

# SPARTACUS

Issue no. 16 \* Aug-Sept 2016

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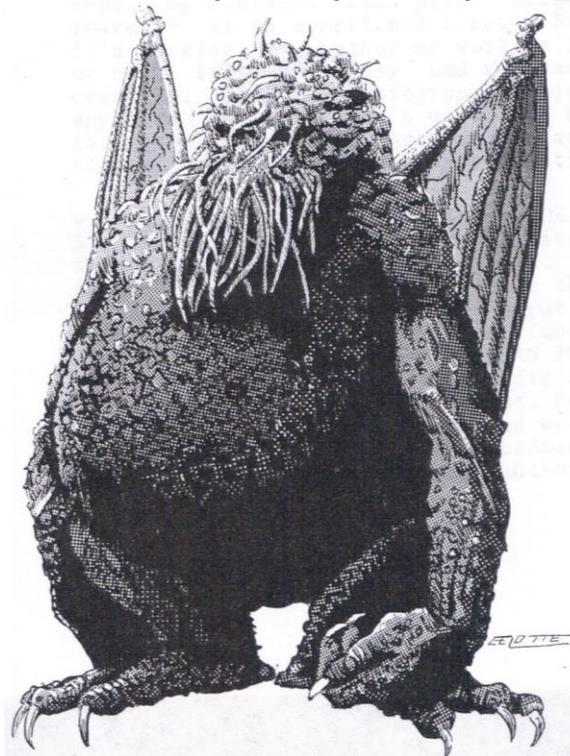
I had thought to gag up Cthulhu here – stolen from Meade Frierson’s 1972 *HPL* – with a Donald Trump wig ... but he looks enough like Trump as he is. *Make R’lyeh great again.*

Before I delve into the nightmarish maelstrom of madness and malarkey that is the 2016 Republican campaign, there are more personal matters to discuss. Like, for instance, **WORLDCON**.

Rosy and I couldn’t go to MidAmeriCon II, and we tried to mask our gloom with lighthearted resignation. I affected boredom with the idea, weariness with the Puppies and a lack of interest in the Hugos my excuse. This was all bushwah, of course: we were desolate. Especially – and until – the Hugo results issued forth.

I say “especially” because I wished even more fervently that we had been there. I say “until” because the news coming out of MAC II’s award ceremony was so great it blew away the fog of gloom.

Once again, the rightist Puppies who had tried to overwhelm or mock the awards were vanquished. Exceptional candidates won down the line, and in the fan categories, the triumph was complete. **Mike Glycer** won, and his *File 770* – and praise us, SF fandom, for getting it right at last: **Steve Stiles** was named Best Fan Artist. After a thousand vain nominations, this generous and humorous member of the fan community rook home a rocket, and I say hallelujah. About time, and who knows, perhaps there’s hope for me (14 failed trips to the final ballot) too! Right? Hello? Hallelujah?



In all seriousness, the evening would have been special even without Stiles' victory – although that win made it an historic occasion. **Joe Siclari & Edie Stern** honored with the Big Heart Award – super people, great friends, wonderfully deserved. And much as I griped because several of my candidates for Best Novel were skunked off the ballot, I can have no complaints about the book that won. Although I've just begun N.K. Jemisin's *The Fifth Season*, I can tell already that it boasts a superb use of the language – a compelling reason to keep reading and a quality I know I'll keep enjoying. I couldn't care less about the ethnicity of the author; the wordsmithery marks excellent and compelling SF.

I would be lying if I said the 2018 worldcon vote didn't disappoint me – the New Orleans bid would have brought the Worldcon to my adopted home town again and who knows, I might have secured a fun fannish job with it. It was a close vote and a good show. But I can't help but dance in the streets over one aspect of San Jose's victory: **Chelsea Quinn Yarbrow** has been named GoH.

