yourself, after all,
to be certain of something as important as that,
you needed to try and find him.
Better for me not to get in the way,
to step aside, let you explore the others
and discover for yourself
that I am the best man to care for you,
love and adore you for your whole life.

So, I took a deep, deep breath,
steeled myself for the possibility
of losing you then watched from afar,
as from a lone window above the fray,
as you flirted and teased your way
through the benumbed boys in your classes,
hoping for, expecting, something to happen.

Yes, I moved out of the way,
praying you would finish your exploration
and realize what I knew all along,
that I am the only one for you,
and no one else in the world
could love you more than I do.

Flirtations

You flirted so much in college
and then told me
about it all the time,
almost bragging, saying,
“I have no secrets from you.”
And why did you tell me
about your flirtations, I could never figure that out.
If they were harmless and silly,
why antagonize me so?
“By telling you I was protecting myself.
Telling you put them out there in the open,
made them safe, preventing me from
doing anything further with those guys.”
In other words, by her telling me
about her flirtations prevented her
from dating them or
meeting them in their dorm rooms to make out.
It made the whole thing safer.
Also, I’m thinking, by making me jealous
all the damn time, she was keeping me in line,
making me aware that she had options other than me,
that if I dated so could she.
In short, in summary, the flirtations
replaced any real dating,
I guess that was a good thing,
come to think of it, a real good thing.

Instead of trying to kiss and paw at her

I remember that dismal,
uncertain time in college
(lost in the mists of life's dark,
tangled jungle)
when my wife
(my girlfriend then)
decided she needed to wander,
to date other guys. If instead
of trying to kiss and paw at her,
these short-sighted jackasses
(thank God for that)
would have been chivalrous
and caring, selfless and concerned
about what she thought and felt
and had to say, she might
have connected with something
in one of them, something
she admired and needed
and came to love, something
she has never found in me.
Things might have been
very different than they are today.
Certainly if she had dated another guy
even a handful of times
I wouldn't be here right now.

She would've jumped at it

Even though she insisted on being free
(from me, her boyfriend of 2 years)
to date other boys in college,
she never went out of her way
to find any and date any.
She never went to frat parties
or sorority mixers, never hung out
in bars trying to get picked up
or studied with a handsome classmate
in a quiet corner of the library. She never
was eager to get to know
her hunky football player friend intimately
in the back seat of his fancy new car.

For some strange reason my girl
never had much interest in finding
other boyfriends, never sent out those
"I'm available" or "I'm interested" vibes
and for such a blessing I am forever grateful.

In addition, for some perplexing reason,
none of her many boy friends, not her
study-buddies or football player friends,
not the guys who walked her to her classes
or the ones who told her she
had pretty eyes, ever
worked up the courage to ask her out
on a date (she was a stunning beauty,
perhaps that kept my rivals away).

So I am doubly-blessed and grateful
and more thankful than can be imagined
because if any of her boy friends
had asked her out, if for example,
Don had asked her out for dinner and a movie,
she would've jumped at it.

Blind Date

"I've never been on a blind date," I state,
feeling a mixture of pride and sorrow.
"I haven't either," my wife responds immediately,
looking away from the TV screen.

I look at her to see if she is kidding.
But she isn't.
"Yes you have," I say. "You've been on a blind date."
A quizzical look crosses her face.

"In college, remember,
when you decided you needed to date other guys."
"Oh that. I forgot all about that."

"So you're one up on me," I continue,
"seeing as I've never been on a blind date
and you have." I guess it is pride I'm feeling.
I've never had to resort to a blind date
like my wife has.
"Yup, I'm one up on you, ha, ha," she kids me,
turning her attention back to the TV.

out of hand, that ha ha blind date of hers,
was actually the worst day of my entire life.
The day she sent me away
so she could spend the day with another guy,
the day I could have lost her,
the most beautiful woman I have ever known.

I guess the laugh's on her though,
because her stupid blind date was a fiasco
and she ended up stuck with me forever, poor
thing.



**It can always be worse, or
what could have happened on Patti's big blind date.**

What if it wasn't merely a spur-of-the-moment blind double-date with Bobbie and her boyfriend, instead Patti knew about it all along and kept it from me.

What if in spite of her initial reservations he turned out to be a really nice guy, handsome and bright, and they had a splendid lunch together. "So do you have a boyfriend?" he finally asks her, overwhelmed by her beauty.

"Not really," she hesitates, "I had a boyfriend in high school but we're dating other people now."

What if while in the back seat of Bobbie's boyfriend's car, she didn't push him away when he reached to put his arm around her. He was being so nice to her after all, such a gentleman.

What if at the basketball game, he sits close against her and says, "You're absolutely beautiful, Patti, any guy would be lucky to have you as their girlfriend." And takes her hand and puts his arm around her waist.

What if after the game the two couples go their separate ways for the evening. He takes Patti out for a nice dinner, then they go back to her dorm, find a quiet corner and continue their conversation late into the night.

