



SUMMER 2016

CHALLENGER

no. FORTY

# CHALLENGER #40

**SUMMER 2016**

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**COVER BY ... ?**



## CONTENTS

Editorial: A Paean to a Press	GHLIII	2
SF and Family	John Purcell	4
Living on the Lesser Light ...	Gregory Benford	6
A Chorus Line	Joseph Major	10
Attack of the Amazing Colossal Monsters 2	Jim Ivers	11
OctoJoker	Joe Major	21
The Challenger Tribute	Guy Lillian	25
How to Kill a DeepSouthCon	M. Lee Rogers	26
The 16th Collie	Mike Resnick	33
Another Chorus Line	Rich Dengrove	35
Phobias	Mike Estabrook	37
Citadel	GHLIII	42
Pluto Now, Then On ...	Gregory Benford	48
The 2nd Rock from the Sun	Tom Rasely	50
Not All Corvettes Are Red	Tara Wayne	54
Another Asimov Story	Gregory Benford	59
Richard Lupoff: A Life in the Zines	Gregory Benford	60
Robin Goodfellow	Rose-Marie & Guy Lillian	62

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*The Challenger editorial ...*

# A PAEAN TO A PRESS

GHLIII Press Publication #1200. That's the mark established by this issue of *Challenger*. 1200 fanzines ... And it only took me a sliver shy of 47 years to do it.

Actually, not all of my 1200 publications were fanzines, *per se*. Maybe 30 were newsletters or such for the co-op dorms where I lived at the University of California. One I recall was an attempt to sell a couch. A couple were flyers for wandered cats. Still another was a plea for information, post-Katrina, for a lost friend. But most, by far, were for SF... and most of those, for *apas*, amateur press associations.

274 issues of *Spiritus Mundi*, my zine for the Southern Fandom Press Alliance, and counting postmailings, at least 45 *Southerners*, official organ of the same. (I spent 7 years off-and-on as Official Editor.) I did umpteen issues of *Chinatown* and villain-pun titles for the Los Angeles Science Fiction Amateur Press Association ... my zine for CAPA-Alpha, the great comics apa: *Worm Chowder* ... dance-entitled zines for the New York Amateur Press Association. (Hail Rick Spanier, king of Earth.) Plus pubs for WOOF, Apa-L, RAPS, SAPS, FAPA, Shadow-SFPA and so forth. For "general" fandom at large, there have been 15 issues of *Spartacus*; 37 issues of *The Zine Dump*, 40 issues of *Challenger*, and the largest and most important fan publications, program books and umpteen progress reports for Worldcons, DeepSouthCons, and a NASFiC.

I have a freak-o-pia of weird traditions and superstitions involving this hobby. For instance, I've begun, and numbered, at least one zine every month since that first issue of *The Barrington Bull*. I've kept at least one copy of each zine, including the two or three I didn't distribute. It's paid off; conducive to obsessive/compulsive behavior or not, this impulsive, expensive, aggravating and occasionally combative diversion has brought me and mine rich rewards. I need only mention our DUFF delegacy in 2003, various Guest of Honorships and a dozen Hugo nominations for Best Fanzine, but those things are secondary to the lifelong friendships we've found and the invaluable sense of belonging to a krewé crazy and brilliant, erratic and humorous, bold and creative. That's the treasure of science fiction fandom.

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**February 7, 2015** – the official date of *Challenger* no. 39. **July 7, 2016** – today, the official starting date of *Challenger* no. 40. A year and five months: the longest gap between issues ... ever. If anyone cares, have a couple of



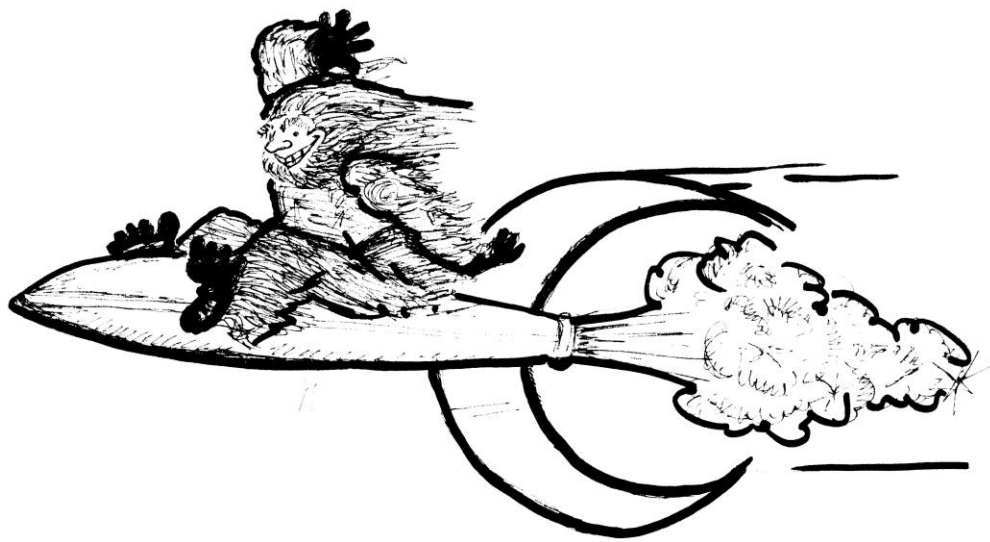
explanations-slash-excuses. First, it's been a personally tumultuous time. Rosy's mother, Nita Green, passed away in 2015, which prompted a family feud, a move to Merritt Island – very near Cape Canaveral; I watch the frequent rocket launches from my father-in-law's backyard – and a trip to Louisiana for an interview (nothing came of it). We've also been busy with real life. Rosy now works as an adjunct instructor at Eastern Florida State College – I'm trying to get on there, too, provoking howls of derision from all who hear of it – and also assists her father and stepmother in the launch of their on-line publishing house, Greenhouse Scribes.

Secondly, *Spartacus* and to a lesser extent *The Zine Dump* have taken up the main burden of keeping me in touch with fandom. We're too broke to make any conventions this year. Of course this hurts – it irked to skip DeepSouthCon, where the wondrous Catherine Asaro was Guest of Honor and our closest fannish family gathered, and also Worldcon: we looked forward to celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our meeting in Kansas City among the the family in and of science fiction.

Which brings up the theme I *thought* we would have for this issue. I *thought* we would have a theme of “the family in and of science fiction,” and indeed John Purcell gave us two moving pages on that topic. (They follow anon.) I *hoped* for Rose-Marie to have the time to pen a piece based on her fandom-rich family album. It was not to be. Both life and death intervened. And the rest of the *Chall* pals were determined to teach the proverbial herd of cats how *not* to be herded.

So no theme, and alas, something of a jumbled, catch-all *Chall*. I comfort myself that our eclectic contents are also pretty grand. That ever-generous gentleman, Greg Benford, has contributed several pieces. Forever friend Mike Resnick is here – when is he not? A chapter in his ongoing 007/Joker pastiche from Joe Major, oh may his tribe increase, may be found within these pages, along with Mike Rogers' analysis of why his DeepSouthCon plans came a'cropper. (The piece has been in *Challenger's* inbox for months – it's about time it showed.) Another article on horror films shows from the master of such, Jim Ivers. There are poems from Mike Estabrook, and gems from Tom Rasely and another constant *Chall* Pal, Taral Wayne. What we *don't* have is a surfeit of letters of comment ... but that's up to you the reader. Our cover? Found somewhere on the internet, artist unknown. Apologies to him/her, whoever.

We hope you enjoy *Challenger* #40, and remember: *the one who dies with the most fanzines wins*.



*Illus by NANCY MAYBERRY*

# SF AND FAMILY

*John Purcell*

*Art by Valerie Purcell*

I have long felt that the science fiction community has been my family. Through good and bad times, the friends I have in fandom have been there for me, which makes me eternally grateful. What is even more fun is when your spouse and family share your passion for science fiction. In my case, I have experienced both, which I really don't think is a rarity, but still it does offer an interesting perspective on both sides of this topic.

This essential truth was revealed to me way back when fannish legends roamed the earth – well, they still do, but they're simply not as numerous these days – when I became involved with the Minnesota Science Fiction Society, Inc. (Minn-stf, for short). For the longest time that club was my home away from home. The friendships formed back in the mid-1970's at club meetings and Minicons have lasted to this day, for which I am eternally grateful. Minn-stf was definitely like one big, productive, squabbling family at times: when people wanted to, they could pull together and do incredible things. Should help be needed to move, for example, it wasn't hard at all to simply put the call out and at least a dozen members would show up to provide needed muscle to move furniture, boxes of books, pictures, boxes of books, dishes, kitchen items, boxes of books, beds, shelving units, and still more boxes of books. On the flip side of this, like any large extended family, personalities can clash and create some very awkward conflicts, some lasting for years, some never completely going away. It happens. Even so, my memories of Minn-stf taught me one thing: cherish your friends. Like family, they are a strong part of your life.

Interestingly enough, I have had the opportunity to be married to a fan twice in my life. The first one didn't make it – well, I freely admit that was not a wise choice on my part – and the second one is still going strong after 25 years. The best part about is that Valerie is an artist: she draws, paints, sculpts, creates jewelry, and is quite good at it all, too. She has had work displayed in AggieCon art shows for four years running (currently getting ready for the next one over the March 27-29, 2015 weekend), and displayed at LoneStarCon 3, Apollocon, and numerous local area art shows that are non-sf related. Interestingly enough, the cover that she created for the WOOF 2013 collation at LoneStarCon 3 (the original picture is below) won a First Place Ribbon for Best Multi-Media Work at the January 2014 Brazos Valley Art League Show. Another of her works took a third place ribbon there, too. She has also done the cover art for a couple fanzines, too: *Askance* 29 and *Argentus* 12. She has another one that I plan on using for an issue of *Askance* later this year.

In addition to her artwork, Valerie also enjoys watching science fiction television shows and movie. We share a passion for old horror and sf films, too: unless we're at a con or have some other commitment, our Saturday night is usually spent watching MeTV's "Super Sci-Fi Saturday Night" programming lineup. (There is a future fanzine article lurking here, it is true.)



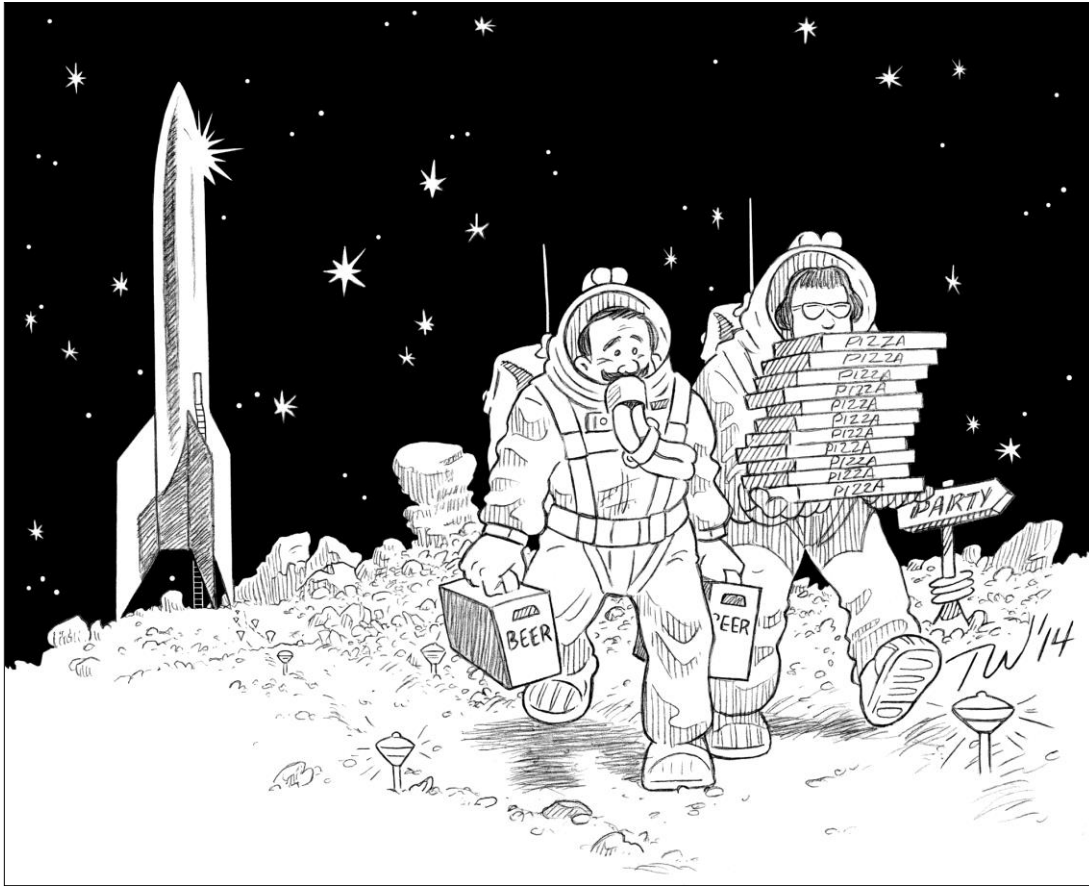
Plus our favorite television shows are *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Constantine*, *Grimm*... You get the idea. Also *Face-Off*, probably the only decent show offered on the SyFy Channel, but that's another fanzine article. (Damn it! I really have got to stop getting these ideas.)

The funny thing about it is that we didn't meet at a science fiction club meeting, convention, or anything like that. We met at work – Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, to be exact. Go figure. Our first date, though, was the first Batman movie starring Michael Keaton and Jack Nicholson. We loved it. That was definitely a clue that was not lost on me. Thanks to her interests in movies and shows of a sfnal nature, I was able to rekindle my passion for fanzines and conventions ten to twelve years ago. She started going to them with me, discovered the art shows, and the rest is history. It also helps that we are both book lovers, and her fictional pleasure is Steampunk, which is – no surprise – a favorite art subject of hers, too.

In any event, I Am Pleased. It is not often that one meets a kindred spirit in life. You cannot go looking for one, either. Online dating websites are stupid, in my humble opinion, and take all the adventure and spontaneity out of meeting new and interesting people. We have fun, and that's so important. For what it's worth, I cannot imagine being with anybody else. And that, my friends, is the bottom line.

Now if you will excuse me, we have an art event to get ready for today.





# Living on *the Lesser Light* that rules the night

**GREGORY BENFORD**

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*Illos by TARAL WAYNE &*

*BRAD FOSTER*

Space fans were startled in May 2014 when the Russians announced that they intend to build a manned moon base. It also set me to thinking over even longer term uses of our moon.

The Russians think the first stage of their project will cost around \$800 million, maybe assisted by private-sector investors. Their goal: to dominate “a geopolitical competition for the Moon’s natural resources in the 21st century.

They’ll start by analyzing the physical and chemical composition of the future home of the base, in the deep cold the moon’s south pole. (A foolish choice, I think; think how readily machinery will seize up in shadows, and the cost of heating the base.) In missions between 2016 and 2025,

they'll learn how to extract minerals such as aluminum, iron and titanium. Beyond that, maybe they can bring back the Helium 3 we know is there. That will be in great demand for future fusion plants to yield limitless electrical power.

I applaud their thinking on the true scale this century needs.

Russia is on the right track, in their own way. To deliver vast new resources to humanity, we must pioneer and occupy the moon, Mars and perhaps even beyond.

And inevitably, we will shape those worlds, as we have shaped our own (though not always well, of course). Can Mars be altered into a human habitat? We'll see.

Mars often gets more attention as the second Earth, since it's larger and has thick ice buried under its sands. But its distance means it will be hard to shape, and hard to reach once we have. Ethical arguments intrude, too. Maybe Mars has life beneath, driven there by the long drying out it has endured. If so, should we endanger it?

When it comes to remaking a celestial body in Earth's image—"terraforming" it—the moon has clear advantages: It gets twice the sunlight of Mars. It's a three-day trip with current technology, while getting people to Mars would take six months. Furthermore, the moon is dead and it's small, so it needs less to build an atmosphere. Mars has slightly less than the total area of Earth's dry land; the Moon has a quarter of it—a bit smaller than all Asia, far easier to shape than Mars.

Still, engineering any planet or satellite, including Earth, is a huge job. We will probably encounter the true scale of it in this century, as we build defenses against climate change. So thinking through other worlds, even in the far future, can make us reflect on how terraforming Earth or other worlds will alter the human perspectives. So...how about the moon?

Terraforming our moon will take many decades, even centuries—and vast abilities. Before we can begin, we'll have to master the resources of our solar system—especially transporting raw masses over interplanetary distances. That means nuclear thermal rockets (which we already developed by the 1970s), advanced robotics and communications, biotech, sustainable closed environments—a century-long advance in our capabilities. Once those come, we can reach higher.

Our moon was born too small to harbor life. It came from the collision of a Mars-sized world into the primordial Earth. From that colossal crunch spun a disk of rocks, and from that churn the satellite condensed. The heat of that birth stripped away the moon's water and gases, leaving it bare to the sun's glower. The sun robbed its gases, and massive mother Earth herself slowly stole its spin, through tides. Luna became a submissive dance partner in a rigid orbit, forever tide-locked with one face always smiling at us.

The moon's closeness is a huge advantage to us, because to make it habitable, we would have to bombard it with water-ice comets, a tricky technology best run with the many resources waiting on and near Earth. Shattered into small chunks, comets cease to be dangerous, and can be rained down on the moon.

This begins by steering a comet nucleus, which some call an iceteroid, from the chilly freezer beyond Pluto. Nudge it from its slow orbit with a mile per second velocity change, swing it near any gas giant planet for a momentum swerve. By hooking the comet adroitly in a reverse swing-by around, say, Jupiter, we can loop it into an orbit opposite to the docile way that worlds orbit the sun. Go retro!

A grimy, mountain-sized iceteroid soon will loom in the moon's night sky, a long-tailed comet bearing a third the mass of all Earth's ample air.