Famed in story and legend is the tale of how, in 1968, the Elves, Gnomes and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder and Marching Society held a special meeting in Mountain View, California. The occasion was a debate on Harlan Ellison's new original anthology, *Dangerous Visions*. Harlan himself was moderating – as Ed Wood said, "Hoo hah!"; it was my first encounter with Ellison. I won't describe the whole evening, but suffice it to say that a glowingly beautiful young lady sitting behind me asked Harlan a good question, I asked him another, and that Ellison said to me (and I have never forgotten this) "Have you tried writing? Well please do. When I marry *her* I'll adopt you!"

The "her" he meant was the beautiful lady behind me. That was Quinn. She has been my "fannish mama" and steadfast friend ever since. She gave me and Tom Whitmore jobs at the '69 worldcon which brought us into contact with every pro SFer in St. Louis. She made me Official Photographer at two Nebula banquets. Of course, she also wrote dozens of marvelous SF and fantasy and mystery and horror novels (most famously, the annals of Count St. Germain), and I imagine that's why San Jose is honoring her – but I know why *I* would.

It's fantastic news. I dance.

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I do *not* dance over the most infamous incident at the convention: the ejection of Hugo nominee **Dave Truesdale**. For most of my information I'm grateful to Moshe Feder and Darrell Schweitzer.

I haven't seen Dave in person since the first San Antonio Worldcon, when his fanzine came within eight votes of the Hugo. At that time I thought him an excellent fella. Since then, somehow, he has become affiliated with the Sad Puppies, which both placed him onto this year's ballot and foredoomed his chances.

My understanding is that Truesdale, moderating a panel on the present state of the genre, launched into a denunciation of Social Justice Warriors and political correctness and went on in this wise for several minutes, monopolizing the microphone and thereby blocking others from expressing their views. I also understand that afterwards the panel was mostly amenable. Nevertheless Truesdale received an e-mail from MidAmeriCon II booting him out of the event.

The argument in support of MAC's action that I read on Facebook stated that since the Worldcon is not a governmental entity but a private business, it can throw out whoever it wants for whatever reason it wants. Complaints that the con violated Truesdale's freedom of speech were just Too Bad. If the con bought the complaint that Dave had used his position to silence other panelists, then it could do whatever it saw fit.

The panel, I understand, is on line, so anyone who wishes to can judge for themselves. I haven't listened to it, because frankly, I think the panel irrelevant. The issue is larger.

It is true that the Bill of Rights is a limitation on governmental activity. But it is more. It is a statement of American morality. It is the way we regard proper human discourse, no matter what the venue. And what it declares is the high value we place on expression with a minimum of restriction. In simple terms, freedom of speech.

No one should be expelled from a science fiction convention unless he or she has done or said some physical injury to another person. (Or a pet. I hate people who hurt animals.) I've heard nothing reported that maintained that Truesdale did any such thing.

I would be very interested in hearing MidAmeriCon's side of this question. What was the complaint? Who made the decision? What was the reason? Why wasn't Truesdale's point of view sought? Why was the most draconian action taken instead of a lesser one? Future worldcons: what's *your* standard?

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And now that we've mentioned Freedom of Speech ... The kerfluffle about quarterback Colin Kaepernick refusing to stand for the national anthem has not died down since it began – it fact, it has grown and morphed into a general movement among SJWs in the NFL, and those who support their right to protest. The publicity has been extensive, including the first mention of Kaepernick's race.

Of course I support the QB's right to protest as he has. Doing so is a fundamental right recognized from the get-go by the U.S. Constitution. Retribution against him for sitting or kneeling while "The Star-Spangled Banner" is played is impermissible.

That said, I think Kaepernick is wrong, and I would and have stood for the national anthem at sporting events, and not just because of the huge crowd surrounding me. It's because of the way I define patriotism and see our little patriotic gestures. I don't regard them as celebratory, but as aspirational: less as "Look at what we've done!" as "Look at what we *can* do!" We recognize our failings and can fix this stuff. I guess it's the liberal SJW way of looking at most things.

And because of it, I can't react solely with shame to the matters Kaepernick is demonstrating about. Of course, police recklessness and racism in general are (here comes the word of the hour) deplorable. But I don't see our patriotism as a denial that our social problems exist or matter. I see it as a call to action.

