

confuSon

"The son of confusion"

"BIG-HEARTED"

HOWARD

In

FORD

MEMORY. . .

Volume 1

Number 3

I could write about Howard, but others have done it so much better! The following all came from the internet, primarily listservs, but the first is different, as you will see. Let's start this off on a high note, **Howard's 80th birthday**

This comes from the website of chadnibal, a family member/friend.



<http://www.livejournal.com/userinfo.bml?user=bighowardbighoward>'s 80th birthday party was a great success, his daughters & grandkids made several nice collages & displays of old pictures & SF stuff, seven of his friends & all the family except the grandson who is in Turkmenistan with the Peace Corps showed up, even one great-grandson.

Four of the bunch were guys he'd known over 50 years, Elliott Broderick, Dean McLaughlin, George Young, and Fred Prophet. All of them, incidentally, were on the concom for the 1959 Detroit Worldcon - the only one missing was Roger Sims, who lives in Florida now. Dean has published 4 novels and a story collection, and has been nominated for a Hugo like Howard. It may indicate that I'm old-fashioned, or a dirty old man before my time that I have so much in common with Howard, but at least there was a small younger crowd of Howard's friends: me, Kathy that owns the used bookstore on Michigan Ave, and my ex-girlfriend Sharon.

Someone pointed out that this party is great evidence that Howard has had a successful life... his kids turned out well, the grandkids were actually helping out quite a lot and being polite hosts for the party, it is really unusual to see four generations all coming together that way. There was quite a lot passing around of photo albums and "who is in that picture?" including E.E. "Doc" Smith, Gene Rodennberry, Bob Tucker, Ben Bova, and Isaac Asimov. The food was great, too,

including homemade guacamole, yummy punch with strawberries, and fantastic ribs. Howard had some of the Makers Mark whiskey that someone got him, and Sharon actually tried the leftover cheap jug wine from Howard's last big party 30 years ago!

We'll follow it with this sad announcement. Curt Phillips sent in the first extended notice, reprinted here as I thot he had done it very well:

And here is the extended and corrected notice that I've sent around to other fan groups this evening:

"Here is the posting that I'd hoped I'd never have to write:

Howard DeVore has died. I just got the news from Mark Hickman who got it directly from Howard's family. It happened yesterday, Dec. 31 in the late morning. He'd been moved to a rehab facility and had been there about 15 hours and simply passed away. Mark knew no other details as yet, but speculates that Howard will be creamated and that there will be a memorial service at Worldcon and at Midwestcon.

"Big-Hearted" Howard DeVore was one of the best known and best liked fans of all time. He was a SF reader and collector since at least the mid 30's, and when he went off to fight in WWII he moved all his books and magazines into a spare room of his house and padlocked the door shut so that he'd never have to worry about what was happening to his collection while he was away. The key went with him to Europe and flew with him on all his combat missions over France and Germany. Howard was an Ariel Gunner in the US Army 8th Air Force and flew the belly-gunner's position in a B-17, probably the most dangerous single job on that aircraft. He rarely talked about his war years and when he did it was nearly always some incredible tale of outwitting the Army at it's own game - a practice at which Howard was a master. However, several years ago Howard and I both took on the job of guarding the huxter room at Pulpcon and spent the night alone locked in that big old room full of pulps. Howard wasn't able to sleep and so we sat up most of the night and talked. Eventually he started talking about his experiences in WWII and for the first time I heard the real story of the horrors he saw first hand in the skys over Europe. I won't go into details, but his war bore little resemblance to the prettied-up war movies that we've all seen. He saw war at it's worst and did his job in spite of it all. Ever since that night Howard's been one of my heros of WWII. He'd have laughed at that idea. I think he'd actually have hated that idea. But heros are rarely the guys who ask for the dirty jobs; they're the guys who get the dirty job done no matter what the cost. And, that was Howard DeVore.

In fandom, he did it all and cast a wide shadow. He published zines - most recently in PEAPS and in other apas, was involved - directly and behind the scenes - with *many* conventions, was a master SF dealer and became the dealer that editors and other professionals turned to for rare SF, he was an early mainstay of the NFFF, First Fandom, and other fan groups, was a publisher of NFFF publications and wrote a book or two of his own, and no doubt did a great deal more that we'll all hear about in the fullness of time.