What if he cannot resist her any longer, and leans in to kiss her. She does not back away, she kisses him back, long and hard and sure. She feels a little guilty about it, because technically Mike is still her boyfriend, but well, Steve is being so nice after all. Before long, they are French kissing. He is only the second boy she has ever kissed in such a special way, but - why not.

What if they exchange phone numbers and addresses, and he makes another date with her, to be alone with her this time. "But what about Mike?" Bobbie asks her. She shrugs, "What about Mike? It's a good thing for us to be seeing other people, don't you agree?"

But she didn't

As a beautiful co-ed in college
she had her choices. If she truly wanted
to be with other guys,
to experience them and experiment with them
she could have accomplished that easily enough.
She could have sent me away
with one little snap of her fingers, made it clear
to the other guys that she was available,
even asked them out to dances and mixers,
plays and games and back to her room,
but she didn't.

She could have made-out with some guy
in the library like Sandy did,
or visited an old high school boy friend
at his college like Linda did.
She could have invited her football player friend
to accompany her to the Fall Formal instead of me,
but she didn't. She didn't do any of this.
Instead, she went right on being my girl,
letting me visit her every week,
studying with me, dating me,
walking with me hand-in-hand,
and kissing me deep and long
and sweet and sure on the mouth
which is where she truly wanted to be all along,
it seems to me
when all is said and done.

The way I fell for her

Through those 4 harrowing years of college,
with me at a different school,
I tried so hard to maintain my relationship with her,
like looking into the cafeteria
through a window while standing outside
in the freezing snow.

I was so worried I would lose her
to another more worthy guy,
worried sick and frightened
some other guy would fall for her
the way I fell for her,
pursue her as relentlessly as I pursued her,
and win her from me,
some other guy, handsome, smarter,
stronger than me.

I worried she would put me behind her,
put us behind her,
and explore her options,
go off and be with someone else,
leaving me behind forever,
leaving us behind forever.

But as fate would have it she,
the most beautiful girl I have ever known,
chose me. How
could such a thing be?
If I live 100 years I'll never understand it.

“OH WHEN THE SAINTS ...”

You have to have been there.

You have to have been there when the Tampa Bay Buccaneers ended their season-and-a-half winless stretch against ... the New Orleans Saints. (As a matter of fact, I was. I walked up to the Dome from my slave-quarter apartment in the Vieux Carre and sneaked in.) You have to have been there when Walter Payton broke the NFL rushing record against ... the New Orleans Saints. You have to have been there when that opposition quarterback not only dropped the ball, but *lost* it, searched for it for five seconds, found it, and scored, knocking the other team out of the playoffs ... against the New Orleans Saints. You have to have been there when the Saints scored on a fantastic play involving lateral after lateral after lateral – and then missed the extra point that would have tied the game.

You have to have worn a grocery bag over your head, as if ashamed to be seen in the same room as our team. Because if there was a way to botch a game, to blow a lead, to lose ... we would find a way.

“We,” you note. New Orleans has always shared a close identity with its football team. We *valued* our team’s ineptitude – sort of like the early New York Mets. We could feel in their haplessness a connection with our own flaws and incompetence. New Orleans – the greatest party town on the continent – had no place for excellence. Like the Saints, we were flakes. Our cops were thugs. Our politicians were crooks either in the federal pen or en route. In the classic phrase, in New Orleans we *lived to eat* – success, progress, even ability were things that stopped at the parish line. *And* here came Katrina.

You have to have gone through that, too. You have to have felt the wind, and seen the flood, and smelled the Superdome as it swarmed with the people nobody wanted and nobody knew how to help. Failing that, you have to have prayed for friends, and maybe even lost one. If you didn’t suffer, yourself, you have to have felt the loss.