Mere days before it strikes, blow it apart with meticulous brutality. Ice shards come gliding in all around the moon's equator, small enough that they cannot muster momentum enough to splatter free of gravity's grip. Huge cannonballs slam into gray rock, but at angles that prevent them from getting away again.



The lunar terraformers must be careful about this. We can't let big chunks of comet scatter off the moon, to rain down as celestial buckshot on Earth. Within hours of the first incoming comet, the moon will have a crude atmosphere. With one-sixth of Earth's gravity, it can hold gases for tens of thousands of years.

The shotgun sting of a shattered iceteroid has a double effect. Coming in along the moon's slowly rotating equator, the iceball delivers gas, some rock--and vital momentum. As more comets arrive and pellets pelt down, the moon spins up. The old world creaks as it yields to myriad slams and bangs, spinning faster from the hammering. From its lazy "day" cycle of 28 days it speeds up to a lazy of 60 hours—close enough to Earth-like, as they say, for government work.

With an orchestral touch we can make the moon give a nuanced performance, coaxed from dynamics. The moon's axial tilt had been a dull zero, dutifully rotating at right angles to the orbital plane of the solar system, robbing it of summers and winters.

But angled just so, the incoming ice nuggets can tilt the poles while shortening the days. From such simple mechanics we conjure seasons. As the gases cool, icy caps crown the world-work.

Now's the era to work chemical magic upon roiling clouds that fork lightning at the muddy gray plains. A hundred or so comets the size of Halley's bring water and carbon dioxide, with smidgens of methane and ammonia. We'll need nitrogen, too, and much magic from the biochemists.

It's time now, to call upon the appetites of bacteria, sprites sowed after bombardment. They bask in raw sunlight as the fresh greenhouse blanket warms the old gray rocks. Soon blue-green algae covers them, exhaling oxygen.

For centuries Luna's dark plains had carried humanity's imposed, watery names: Tranquility, Serenity, Crises, Clouds, Storms. Now these lowlands of aged lava catch the rains and make muds fatten into ponds, lakes, true seas.

After billions of years, the ancient names come true.

Servant biomachines will create the first greenery. The leaves of the odd new trees begin their chemical congress with the quickening air. Like Earth's tropics now, at the moon's equator heat drives moist gases aloft. Cooler gas flow from the poles to fill in. The high wet clouds skate poleward, cool, and rain down riches.

On Earth, such currents are robbed of their water about a third of the way to the poles, creating the worldwide belt of deserts. Not so on the moon. This new world has no chains of deserts, just one simple circulating air cell grinding away in each hemisphere. Moisture forges climate. Northerly winds sweep poleward, swerving toward the west to make the occasional mild tornado that can tower tens of kilometers. (Not all weather should be boring.)

Clouds patrol the air, still fretting over their uneasy births. Lunascapes emerge: Great Grayworld.

Where day yielded to dark, valleys sank into smoldering blackness. Already a chain of snowy peaks shone where they caught the sun's dimming rays. Knife-edged mountains cleave the cloudbanks, leaving a wake like that of a huge ship. At the fat equator, straining still to adjust to the new spin, tropical thunderheads glower, lit by orange lightning looking for a way to spark life among the drifting molecules.

Luna, once "the lesser light that rules the night," is now wreathed in cottony clouds. It shines five times brighter than the old Luna, casting sharp shadows on Earth. Because of the reflection of the new seas, when the alignment is right and clouds do not shroud, people on Earth's night side gaze up at Earth's own image.

The moon has no soil, only the damaged dust left from 4 billion years beneath the solar wind's anvil. Making soil from gritty grime is work best left to the biologists' tiny assistants.

The moon will then grow a crust of soil and life. Earth is, in essence, a tissue of microbial organisms living off the sun's fires. Our moon can brew its own, in fast-forward—primordial broths, endless chains of regulatory messages, intricate feedback loops, organic gavottes. Bioengineered minions

can till the dirt, massage the gases, build an ecology. Meteors sent from the asteroids can pepper the soil, prick the air, speed chemical matters along with their restless energies.

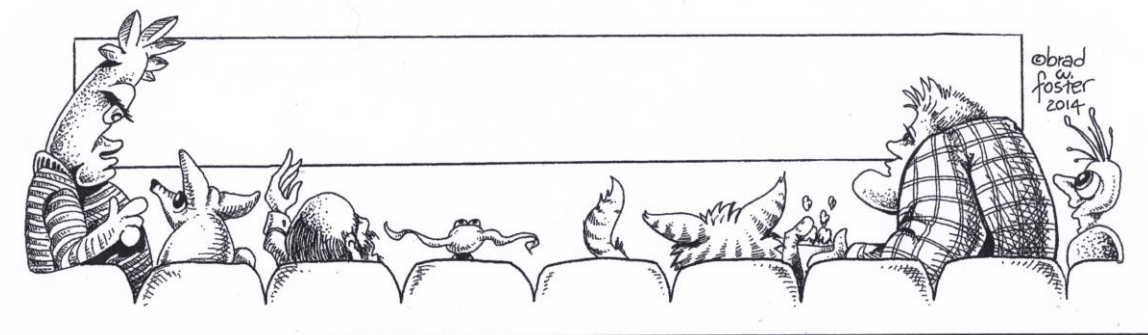
Our present gray sphere--that the Russians plan to make into the realm of strip miners and rugged, space-suited loners--can become a thin-aired habitat, in time-- a world where humans might breathe free.

This vast work will take patience, prudence, pride. Life blooms. Carefully engineered cells breathe damp carbon dioxide and exhale designer organics. The air must be deep to provide pressures like Earth's, and within it soon dwell strange life. Perhaps we will see bovine gas-bags that patrol the skies, spindly zig-zagging trees, birds swooping like manta rays, spindly ropes with shimmering green leaves bigger than buildings. Our moon can become not a replica of Earth, but an exotic realm we shape as we like, and come to love.

Humans will watch sunsets move with a slow-motion grandeur, the full pallet of pinks and crimsons and rouge-reds lingering for an hour. Pearly, blue-dot Earth will eclipse that sun, punching a dark hole in the middle of the day, for some on the half we'll call Nearside. The deep air will covet heat, making the moon much like a cloudy Florida. In the one-sixth gravity, humans can fly, with flaps on arms and feet. At last we will be at one with the birds—big rude beasts who will challenge us among the thick decks of pewter cloud.

This exotic Florida-like globe with the land mass of Asia will have mostly cloudy days—it takes six times as much atmosphere to press down to the pressures we're used to, with only 0.18. It'll be warmer, too, from greenhouse effects. Earth will still hold sway over a moon revolving much faster, making its presence felt even if you can't see it most of the time. The tides will be twenty yards high—and so can be surfed. With lesser gravity, a boarder can skate over hundreds of miles, a day-long ride. Of course, when that tide slides up the shore of a lunar lake, there'll be plenty of tourists scampering away from it. Every world should have some mandatory drama.

Such a vast idea gives humanity not merely more land. It yields a precious creation *we* made, not nature--the first created world. This sobering step to a higher level will mark a defining role for the millennium we have just entered, as we finally become, millennia after the Old Testament commanded, true stewards of the Earth—and no doubt, more.



## A CHORUS LINE ...

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You do realize that one of the regular features of life at the McMurdo Station in Antarctica is the showing of *The Thing from Another World*? I think that falls under the category of going crazy in order to keep from becoming insane. Caroline Alexander reprinted in her book *The Endurance* (2008) [not to be confused with Alfred Lansing's *Endurance* (1959) or Frank Worsley's *Endurance* (1931)] an picture from the Midwinter's Day entertainment on the *Endurance*. One man was in blackface. She made an apology for the problem. I don't think she got the point.

Anyhow, the disruption caused by a giant flaming carrot (not to be confused with the comic *Flaming Carrot*) could fall under the head of that sort of relief, and trying to reproduce it for the help of future winter-over crews could be put forward as a way to recreate that relief. Then, as John W. Campbell once said, perhaps they could also have filmed the original story.

The sort of destruction in monster movies would fall under the category of the Benevolent Catastrophe that H. G. Wells liked to write about. All the old ways get utterly wrecked and the right sort of people get a chance to build a modern society on the ruins, where everybody wears the same clothes, lives in houses of white porcelain, and discusses the right sort of ideas. You do know that Wells didn't like *Metropolis* for some reason.

Those two "Monsters of the Midway" stories maybe shouldn't have been so publicized. Some college football teams would do that. And I thought I had enough trouble at college with the casual brutality of human football players. They knew that they would never be called to account for anything they did, and the expected resulted. And to this day the alumni association simply does not understand why I refuse to donate, join the booster club, or have anything to do with the football stadium.

What really bothers me is that Gordon van Gelder is editing *F&SF* out of his home. It's his fanzine, his fictionzine! How the mighty have fallen!

As for Dino's (some names grow into appropriateness) atrocity mis-titled *King Kong*, I suppose the failure of the giant mechanical prop was hubris coming back to bite him in the behind. I think they were still claiming it was the mechanical prop, when except for that one scene it was a guy in a rubber suit, no doubt borrowed (without credit) from Toho Studios. Not to mention "When Jaws die, nobody cry, but when Kong die everybody cry." Actually they were crying at how wretched the movie was, but nobody told him that.

Verne may have picked Florida over Texas for ease of shipping (Tampa Bay being a more suitable harbor than Galveston) but he could have looked at a geography book a little more closely. The Columbiad is dug into a hill 1800 feet high. The Vertical Assembly Building, at 526 feet height, is taller than any natural feature in Florida. And besides, as the chief Texas representative, a Russian named Sagdiyev, argued, Texas has incredible natural resources, hardworking labor, and some of the cleanest dance hall girls in all the South . . . forget that last one.

Martin Morse Wooster discusses bad translations of Verne. They were rushed out by publishers who thought copyright was for pansies. The problem then becomes that people based things on the errors of translation. Philip José Farmer, for example, had some comments on Nemo that were based on the translation and weren't in the original.

As Milt Stevens (and you and everyone else) will soon find out, I have a collection of (public-domain) works about Britain being invaded and conquered that includes *The War of the Worlds* along with the one that kicked off the genre, George Tompkins Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), Saki's *When William Came* (1912), and the satire of them all, P. G. Wodehouse's *The Swoop!, or How Clarence Saved England* (1909). That reverse-imperialism was hardly original to Wells.



# Attack of the Amazing Colossal **Monsters:** Part 2



## Jim Ivers

The popular cycle of giant mutant bug and animal films had run its course by the end of the fifties (see part 1 in *Challenger* #39). This genre would remain dormant for a decade before returning in a slightly different form in the seventies. However, human-turned-monster chillers continued into the sixties with films such as *The Beast of Yucca Flats* (1961), *The Hand of Death* (1962) with John Agar, *The Slime People* (1963), *Curse of the Fly* (1965), and

*Terror Beneath the Sea* (Japan, 1966).

Victorian-era tales of vampires and supernatural horror was going strong due to Hammer, AIP, and countless others cashing in on their example. Mario Bava and other talented filmmakers in Italy contributed richly atmospheric period-piece fright films and, later, stylish contemporary giallo shockers. Two deliberately disturbing serial killer stories, *Psycho* and Britain's *Peeping Tom* (both 1960), caused an initial uproar but also pointed the way to the future. Ed Wood's trashy *The Sinister Urge* (1960) represents an early psycho-killer influence on exploitation cinema while Hammer responded with the far classier *Paranoid* (1963).

Unlike the previous decade, which played it safe and conservative, films in the 1960s, especially in the horror genre, took risks with more adult-oriented themes and content. (Another departure is the sudden disappearance of teenage characters from genre films; they would not return until the slasher cycle of the late 1970s.) The movie industry realized it had to give the audience something extra that television, its big competitor, couldn't provide.

In the face of all these changes, the era of the giant bug/monster film (with the exception of the Godzilla franchise) was over. However, a new line of Technicolor fantasy-adventure films with bigger budgets and better special effects created a small niche for a few oversized creatures to continue wreaking havoc. The enduring popularity of dinosaurs, for example, continued in escapist fare such as *Dinosaurus!* (1960), *Reptilicus* (1961), *Gorgo* (UK, 1961), *One Million Years B.C.* (1966), and *The Valley of Gwangi* (1969).

### Films of the 1960s

*The Lost World* (1960) - This colorful Irwin Allen fantasy adventure gets honorable mention. Besides all the giant iguana and monitor lizard "dinosaurs", this has a giant live spider seen briefly in a cave. David Hedison kills it with a single rifle shot. Allen would later take his love of giant bugs, animals, and alien monsters to television.

*The Horrors of Spider Island* (Germany, 1960) - Dishonorable mention goes to this amusing and much ridiculed "transformation" horror story done on a shoestring budget. A man turned into a giant mutated spider menaces a group of stranded fashion models. *Mystery Science Theater 3000* gave this a proper shellacking that is quite funny.

*The 3 Worlds of Gulliver* (Columbia, 1960) - Fun fantasy adapted from *Gulliver's Travels*. Gulliver fights a giant alligator. There's also a giant squirrel and weasels. Another Ray Harryhausen triumph. Star Kerwin Mathews was in two other noteworthy fantasies, *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (Columbia, 1958), also animated by Harryhausen, and *Jack the Giant Killer* (United Artists, 1962), with effects by Jim



Danforth.

*The Mysterious Island* (1961) - More classic stop-motion animation by Ray Harryhausen in delightful Jules Verne sci-fi/fantasy adventure. A childhood favorite for a generation who grew up watching TV in the 60s. The battle with a giant crab is a highlight. There's also a huge bee, a comical giant chicken, and an underwater encounter with an enormous octopus-squid creature. This film, along with *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958) and *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) represents the pinnacle of Harryhausen's brilliant career. He created a wonderful menagerie of the coolest fantasy creatures ever brought to life on the silver screen.

*Journey to the Seventh Planet* (1962) - This Ib Melchior space adventure gets dishonorable mention for recycling tarantula footage from *Earth vs. the Spider* (1958). The black-and-white clips were reprocessed with a blue filter and shoe-horned into this film to make up for a shoddy special effects budget. Melchior's *Angry Red Planet* (1959) features a giant rat-bat-spider hybrid used to promote the film, but it looked phony on screen.

*The Birds* (1963) - This unprecedented Hitchcock shocker came out of nowhere, much like *Psycho*, making it all the more unsettling. This involves normal-size birds, but is still worth mentioning for, once again, anticipating the future. Every species of bird suddenly turns hostile, randomly attacking humans and pecking them to death.

There is no heavy-handed environmental message as no explanation for these events is ever given. (In fact, it's virtually impossible to come up with a plausible reason for every bird to suddenly turn homicidal.) That makes this more of a bizarre, one-shot novelty film – and a damned good one at that. Unlike *Psycho*, it would not sire a flock of cheap imitations. However, the nature-fights-back premise would come home to roost with a vengeance in the seventies.

*Space Probe Taurus* aka *Space Monster* (AIP, 1965) - A space ship on the bottom of the ocean on another planet is attacked by giant crabs. Live crabs and a model rocket were used. The fake-looking dime store effects are fairly amusing. The film itself, which was shot in Canada, is uniformly bad and boring from start to finish.

*Village of the Giants* (1965) - Schlockmeister Bert I. Gordon is responsible for this idiotic blend of 1950s giantsploitation and 1960s beach party flick (which were absurdly popular at the time). A group of teenagers, and a duck, become giants in a small beach town. Much tedium, including slow-motion go-go dancing, ensues.

*Sting of Death* (1965) - Unintentionally hilarious wetsuit-wearing walking jellyfish monster with huge balloon head terrorizes go-go dancing teens in the Everglades. Cast includes Deanna Lund from *Land of the Giants*. Director William Greffe also made the *Jaws* knockoff *Mako: The Jaws of Death* (1976).

*Hercules and the Princess of Troy* aka *Hercules vs. the Sea Monster* (Italy, 1965) - Honorable mention goes to this pilot for an unmade TV series. Terrific bug-like sea monster resembles the caterpillar from *The Monster That Challenged the World* (1957) with spindly spider legs. Story follows mythic tale of Andromeda who is chained to a rock as a sacrifice to a sea monster.

*The Reptile* (Hammer, 1966) - Title and poster gives away killer (ugly half-woman, half-snake monster) in period-piece murder mystery.

*The Deadly Bees* (UK, 1966) – Dull Amicus misfire about regular-size bees used to murder people.

*Night Fright* (1967) – This recycles the premise from *The Monster from Green Hell* (1958). An Ape sent into orbit returns to earth as a radiation-mutant monster. A guy runs around in the woods in a bad gorilla suit for much of the story. Hilariously awful film.

*Son of Godzilla* (1967) – Honorable mention for including two giant praying mantises and an arachnid.

*The Devil's Bride* (UK, 1968) - One of Hammer's best films. In the wild occult ceremony finale there is an all-too-brief appearance of a giant process-screen tarantula that's fairly plausible.

### Television in the 1960s

*Jonny Quest*, “Terror Island” (1965) – Animated adventure series. Mad scientist in China creates a giant crab, spiders, and reptiles. The story was clearly inspired by the many giant bug movies of the 1950s.

*The Wild Wild West*, “The Night of the Raven” (CBS, 1966) - West is reduced to six-inches-tall by the evil Dr. Loveless. In a scene that appears to copy the alligator fight in *The 3 Worlds of Gulliver*, West defends himself against a giant cat and later avoids a big spider.



*Land of the Giants* (ABC, 1968-1970) - Irwin Allen rehash of *Attack of the Puppet People* (1958). Some good process-screen effects for giant insects, animals, and people for two seasons of paper-thin adventure stories.

*Micro Ventures* (NBC, 1968) - Short-lived Hanna-Barbera animated series shown on *The Banana Splits Adventure Hour*. In each episode, a scientist uses a shrinking machine to reduce his family and dune buggy to miniature size to explore the world from the perspective of an insect. Possibly the world's most irresponsible parent, he exposes his kids to a series of life-threatening horrors as they are continually threatened by gigantic ants, bees, etc.