Howard's greatest fannish impact was as a mentor and a friend to countless fans all across the entire spectrum of fandom - including me. He was the guy who would always know the info that you wanted or would know where to find it. He knew where to find books and pulps that no one else could find. He had the connections and the knowledge of how to use them. A very handy fellow to be friends with.

He was hardly perfect. Howard smoked too much and continued to do so long after he knew better. He could get furious when a friend of his was being done wrong by anybody else - and would frequently assume the duty of correcting the situation - which was something

else that he was very good at. He and his late wife Sybil raised a good bunch of children. I finally met one of his daughters, Karol last year at Midwestcon and immediately found her to be as delightful to talk with as her dad (and much prettier...) Last year when the Midwestcon weekend came around I was still at work that Friday and had had a terrible week. Irritable co-workers, angry surgeons, lost surgical instruments, grouchy patients complaining, heartbreaking patients dying... and just at quitting time I got the news that the vacation time off I'd requested had been denied. In that moment when all seemed lost, I remembered that the Midwestcon was to be held that weekend and that I'd heard a report that Howard -who'd been very ill -was thinking of showing up for it. In that very instant I knew how I'd spend my weekend. I drove directly home, packed a small bag, grabbed some cd's of old time radio shows for the truck, kissed Liz good-bye for the weekend and drove all night to Cincinnati, arriving early that morning for Midwestcon. I was so sleepy all that day that I probably appeared drugged to all who saw me, but I grabbed a catnap outside by the pool and managed to function. Met some good friends, and got to hang out with Howard, who had indeed shown up. He looked better than he had in quite a while and proudly reported that he'd quit smokeing and had lost about 35 pounds. I'd always known that he could do both of those things whenever he'd just make up his mind to do so. We talked several times that day about little things; old times at conventions, people we'd known in PEAPS, about a video tape he'd sent me of a flight on a restored B-17 that he'd taken a few years ago - one of his first flights since leaving the Air Force over 50 years earlier. That evening at the end of the day, we just sat and enjoyed being there with our friends. And that was the whole point. That's always the whole point, really. I'm very glad now e that I followed my hunch last year and dropped everything to drive all night to attend Midwestcon for only a day. That was the last time I got to sit and talk with Howard, and it was a very, very good day.

Till the next time, Howard..."

Curt Phillips

I followed it on three listservs; fictionmags, pulpmags and Timebinders. Following are some excerpted comments.

First, from Joyce Scrivner on pulpmags. Look it over; you might be able to help:

The Worldcon this year (LACON) has asked me to put together a display about Howard for the convention - he will still be their fan guest even if he is not there. I am permitted more or less to do what I want, and have some funding to cover it.

Would *you* - most of you I don't know - be willing to contribute? I have very little knowledge of Howard's pulp background, though I visited him several times. I'm interested in pictures, stories, printed material (I know Howard did a vast amount of printing) - and am willing either to copy or borrow originals.

I plan to ask several of you individually, but if I don't know you (as I don't know most of you), think about this, and write me.

Much thanks.

Joyce Scrivner

PS. I visited him several years ago and took away most of the fanzines he had at that time. I can offer an original Howard Devore printed membership card for Detention (the Detroit Worldcon.) If you'd like another memory, gift.

*** joyce scrivner *** joyce.scrivner@gt.org *** all opinions my own ***

Howard and I had swapped emails over the years, but I don't recall having a face-to-face with him; surely he was at MagiCon or, going much further back, the ChiCon in '52!

Duane Spurlock

Thanks for sharing this info, Curt. It's very sad, but anyone who ever met Howard will never forget him. He was bigger than life, like many of the heroes in the pulps he loved. I'll miss him.

-Duane

Then there was the question about the worldcon keeping Howard on a Guest of Honor. Here are a couple of responses:

Alistair Durie, from fictionmags, wrote:

I am sorry to hear about Howard. I am not sure I ever met him at Pulp Con but did correspond with him. A sad loss.

A couple of points occurred to me. Howard didn't seem to speak willingly about his war years - or may just have been reticent. I once said to my father, who was demobbed as a Lieut. Colonel - "You never talk about the war years". He replied "Some of us didn't enjoy it." and that was the end of the discussion. So I am still in ignorance of much of it except what he put in his memoirs.

I see the family wondered whether Howard could still be the GoH at Midwestcon. There is a precedent for this. The Surrey County Cricket Club wanted Peter May, a well-known player and personality, to be their next president. Unfortunately he died but the club went ahead anyway and after discussion with the heraldry experts named him "President honoris causa". I may have the latin slightly wrong, but no doubt a latin-expert chum can correct me if necessary.

