



\_ L \_ e \_ i \_ b \_ o \_ w \_ i \_ t \_ z and "The Darfstellar") and Octavia Butler ("Speech Sounds" and "Bloodchild"), each with two wins out of two nominations. Next week: who has the most Hugo wins in the fiction categories? [-ecl]

THE MT VOID

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2.

David Betancourt  
Shamrock Chemical  
Old Bridge, New Jersey  
January 18, 1996

Dear MR. LEEPER,

As a neighbor to you in Old Bridge, Shamrock Chemical would like to call your attention to a situation that should be of interest to you and your family. Shamrock Chemical has for many years been a good corporate citizen of Old Bridge, New Jersey, and we would like to be a better one.

As you may know, the Township of Old Bridge recently sued Shamrock Chemical for polluting the local ground-water supply. The court gave us ten years to desist from this practice. Ten years is a long time to subject you and your family to toxic chemicals. I think that Shamrock can be a much better citizen than that. But of course the American legal system can be very expensive and following the court case of the Township of Old Bridge v. Shamrock Chemical, we simply do not have the funds to clean up any faster. And the sad fact is that it is your family that is at risk.

Now is your chance to show your support for Shamrock chemical's clean-up. Please give as much as you can so we in Old Bridge can once again feel safe drinking water from the tap.

Yours truly,

David Betancourt

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Yes, I am concerned about toxic waste in my drinking water. Please accept my contribution to the Shamrock Clean Water Project in the amount of:

\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ \$200 \_\_\_ \$1000 \_\_\_ \$10,000

MR. LEEPER  
AT&T--RM MT 3D-441  
200 LAUREL AVENUE  
MIDDLETOWN NJ 07748

THE MT VOID

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3. Please note that the last three non-festival notices, including this one, each of the form of a letter, represent a satire. They are a slight exaggeration--only a slight one--of how bad things have gotten. But it is not unusual for me in one day to get four such "beg" letters, often for opposing points of view. Next week I'll tell you about a letter I really \_ d\_ i\_ d get.

Mark Leeper  
MT 3D-441 908-957-5619  
...mtgzfs3!leeper

The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.  
-- Oscar Wilde

WILD CARDS: CARD SHARKS edited by George R. R. Martin  
Baen, ISBN 0-671-72159-3, 1993, \$5.99.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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For this "Wild Cards" book, Martin has changed publishers from Bantam to Baen and returned to the format of multiple stories, each written by a single identified author, rather than a single

narrative with each author doing a separate character.

There is a framing story, though: someone has set fire to a church in Jokertown and Hannah Davis is assigned to investigate. This investigation brings her into contact with eight very different characters, each with his or her own story to tell, each with a piece of the puzzle (reminiscent of C i t i z e n K a n e). (Without having read the initial "Wild Cards" book, however, none of them will make a lot of sense, so be warned.) Though the authors all bring their own individual strengths to their sections, "The Crooked Man" by Melinda M. Snodgrass is the stand-out story, a realistically drawn picture even if a trifle obvious. The parallels to bigotry towards gays and lesbians, and towards people with AIDS, is much more heavy-handed than in previous volumes I had read and worked better, I think, with the lighter touch.

I had stopped reading the "Wild Cards" books for a while, in part because I thought they were moving too much away from science fiction and into horror, and in part because I didn't think the single-narrative formula worked as well as the short stories. (But then, I'm an inveterate short story fan!) With this new book, Martin seems to be returning to the style of the earlier books, and I recommend it to fans of those books.

MAP OF THE HUMAN HEART  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
Copyright 1993 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: This could have been a story about racism, it could have been a film with historical scope, it could have been a film about courage in wartime or an anti-war movie, it might have been about an engaging love triangle story, it might have been a study of contrasting cultures, but in trying to be all those things this murky film is not enough of any of them. (Warning: this review tells more plot than I usually do as the film is otherwise difficult to describe. For most readers I don't believe I will be damaging the enjoyment of the film.) Rating: 0 (-4 to +4).

With T\_h\_e\_N\_a\_v\_i\_g\_a\_t\_o\_r, New Zealand director Vincent Ward showed he had an unusual photographic style, some interesting ideas, and an occasional mystical impulse. They all worked fairly well in that small film. M\_a\_p\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_H\_u\_m\_a\_n\_H\_e\_a\_r\_t is a big film, but Louis Nowra's screenplay from Ward's own story assumes it is bigger than it actually is and that Ward's direction can deliver more than it actually can.