*Star Trek*, “Cat's Paw” (NBC, 1968) - A giant black cat appears in a spooky castle in this Halloween-themed episode.

### Eco-horror in the Seventies

The so-called “Me Generation” decade was a different kettle of fish. Pollution suddenly became a hot topic in the U.S. media. Everything from large-scale industrial waste to the individual “litter-bug” was the subject of much scrutiny and public debate. On a grass-roots level, much of the momentum of the anti-war activism of the '60s carried over into pro-environment protests against corporate pollution and nuclear power plants. This quickly filtered into mainstream culture and the public education system.

The first Earth Day occurred in April 1970 (along with the introduction of the rather ugly Earth Shoe). The Keep America Beautiful organization was founded in 1953, but it crashed into the nation's consciousness with an unforgettable TV ad campaign starting on the second Earth Day in 1971. In what became known as the “crying Indian ad,” a mournful American Indian paddles a canoe down a polluted stream. The guilt-shaming tag line was: “People start pollution. People can stop it.”

On television, *The Name of the Game* broadcast an extraordinary episode, “L.A. 2017” aka “Los Angeles: AD 2017” (January, 1971), directed by a 24-year-old Steven Spielberg. This cautionary tale depicts a dystopian, totalitarian future where the country, and presumably the world, has been ravaged by pollution, forcing people to live in underground facilities.

The earliest feature film on this topic was Britain's *No Blade of Grass* (1970), a grim anti-pollution story. Hollywood kept the bad times rolling with depressing visions of a polluted future in *Silent Running* (1972), *Soylent Green* (1973), and countless post-apocalyptic wasteland sagas.

As a sixth grader, the new words “ecology” and “recycling” were added to my vocabulary. I recall working on class projects and watching short dramatic films designed to promote pollution awareness. One such film depicted an antiseptic underground society in the future similar to George Lucas' *THX 1138*. As a birthday present, a young girl gets a special pass to visit the surface. Wearing environmental suits, she and her father explore the ugly, poisoned wasteland the earth has become. She naively sees the surface world as beautiful while her parents exchange a sad, knowing look.

This populist environmental movement inspired a new cycle of “when animals attack” films. Giant (as well as ordinary size) bugs and animals mutated by various pollutants rose up to terrorize humanity with a vengeance. In the first half of the decade, these movies were mainly inspired by our fear that industrial pollution was ruining the planet and turning nature against us. After 1975 animal-attack films were mostly tacky cash-grabs riding on the coattails of the blockbuster success of Spielberg's *Jaws*.



## Films of the 1970s

*Multiple Maniacs* (1970) - This bizarre bit of John Waters nonsense earns honorable mention for an utterly insane dream-like scene of Divine being assaulted by a 15-foot-long lobster. The creature is surprisingly well constructed – too bad the film isn't.

*Yog, Monster from Space* (Japan, 1970) – Aliens morph into giant squid, crab, and turtle creatures.

*Godzilla vs. Hedorah*, aka *Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster*, and *Gamera vs. Zigra* (1971) both contain an anti-pollution message. It's nice to see the big guys pitching in to save the environment. Now if they would just stop destroying cities...

*Zaat* (1971) – Inept hilarity about human catfish monster in *Black Lagoon*-ish rubber suit.

*Octaman* (1971) - Good for a few laughs, this cheaply-made schlock-fest features a murderous humanoid mutant octopus. A guy in a huge rubber octopus suit walks around attacking people. Incredibly, director Harry Essex was one of the writers for *Creature of the Black Lagoon*. Padded with tons of stock footage, this was shot silent and badly dubbed in post-production.

*Night of the Lepus* (1972) - It was bound to happen someday. A horror film about giant mutant bunny rabbits. In a science-gone-wrong story, injections of hormones result in a genetic mutation that causes rabbits to grow into nasty giants. Hilariously bad film. The official low point of DeForest Kelley's career (“I'm a doctor, not a rabbit wrangler”). The same is true for Stuart Whitman, classy Janet Leigh, and Rory Calhoun.

*Frogs* (AIP, 1972) - Dishonorable mention for a totally misleading poster showing a human hand in a giant frog's mouth. [See above.] There are no giant animals in this film. This is the type of junky horror film that features young actors who are just getting started (Sam Elliott, Joan Van Ark) and old veterans on their way out (Ray Milland as a nature-hating industrialist). Set on an island, intelligent, telepathic frogs rebel against pollution and pesticides, directing non-giant spiders, lizards, snakes, alligators (and even a turtle!) to kill humans out of revenge.

*Night of the Cobra Woman* (1972) - Cheesy Filipino flick about a beautiful girl who turns into a man-eating cobra. Need I say more? Campy fun.

*Godmonster of Indian Flats* (1973) - Amusing man-in-shaggy-costume nonsense about a giant mutant sheep that walks on its hind legs and terrorizes a Western town.

*Sssssss* (Universal, 1973) - This camp classic deserves brief mention. Hard to believe such a tacky rehash of old horror tropes could come from Universal, but this was the studio's first film under new management. The plot, which recalls *The Alligator People* (1959) and *Curse of the Swamp Creature* (1966), is a throwback to the old human-transformation subgenre. Strother Martin plays a traditional, old school mad scientist who creates a snake-venom drug that turns men into King Cobra snakes. Exactly what he hopes to accomplish by doing this is never fully explained, but the film has a certain goofy charm.

*Phase IV* (1974) - Honorable mention for the only feature-length film directed by noted graphic artist and title sequence designer Saul Bass. Regular-size ants develop an intelligent hive mind which surprises and alarms humans. What do the ants want? This obscure, trippy gem has a cult following.

*The Giant Spider Invasion* (1975) - Just when you thought it could not get any worse than *Night of the Lepus*, this gem crawls out of the woodwork. With laughable special effects that belong in the fifties (as in *Mesa of Lost Women*), this one is a howler. (The director also made *The Capture of Bigfoot* in 1979.) A meteorite crashes in rural Wisconsin and spawns spiders of varying sizes. A giant one was constructed by covering a Volkswagen with hair and long legs operated by people inside the car. See the *MST3K* release.

*Jaws* (1975) - A huge (but plausible) shark goes on a killing spree. This blew up into an out-of-nowhere blockbuster that launched a string of when-animals-attack imitations that had nothing to do with environmentalism and everything to do with making a quick buck.



this mysterious Miracle-Gro.

*The Food of the Gods* (AIP, June 1976) - American International and Bert I. Gordon saw gold in the eco-horror trend and jumped in with this adaptation of the H.G. Wells story (a no-cost, public domain property). On a remote Canadian island, a middle-aged couple living in a cabin discover the white goo seeping out of a rock formation makes their chickens grow into giants. Unfortunately, wasps and rats also get into

The special effects budget was spent on the rhino-sized rats, with little left over for the wasps. The tacky, totally unconvincing wasp effects are unforgivably bad. Worse than the crudest work done in the fifties, including Gordon's *The Beginning of the End*. At least the rats are fairly well done using a

combination of real animals and big prop heads for close-ups. (Although it is disturbing to see how many trained rats were killed, mostly drowned, during filming; animal rights groups should be all over this film.)

Much like *The Killer Shrews*, the people are barricaded inside a cabin and surrounded by the ravenous beasts. This stars the annoying, always grinning or grimacing Marjoe Gortner and wastes the talent of veterans Ida Lupino and Ralph Meeker in the twilight of their careers.

*Grizzly* (May, 1976) - As the poster says: "The most dangerous jaws in the land." A park ranger tries to stop a savage bear from mauling campers and drunken hunters. This "*Jaws* with claws" is not as bad as it sounds. The film received decent reviews and was a huge box-office hit. Director William Girdler also helmed *Day of the Animals*. Not the first or last bear-attack film – *Night of the Grizzly* (1966), *The Edge* (1997), et al.

*Dogs* (1976) - An embarrassed-looking David McCallum wastes his time in a horribly lame and ridiculous story of domestic pooches gone bad. A dog of a film.

*Squirm* (AIP 1976) - Icky tale about normal size man-eating worms that are drawn to the surface by electricity, for some reason.

*Day of the Animals* (May 1977) - A chemically imbalanced forest (due to the depletion of the ozone layer) causes animals to go berserk and attack a group of hikers. An insane over-the-top Leslie Nielsen wrestles a grizzly bear. Need I say more? Director William Girdler made only 9 films before dying in a helicopter crash.

*Tentacles* (AIP, June, 1977) - American International strikes again with this Italian-American co-production about a giant octopus that is in no way a cheap knock-off of *Jaws*. Just kidding – this is a total piece of crap. There's even a fight with a killer whale. And how in God's name did they get Henry Fonda and John Huston to star in this travesty? I'm guessing blackmail.

*Orca* aka *Orca: Killer Whale* (July 1977) - Another Italian imitation of *Jaws*, but with a twist. Mariner Richard Harris kills a pregnant female orca and feels bad about it. A male whale, apparently out for revenge, chases him until they battle it out in the Arctic. Hard to decide who to root for in this one. Bo Derek has a small role (a red flag in itself). *Orca*, by the way, is the name of the boat from *Jaws*.

*Empire of the Ants* (July, 1977) - Extra cheesy Bert I. Gordon indie based on yet another public domain H.G Wells story, distributed by AIP. The absolute low point in the careers of both Robert Lansing and Joan Collins (who looks great here). This opens with a near-cartoonish scene of an evil corporation (possibly BP) dumping barrels of radioactive waste off the Florida coast. Naturally, some of these wash up on shore where ants eat the silver goop leaking out and grow into huge mutants.

Collins plays a huckster selling worthless real estate in the everglades. Her little group of prospective clients is chased into the swamp by the giant insects. In an amusing plot twist, the queen ant







sprays mind-controlling pheromones on people, turning them into worker drones. Over-night an entire town is somehow brain-washed and under telepathic control, working for the ants at a sugar refinery. (Sugar? Oh, the irony.) The story becomes like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* at this point. Bad superimposed ant footage and hilarious giant puppet ants turned this into a camp classic. Whenever a person wrestles with a fabricated ant, the operator shakes the hell out of the camera to disguise how fake it looks. This is a real hoot that lovers of bad

films should enjoy.

*Kingdom of the Spiders* (1977) - William Shatner fights off an infestation of thousands of poisonous normal-size tarantulas in a small desert town. This effectively disturbing film has picked up a cult following.

*Damnation Alley* (1977) - Big budget (\$17 million, twice that of *Star Wars*) attempt by 20th Century Fox to get in on the disaster-movie trend. A group of post-World War III survivors head across the ravaged desert landscape toward Albany, NY in a cool tank-like Landmaster vehicle. (I've been to Albany, and it isn't really worth all that trouble.) In an apparent homage to Steve McQueen from *The Great Escape*, Jan Michael Vincent rides a motorcycle through a gauntlet of giant blue-screen scorpions. There are also killer cockroaches. Flawed but fun drive-in feature has a following among cult-film fans.

*Warlords of Atlantis* aka *Warlords of the Deep* (UK, 1978) - Fantasy adventure gets semi-honorable mention for its giant octopus sea monster. Colorful hokum starring Doug McClure.

*The Swarm* (Warner Bros., 1978) – Typical Irwin Allen nonsense about an invasion of African killer bees. Highly respected thespian Michael Caine (who did some surprisingly awful horror/ adventure films in the '70s) stars along with typically large cast of past-their-prime veterans. Similar to *The Bees* (1978) about swarms of South American killer bees in North America.

*Attack of the Killer Tomatoes!* (1978) - Wacky, low-budget spoof of 1950s giantsploitation films has a considerable cult following.

*Bog* (1979) - Prehistoric, bug-eyed mutant gill monster in rural swamp kills fishermen.

*The Great Alligator* (1979) - Barbara Bach probably wishes she could forget this mega-turkey about a gigantic man-eating African crocodile, despite title (the incarnation of an angry native god), that kills invasive tourists.

*Prophecy* (Paramount, 1979) - We close out the decade with a slick, big studio production with gory effects. Ecological fable about industrial pollution changing evolution with DNA mutations in animals.

## The 1980s to the Present

Only a handful of noteworthy films in this genre have surfaced since the seventies. These are mainly freaks-of-nature stories without any environmental or anti-nuclear undertones. There is the sequel, *Food of the Gods II* (1989), the awful CGI effects of *Anaconda* (1997), *Jaws*-like clones, normal-size spiders in

the big-budget *Arachnophobia* (1990), the campy, low-budget *Eight Legged Freaks* (2002), and the terrifyingly realistic giant CGI spider in *The Return of the King* (2003), third in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

Like it or not, the latest variation in animal-attack films is a new brand of deliberately absurd, over-the-top cable movies that annoy as many people as they entertain. The SyFy Channel has been serving up a steady diet of ultra-campy guilty pleasures such as *Sharktopus* (New Horizons, 2010), *Big Ass Spider*, *Sharknado* (both 2013) and various spin-offs and sequels, each one more ridiculous and cartoonish than the last. These are designed to be so-bad-it's-good instant cult films – and a few have succeeded thus far. Part of the attraction (besides the wildly implausible CGI effects sequences) are the many familiar faces, mostly former TV stars, who are clearly having fun spoofing themselves.

But the most enjoyable and worthwhile films in this endlessly reworked genre are the ones that return to their roots and pay homage to the original Giant Bug films of the past. Below are a few final examples.

*Alligator* (1980) - The titular reptile grows into a giant inside Chicago's sewer system after consuming lab rats pumped full of an experimental growth hormone. Critics praised the clever John Sayles script which recreates the ambience of a fifties-era drive-in fright fest.

*Island Claws* (1980) – Obscure, barely released drive-in flick is more or less a remake of *Attack of the Crab Monsters*. Nuclear radiation creates giant mutant crustaceans. Huge prop crab is actually quite good, albeit slow moving.

*Blue Monkey* (1987) - Strange worm-like parasite exposed to a genetic growth stimulant grows to monstrous proportions and attacks people.

*Slugs* (1988) - An homage to 1950s horror films, slimy killer slugs go on the rampage in a rural community.

*The Nest* (1988) - Horrifying shocker as a biological experiment goes haywire when meat-eating mutant roaches invade an island community, terrorizing a peaceful New England fishing village.

*Tremors* (1990) - Giant sand worms invade a remote desert town. This first film, a near-classic in itself, has the same basic structure and setting as a 1950s giant bug movie. It also boasts better characters who are fun to watch and a light-hearted script with nice touches of humor. Followed by four sequels.

*Ticks* aka *Infested* (1993) - Teen campers are infested by mutated, blood-sucking ticks created after local marijuana growers use herbal steroids to accelerate plant growth.

*Oblivion* (1994) and *Oblivion 2: Backlash* (1996) - Both feature stop-motion giant scorpions in a few segments that harken back to *The Black Scorpion* (1957) and the animation of Ray Harryhausen. A unique, tongue-in-cheek blend of science fiction and Westerns with a great cast. Just about the only films from Full Moon Entertainment that are worth a damn.

*Mosquito* (1995) – These bugs grow large after eating bodies of dead aliens dumped on Earth.

*Anaconda* (1997) – Outdated CGI effects and bad acting -- especially Jon Voight's ultra-hammy performance -- have elevated this turkey to near-cult status among lovers of camp.

*Starship Troopers* (1997) - Futuristic war story on another planet against horrific aliens that resemble giant

grasshoppers. Much slam-bang action and great computer-animated bugs almost makes one forget this is, at heart, a deeply cynical parody of patriotic WWII movies and news-reel propaganda. A very strange, unique, and confusing film that leaves one with mixed feelings and a somewhat bitter aftertaste. The type of film that could not have been made in today's pro-military post-9/11 world.

*Lake Placid* (1999) – Campy fun with giant alligator; followed by many made-for-TV sequels.

*Arachnid* (Spain, 2001) – Genre homage features giant mutant spiders on a remote tropical island.

*Frog-g-g!* (2004) – Comedy about giant frogs mutated via chemical waste in the water supply.

*The Mist* (2007) - Good Stephen King yarn pays homage to vintage giant bug features. Giant creatures lurk inside a strange fog after a secret military project goes awry.

*The Giant Spider* (2013) - Set in the 1950s and filmed in black & white, an affectionate homage to the giant bug genre. Process-screen shots of a real spider are superimposed in the same manner as *Tarantula* (1955). Much of Christopher R. Mihm's work seems like fancy home movies (with friends and family in the cast), but this is his most professional looking production thus far.



### Conclusion: Fear is the Key

In the end, all of these films are about different modes of fear and the creative ways filmmakers exploit them as entertainment. Our fears in the post-World War II era centered around Communist infiltration and aggression, nuclear war, and a general uncertainty about the rapidly changing Space Age. It's only natural that new film genres sprang up in response. Cruel, pitiless (and hideously ugly) aliens from other worlds were far more powerful and frightening than the traditional movie monsters of the recent past. A huge wave of horror-based science fiction films was carried along by this basic fear.

However, in the long run, it didn't really matter to the audience if these hostile aliens represented the Russians or not. Scientific progress, and the fear of it

creating environmental disasters, had provided a platform for telling bigger, more outrageous stories. Insects and other creepy-crawly things have always had an unnerving alien aspect to them. Humanity has been in a constant war for survival (or simply piece of mind) against the non-human creatures that invade our living space. We don't share, we exterminate. Using fictional weird science to turn these tiny creatures into menacing, house-sized giants was the stuff of nightmares and made for many memorable films. The socio-political context lurking within these stories has evolved over the decades to reflect shifts in public awareness, but the essential fear factor remains the same.

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**BIO:**

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# OCTO-JOKER

*Joseph L. Major*

. . . the bullets from Orlov’s agents rang on the metal of the great excavator as Bond stared at the controls. He made a guess and the machine rolled forward, crushing the motorcars on the open goods wagon. The two men reloaded and kept on shooting. A bullet cracked the windscreen as Bond raised the digger arm. The train shook as the coupler came loose, and, just in time, Bond slammed the basket into the car ahead.