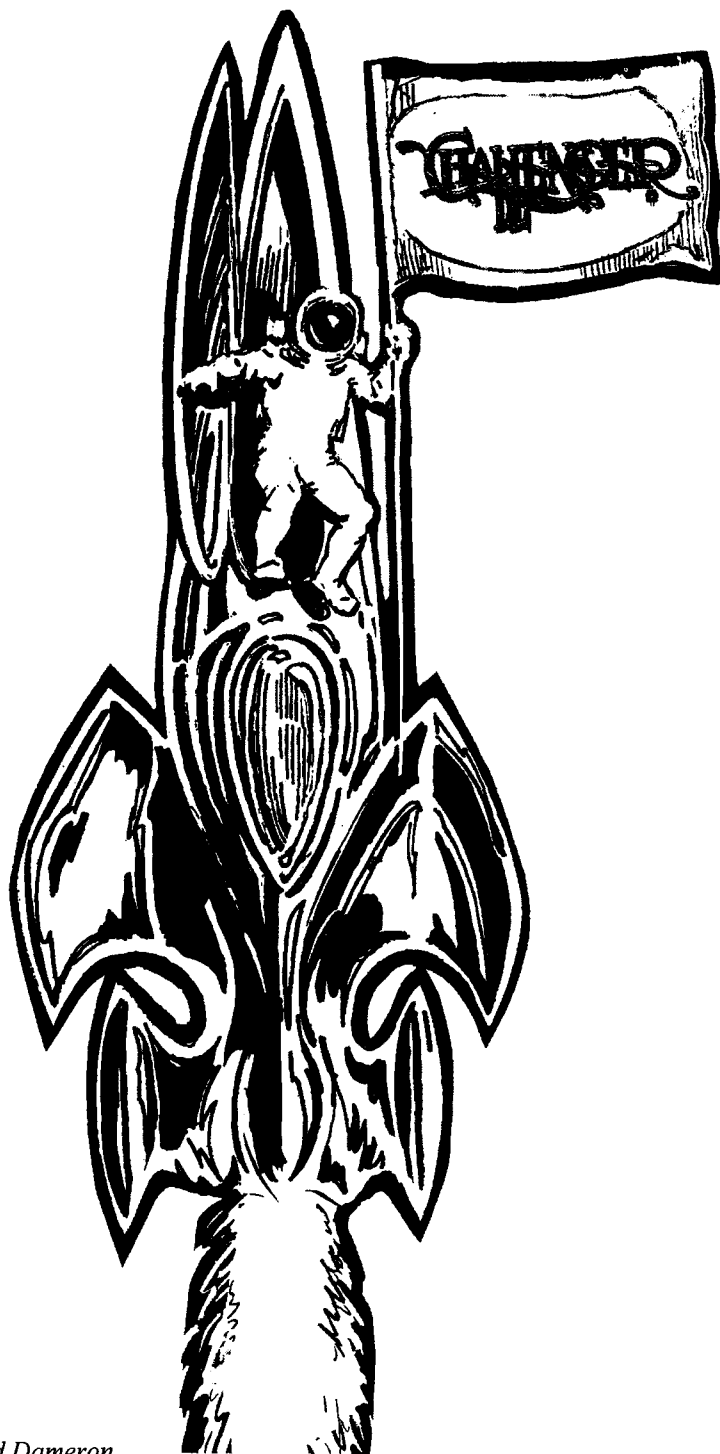
To *really appreciate* – and forgive the split infinitive – you have to have gone through that.

Rosy and I were at Justin and Annie Winston’s house with John Guidry, Dennis Dolbear, Jason the movie nut and a couple of ladies from their Mardi Gras krewe. Despite the team colors everyone wore – black and gold – the mood was more resigned than excited. Everyone believed the hyped superiority of Peyton Manning’s Colts. We tried in advance to claim a moral victory, since it was remarkable to make it this far, and Peyton was New Orleans-born and son of the greatest Saint, ever. We could still take pride, we anticipated saying. Nobody thought we could actually *win*.

Tell that to Sean Payton. Patience, changing defenses, and that on-side kick to start the third quarter. (I’d jokingly predicted it just before it happened.) *Toujours, l’audace*. The Saints won the game with their brains. They not only out-fought the Colts, they out-*thought* them. And when Manning threw that fourth quarter interception, and our guy ran it back for the touchdown ... it was funny; it took a second or so for us to react. It was as if we couldn’t believe it. When the Colts got the ball with three

minutes or so to go, I cautioned against celebration: if anyone could score two touchdowns in two minutes, Peyton could. And then his fourth down pass skipped over his receiver's fingers, and it was time for what Guidry called the Saints' favorite play – the 30-second kneel-down.

"Wake up, now!" Justin told us. "It's all been a dream!" But it wasn't.



Ned Dameron

Inside, the confetti fell in Miami – over the gauntlet of Saints touching the Lombardi trophy as it was brought forward to Tom Benson, over the brilliant coach whose genius and audacity had won this violent game of living chess, over the earnest young quarterback who had adopted, and been adopted by, our crazed, flawed city, and his beautiful wife, and his baby boy, trying to catch the rain of purple, green and gold falling from the Florida sky ...

And outside, on Justin's porch, the distant horns, the firecrackers, the cops wailing their sirens and flashing their blue antlers, the all-but-incoherent howls from the people dancing in the street – "Katrina Who?" and "Who Dat? Who Dat? *Who dat sey day gonna beat dem Saints?*" over and over again. (If anyone's interested, "Who Dat?", like "Where y'at?", is a "Nint' Wawd" phrase. People talk like that in the "Nint' Wawd." Something about the water...)

A city that has known little but corruption, lassitude and tragedy, a team that has known little but humiliation, mockery and disappointment, deserve their glory. *Hope. Joy.* And like we've been saying for decades – albeit in a slightly different spirit – *Just wait 'til next year.*

Who dat sey dey gonna beat dem Saints?