Avik (played by Robert Joamie as a child and Jason Scott Lee as an adult) is an Inuit--or as he says, an Eskimo--who meets a cartographer and tells him his life story. As a boy in 1931, his life was changed when another cartographer, Walter Russell (played by Patrick Bergin) came to his people's land to survey for maps. Russell is impressed with the boy's curiosity and deeply affected when he discovers that the boy has tuberculosis. Russell arranges to take the boy to a Montreal Catholic hospital and school, flying the boy in the open biplane the cartographer came in. One taste of flying and the young Inuit is hooked for life.

At the hospital Avik is traumatized by all the scientific equipment. He is mistreated by the nuns, who are portrayed as extremely bigoted against Protestants and "half-breeds." Avik forms a close relationship with Albertine (played by Annie Galipeau as a child and Anne Parillaud as an adult). He is half white, half Inuit; she is half white, half Indian. They are torn apart by the nuns. In 1941 events draw Avik into the RAF and he, Russell, and Albertine will cross paths again.

This is a film with at least two or three very memorable scenes--one over the Albert Hall, one involving a barrage balloon, and a horrifying sequence set in Germany--but it still leaves loose ends and is unsatisfying. Patrick Bergin's last scene comes totally

out of left field and seems to belong more to a surrealistic satire. The scenes of air warfare are of a unique style that perhaps gives them the feel of real Army-Air Force World War II documentaries: the scenes are murky and more than once scenes seemed out of focus.

This was a film I was anxious to see and tried very hard to enjoy, but I have to say that it really did not work for me. This British-Australian-French-Canadian-Japanese co-production is a hodge-podge of too little of too much. I give it a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

LOST IN YONKERS  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
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Capsule review: Two boys have to spend the summer of 1942 with their steel-willed grandmother and out-to-lunch aunt in Neil Simon's L\_o\_s\_t\_i\_n Y\_o\_n\_k\_e\_r\_s. While there is some of the old Simon whimsy here, there is also some real human drama without sugar-coating. This play won a Pulitzer Prize and may well be one of the best films of the year. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4).

Neil Simon built his reputation on warm, whimsical comedies with occasional pieces of real drama mixed in, as long as they do not threaten too much to spoil the play or movie-goer's day. L\_o\_s\_t\_i\_n Y\_o\_n\_k\_e\_r\_s is not typical Simon. There is some whimsy here, certainly, but there is also some tragedy and some authentic human pain. A lot of people may be disappointed by L\_o\_s\_t\_i\_n Y\_o\_n\_k\_e\_r\_s; I certainly was not.

It is the summer of 1942 and Eddie Kurnitz, a widower, needs to have someplace to leave his two sons Jay and Arty (played by Brad Stoll and Mike Damus) so that he can make some money to pay his debts. Reluctantly he's decided to leave them with his mother, the



family matriarch. Grandma Kurnitz (played by Irene Worth) loves nobody and is herself unloved. Her family has always lived in fear of her and it has never really functioned as a family. This is the story of the boys and that summer, but even more, this is the story of the boy's Aunt Bella, who lives with her mother. Aunt Bella has always seemed a little out-to-lunch to the boys (and everybody else), and the idea of spending a summer with both the aunt and the grandmother is less than promising for Arty and Jay. This is the story of how the boys come to love their aunt and understand their grandmother, but the telling is not pat. Understanding does not always bring forgiveness. While there is hope by the end of this story, there is also some disappointment.

Receiving top billing is Richard Dreyfus as the boys' uncle who is fooling around on the shady side of the law. He has double-crossed a flashy hood and is using his mother's house to hide out in temporarily. While he gives a little panache to his role and some action to the film, his part is really mostly distraction from the main plotline. In the end he is just there to show one more way Grandma Kurnitz's personality has damaged the lives of his children.

I may be one of the few people in the world who was not bowled over by Mercedes Ruehl in T\_h\_e\_F\_i\_s\_h\_e\_r\_K\_i\_n\_g, but L\_o\_s\_t\_i\_n\_Y\_o\_n\_k\_e\_r\_s is a good film and it is mostly due to her. She has already won a Tony Award for her role as Aunt Bella on Broadway and she may get an Oscar

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nomination.

Martha Coolidge's direction is engaging and the feel of 1942 is well conveyed, considering that it depends mostly on one house, a street, and a candy shop. Critical comment seems very mixed on L\_o\_s\_t\_i\_n\_Y\_o\_n\_k\_e\_r\_s, but I am inclined to think it is because it has been so long since we have seen real human drama on the screen that we may have forgotten how to react to it. I give L\_o\_s\_t\_i\_n\_Y\_o\_n\_k\_e\_r\_s a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