He had to move fast. There was a screeching as the metal roof of the passenger car ruptured. The coupler must have broken! He clambered over the arm, the two men firing wildly as the train shook. There he was at the end of the arm! He jumped, and knocked down the first man. But the second man raised his Makarov, at point blank range, about to shoot.

Someone else had shot first! The man toppled, falling to one side, off the top of the car. Bond smashed his hand into the other man’s face, then toppled him off the car as well.

Now for Octopussy’s circus! Had the other shooter been sent by M.? Or the Germans, with their awkwardly-named organization, “Federal Office for the Defence of the Basic Law”? No matter, there he was, driving a Land Rover, right next to the train.

Bond gathered himself, jumped, and landed on the roof. He grabbed the rack on top of the vehicle as it moved aside and rolled to a stop. Shaken but not stirred, he rolled off the top, gathered himself, took the door handle to get in and heard the driver say, “I like this job — I like it!” Then he laughed, wildly, insanely.

The Joker! What was he doing in Germany! What was he doing here!?

“Why so serious? Don’t you want a little ride?”

“Joker,” Bond said.

“I’m supposed to meet Kamal Khan for a job interview. Very unimaginative man, that. Always repeats himself. Now me, I never repeat a joke twice. Unless it builds.”

“This is serious. He’s got an atomic bomb at the American air base, and it’s going to go off unless I disarm it!”

The scarred face struggled to react. “Why, that little worm.” He looked at Bond. “I may be a criminal lunatic, but I’m an **American** criminal lunatic! Do you want to see the big kerboom? Get in the car.”



Bond jumped in. “And . . . here . . . we . . . go!” his driver said, tramped the accelerator, and sent the Land Rover squealing off.

“Where to?” the Joker said as they roared down the road.

“The circus.”

A gust of wild manic laughter rang through the cab. “Oh, you want me to be a clown! I was a clown one time. The mayor of Gotham — not Cobblepot, but his predecessor, a most unfunny man — wanted to have a little entertainment for his son’s birthday. Hired an incompetent. I was almost sorry I didn’t kill him! Instead . . .”

While this insane reminiscence was going on, Bond watched calmly as the fleeing car set off German policemen at intersections. And there were the American military policemen to consider, too.

How they got to the circus Bond was not quite sure. But the Joker ran him through the gate, grabbed him by one arm, and led him to a trailer. He seemed to have a magnetic attraction for clowns.

While Bond made himself up, the Joker grabbed a clown outfit. Then he was gone. Bond looked at himself in the mirror. Now how to persuade Octopussy that her ostensible mentor had betrayed her, certain that she would not be around to get back at him? And dressed like this, too. At least he would fit in, but once he got into the circus ring it would be another matter.

M. had not been too pleased about the means, but was satisfied by the outcome. These matters balance out. Now, dressed as an Indian public entertainer, Bond was with Octopussy in India itself, at Kamal Khan’s palace in India, aiming to finish the job.

The man had disappeared after the failure of his scheme. With Orlov dead, the Soviet government had abandoned his cause, speaking vaguely of ‘misled officers.’ The Americans had been doubly embarrassed, first by the theft of one of their own weapons, second by the intended use of the bomb, and also worked to keep it quiet.

The Service was not concerned about the American response. Someone in their Indian station might try to engage the services of locals to take care of Kamal, but their efforts in such measures had usually been very much in vain. Bond was more concerned about the Russians, and their Military Intelligence Special Purpose teams were more ruthless and more skilled than any Indian gangsters.

And then there was him, amid a team of Indian entertainers, with only Vijay from the Service as his assistant, and whatever support Octopussy might offer beyond her covering for him. The street entertainers were performing outside Kamal Khan’s palace. He might recognize her, or perhaps not, as she was heavily veiled and wearing a voluminous sari.



The night was falling. The entertainers began doing the rope trick, except that it was secured to the wall around Kamal Khan's palace. In the flickering torchlight, Bond scaled the rope, while below Octopussy's hawkler cried out his virtues in Hindu.

There! The top of the wall! He flipped over it and landed on the ground inside with a thud. Bond stripped off the loose Hindu garb, threw away the turban, and drew the Glock G32.

The door was wide open! Some sort of lure? Or had he just missed them? Casting security aside, Bond dived through the open doorway, rolled, and came to his feet, gun out. Still nothing. He hurried through the corridors of the building. There was some light upstairs, and when he found stairs he dashed up them.

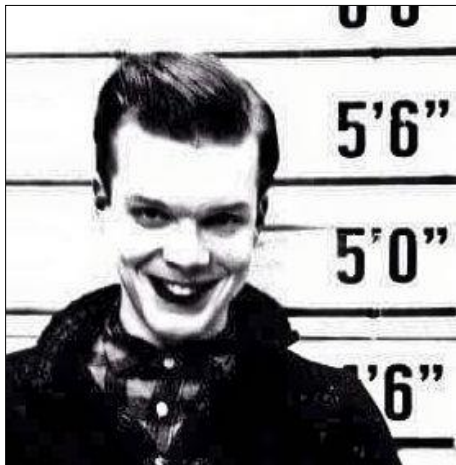
Then he saw it. Gobinda Singh, the great grim bodyguard, the lethal, efficient Sikh. He lay sprawling dead on the floor. Bond stooped over the body, then flinched back. Gobinda's face was drawn up in a rictus of a smile, teeth exposed, eyes staring.

But the room ahead was lit and Bond hurried towards it.

The first thing he saw was Kamal Khan, standing beside an open safe. He had been ready to flee, but he had been caught.

"Do you want to know how I got these scars?"

There was the reason he was not fleeing. The Joker stood there, pistol — a real pistol, not one of his elaborate toys — thrust into Kamal Khan's face. He was toying with his victim, the sinister clown indulging in one of his brutal jokes.



Kamal Khan was, for once, terrified and submissive. Did he even notice Bond? He pushed the portfolio he was holding towards his captor. "Here. Take this. Get me out of here!"

"When I was a kid, I used to love to go fishing at camp. But I never could get those little worms on the hook. So one day, these bullies decided to show me how it was done. And they take the fishing rods and they take me out to the end of the dock and they stick hooks in my mouth. And then they pushed me into the water and pulled me back in. Just like a fish. You know what I did then? I burned their cabin down while they slept." The Joker paused, then said with a harsh gloating joy, "And they roasted."

He switched to an incongruous light tone, "And I never did have any problems with those little worms again."

Kamal was trembling. "Here! Take it! Take it all! Just get rid of him!" He gestured towards Bond, who leveled the gun, aiming carefully.

"Don't go away, Kamal. It's just an old friend, come to say hello." The Joker paused. "Ain't it always the way? You get in the mood and company shows up." And he gave his crazed laugh.

"He's going to kill us! He's going to kill you!!" Kamal was panicking now.

"Put the bag down, raise your hands, and step aside," Bond said, voice cold as ice.

"Careful with that luggage, you might lose your tip, or your head." He paused. "Tell me, Kamal, did you ever dance with the devil in the pale moonlight?"

"What?"

Kamal dropped the bag and went for something under his jacket. Bond fired, and the man flopped down, boneless, dead. Bond shifted his aim but paused. The Joker caught the pause. "You can't kill me!" He laughed, one of his insane howlings. "You can't kill me without becoming like me! I can't kill you without losing a human being who can keep up with me! Isn't it IRONIC?"

Then he fired, over Bond's shoulder. Bond whipped around to confront the enemy — but there was no one. He turned back to look, sweating . . . and the bag was gone. Laughter echoed in the air.

It was always like this when a double-oh mission was over; the let-down, the tiredness, the self-disgust. He looked down into Kamal Khan's empty eyes. "Which of us is better off now? Or was it him?"

There would be no answer. Bond holstered his pistol and turned his back on the body. In the garden, he took the satellite mobile out and made a call to Station I. "Universal Export India," he heard.

"Pardon me, I was trying to reach Minimax Fire Extinguishers."

"They are not at this number."

Kamal Khan was dead, mission resolved. Bond wandered out into the street.

The show was over, the players packing up the equipment. Bond approached the tall woman wrapped up in the sari. "All done."

She turned, and though he could not see her mouth, she was smiling. "How about a vacation? I'd say you're due three weeks' recuperative leave. The houseboats of the Vale of Kashmir are very restful." When Bond seemed unsure, Octopussy said, "I owe you. And your people owe you, too. Three weeks at least."

The houseboats of the Vale of Kashmir were very restful. Bond was regretting he would have to go back to London, which meant it probably would be a good idea. They were too much of a kind, too close, and they could not endure each other. Then the other boat came drifting by.

The other houseboat had been painted white, and had "HA HA" written all over it. In the sternsheets, the Joker's girlfriend, in a skimpy black and red bathing-suit, her hair dyed black on one side and red on the other, and her face painted white with the black domino, poled the boat along, scowling as she did. Then, he stepped out of the cabin, in purple trunks, holding a guitar. He put the ungainly instrument under his chin, like a violin, and proceeded to begin playing it with a violin bow. After a moment Bond recognized the song. "Can you hear the breeze that flows through the trees . . ."

Octopussy looked at the grotesque performance. "Who *are* those people?"

"Americans," Bond said. "Let's go below."

Insane laughter filled the air as the other boat drifted off.



# *The* *CHALLENGER* *Tribute*

*This is not the Challenger tributee for this issue. This is actress/comedienne Kate McKinnon, who is very beautiful, a funny presence on *Saturday Night Live*, and just dreadful in the new *Ghostbusters*. Indeed, she is not the object of *Challenger*'s tribute, but she sorta looks like her.*



*This is actress Gretchen Corbett, whom you should remember from her terrific turn on *The Rockford Files*, where she played James Garner's friend and attorney. She also is not the tributee to this issue of *Challenger*, but she really looks like her.*



I am reduced to this ridiculous manner of honoring the *Challenger* tributee, because I don't have a picture of her – although God knows I've asked enough times. She is

## DIANE HUGHES

... friend, confessor,

confidante, and advocate, smart, wise, funny, patient with people but unfailingly *impatient* with B.S., one of two women in the world who has *carte blanche* to kick my ass, and also a light of Atlanta fandom, a friend to his dying day of Theodore Sturgeon and his family, and if she ever fulfills her promise to send me a photo, I'll publish it in the *next Challenger*.

And what do you *mean*, you don't blame my mother?

# HOW TO **KILL** A DEEPSOUTHCON WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

***M. Lee Rogers***

By now, most of you have heard that ABC DeepSouthCon, which had been scheduled for May 13-15, 2016 in Roswell, GA, had to be canceled. How did the situation become so dire that cancellation was the only real option? How could anyone screw things up so badly that a 50+ year old convention could not survive, and that its death was clear almost a year before the con weekend?



In fact, it is ridiculously easy to kill a convention, even one with the DeepSouthCon name. I ought to know. I did it.

This article is a brief attempt to set forth the most notable of the many errors that I made in running this convention into the ground. I profoundly hope that no other neo conrunner will make the same mistakes I made and waste a great amount of time, money, and effort in the process. This is not a "History of..." article that goes into all the sordid details. That would not serve any useful purpose at this point. Please... just learn from my errors and do not do the stupid things I did.

The only caveat to all this is that no one should ascribe any blame to any other members of our committee or my *éminence grise*, Ron Zukowski (co-chairman of the 1986 World SF Convention, ConFederation, in Atlanta). We had some of the best con-runners in Southern SF fandom working with us. If I had asked for advice earlier in the process, perhaps ABC DSC would still be on the calendar. It is not their fault. As the authors say, all errors are mine.

## **Who Started This Mess and Why**

I do not remember the exact time except that it was a Monday night a few months before the JordanCon DeepSouthCon in 2013. Gary Robe was running the 2014 DSC named Contrails scheduled for the Tri-Cities area in Bristol, VA. He has written about the problems he ran into with holding that convention, but at least he held his convention. However, at that time there had not been much public mention of any bidders for the 2015 DSC. At least I had not heard any

discussion. As far as I knew, there were no bidders for 2015.

This was a major problem for Southern SF fandom. No DeepSouthCon? WTF? What could be done? I started to think -- and my head hurt (apologies to Yosemite Sam). I remembered an account that Toni Weisskopf had given of how she and Julie Wall had hatched the plan for the 2012 Huntsville DSC on the way home from a previous convention. A fateful synapse fired and I thought, "Is this possible?" I knew I was not the most obvious candidate to be a convention chair, but these were desperate times.

Ron Z. and I speak frequently of many matters. He was the obvious choice to help with this crazy idea. If he were not interested, I probably would not have considered it any further. But I got on the horn and described the situation. It looked like no one else could or would do it. We discussed the matter and he did not tell me I was crazy. We both thought it was possible and was the only way out of the crisis.

During that conversation, the bid for ABC DSC was born. We both agreed that if any other bidders came forward, we would step aside and let them have it. Later, we learned that New Orleans was bidding for 2015 with their local convention Contraflow. However, there were no other bidders for any future years. Once again, we were prepared to let another bidder have the con. But no one else showed any interest, so Ron and I announced the bid at the JordanCon site selection meeting in the lobby of the Doubletree Hotel.

You know the rest of the story. We canceled the convention after a committee meeting in mid-July 2015 when everyone agreed there was no reason to continue. I paid \$6,385 to the hotel to cancel the meeting contract on top of the \$1,750 we spent on bidding expenses. In total, we spent \$8,767.65 on the bid and convention. Once I refunded the 14 paid memberships, the financial obligations were satisfied. As for someone to run the convention, the site selection meeting at Contraflow selected JordanCon in Atlanta as the emergency site of the 2016 DeepSouthCon.

Now, let's go to the video tape and figure out which errors caused this mess.

### **Things To Do or Not To Do When Running a Convention**

Again, these comments are my observations based on my analysis of our situation. Other convention runners may agree or disagree. Perhaps a useful discussion will come out of this dissection.

- ***Make sure the chairman has enough contacts to recruit the convention staff.*** Toni Weisskopf had one enormous advantage over me. Everyone in Southern SF fandom knows and likes Toni. Most people wanted to help her run DeepSouthCon 50.

I did not have that advantage. For better or worse, I have always been on the outside of life looking in. It is part of being a lifelong nerd/geek. It even applies to SF fandom. I did not have the necessary relationships with enough other fans to get them to want to be part of the convention. This meant we were not able to recruit enough staff to run the convention properly. At the last meeting, we asked ourselves if we would rather run a bad



convention or no convention at all. We all immediately said no convention was better.

I had believed we could use the DeepSouthCon name to attract interest in working on the con. A few people responded, but not enough to actually run a respectable convention. This problem could have been solved if I had not made the next catastrophic mistake.

- ***Pick an uncontroversial Guest of Honor or no Guest of Honor at all.*** I must apologize to John C. Wright and his charming wife L. Jagi Lamplighter for needing to make the following comments. They did not deserve to have this happen to them. However, the following is the honest truth as best as I can see it and it is an essential part of this story.

I had no idea who John C. Wright was when this convention started. As it turned out, John C. Wright was the most hated and unpopular man in the science fiction world at the time our convention chose him to be Guest of Honor. (On the other hand, he was popular

enough to get six Hugo Award nominations last year.) Perhaps Vox Day would have been slightly less popular, but I doubt it. Had we realized the situation, we would have chosen a different guest. However, I accepted the recommendation to invite Mr. Wright, so the blame falls on me.



The message for conrunners is that a bad choice for Guest of Honor can kill your convention. ABC DSC never recovered from the choice. It took a while for the body to stop twitching, but it died after that selection. We lost all of the goodwill the DeepSouthCon name carried with it. One prominent Southern fan basically refused to talk to me when I asked for advice on recruiting staff. A couple of other well-known fans were openly happy to see our convention shut down.

One conrunner told me (much too late) that a convention needs to review every single

word that a potential Guest of Honor has written in social media before choosing the person. That still seems like a Herculean task. But it is probably necessary. Otherwise, pick someone who will not offend anyone. Another fan said that she would not buy a convention membership until she knew the Guest of Honor choice. This sounds like very good advice.

This is the place to note that for all of the self-inflicted wounds we suffered, it was not 100% my fault. ABC DSC was to some degree a casualty of the ideological thermonuclear war that has engulfed the science fiction world over the last few years.

Social Justice Warriors drop multi-megaton devices on Sad Puppies, who occasionally respond with death ray lasers. Toni Weiskopf was another casualty, not receiving a richly deserved Hugo Award for her editing work.

Today's conrunners need to either avoid any sign of favoritism to one side or the other, or aim their convention squarely at one faction or another. Trying to ignore the problem does not work.

- ***Begin organizing your staff as soon as you decide to do a con.*** I believed we did not need to do a lot of organizational work before the vote. There was plenty of time for that during the two-year run-up to the convention. In fact, that was exactly the time that we needed to get all of our core committee in place and begin to find department-level workers. If we had not been able to find sufficient staff before the vote, it would have told us that the convention was not feasible and we could have shut down the bid.
- ***Don't be a dictator.*** I had decided from the beginning that I would finance the con myself. I was not rich but had some funds that could be used to get things going until memberships came in. Since it was my con, Ron and I ran the early part of the con on our own.

I now realize what an enormous mistake that was. We could have made much more use of the talented and knowledgeable people in our group. We should have set up a real committee from the beginning and given them real authority. It is the only way to keep good people around.

The dictatorial style also lends itself to a lack of communication with the rest of the group. We rarely sent basic information about the con to the rest of the committee until long after decisions were made. I knew better and wanted to use modern technology to stay in touch, but did not do it.