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Since *Spartacus* no. 15, we've experienced the entire **Clinton/Trump** presidential contest to date, from the conventions to the first presidential debate. Time to drop yet another name. In 1968 I went to the New Orleans airport to look at a presidential candidate (I think it was Nixon) and took a photograph of a reporter: Theodore H. White. His *Making of the President* series was a brilliant look at presidential campaigns in the mid-century, insightful, fair, balanced. White would take one look at this 2016 contest and swear he'd been slipped a tab of bad acid.

Look back at what he'd be seeing ... the Republican convention, or as I called it, *Marat/Sade II*. Check out the Doonesbury Sunday strip of the characters witnessing that Black Shirt super-rally, and recognizing that it just might color the rest of their lives.

He'd be horrified by Trump's exchange with the Gold Star parents who denounced his proposed Muslim immigration ban at the Democratic convention. His 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment threat joke. His hiring of the professional provocateur Breitbart. The accusations that Clinton is a "bigot" because she condemns bigotry.

The *Dallas Morning News* and Harvard Republican Club both refused to endorse Trump and chose Hillary, joining the expected endorsements by the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Still Trump began his climb up in the polls ... if the polls can be trusted; CNN has been caught fiddling with the makeup of the polling pool to boost Trump's perceived chances.

It's been pretty obvious that much of the media has been boosting Trump. Matt Lauer's obsequious performance in the *Commander-in-Chief Forum* and Jimmy Fallon's repellant fawning are proof of that. Contrast both with Hill's turn on *Between Two Ferns* – a self-parody meant to charm stubborn millennials still embittered over her defeat of Bernie Sanders, now one of her most effective surrogates.

There's been Hillary comment that half of Trump's supporters are "deplorable," based on their pugilistic boorishness and violence at his rallies. There's been the ludicrous response to her dose of

Commented [RL1]:

pneumonia, an obvious case of overwork coming home to roost from which she recovered easily. (I've heard conspiracy theories involving everything from Parkinson's to AIDS.)

Finally, as September struggles to reach a peaceful end, we reach the debates. I was terribly depressed and anxious about them and about the whole campaign at that time. Trump's numbers were up, the talking heads were chattering about his electoral paths to victory – and, being paranoid, I was certain of bad news. But then September 26 came, and the debate came, and I found my nervousness had been thoroughly wasted. Though Trump, that mountain of class, threatened to bring Gennifer Flowers, underscoring Trump's embodiment of the age-old American caricature of a bully with his bimbo, the joke was on him. Every commentator and poll I saw agreed that Hillary mopped the floor with the snorting, sniffing, incoherent, overbearing idiot.

On Facebook you can find a rant by Keith Olbermann – perhaps the best “ranter” around – listing ten dozen or more assaults by Donald Trump against decency and rationality. That he is still viable as a candidate for President – for *President*, for God's sakes – passeth understanding. Clearly he leads, without understanding that he leads, an anti-intellectual and anti-professional and anti-inclusive movement of profound proportion, and deadly effect. We are on the knife-edge of a societal disaster. Trump will poison this society's law through SCOTUS and other judicial appointments for the rest of this century. The damage his election will do to America's social cohesion is beyond imagination. Immigration Police such as Trump promises are one step shy of classic fascist history. “Su carta! Su carta!” You want to live in a country like that? The way is open.

Hillary has *got* to win. And then we who support her must act to reunite this fractured fairytale of a country.

Here's a story I find relevant for some reason:

Many years ago I was crossing Arizona on a Greyhound bus, heading back to college. (Remember, I'm a flight-o-phobe.) I was long-haired and looked ridiculously out of place, but for some reason I wasn't worried. I felt OK in my own country.

Instead I was kind of ... moved. Sitting on the very back seat of the bus was a cowboy couple. They were outdoor folks, deep-wrinkled and blasted by the sun – and they were holding hands like a couple of teenagers. Damned if they weren't in love.