Alistair

To which David Langford replied:

Precedent within fandom, too. The 1999 Worldcon in Melbourne kept George Turner on the GoH list despite his death in 1997. And Bob Sheckley (not being well enough to travel) was a GoH-in-absentia at the 2005 Glasgow event.

-David Langford

**TIMEBINDERS@
SFLOVERS.ORG**

It saddens me to no end to report that Howard DeVore died on 31 December 2005.

Damn.

I just found out on the digest (dated today) of the Ann Arbor-based Stilyagi mailing list.

The man cast a large shadow on Detroit fandom, and not just because of his size, either. He will be sorely missed.

Requiescas in pace, Howard.

Al Bouchard

"If it makes sense, it's probably against Postal regulations."

-A quasiquote from
Howard DeVore

From Pulpmags:

Kurt,

You summed up pretty well my feelings of Howard DeVore. I talked to him a bit at the Pulpcon I attended about 7 or 8 years ago, but didn't know him well in person. I knew him best from his PEAPS contributions, which as you say were always entertaining for a variety of reasons.

I think the Howard DeVore quip that you paraphrase is slightly askew, though still typical Howard. He could not remember whether the issue he was looking at was December 1932 or December 1933 [or some such years]. (The month of issue would be listed on the cover.)

In almost every PEAPS contribution, he would also mention his daughters. How fortunate they are to have had such a wonderful man for a father.

Joe Sokola

From pulpmags, Kurt Shoemaker wrote:

Hello, Clearly, Howard is a blessed man to have such friends and family.

I was fortunate to know Howard -- not as well as Brian or Curt, but I knew him, talked with him frequently at Pulpcon and on the phone a few times. I bought some 'Adventure' pulps from him as well. His contributions to PEAPS always rewarded the reader whether funny, angry, sad, eventful, or whathaveyou -- and always entertaining.

Curt is right: Howard lived his life on his own terms and to those who knew him he lived it with heart.

Tot siens, amigo,
Sincerely, Kurt.

There is much more I could include. The outpouring was spontaneous and voluminous! However, I feel I have made my point. Howard was much-loved and a very memorable person. He will be missed.

Let me finish with this, from his girls:

From Howard's "girls":

Earlier today we sent a brief email to everyone on our Dad's address list. We are not sure if it went out as intended, and so following is a copy:

THE BIG HEART IS SILENCED. December 31, 2005

It meant the world to Dad to know he had so many "fans". Per Howard's wishes, there will be no funeral service. We will celebrate his life at the 2006 Midwestcon.

We are asking Curt Phillips and Chad Childers to pass along the following additional information:

We are all heartbroken and saddened beyond words at the loss of our Dad. No parent could have loved us more, and while he could at times seem crumudgenly, that was all a big put-on. He would have given everything he owned if one of us needed something. We're sure some of you have seen the same in him. We wish to say only that his passing was quick and he was in no pain.

Our greatest wish was for him to live long enough to make it to LA. He was honored and excited at the prospect. We had all planned to go to LA with him and to be a part of his

enjoying this honor. We do not know if this situation has occurred before with a GOH, or how this will be handled. We are hoping to talk with the convention committee to see if perhaps he can still be the fan GOH, and maybe we could come as his representatives. That may not fit with their plans, so we will wait and see.

All of our lives our Dad has told us that he did not want to have a funeral, that he wanted us to hold a wake for him at the Midwestcon. So it shall be - June 2006 - - - and he wanted all of his friends to "drink a shot of Jim Beam for me". We hope you all will. We would so appreciate it if anyone who can, would send us any personal remembrances, funny tales, stories, online postings etc that you have about our Dad. They would be a treasure we can all keep, and also bring to Midwestcon and to LA to share with you. They can be sent to our Dad's email or to his home address or to us. (bigheartedhoward@comcast.net) (4705 Weddel, Dearborn Heights, Mi. 48125). Also, if you can pass this information to anyone who knew our Dad and may not be online, we would appreciate it.

Cheryl Davidge

Karol Sissom

Suzanne Reynolds

Thank you all for being his friend. Each of you enriched his life and brought him happiness.

As Dad always lovingly referred to us: "the girls" - - -
Chery, Karol and Suzy

(and the grandkids! Julianne, Ian, Jesse, Sarah, and Jillian)