- ***Make sure the chairman is in good enough health to do the job.*** In retrospect, my health was not good enough to take on an effort of this size. I was still functional, but diabetes and heart problems had sapped a lot of my strength. Too many nights saw me come home after work and vegetate until bedtime with no energy to do anything productive. Ron said later he wished he had asked me that question up front.
- ***Know your goals.*** This is one area where we actually did well. Ron and I knew what we were trying to do besides bring DeepSouthCon back to Atlanta:
  - ***Prove that DeepSouthCon could survive as a stand-alone convention.*** We believed that the Atlanta metropolis was a more popular location than more peripheral areas and could draw fans to it in larger numbers. More on this later.
  - ***Promote written science fiction and fandom first, audio SF and fandom second.*** We had nothing against the movie/TV side but felt it had been over-emphasized in recent years.

- **Emphasize the ABC axis.** The name referred to the ABC Cons of the early 1980's. The Atlanta, Birmingham, and Chattanooga fan groups had a certain spirit that gave them a very real charm. The rest of Southern fandom tended not to notice this group, but those of us in the area did. Ron and I wanted to remember this earlier center of activity.
- **Recognize the forgotten fans in Southern fandom.** We have too many people who work for years without being recognized by the core group. Our two fan guests, Bill Ritch and Julia Morgan-Scott, were very good examples of this lack of recognition. We were happy that they received the notice. I just wish we could have given them the attention at the con that they deserved. I hope both will be considered for guest spots at future Southern conventions.
- ***Pay close attention to the convention's finances.*** Since I had been the CFO at ConFederation and was guaranteeing the finances of this convention, I took on the CFO job for this convention. This was not necessarily a mistake, but there are some things I could have done better.
  - **Be sure you have enough money on hand at the start of the convention to do the job.** For a small to medium-sized convention like DSC, one probably should have at least \$10,000 available to get the con started. We had some money but not that much.
  - **Be careful with PayPal.** Everyone uses it to collect memberships nowadays, but it can be tricky to set up your account. By the 2015 LibertyCon, Ron and I had finally gotten a tablet computer ready to use to collect memberships via debit or credit card. Of course, the memberships we sold there were all paid for with cash. Another gotcha was that PayPal by default only allows you to withdraw \$500 a month from your account. This would have caused us a lot of trouble had we continued.
  - **Check the bank account setup.** We were being charged \$11.50 per month for the account. That is not a lot, but it does add up over time. No wonder the bank person encouraged us to keep the account open as long as necessary after the cancellation.
- ***Pay attention to the details.*** I always thought I was a very good detail guy. But I lost track of a lot of things and was strangely passive about a lot of matters that I should have jumped on quickly. Maybe my lack of energy had something to do with that. Maybe I suspected I did not have the necessary ability and leadership qualities to run a convention. This does *not* mean the chairman should micromanage the convention. It is not possible and the good staff will leave quickly if you try.
- ***Do not trust your hotel.*** I would require a stand-alone DeepSouthCon bid to present a tentative written agreement with the hotel to the site selection meeting, similar to the

requirement for a World SF Convention. That would have helped us avoid one of our major mistakes.

We did not conclude a written agreement with our original facility before the vote, only to have them refuse to honor our verbal agreement with a previous sales manager and demand a significant payment for function rooms that we had expected to use for the price of the room-nights. This made us look like a bunch of rank amateurs.

Sir  
Sydney  
Sneer,  
the Old  
SMOF in  
the Hills,  
Sez:

It's not *who* you  
know, it's ...  
wait a minute, it *is* who  
you know!



- ***Do not try to run a convention from out of town.*** We have much better Web-based collaboration tools to work with people in different locations now than we did when I worked on conventions. But the chairman should still be in the convention city, especially for a first-time convention. I remembered that Irvin Koch had talked about how it was relatively easy to run a convention from out of town. He did it a few times. Maybe he had better skills.

I found that it was difficult to arrange committee and hotel meetings from out of town. For our final committee meeting, we had to borrow a boardroom from the hotel. One time before that, Ron and I tried to get together on a Saturday morning at the church that he (regularly) and I (occasionally) attend/s. It worked -- for about ten minutes. Then the priest and his wife came in to clean up for Sunday services. End of meeting.

- ***Do not neglect publicity.*** I had a person in mind to run publicity. That person decided not to take on the job. Mainly for that reason, we never did a lot of publicity for the con. We were very fortunate to have a competent person run the Web site and Ron ran a Facebook page, but that was about it.

Probably because we never announced anything locally, another group with similar outlook announced a con in Atlanta for our weekend. They may not have known that we existed. Even for a DeepSouthCon that is well known in fandom, the organizers need to get the word out early if only to fend off rival cons.

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## Final Thoughts from the Rubble

I would hope that the DeepSouthCon site selection/business meeting would consider shortening the pre-convention time from two years to one. Two years is too long to hold a group together

for a relatively small convention. Going to one year would help keep things moving.

One thing that Ron and I noticed during the hotel selection process is that facilities have more demand for their function room business than they did in the past. They can get away with demanding higher payments than in those thrilling days of yesteryear. One facility that we looked at in the Emory University area wanted us to pay thousands of dollars straight up for the function space with no credit for room-nights at all. They must get a lot of government and academic business to expect anyone to do that.

Bill Ritch made a good suggestion to us before we named him Fan Guest of Honor. He offered that we hold a track of programming for Southern convention committee workers *à la* SMOFCon to discuss their problems and solutions. Some convention ought to do this. It would probably get them a few extra memberships and it might do some good.



We also hoped to get Toni to do another one of the writing workshops that she held at the Huntsville DeepSouthCon. We never got to ask her, but we planned to. It could be a useful and profitable venture for her and the convention committee.

And if no one else has figured this out by now, please, **please, PLEASE** do not try to do another stand-alone DeepSouthCon! There are not enough potential attendees to justify a convention of more than 50-100 people. It is galling that DeepSouthCon will have to be attached to other conventions to survive, but that is the sad fact. As Scarlett O'Hara said and Penny Frierson (the other co-chair of ConFederation) often quoted, "We have always been dependent on the kindness of strangers." Thus it will have to be.

To this day, I am still shocked and stunned that I made so many major mistakes in running a convention. It proves that conrunning is more of a skill than some folks give it credit for. It deserves to be taken seriously.

As for me, I do not expect to return to SF fandom. Too many people would remember my screw-ups. It is meet and right that I should depart. Have fun and thanks for all the fish.

Artwork by KURT ERICHSEN

no ~~~





# THE 16<sup>TH</sup> COLLIE

*Mike Resnick*

Back in the days when we were breeding and showing collies, most people coming out to visit could only count up to fifteen before they ran out of dogs, but they were wrong. Beau Hank was as much a collie as any of them. He differed slightly from the others in that he had four hooves, weighed about a thousand pounds, and both of his parents were horses, but in all important respects he was as much a collie as any of the others.

The future Campbell winner, Laura, thought he was a horse, and soon found herself in a minority of one. He had been purchased for her on the (misguided) assumption that owning a horse and letting him graze off our five acres would be less expensive than continuing to pay fifteen dollars an hour for her riding lessons.

We began to get an inkling that we had erred most grievously when Laura insisted upon a corral for Beau Hank. It cost \$800, and was very close to being the cheapest thing about him.

Beau Hank could not understand why a nice friendly collie like himself – larger, perhaps, than the other collies, but undeniably canine – should be segregated from his fellow dogs. He had been in his corral for perhaps three minutes when he realized that no one was going to open the gate and invite him out to play, so he opened the gate himself – permanently. Three days and five very expensive gates later we gave up and purchased an electric wire that ran entirely around the one-acre corral.

For six days in a row Beau Hank jumped over the wire unscathed, and for six days in a row I refused to believe that so rotund a horse could manage such a leap, and tested the wire the only way I knew how: by grabbing it. And screaming loud enough to wake such dead as weren't otherwise occupied at the time.

(My contribution to the organization did not necessarily lie in the area of brainpower.)

Upon escaping from the corral Beau Hank would race up to the house -- usually via Carol's flower gardens -- and pound on and about the door until he was convinced no one would let him in. Then, craving the companionship of his fellow collies, he would go out to the kennel runs and methodically kick in each metal gate until all the collies were released.

This would be followed by a vigorous game of horses and wolves. Beau Hank usually (but not always) got to be the horse, and those dogs that were not busily scavenging for anything edible would proceed to chase him all around the fenced-in five acres.

At first Carol was afraid that in their enthusiasm the collies might forget that they were merely playing and actually pull Beau Hank down, much as a pack of wolves will pull down its prey. This fear lasted just long enough for Kim (Champion The Grey Lensman) to spurt out ahead of the pack and hurl his 85 pounds of rock-hard bone and sinew against Beau Hank's left foreleg. He bounced off like a tennis ball hitting a brick wall, and Carol now began worrying about the dogs rather than Beau Hank.

Within a week all the collies tired of chasing Beau Hank, with the solitary exception of Isis (official name: The Mind Spider), who never got tired of anything. Had she been a comedienne, she would have told the same joke over and over until even her most devoted friends left the room. Beau Hank soon realized that Isis was the only collie who truly understood him, and he confined his daily orgy of

destruction to her dog run alone. Every morning there would be a loud crash, and a moment later Beau Hank would be racing across the lawn with Isis in hot pursuit. On those occasions that she got winded before he did, he would skulk back through bushes and trees until he was perhaps fifty feet away from her, and then would burst from cover, race over to Isis, bite her gently on the back of the neck, and race off again. This was repeated, *ad nauseum*, until Isis deigned to chase him once more.

Beau Hank's skulking practice with Isis served him in good stead at two o'clock every morning. We had long since learned that dogs tend to sleep for five or six hours after eating a meal, and so to assuage the neighbors, we began feeding the collies very late at night in the hope that they would keep quiet until sunrise.

So it was that every night, an hour or two after midnight, I would trudge out to the runs, which were about two hundred feet from the house, carrying anywhere from 9 to 12 food bowls (depending on which collies were on the road and how many were in the house for the night). Outraged at not getting his fair share of the food and forgetting the fact that he spent 90% of his waking hours eating, Beau Hank would race up to demand his rights.

At a point halfway between the house and the runs, I would hear this thousand-pound collie galloping across the lawn and would immediately peer into the darkness, trying to spot him. I was successful only about half the time, which meant that three or four nights a week one kennel owner and 30 pounds of carefully-mixed meat and dog meal went flying through space. Beau Hank would immediately lower his head and emulate a vacuum cleaner, while I would begin counting to make sure I still had the requisite number of arms and legs.

Veterinarians will tell you that a horse cannot eat meat, that it will give him a severe case of colic. Evidently Beau Hank was unversed in veterinary science, since he ate an estimated 500 hundred pounds of meat and dog meal per year during fiscal 1974 through 1976 without ever showing any ill effects, much to my disappointment. (Indeed, he once disrupted a lawn party Laura had thrown for her friends by eating half a dozen of their hamburgers – mustard, onions, buns, and all.)

When Merlin (Champion Silverlock) and his littermates were four weeks old, the weather was nice enough for them to be allowed outside for a few hours a day. A pair of interlocking portable pens were set up on a gravel patio, and food and water were placed in with the puppies. It was a challenge Beau Hank couldn't resist. One way or another he would manage to knock over the pens without harming the puppies, and would immediately clean out their food pan. Then, very gently, he would teach them the basics of horses and wolves.

Our first indication that the puppies were loose would be when one of us chanced to look out into the meadow and see Beau Hank standing with a foreleg raised in the air. Since he never exerted himself enough to become lame, we knew the answer must lay elsewhere – and sure enough, he was merely holding his foot up until the puppies, who, never having been injured didn't have the brains to be afraid, moved away and allowed him to set it down again.

For some reason, most of the male puppies idolized Beau Hank, while most of the bitches paid him scant attention. Merlin and his male littermates could usually be found in his vicinity, happily chewing on his legs or pulling at his tail while he stood there with an incredibly stupid grin on his pinto face.

Then came the day, a few weeks later, when the litters took up permanent residence in the heated puppy house. Beau Hank couldn't stand being segregated from Merlin and company, and broke the fence down each and every day, bar none, culminating one Sunday afternoon with the destruction of the entire puppy house.

"It's time to begin dispersing the puppies," said Carol that afternoon.

"We might as well," I muttered. "We sure as hell don't have any place left to keep them."

The puppies – all except Merlin – were dispersed in the next few days, and everything went back to normal at the Resnick residence – except perhaps at two o'clock in the morning, when the largest of the collies came thundering out of the darkness in search of a little snack.

## ANOTHER CHORUS LINE

*So few and far between were the letters of comment received on  
Challenger no. 39 that I'm scattering them throughout this  
issue. C'mon, Chorus, you're letting me down!*

**Richard Dengrove**  
**2651 Arlington Dr. #302**  
**Alexandria VA 22306**  
**RichD22426@aol.com**

I read all 82 pages of your zine and I am ready for bear. I have several comments. Are they the equivalent of Mark Twain, Walter Lippman or Bertrand Russell? Probably not. But my comments are my own. Hey, I bet I outdo the works of Soupy Sales.

*Alert White Fang and Black Tooth. "Don't kiss!"*

I will start with Jim Ivers' discussion of monster movies. I am wondering whether any horror movie producer ever considered doing anything to raise the bar to reality most gigantic, movie monsters present. They violate the square-cube law, and such creatures would have a hard time withstanding the Earth's gravity. Insects, in particular, would. If they are going to be fifty feet tall, they can't look anything like insects. Their dimensions must resemble a dinosaur's or an elephant's. More a dinosaur's. Otherwise, the creature is going to see their stick like feet snap. Insects are not the only problem; a fifty-foot woman would present a problem too. At best, she would have to crawl on all fours. Don't get me wrong: I don't have anything against the giant insects in *Them!*. I realize it's all fantasy. I was just wondering whether any movie producer ever shaped their gigantic monsters to withstand Newtonian breaks, i.e., the Earth's gravity.

Jim Ivers also discusses horror films where the monster fell far short of gigantic. One was *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*. That didn't end the fashion for starting the title of movies with 'I was a Teenage.' Not by a long shot. I looked up a film I remember made by the same people and based on the popularity of the first, *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (1957). Apparently, the Frankenstein was made out of bits and pieces of teenage cadavers. I was told the Frankenstein had a surfer's body but sported a face that could stop a clock. Apparently, "Professor Frankenstein," played by a Whit Bissell, remedied that by murdering and dismembering a teen with a nice face. In addition, the movie carried an immortal line spoken by the mad scientist: "Answer me! You have a civil tongue in your head! I know – I sewed it in there!" The reviewer Leonard Maltin wrote the movie was worth catching only for that line.

In Greg Benford's article, we go from the fifties to now. David Truesdale complains that while *Star Wars* does well, magazine science fiction languishes it. He blames literary science fiction for this; and, in turn, how science fiction has abandoned the hard sciences for a squishy soft version. No doubt literary science fiction can be a turnoff, and may even be meant to be a turnoff. However, I suspect David misses the important reason why magazine science fiction is a dying breed. It is for same reason magazine fiction has been a dying breed for decades. The distribution system for it has broken down. You can't get it in drugstores and newsstands anymore. On the other hand still, perhaps David is looking in the wrong place. I hear the popularity of e-books has produced a renaissance of published short stories.

While the country is harkening to the new, most of us fans revere the old. In your article on Meade Frierson, Guy, you discuss how you and Meade wrote a zine called *The Call of the K'Orphluu* in honor of H.P. Lovecraft. Later on, you mention a monster zine Meade did, *HPL*, which, of course, concerned H.P. Lovecraft. All this reminded me of a '60s short story in *Playboy*, "The Unspeakable." Admittedly, it took a humorous view, but not unlike *The Call of the K'Orphluu*. At one point, it said something like 'There, upon the mountain was the Unspeakable in his *unmentionables*.' At the end, the fearful narrator exclaims that he reported all the fantastic doings to the U.N.

Other tales of horror don't have to be processed through wags in order to become bad. When the originals were introduced to the public, they revealed themselves in all their badness. Such apparently was the case with "Queen Kong." I have to say the movie's theme song makes me wince: "She's a

Queenie Queenie for my weenie.” However, Guy, I gather you were wrong about the picture not being released. While Dino De Laurentiis prevented it from being released in America and Great Britain, it was released in Germany and Italy. Also, it’s been playing in Japan, where the Japanese did to it what Woody Allen did to the Japanese movie *International Secret Police: Key of Keys* (1965) AKA *What’s Up Tiger Lily?* (1966). Anyway, that’s what Wikipedia claims. A Google search reveals that the full *Queen Kong* has been uploaded to YouTube twice. [My God. WHY???

In Taral Wayne’s article under “Torn Genes,” instead of a giant creature, he mentions something else that grows large. Not the organ you’re thinking of, but the brain. He heard on CBC that we have lost the gene that limits the size of our brain. I have to disagree that that would constitute a birth defect. A defect occurs only when we can’t adapt to a mutation. If a larger brain allowed us to adapt to our environment far more than before, it would not be a defect but actual evolutionary progress. On the other hand, if that brain would grow so large that it would snap our necks, that indeed would be a defect.

Later on, Taral changes the topic from biology to economics. Under “Two Rights,” Taral points out some problems with untrammelled capitalism. Among them is that we are not perfectly rational like Adam Smith postulated. A Polish economist once demonstrated that any system would work perfectly if we were perfectly rational. Even Stalinism. In addition to the political power, the absolute ruler would possess the brain power to figure out if all his bureaucrats were doing a good job to the best of their abilities. If not, he would kill the laggards. That would end in a very efficient economy. In answer to this argument, advocates of untrammelled capitalism reply that, in the real world, socialism doesn’t work that way. Of course, they wish to avoid the fact that capitalism doesn’t work that either. No system with human beings does. What type of economy am I advocating? All I am saying is we have to go back to the drawing boards.

I go from playing with the consequences of economic systems in the abstract to making a comment on a concrete alternate history, namely, Ward Moore’s *Bring on the Jubilee*, which Joseph Major analyzes. I didn’t get, when I read the book, that the Confederacy conquered Central and South America. However, I know there was a BBC movie “C.S.A.: Confederate States of America” (2004), where that happened. I wonder if the scriptwriters got the idea from Moore’s novel. Of course, in that movie, the Confederacy conquers the north as well; and spreads slavery there.