Of course I didn't speak to them; we had nothing in common and I would have sounded condescending and pretentious. They undoubtedly looked at me as I looked at them, as cultural clichés. But they *were* in love, and being a sentimental slob from day one, that knocked me out, then and now. I'm not going to infer a *word* against such people. I'm just going to wish them now as I wished them then, a silent happy-ever-after from the hippie two rows forward.

I hope I feel as good towards them when we come out of this election. I hope I won't resent or despise them because of the injury they and people like them may have done to this country.

They say, and quite fairly, that many Trumpies are people in despair who believe that the world has passed them by, and who are trying desperately and foolishly to re-establish the simple hope that they matter. Such people have my complete sympathy – since I pretty obviously feel that way myself. But their politics stinks of desperation, for there are people advocating their positions who clearly *are* deplorable. The drunks who destroyed that famous natural formation in Oregon. The blonde in the hoodie on Facebook who, one at a time, threw a bucketful of puppies into a river. (Some overhand, some underhand. They look about, curious, when she picks them up. Some squeak a little.) The Trump supporters who call Hillary a bitch and scream “Lock her up!”, who shout “Nigger lover!” and “Traitor!” at journalists, who beat up protesters, who enforce the rule of the thug.

Hillary is right to condemn such behavior and call it for what it is, deplorable. She's also fully justified to pin the antics of his supporters on Trump when he has egged on such behavior, called jokingly for her murder, mocked a disabled reporter, belittled a Gold Star family, and committed dozens of other breaches not merely of political correctness, but of plain human decency. A people that supports such a man is not a people I would be part of, if I had any choice. Trouble is, I don't have any choice.

But. There they sat, a couple of people who loved each other. The Trumpies like them are dead wrong, and they'd mess my country up beyond repair. Should they win, I doubt I'll have much pride in America for the rest of my life.

I was a public defender for more than 22 years, and saw and defended every sort of malfeasance, and yet I still have no illusions. My mantra remains – their opinions I respect not at all, their rights I respect more than they do, their feelings ... not nearly enough. Christ, which is to say, western civilization, commands me to consider the beam in my own eye, and to forgive Trump people – in fact, to love them. But Jesus, Jesus: give me something *easy* to do, why don't You?

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From my father-in-law, Joseph L. Green:

My first new collection in several decades, *RUNNING WILD: UNFETTERED STORIES OF IMAGINATION*, is now out from Wildside Press, and is available at Amazon and other e-book retailers. Here's a direct link to the e-book on Amazon,

<https://www.amazon.com/Running-Wild-Unfettered-Stories-Imagination-ebook/dp/B01LOZGZ2G>

A print version is also available, at Amazon and elsewhere, but is a little pricey at \$15. The e-book is only four.

This is the first book-length production from Greenhouse Scribes, which consists of myself, beloved Patrice, daughter Rosy and husband Guy Lillian. More will follow, including new collections and novels.

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They are passing from us now, those great men of my father's generation who survived the Great Depression, fought back the two most disciplined armies on Earth, created the middle class and turned away Communism, bound the nation with a new sense of justice and equality and took mankind off the planet and into space. They did other things, too. **Harold Rothbard** flew over Germany in a B-17 as a tailgunner, hoping that the next bomb they dropped would catch Hitler in the head. After the war he became a restaurateur in New York (Junior's -- best cheesecake in this dimension) and West Palm Beach, married Rosy's mother and kept her very happy. He was a generous, garrulous, epic man.

And of course, there was **Dave Kyle**, Joe Green's great friend and science fiction fandom's senior boy. Dave's longevity – he was among the First Fans – and accomplishments are well-documented elsewhere. Here a salute to the friendship he brought this house and the great house of SF fandom. Last time we encountered him, at the last San Antonio Worldcon, he said to me, "Always something new to see." What a guy. No one wore a red jacket better.

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That's all for September. I've left out the LOCs this time, but they will show in full next issue – due out around Thanksgiving, when the election will be past, and we'll know. *Vote*, everybody. Like your life and country depended on it.