We go in the SF genre from an alternate history to an author known for his science fiction-like horror tales, H.P. Lovecraft. In a letter, Milt Stevens apologizes for Lovecraft’s racist views during the ‘20s. I imagine Lovecraft held views that other races were inferior, and such, because his class did. Such views proliferated more than flies until the ‘30s. However, before then, I gather Lovecraft changed his views after he married Sonia Greene. In fact, he may have become a moderate socialist of sorts.

Another fantasist beside H.P. Lovecraft was Criswell. I once read snatches from *Criswell Predicts*. I came to the conclusion that he was a put-on. It was nothing as cosmic as a black band of something exterminating all life on Earth. No, he said that, by the 1980s, facelifts would go for \$25 each, and you could buy the kit for it in any pharmacy. Of course, he may have been confusing facelifts for mud packs.

As opposed to either Lovecraft or Criswell, Rodney Leighton writes with his two feet on the ground. For that reason, he wonders why so few people have responded to his zines either printed or emailed. I have spoken to Rodney about this before. However, I have changed my views recently. Now, for me, the problem is that he has a very distinctive style and is a very distinctive man. He has been bringing his world in rural Nova Scotia and his occupation of silviculturist to US fans. Also, he reviews blockbuster novels. To me, this is all foreign, and learning about it completes me. Apparently, many more wish to flee foreign influences rather than revel in them.

With Rodney, I end this letter with, I hope, some wisdom rather than a bang or a whimper. Having 82 pages to write about, I had to weed many of the comments I would otherwise have made. The subjects I did write about include *I was a Teenage Frankenstein*, HP Lovecraft, economics, politics, time travel and sex. How much sex you can get from *Queen Kong* is another thing entirely. Apparently, the female movie makers found the object of Queen’s passion, a fellow, hot stuff.

# Phobias

Atomosphobia- Fear of Atomic Explosions  
Algophobia- Fear of Pain  
Nosocomophobia- Fear of Hospitals  
Nyctophobia- Fear of the Dark  
Oneirophobia- Fear of Dreams  
    Arachnophobia- Spiders  
    Caliginophobia- Beautiful women  
Metrophobia- Poetry  
Logizomechanophobia- Computers  
Gerontophobia- Growing old



## **Algophobia**

*Fear of Pain*

They were long days  
and longer nights. Sometimes  
he'd bang his head on the wall  
to make the pain  
in his guts go someplace else.

The pain in his abdomen and lower back  
became sharper, unbearable  
and he lost his appetite but he ignored it all  
and now even after surgery and chemo  
it's too late.

Stoic until the end he muttered  
that he needed morphine for the pain  
indicating with his eyes  
that he had had quite enough  
and it was time for him to go.



### **Atomophobia**

#### *Fear of Atomic Explosions*

He still cannot believe that some scientists  
working on the atomic bomb back in 1945  
did the calculations and feared  
that setting off the bomb would ignite the atmosphere  
obliterating life and set it off anyway.

### **Nosocomophobia**

#### *Fear of Hospitals*

Whenever he finds himself in a hospital  
he vows to take better care of himself  
especially this time after noticing the sign  
on the men's room door: "This restroom  
accommodates persons over 500 lbs."

Right after Dad died in that stark lonely hospital room  
the skinny young Asian doctor looked through  
his dark glasses at Mom and said, enunciating  
his words like he was trying to make them stick  
to the wall "I am sorry, but he has expired."

Sleeping on short stiff benches  
beside dusty plastic plants  
and torn magazines strewn about on ugly  
brown end tables in the ICU waiting room waiting  
for her mother to emerge from her coma or not.

A hospital is always alive  
pulsating with activity even at night.  
But at night mostly ghosts  
walk the dim corridors quiet  
but there, always there.

### **Nyctophobia**

#### *Fear of the Dark*

In the darkness he feels helpless against troubles  
that during the day barely slow him down. Probably  
a holdover from the early humanoids huddled in treetops  
frightened to move and fall to the ground  
to be eaten by a bear, lion, tiger or snake.

The dog has passed  
and the wife is away the house  
so quiet and still as the darkness deepens  
and I realize I could never live alone wishing  
I'd stop hearing the click-clack of his nails on  
the stairs.

Alone in this lonely hospice bed  
I look out from my emaciated face  
at the ones I love crying huddled around me  
all still able to move forward with their lives  
while I'm left behind in the eternal  
darkness.

### **Oneirophobia**

*Fear of Dreams*

No I didn't see you over there in that corner  
with that other man, wasn't paying  
any attention, but also my peripheral vision  
isn't that good. What were you doing  
over there anyway, my love?

Like in a horror movie he's breathless  
outside himself watching himself running  
from the hairy black faceless one chasing him  
through the rambling old house in Nanuet  
with its crawlspaces cubbies and inky closets.

Our little dog breaks through the electric fence  
runs away down the road. Damn! Find him  
before one of the big wild dogs gets him! Too Late!  
A big dog with our dead cat in its mouth is scrambling  
up the hill across the street being chased by our little dog.



### **Arachnophobia**

Irony lying here in bed  
she's playing Spider Solitaire on her iPad  
while I'm watching a black hairy spider  
working his way across the ceiling minding  
his own business but if she only knew . . .

We're sitting out on the wicker chairs when I notice

a huge spider crouched underneath my wife's armrest.  
But he's not bothering anything  
so I remind myself that some things are better off  
remaining unmentioned such as spiders and old girlfriends.

### **Caligynephobia**

At Planet Gymnastics with my grandson  
watching the teenage girls twist and tumble thankful  
there was no girls team when I did gymnastics  
back in the sixties. We would not have survived  
such a distraction as sweet as it might have been.

Celia was our football queen in high school.  
I don't think I said one word to her back then.  
She was one of those untouchable beauties  
scared guys like us half to death. I had hard enough  
time talking to my own girlfriend for crying out loud.



### **Metrophobia**

They say "Thanks, how nice" as they put  
down  
their iPhones and leaf through the pages  
of his new book of poems for a minute  
before picking up their iPhones again.  
"That's great" they added and that was that.

Suddenly, my heart goes out to her. The fact  
that she doesn't read my poetry and most  
of it is to her or about her, the fact  
that she doesn't like it, is discomforted by it,  
frightened  
by it even – well, it doesn't matter, does it?

### **Logizomechanophobia**

Doesn't have a computer, an iPad or even an old-  
fashioned cellphone never needed those contraptions  
gets angry whenever Facebook is mentioned  
frightened he'll get sucked into the social media void  
and won't be able to get out again.

In the doctor's waiting room waiting watching

the other waiters on their iPhones and iPads, plugged into  
their iPods even the older people while I sit scribbling  
on my notepad with my antiquated pen  
a clueless throwback to some earlier time.

## Gerontophobia

I've been showing my age forgetting  
the names of celebrities. It's frustrating  
but I can live with it but after 10 minutes  
unable to recall the name Faulkner  
one of my favorite novelists I begin to worry.

He hates growing old, aching joints  
foggy eyesight and memory but fights it constantly  
even though he knows the game is rigged  
the gods will have their way but he simply cannot  
go gentle into that good night.

Searching through the magazine rack  
pushing aside the muscle and motorcycle magazines  
karate, mountain climbing and girlie magazines  
trying to find a copy of *Arthritis Today*  
suddenly wondering how the hell did I get here?

He surreptitiously snaps sultry pictures of a long-haired  
Latina stretched out on a blanket sipping a Bud Light Lime  
from a sweating can. He emails them to his buddy George  
who responded with "what kind of camera do you have?"  
and he knew they were now officially old men.



# CITADEL



*It was the best of times*, it was the worst of times; it was an era of innocence, it was a time of cynicism; it celebrated beauty, it reveled in ugliness; it begged for health, it embraced psychosis. It held hope for discovery and invention; it held fast to nihilism and depravity. It was the time and place of People's Park; it was the time and place of Charlie Manson. It had hope, it had dismay, it had fragrant blooms and fulsome bombast.

Ah, Berkeley at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies. The Golden State at the golden age, on the cusp of the counterculture. It was the best of times, it was the worst. This was one of the best of times.

The date was April 24, 1971, and though it terrifies me to admit it, that was 45 years in the past. For the benefit of any younger readers, let me set the stage.

**GUY LILLIAN III \* ARTWORK BY CHARLIE WILLIAMS**



America was, as always, at war. Back then the terrible, overarching enemy was communism, and the specific site of battle was South Vietnam. Guerilla fighters known as the Viet Cong, or “Victor Charlie”, or just “Charlie” in the parlance, and later the North Vietnamese Army, fought to destroy what they described as a puppet regime in the South supported by first the French, then the U.S. Lyndon Johnson and, at the time of the march, Richard Nixon were determined not to let them succeed, and poured thousands of American soldiers and billions of American dollars into what seemed to be a bottomless pit of pointless waste.

The San Francisco Bay Area, especially my school, the University of California at Berkeley, was a nexus of antiwar activity and the hippy counterculture. Encounters between mundane society, if one can call it that, and the youthful sub-society of Haight-Ashbury and Berkeley were, shall we say, somewhat tense. (I refer those interested to the story of People’s Park I published last in *Challenger* no. 26 and, by contrast, my interview with Leslie van Houten in issue no. 32.) As a matter of fact, it was more than occasionally violent.

The great divide among the generations dealt with Vietnam. Young men found any means they could to avoid being drafted into the service and sent there. They fled to Canada, they moved their marriages forward, they enjoyed college and their II-S ratings. They reversed vacuum cleaners and blew dust into their lungs. After the draft shifted into a lottery system the lucky lads with high numbers – like me, I was 189 – reveled in their good luck, but refused (in the

most part) to rest in it. Thus the ongoing effort against the war on campuses like Berkeley’s. Thus the national outrage in May, 1970, against Nixon’s invasion of Cambodia and the massacres at Kent State and Jackson State. Thus the National Peace Action Coalition anti-war march through San Francisco on April 24, 1971.



1971 was my last year at UC-B, and I lived at Barrington Hall, a co-op – a student-run dorm owned by a private, student-run corporation. The place is famous in science fiction fandom; in the 1950s Terry Carr and Ron Ellik published *FANAC* there and won a Hugo for it. My fanzine career began there just as theirs did, with the house newsletter, *The Barrington Bull* (see *Challenger* no. 24 and my editorial, *supra*). But these matters are secondary to this account, which should center on the personality of the place. Not only students resided there, but folks we called *crashers*.

A place like Barrington would attract people from off the beaten track, shall we say, and one of the most popular of these was a fellow I’ll call Phil Cawthorne. Phil was a former student, extremely tall, skinny dude – his nickname was “Giraffe” – with a

pleasant craziness to his personality and a fondness for pharmaceuticals. Though I never used the stuff, we got along really well, which was why I was among those deeply disappointed when it seemed as if we would be denied Phil’s presence at the big peace march planned for April 21. The plan was for a number of us to crowd into a Barringtonian’s rustbucket automobile and book it for San Francisco. But Phil ...

Phil claimed once that the room where he crashed was a world class drug haven one step lower than a Shanghai opium den. Observing the depths of his unconsciousness, I could believe it. I stood above Cawthorne's recumbent form, kicking at the leg of his cot. It was an ungodly early hour – 7:45 AM. “Phil! PHIL!” Finally the corpus moved. His first words were “*Urrghhhh ... What time is it?*” Upon hearing the hour, Phil murmured “I need a new nervous connection somewhere beyond the rainbow. Have fun, kiddies.” And curled the covers back over his head.

This was not acceptable. The house member with the car swore he would not leave without our most ardent revolutionary. He hauled out a copy of *Trashman* and began to read it aloud into Cawthorne's ear.

An aside to those unacquainted with those gospels of the age, underground comix. Modern youth obtains its role models from reality television and its political savvy from social media. We didn't have such niceties in the days of the revolution. We had comix. We had Robert Crumb and *Zap Comix* (issue #4 was taken to court for obscenity), the brilliant Gilbert Shelton and *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* and *Wonder Warhog*. Richard Corben did stuff for the environmentally-minded *Slow Death* and other comix that was simply classic – “Rowlf” and “How Howie Made it in the Real World”. *Trashman* was of that ilk. You may read a synopsis of the character and the comic on Wikipedia. Suffice it to say that he was irresistible; Cawthorne made it to his feet and, packed in like clowns at the circus, the Barrington Hall peace march contingent made it to the financial district of San Francisco.

I can't remember where we parked – I'm astounded that we found a space. I do know that we found

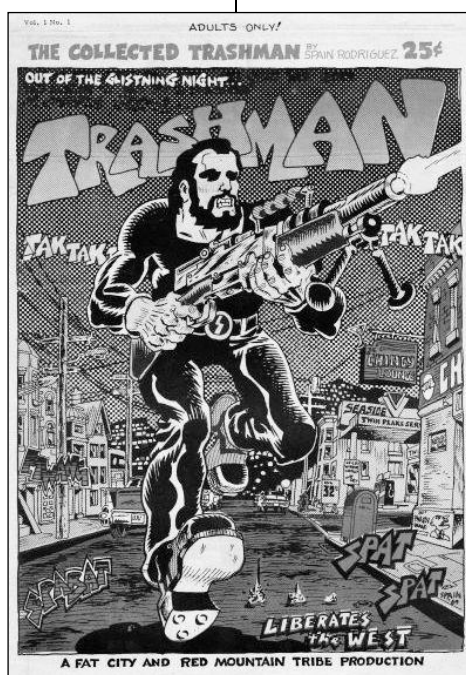
ourselves at the corner of Market Street and California, the front of the march, a narrow downtown canyon between office towers. A white banner stretched sidewalk to sidewalk. Monitors, whom I noted were “really cool for this sort of event,” tried to keep the street itself clear for the people leading the march – Vietnam vets.

Time for another aside. There has always been a general confusion about the attitudes of the anti-war movement towards American G.I.s. The cliché was that we were spoiled rich college kids – well, two out of those three adjectives were unarguable – who *spat on* soldiers when they

returned from Vietnam. The media bought and sold this image – which I'm convinced originated somewhere in the ichorous cesspool simmering and popping around the White House in those days. (My favorite was a comic showing a hippy girl, face painted with stars, bashing an enlistee on the head with a bong.) Of course, I wasn't everywhere and I didn't see everything, but I was at Berkeley and the only hostility I heard of between G.I.s and hippies came from the other side – and was racial. A couple of psychopathic black soldiers picked up a white hippy kid while he was hitchhiking and

hacked his face with a cleaver. That's true; I knew the guy. His snoot looked like a clown nose.

There was a 'Nam vet in the Lillian Hellman writing seminar with me, a fine funny dude, one of our two Robert Roths. No one called *him* a baby burner. In fact, every time a student or a street person met a Vietnam veteran in my presence, we hit up the guy for his *stories*: what happened? What was it like? You see, guys like me knew that the draft wasn't going to get within a mile of us. But I'd already lost one cousin in Vietnam (see “My Cousin Jimmy” in *Challenger* no. 33) and that



was goddamned enough. And it had been but 11 months since Kent State.

The genuine consensus was that no one had earned the right to lead a genuine peace march more than vets ... and so, in ragged Army jackets and khakis, they did.

“ONE TWO THREE FOUR ONE TWO ...”  
“PEACE NOW!”

We followed them through the citadel of San Francisco. It was a Saturday; except for the march the city was all but empty. No office workers glowered or grinned from the silver windows above. My 21-year-old mind suddenly harbored



It was 9 A.M. The countdown began. “TEN ...NINE ...EIGHT ... SEVEN ...” On the count of “ZERO!”, the March was on.

The Nam vets took the lead. They lined up and marched, one of their own shouting the cadence, “WHADDYA WAN’?”

“PEACE!”

“WHEN YA WAN’ IT?”

“NOW!”

“SOUND OFF!”

“ONE TWO!”

“SOUND OFF!”

“THREE FOUR!”

doubts about the usefulness of the March, seeing that: who would see us? Who would consider what we were saying? Who could possibly be convinced? I also wondered if the worries of some might come true, and the presence of all those moneyed monoliths we walked among would prove too tempting to the militant among us, and I was alert for the terrible sound of smashing glass. But there was nothing. A lone blonde in office attire watched us solemnly from a balcony above. “Hello, beautiful!” a sexist swine of my close acquaintance shouted – ducking his head to avoid the ire of the many redheaded feminists in the crowd.

On we walked. On the center median – what we call the “neutral ground” in New Orleans – a poor fool sold little flags emblazoned with the peace symbol, to disgust and laughter. Reaching the top of a hill, of which San Francisco has a few, Phil and I looked back along Geary. *A million people.* Curb to curb, all the way downtown. Phil freaked. Did he thank Trashman for this sight? I couldn’t hear.

From the rough, dim map on the flyer (above) you might see that various contingents were slated to join the march at certain points along Geary. I don't know when the dweebs with the North

The march sloughed through residential districts to Golden Gate Park, one of the most wonderful city parks in America, and into the Polo Fields.

O.D. or pitch an epileptic fit; his friends led/carried him to a medical tent.

The Hispanic group had been active in San Francisco and on the Berkeley campus for several years, ever since the Third World Liberation Front, uniting black, Latino (called *chicano* then) and Asian students in a quest for a Third World



College on the UC campus. If it hadn't been for the intimidation that accompanied the movement – you either went along with them or you got thumped – it might have been a worthy goal, but of course the cops made the question moot by slinging clubs and spewing tear gas at the slightest provocation. Take your choice, GHLLI; who gets to kill you for going to class? Anyway, La Raza stormed the stage, threw everybody who was not them off, and began haranguing the crowd. “You want music? Okay!” I can hear their singer scream “Viva la Raaaaaaaaza!” even now.

Clearly, it was time to go home. I circumnavigated the Polo Grounds once more before heading out. Once again, Geary Boulevard became crowded with peaceniks – all of us airing our thumbs, begging for rides. I was picked up in front of a movie theatre a mile or two from Golden Gate Park. They were playing *Love Story*, and the beautiful little teens in bell-bottomed jeans waiting to cry their eyes out for Ali McGraw warily watched their big brothers and sisters stagger by.

The car I rode in was so crowded I had to sit on the edge of my foot. After we got across the Bay Bridge I still had to hoof it across Berkeley to get back to Barrington, and by the time I made it my feet felt like they'd been gnawed on by badgers. The next day the Hearst-run San Francisco *Examiner* opined that the march was “an orgy of hate” directed against the Nixon administration. Right. Hate with Frisbees, hate with guitars, hate with hunger strikes and strength against blacklists. Hate with music. Hate with G.I.s who'd been there. Hate – it seemed the only word they understood.

There was damned little hate out there, on April 24, 1971. Cynicism and dismay, maybe. The era was ending, and we knew it. The student antiwar movement – for that matter, the counterculture – was, for all our numbers, passé. Turned out I was right in thinking that what we did on April 24, 1971 would have little effect. Kent State had worked. Nixon would be allowed to carry out his war in peace. The age of the Yuppie was approaching, the self-absorbed, oblivious, smugly greedy era that would celebrate Ronald Reagan and forget the suffering of others. That time had

its day – and itself passed. So it goes. The one sentence that is always true: *this too shall pass away*. Still, though it would only be 16 months until Richard Nixon would crash and burn on the rock of his own anguish, it would be four years before his successor would stand up in front of a very different



student body and announce the end of the Vietnam War. How could I know as I limped home that evening that I would be at Tulane University for that moment too?

The last time I saw Phil Cawthorne was one of the last times I was in Barrington Hall. It was in between semesters later that year and I was ready to start home to New Orleans. I checked my Barrington room one more time and walked down through the dining room, and he was there, alone, humming and dancing, studying the end of his cigarette. I said “Hi, Phil,” and he said something like “Watch your karma, man,” and I never saw him again. Which is too bad. He was one of the real ones, and I'd liked to have helped him through.



# PLUTO

NOW, THEN ON TO 550 A.U.



Gregory Benford

Physicist, University of California, Irvine, author of *Timescape*

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The most long-range portentous event of 2015 was NASA's *New Horizons* spacecraft arrowing by Pluto, snapping clean views of the planet and its waltzing moon system. It carries an ounce of Clyde Tombaugh's ashes, commemorating his discovery of Pluto in 1930. Tombaugh would have loved seeing the colorful contrasts of this remarkable globe, far out into the dark of near-interstellar space. Pluto is now a sharply-seen world, with much to teach us.

As the spacecraft zooms near an iceteroid on New Year's Day, 2019, it will show us the first member of the chilly realm beyond, where primordial objects quite different from the wildly eccentric Pluto also dwell. These will show us what sort of matter made up the early disk that clumped into planets like ours—a sort of family tree of worlds. But that's just an appetizer.

*New Horizons* is important not just for completing our first-look at every major world in the solar system. It points outward, to a great theatre in the sky, where the worlds of the galaxy itself are on display.

Beyond Pluto looms a zone where the Sun's mass acts as a giant lens, its gravitation focusing the light of other stars to a small area. Think of it as gravity gathering starlight into an intense pencil, focused down as dots on chilly sphere. Einstein calculated such gravitational bending of light in 1912, though Newton knew the effect should occur in his own theory of mechanics and optics.

Images of whole galaxies made by this effect were not discovered until 1988. Such magnification of light from a star and the planets near it naturally creates a telescope of unparalleled power. It can amplify images by factors that can vary from a hundred million to a



quadrillion, depending on frequency.

This suggests using such power to study worlds far across the interstellar reaches. We have already detected over two thousand planets around other stars, thanks to the Kepler mission and other telescopes. We can sense the atmospheres of some, when they pass across our view of their stars, silhouetted against that glare. Many more will come.

Our space telescopes envisioned for the next several decades can only tease out information about a planet at interstellar distances by studying how light it reflects or absorbs changes. At best, such worlds will be dots of faint light.

But at the lensing distance, under enormously better resolution, we can see the worlds themselves—their seas and lands, atmospheres and moons.

Hearty *New Horizons* now zooms along at about 15 kilometers a second, or more usefully said, at about three Astronomical Units (AU, the distance between Earth and our sun) in a year, relative to the sun. The focus spot of the sun is 550 AU out, as Einstein predicted in 1936. *New Horizons* will take 180 years to get to that focus and be long dead as its nuclear power supply fades. So future missions to put a telescope out there demands speeds ten or more times faster. (Voyager, flying after 38 plus years, is only 108 AU away from earth.)

We know of ways to propel spacecraft to such speeds. Most involve flying near the sun and picking up velocity by firing rockets near it, or getting a boost from its intense light using unfurled solar sails, and other astro-tricks. Those feats we can fashion within decades, if we wish.

Our goal could be to put an observing spacecraft that can maneuver out at the focus of “God’s zoom lens” – a seventy-billion-mile-long telescope that light takes over three days to traverse. An observing spacecraft could see whatever is behind the sun from it, many light years away.

This would vastly improve our survey of other worlds, to pick off strings of stars and examine their planets. Using the sun as a lens works on all wavelengths, so we could look for signs of life—say, oxygen in an atmosphere—and perhaps even eavesdrop on aliens’ radio stations, squawking into the galactic night.

A first such telescope could scrutinize Alpha Centauri’s planets, if it has some, the next big step before trying to travel there. The craft could trace out a spiral pattern perpendicular to its outward path, slightly shifting its position relative to scan the Alpha Centauri system. Then look further still.

*New Horizons* maybe the best-named spacecraft of all, for it does indeed portend fresh, bold perspectives.



# *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Rock from the Sun*

## *and Other All-Female Planets*

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Tom Rasely

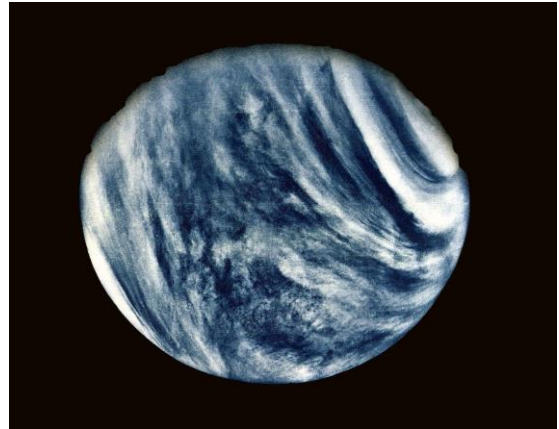
*[She was Venus to the Romans, Aphrodite to the Greeks. Her planet, the 2<sup>nd</sup> rock from the sun, is somewhat of an enigmatic puzzle for the fans of 50s sci-fi space films.]*

Sometimes called the Moon Goddess, the Vegetation Goddess and Goddess of love and beauty, fertility and even herbal magic, Venus was the daughter of Jupiter, a lover of Mars, and the wife of Vulcan (for all you Trekkies, that's the Roman god of metalwork). She allegedly had an affair with Mercury, but at the same time was represented as Venus Verticorda, the protector of feminine chastity.

So, to say she was the bringer of joy to gods and humans alike might be a bit of an understatement. But how does this all relate to the genre of sci-fi space films from the 1950s and '60s? The answer is: women, and lots of them.



Venus was not the destination of choice for most '50s sci-fi space travelers. Mars and the Moon were far more popular. But She did get her share of visitors, and sometimes sent her people Earthward. Classic films like *First Spaceship On Venus* (Crown International, 1962, US), *Abbott and Costello Go to Mars* (1953), *Queen of Outer Space* (MGM, 1958), and the British 8-chapter serial *Master's of Venus* (Wallace Productions, Ltd., 1962) all landed Earthlings on Venus. And since Venus is also the Moon Goddess, it's easy to see her influence on the all-female civilizations found in *Cat Women from the Moon* (Astor Pictures, 1953), and *Missile to the Moon* (Astor Pictures, 1959).



### ---One Small Step For Womankind---

*First Spaceship on Venus* lived up to its production company's name, giving us an international cast. The story is very similar to the Russian *Planet of Storms* (1962): a group of scientists explore the deadly surface of the planet Venus. In *First Spaceship* life is discovered in the form of a plant (a nod to the herb magic of the Roman Venus?). And there's the classic Red Scare motif when we find out that the Venusians have gone through a terrible nuclear-like holocaust. Sumiko (Yoko Tani) is the only woman, but she is paired with one Russian, one African, one French electronics expert, one scientist from India, and a botanist from Japan, along with a couple of Americans, so she doesn't stand out as the "token female". In fact, she is a rather strong character with only one slight emotional lapse when the rocket passes the moon and she is reminded of the death of her husband.

\*

In the TV series spinoff of the Republic Pictures serial cliffhanger the role of Joan is handled skillfully by Aline Towne. She and Commando Cody not only end up on Venus in one episode of *Commando Cody: Sky Marshall of the Universe*, but Joan also gets to pilot the rocket on several occasions.

### ---The Battle of the Sexes---

In *Queen of Outer Space*, we are bombarded by '50s stereotypes. The rocket crew led, by Eric Fleming, lands on Venus and steps out into an atmosphere that's supposed to be clouds composed mostly of sulfuric acid, and temperatures of around 400 degrees (hotter than Mercury). They discover breathable air and vegetation, all of which explained away by Professor Konrad (Paul Birch) who says that he too "subscribed to many of those theories. I even helped formulate some of them. But it appears I'm closer to the problem now."

It turns out that all the men of Venus were either killed or banished as a result of an uprising by the women of the planet. Venusian scientist Talleah (Zsa Zsa Gabor) explains that "they didn't take us seriously; after all, we were only women." She leads an underground movement of frustrated girls who would like to have some men around. When Talleah announces that she's jealous of the Queen for her attentions to Captain Neal Patterson (Fleming), Lt. Larry Turner (Patrick Waltz) makes what is perhaps the most demeaning, chauvinistic comment in screen writing history: "26 million miles from Earth and the little dolls are just the same". Ouch. The Professor tells Patterson that he could win the Queen over with his charms, and Larry lends his support by saying, "After all, she's a woman." The Queen is finally defeated, and girls get boys.

With sets and costumes borrowed from *Flight to Mars* (Monogram, 1951) and *Forbidden Planet* (MGM, 1956), and a story by Ben Hecht, screen writer Charles Beaumont gives us a clear view of social mores of



the time, while disregarding any scientific facts about the planet Venus. This is truly the “fi” part of sci-fi. Or as Professor Konrad says, “It appears all things are possible in space.”

\*

While the Universal Pictures title tells us that *Abbott and Costello Go to Mars*, they actually end up on Venus, and stumble on yet another civilization of all women who have also defeated all the men. The girls crowd around our heroes and their unlikely companions, Mugsy (Horace McMahon) and Harry (Jack “I am with you” Kruschen). Romance ensues, but even when the girls eventually return the four men back to Earth, Costello discovers that he will be hen-pecked even from a distance of 26,000,000 miles.

\*



Nyah (Patricia Laffan), the *Devil Girl from Mars* (Gig Productions, 1955) has come to Earth in a spaceship made of organic metal, to replace her planet's diminishing supply of men, caused by a war between the sexes. “I can control power beyond your wildest dreams”, she says as she demonstrates a strange looking Gort-like robot. Nyah is single-minded and cold-blooded while the ‘50s philosophy is held intact by Ellen (Hazel Court), a beautiful career girl whose only desire is to “have children, meet the right man”.

---Will All Other Venusians Please Stand Up?---

Oddly, *Masters of Venus*, an eight-chapter serial produced for the British Children's Film Foundation, introduces us to a population on Venus of mostly men (with six fingers). The only females in the whole story are two young girls, Pat (Amanda Coxell) the daughter of the earth scientist who designed the rocket, and Mara (Zienia Merton) the daughter of the Venusian Master of the Men of Skill, both of whom play a large part in the action. In fact, it's Pat who saves the day. The scientific facts are given a nod by use of a hazy cloud that appears in all the scenes on the planet surface, but reality is quickly set aside when we are told that the people of Venus were originally the inhabitants of Atlantis, who were driven out by their jealous five-fingered counterparts. All the Venusians wear 6-fingered black gloves, which only accentuates the mysterious extra finger as it permanently and humorously sticks out straight at all times.

*Zontar, the Thing from Venus* tells the story of a plot to destroy the earth (again), as a bat-like alien takes over John Agar's brain. This can't be very difficult: Agar's brain also gets taken over by an alien force in *Journey to the Seventh Planet* (a Sid Pink film), and again in *Brain from Planet Arous*.

And finally, the writers of *Stranger from Venus* (1954) obviously were looking to bank on the popularity of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), even to the point of casting Patricia Neale in the role of a woman who befriends the alien.

---*The Man in the Moon is A Woman*---

Astor Pictures brought us a pair of films, *Cat Women of the Moon* and the remake six years later *Missile to the Moon*, in which we find an all-female civilization. *Cat Women* was made in 3-D, while *Missile* was produced in 2-D (although if they'd made it in 1-D, it's hard to say if anyone would have noticed). In both, a crew of earthlings is going to a pre-set landing spot on the Moon where they meet up with an all-female population that wants to move to Earth. Both end in total disaster for the women, who are all named by Greek letters.

However, while romance and a pre-arranged marriage play a big part in *Missile*, all but one of the girls in *Cat Women* remain aloof from romantic interests to the end. Beta bottom-lines it by announcing, "We have no use for men!" It is a particularly embarrassing moment for the Earth crew navigator Helen (Marie Windsor) when the crew awakens from take-off blackout, and she immediately fixes her hair. None of the guys worry about what they look like...but then one of them is Sonny Tufts, which may explain it.

---*The Best Man for the Job?* ---

Just as the planet was named Venus by a male Roman astronomer, we see that all these films were given their personality and dated dialogue by male writers and male directors. They definitely could have used a women's touch.

Outside of the fact that we were never told how these all-female civilizations propagated their races, women generally didn't fare well at all in the classic sci-fi films of the '50s and '60s. With revealing costumes, often with high-heels, and some of the strangest perms, they were also trapped by the most innocuous dialog. One classic example occurs in *Rocketship X-M* (Lippert Pictures, 1950):

- Lisa (Ona Massen): I suppose you think that women should stay at home and have children.
- Floyd (Lloyd Bridges): Isn't that enough?
- [Osa's reaction clearly shows us that is unsure.]

Although there is still the lingering stereotypes, the times they really *are* a-changin'. In the post-*Star Wars* era, we have begun to see competent women in positions of authority in sci-fi space films. Could we imagine Han Solo suggesting to Princess Leia, with her "Just do it!" philosophy, that she'd be better off as a housewife! *Dark Planet* gave us the no-nonsense Commander Liz Susan Ivanova (Claudia Christian), and of course, the *Alien* movies brought us tough Lt. Ellen Ripley (Sigourney Weaver). And most recently we were introduced to Queen/Senator Amadala (Natalie Portman) who practices "aggressive negotiations".

Thankfully, with the turn of the millennium, the goddess of love and beauty, hasn't lost any of her charm. However, she has finally come into her own, and we find that sometimes the best man for the job really *is* a woman.





*My mother, Joan MacDonald, next to the family Stingray!*

*Taral Wayne*

## *Not All **Corvettes** Are Red*

It might come as a shock to you that I have had the privilege of being behind the wheel of a vintage Corvette Stingray. I wasn't allowed to turn the key in the ignition, since I was no more than 14 at the time, but I certainly sat at the wheel. I even sat in the passenger seat, and better still, under the glass "fastback" while it was being driven.

First, some background.

The Corvette was not a popular model when it was introduced in 1953. The European styling and somewhat small engine block didn't endear it to American drivers. But in 1956, the Corvette was given a facelift that fitted in better with what American drivers wanted. As well, the weak, six-cylinder engine was gone, replaced by a V-8. Sales strengthened immediately!



There was one other facelift, revising the rear end, and then a completely new model appeared in 1963. This was the fabulous “Stingray.” The fastback body was as near to the iconic Jaguar XKE as possible, with sexy curves, wicked wire wheels and restrained chrome trim. Of the several years’ models, the best was surely 1965. That year’s Stingray was stripped to the essential lines, abjured unnecessary vents, pointless Laker pipes and non-functional bulges in the hood. That was the model my father bought, new from the Chevy lot I passed every day on the way to school.

At the time, I lived in a flat over an animal hospital. My dad worked as a veterinary assistant downstairs. The hospital was a ramshackle structure of three and a half levels that tumbled down an embankment sloping down to Etobicoke Creek. It was an adventure in itself to explore the unexpected little rooms, and the largely abandoned lowest level was locked up, as though to ensure that restless zombies on the other side wouldn’t break into the part of the hospital inhabited by the living. One of my most exciting games was to unlock the door and creep into the forbidding blackness.

In 1954, during Hurricane Hazel, the valley of Etobicoke Creek had flooded, and the bottom two floors of the hospital were submerged, drowning all the caged animals. The poor dead animals were found floating at the tops of their cages when the water went down. Standing in the very same basement, thinking about that tragedy, never failed to evoke a shudder.

The animal hospital was on Bloor Street, one of the major drags in Toronto, and the four-lane street leapt over the insignificance of Etobicoke Creek with the help of a massive steel and concrete bridge. On the other side of that bridge was the car dealership. I sometimes wandered around looking at the new models, and must have seen the Stingray my father would eventually buy ... but, of course, I could have no idea he would do such a crazy, wonderful thing.

We had had several cars while living over the animal hospital, but they had been nothing a kid could boast about. I recall a Ford Falcon station wagon, badged as a “Frontenac” in Canada for some reason. In 1965 we were driving a Ford Fairlane, a beige family car with restrained lines, modest tail fins and that “Ford look” of the time. Think of the 1950’s T-Birds if you want to imagine it, but with rear seats and longer roofline.

My father was never satisfied with an ordinary life or ordinary possessions. I think he had always felt that life owed him more, but without any especial talent or knowledge, he had no way to get what was due to him ... so he drank instead. And made perfectly idiotic decisions, such as to order a billiard table that he could not afford, not use it for a few months and then, finally, suffer the humiliation of its repossession. He went through all his paycheck every week, because he could wear nothing but the best (off-the-rack) suits and shirts. He bought a banjo he never learned to play. And then one day he inexplicably decided that a Ford Fairlane was not the sort of automobile that a man of his outstanding caliber ought to drive, and dropped in at the Chevy lot.

He got just over \$2,800 in trade for our 1963 Fairlane. That may not sound like much for a two-year-old family car, but in those days a bottle of Coke cost a dime. \$100 a week was a decent salary. A brand new Volkswagen Beetle cost about \$1,700. So it would appear that my dad got a pretty good trade-in value for his wheels. You may now ask, what did a new Corvette Stingray cost? Keep in mind that the base model 2016 Corvette C7 costs about \$55,000 *US*, and, with a few options, easily runs over \$65,000. Take a look on the next page – that is the *actual* sales bill for my father’s Stingray!

\$4,532! Can you believe it? If only I could get back to 1965, I could buy a Stingray of my own. Unless the time-import duties were excessive, which I presume they would be, to prevent a total breakdown of the time-space continuum as we know it.

Of course, this meant we had no family car. The Stingray was a two-seater, so if we were all to go somewhere, I had to sit behind the two seats, on a sort of shelf right under the glass rear window. The marvel of it was that I fitted, but I was only 14, and, I guess, not a particularly large 14. Still, I remember it being cramped. I couldn’t straighten up, and it got very very hot, very very quickly. I don’t think I ever went far in the Stingray unless it was just me and my dad. But that was okay, because my dad didn’t really take us anywhere very often, so the few trips I made in the passenger seat were treasured without consideration of what I might have been missing.

DA 35 250M (A.P. A7302)

**CAR OR TRUCK INVOICE**  
**HUMBERVIEW MOTORS LIMITED**  
 3200 Bloor Street West  
 TORONTO 18, ONTARIO

**Sold To** Ronald M. & Joan T. MacDonald  
 3265 Bloor Street West  
 Toronto 18, Ontario

**DATE** March 24, 1965  
**SALESMAN** Hughes  
**INVOICE No.** 1011

NEW OR USED	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	SERIAL NO.	MOTOR NO.	COLOUR	KEY NO.
N	1965	Corvette	19437	5-19437-S106997	5106997	Maroon	8102 9043
I only 1965 Corvette-Prestone 4 speed Transmission 300 H.P. Engine Positraction Power Steering AM-FM Radio Soft-ray Windshield Telescopic Steering Gas Licence Less trade-1963 Ford-Licence #503300							6308 00 263 00 77 00 61 00 136 00 315 00 16 00 61 00 7237 00 2837 00 4400 00 132 00 4532 00
<b>SETTLEMENT</b>							
<b>PREVIOUS DEPOSIT</b>							4532 00
<b>CASH ON DELIVERY</b>							

The implications of having a Stingray instead of a family car only sank in that summer, when my dad announced that he was taking his two-week vacation by going on a long car trip ... with mother. *They* were going by highway all the way to Mexico! *I* was staying home, to be looked after by my geeky aunt and uncle!

Of course, I protested at once ... but what could I do? Realistically, I could not spend two weeks under a magnifying glass being cooked by the sun, even if they would have let me.

So I languished at home, waiting for the postcards to arrive, one by one, from exotic places such as St. Louis, Amarillo and Guadalupe. The worst of it was that the relatives

looking after me cooked everything in a way completely foreign to me. I could barely swallow the unfamiliar swill, but they made me eat every wretched bite while my parents were away on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure!

Perhaps having a Stingray in the family was not such a boon, after all? The car was not lucky for Dad, either.

Perhaps I should explain that on top of being a less than superlative father, he was an unfaithful husband. He had at least three girlfriends that I knew of once I was old enough to know what girlfriends were for. The one in 1965 was a married woman, who would eventually bear twin girls by my father, which pleased nobody except perhaps him. In the following, inevitable divorce between the mother and her husband, my dad somehow got involved in an attempt to gain custody of the girls with the mother. Frankly, I have no idea how that was supposed to work out, since there was the little detail of him still being married to *my* mother.

The husband was a decent guy, as I remember. His name was Jim Horn, I think, and he was a cop. (Yeah, my dad cuckolded a cop! Smart move.) Officer Horn had restored a 1934 Ford Model A hardtop, and I think he let me ride in it once. He won the suit and got the divorce, and to this day I can look at the photographs and wonder where in the world my two half-sisters, Lynn and Laura, might have gone.

I should clarify that Lynn and Laura shouldn't be confused with my adopted sisters, Christine and Karen. I know perfectly well where *they* are and how *they* ended up. But that is a story for another day.

As it happened, Mrs. Horn was the jealous type. At one point, my dad was visiting while Officer Horn was on duty, and the two of them got into a spat. The Stingray was parked in the driveway, behind the Horn family car. She jumped in, turned the key and backed as hard as she could into the fiberglass body of the Stingray.

Now fiberglass is a versatile, strong, lightweight building material, but when it fails, it fails magnificently! It shatters and tears, trailing glassy streamers and fragments that cannot be simply hammered out and repainted. At best, the damage has to be cut away and re-molded, but it is usually more practical to replace the entire body panel with a new one. The damage inflicted on dad's Stingray put it in the shop for a considerable time, as I recall.

But that wasn't the end of it. Later that year, Mom and Dad were in Niagara Falls, and when they pulled the Stingray out of a parking area, someone hit the car square on, and sheared off the entire front end! It must have cost hundreds to repair – thousands in today's dollars. The glamour of owning a Corvette Stingray must have begun wearing very thin at that point.

It wasn't the accidents or the upkeep or the impracticality of owning a Stingray that led, as it inevitably must have, to the end of our brief acquaintance with fashionable motoring. I believe the final blow was the high

monthly payments. Did I mention that Dad had to have the best of everything? He could not have the booze, the girlfriends, the restaurants and the suits and still keep up payments on a sports car that was, from the beginning, too rich for his blood, and even he finally saw the writing on the wall. It said, “get out while you can.”

Of course, being my dad, he didn’t use the money he got from the sale to pay off the loan for the Stingray. Oh, no... he bought a stereo ... or was it the colour TV, or the Encyclopedia Britannica, or the new kitchen appliances, or the new fishing outfit, or... well, know knows. It was fifty years ago, and I was 14. All I knew is that we suddenly acquired another Falcon station wagon – metallic blue this time, with a V8 engine dropped it so that it could pull a rented trailer. But the Falcon and the trip to Cape Kennedy in the trailer are another story, too.

On the whole, I was better off with the Falcon. I had the entire back seat to myself, and could clamber over the divider into the back and mess around. This was before Safety, you understand, and the unbreakable rule that children must be shackled to the seat for their own good – so I could do what I pleased. I still missed the Stingray ... but not really all that much. My mother acquired a car of her own, too! A big ugly Plymouth, circa 1958 or ’59, with tailfins that were second only to those on a ’57 Cadillac. It smelled a little musty and didn’t seem to have much pep, but that was before I cultivated an appreciation for ‘50s Detroit iron.

I wonder who ended up with our Stingray? Someone who ran it into the ground, or cared for it like a family heirloom? All I know is there aren’t many of them still on the road. If I got rich as sin, I would surely hunt for one on eBay, and of course it would have to be the same model and the same wine-dark maroon! However, it wasn’t my fate to be the money-minded sort of person who can afford the world’s treasures, so I have *toy cars* instead. I have various Stingrays, from different years, but my favourite is the 1/18 scale diecast. The manufacturer usually hovers just over the line between a collector’s item for adult hobbyists, and mere toys for kids. Fortunately, their ’65 Stingray is one of the company’s best efforts. The detail is very creditable.



The best thing, apart from the detail, is that it is the same year and model as my dad’s Stingray. The colour is off, being fire-engine red rather than maroon, but short of repainting it, there’s nothing I can do. The only diecast I have in the right colour is the wrong year, and a much smaller, far less detailed scale. I have a second 1/18 like this that’s in metallic blue, which is nice in its own way, but even less the proper colour.

While I may never own an actual 1965 Stingray of my own, I have a genuine receipt for one. And I have two genuine touchstones. In those days, when you bought a new Corvette, you were given (or perhaps sold) owner’s pins. You would pin them to your suit or jacket so that envious drivers of lesser cars like Buicks

or Volkswagens would know the class of driver you were, even when you weren't actually behind the wheel. Prestige was as important in 1965 as it is in 2016, so people had to know that you could throw around such huge lumps of money as \$7,237! By happy circumstance, the 10kt gold, enameled pins that belonged to my mom and dad were never misplaced, and I display them in a small plastic box with one of my grandfather's WWI service pins and a genuine employee's pin from the Warner Brothers animation studio.

Now and then I wonder if they could be eBayed for any significant sum – perhaps I'm sitting on a small fortune without knowing it? For fun, let's check right now. I'm on a page with various Corvette memorabilia, and there's a group of pins ... and *there* is an exact match for the pair I own. Wow! The seller wants over \$150 US for it! Not quite a small fortune, but not shabby either. Oh, wait, there's another seller with one who only wants a mere \$32. For that, I think I'll *keep* my pins. After all, they are a material link to an early and rather innocent chapter of my life, when sitting in the passenger seat of a Corvette Stingray was a big thing. You'd have to raise the bid to *at least* \$100 to get me to part with one of them ... the second I wouldn't part with for anything in the world.

Perhaps tonight I'll have a dream that I planted them, and that when I woke next morning I found them full grown.



## ANOTHER ASIMOV STORY

Greg Benford

I got this from a friend writing a book on physicists, an incident:

*As I entered the American Tentative Society (a group of science writers who wanted to honor adventurous science) luncheon in June 1978, one of my friends introduced me to Isaac Asimov. A sixtyish man, stocky, with graying mutton chop whiskers, he was best known for his science fiction and popular science books. I said, "I'm glad to meet you. My son is a science fiction fan and he'll be impressed that his Mom met you." Without missing a beat, Asimov replied, "In that case you should have an affair with me so you can brag about it to your son." I was offended by his insensitive overture and walked away from him. How could he imagine his pass would be effective?*

*Later, when the science writers and scientists entered the dining room for the meal and the medals (which went to Frank Drake for pioneering the search for extraterrestrial intelligence and to Jocelyn Bell, the grad student who discovered pulsars), I carefully sat down at a table. A couple of weeks earlier I'd had open surgery to remove my left medial cartilage. My knee had a large bandage over the incision and I was walking with a cane. Asimov sat down next to me, and not long after everyone was seated, he grabbed my left knee. I let out a loud scream. That seemed to deter Asimov from further passes.*

When I told that story recently to a physicist friend, he said that he knew a woman who had similarly been propositioned by Asimov. She responded, "Yes. I'm in Room 519. Why don't you come to my room in half an hour?"

Asimov's eyes opened wide and after a pause, he laughed weakly. Asimov at a loss for words, one of the most prolific writers of all time! His bluff called, Asimov never showed up.



# **RICHARD LUPOFF: A LIFE IN THE ZINES**

Gregory Benford

As a young science fiction fan in the mid-1950s, I already knew that Richard (Dick) Lupoff was ahead of me in the great game of the One True Literature.

From fanzines I knew had been in the Army, so came from the culture I already knew, since my own father was a Lt. Colonel; we had already lived in occupied Japan and Germany. Dick had spent two

comfortable years at Fort Benning and Fort Gordon, Georgia, and Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. But he came to my attention when in 1958 he started looking for a job as a writer or editor. He said he “would have loved working for John Campbell or Anthony Boucher or Horace Gold as an assistant at one of the science fiction magazines of the day,” but the bigger field of computer tech, just beginning. Dick got a job as a technical writer for Sperry Univac—a computer that became a metaphor: Univac! It had 1000 words of memory then (!), about 10 kilobytes, and filled a room.

Reader, I read in fanzines of Dick’s job there and his move to IBM — and used his reflections on that in memory when I wrote my winning entry for a F&SF story competition in 1964, my first sale—my only fantasy, with a unicorn and Univac in it, by the contest’s constraints. Dick’s amusing comments on the early tech industry stuck in my mind. Meanwhile Dick started his arc toward sf pro status.

By mid-60s Dick had edited and written himself into our genre, with his first book, *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure* in 1965. I noticed his first novel, *One Million Centuries*, and liked it in 1967. Big, expansive stuff.

He was a passionate fan of comic books: superheroes, science fiction and horror. Same as me — Jules Verne, Heinlein, Clarke, etc. But Dick was into horror, too, including “The Dunwich Horror” by H.P. Lovecraft — who thought he was an sf writer!

Dick hit all the mags and was a burgeoning force. He gave me good advice. We even collaborated on a satirical novel, Dick managing an introducing chapter that resonates with luscious memories of the 1950s, backseat love, the aroma of youth. But we never wrote more, alas.

In the science fiction magazines — *Galaxy*, *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *Other Worlds*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*—I found a path to science, while Dick found many others. I especially liked *Xero*, his Hugo-winning fanzine about mostly the pulp, comics and mag world. How many fanzines have had a book reprint their best? To a first approximation, as we say in physics, one.

My brother and I had started publishing a fanzine, *Void*, that came to some prominence in last 1950s into 1960s, with other fan editors coming in to help, notably Ted White and Terry Carr. Both went on to be pro writers and editors, as I did, too — though for me always a hobby. Dick was a leader in our generations march from fanzines to prodom, a pattern stretching back to the 1930s. First write half a million lousy words, out of sight, then send your better stuff to the prozines...

He made his big break by quitting computer work and moving to Berkeley, where we first met, as I recall. He plunged in, immersing in the rock scene there (while still raising a family) and writing novels like *Sacred Locomotive Flies*, *Space War Blues*, *The Triune Man*, *Sun's End*, and *Circumpolar!*, plus maybe his best, a fantasy novel, *Sword of the Demon*, that had great creative zing. Better than Tolkien, I thought; still do.

*The Adventures of Professor Thintwhistle and His Incredible Aether Flyer* with Steve Stiles invented steampunk before my Orange County friends did, and doesn’t get enough credit.

But Dick’s career hit a bump and he did other things than SF. As he puts it, “The fact is, I didn’t quit, I was fired.” He had more courage than I. Never would I attempt to be a full-time writer; he did, always a risk. I had a PhD and wanted to do science, but I fathom the lure of the full-time pro.

His attitude toward life is best embodied in a wonderful photo of him and Pat in superhero costume. Name any writer who could show himself better than this!

Dick has soldiered on, still active, still coming. I admire that. I like the way this book circles round on his life, revisiting some notes, building on them. His life is a tale well told — a lesson in the tides of genre.







# ROBIN GOODFELLOW

You need not be a Shakespearean scholar, and recognize the full name of Puck from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to identify the likely lad to our right as a puckish good fellow indeed – for **Robin Johnson**, Chair of the first Aussiecon, fan Guest of Honor at the last, is universally hailed as such throughout SF fandom. He descended upon Florida in early August, and we, Rosy & Guy Lillian, had the delight of showing him a satellite launch, the Kennedy Space Center, and a marvel or two of St. Augustine, met by a great science fiction couple. Terrific Midsummer days, no dream involved!







On Robin's first evening in Florida, we introduced him to Joe and Patty Green. Robin had a long confab with Joe about science fiction and Patty helped him configure the new cellphone he'd bought for his journey. The next day we were off for the Kennedy Space Center, where we broiled in the heat, saw a good IMAX film, and enjoyed a close-up visit with a space shuttle (below).

The *Atlantis* seemed a little worn, but what shuttle wouldn't after umpteen trips to outer space? The Greens and we Lillians witnessed its final launch into orbit. Here Robin chats with NASA retiree Tim Potter beside the beautiful old ship. Just out of camera range, a full-scale model of the Hubble Space Telescope.



Our bus tour of the KSC took us by the gi-normous Vehicle Assembly Building, the launch pads for the moon missions, and a prone Saturn V. That sucker was *big*. The museum also boasts Apollo 14's command capsule, moon rocks, spacesuits, and – as you see – journalistic celebrations of America's greatest space achievement. *Hot* – I nearly passed out – but extraordinary fun.





**Joe & Gaye Haldeman, Robin & Rosy** ... chowing down at St. Augustine's splendid Columbia Restaurant. Earlier that day, a rocket launch. Below, Robin ascends the Castillo de San Marcos.





## *Our Friend Robin – an Appreciation*

*Rose-Marie Lillian*

What's so great about fandom? People like Robin Johnson. In addition to his world class fanac—former Worldcon chairs are still a very small club – he's also a world class travel companion.

My favorite travel-with-Robin adventure occurred some years ago after Australia's national SF/F con, Swancon, in Perth. Since we had about 48 hours to kill on our DUFF trip Robin and Aussie fan Bill Wright suggested we join them on a trek to Fremantle and then onwards to Rottnest Island off the coast.

We had just enough time in Fremantle to take in the fascinating and horrifying Batavia exhibit in the Shipwreck Galleries in the Western Australia Museum, then we were off west by ferry to Rottnest Island. Rottnest is a protected beautiful nature preserve of about seven square miles. In fact, it's small enough to bike around, which Bill recommended, so we did—right under the sweltering April sky. After about 90 minutes of such enervating activity we hied ourselves back to the relative cool of the restaurant where we were to meet Bill and Robin.

Bill looked as tired and sweaty as we felt. Robin, on the other hand, looked just as cool and collected as if he had just stepped off the ferry. Upon inquiry, we discovered that Robin had jumped on the hop on-hop off air-conditioned tour bus that takes visitors to multiple stops around the island, including secluded coves, beaches and secret hideaways.

So if you're ever out and about with Robin Johnson and you're wondering about that travel advice he's offering? Just take it.

