



This wheel keep on turnin'...

On the very day that my stint as a Jefferson Parish public defender effectively ended, I met with the head of the St. John Parish Indigent Defender Board and arrived at the terms of my employment there. Less money (much), less work (but more interesting), and the chance to work cases outside of the parish (in my spare *ha* time) ... but work. And a relief from a month of tension and worry.

I'd known the end of the IDB was coming for me for a long time. The grim news reported in SM177 — that Drug Court was being canceled — was only the climax of a tension building for a year and a half. I'd had hopes that I could be reassigned to another division of court, to the work I started out with as a P.D., but the staff roster was full and there was no way. I heard the fatal news in early June. That I had nine years' seniority and was undoubtedly the most productive lawyer in Jefferson in terms of cases closed ... well, it meant nothing.

I had begun distributing resumes, writing samples, and law school transcripts a month before the final news. Once the decision was final I redoubled my efforts. For 8 days things were grim indeed. Then, on June 14, three things occurred. At home, our hot water was turned back on. At court, a lawyer friend who pulls in over a hundred grand a year gave me some info on setting up a private practice. Finally, that same day, the St. John the Baptist IDB called and set up an interview. Less money, a longer commute, but — a job possibility.

I drove to Alexandria, a small city in Louisiana Cajun country, for a seminar — and an interview. The guy and I talked for two hours, and I heard nothing that was not promising. Then I visited him at his office in Laplace, just upriver from here — and two days later, he called to tell me I was in the lead, and he would let me know the following week. Waiting for him to call was Hell itself, so I finally called him. He arranged to meet me at a local coffee house, and there we made the final arrangements and shook hands.

So on July 10th the job began in truth, with hearings held in Edgard, a country town a hoot-&-a-holler upriver. That aspect of things I like very much. It's a pleasant drive through funky rural Louisiana; I enjoy the moss-draped Cajun vistas and the opportunity to cool down from the day. I even like the fact that the courthouse is across the Mighty Muddy from the IDB office, since I get to ride the ferry and let the Mississippi carry away every human trouble.

I am supposed to be working a sliver less than full time, to free me for outside work — but I have a full caseload, two first degree murders coming up (actually, two trials, one defendant), and that outside work is slow in coming. After Chicon, I may blow off the idea completely. The money angle is definitely going to be rough. But I am just plain grateful to be working, to be able to go to Chicago, to be free from that awful fear of having *nothing to do*. Now I have *plenty* to do ... and the determination to have more.

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MOTHER

It took blood, sweat, and tears, but my mother is in nursing home, at last. To say that this is a relief to my poor brother and sister-in-law, who also live on Grand Island, New York, is to beggar the language. It's a relief to me, too. My mother is in the hands of health care professionals, and no longer in peril.

It took some subterfuge. Mama had been hearing bumps in the night for some time, and had finally made up her mind that it was time to leave the apartment she'd been in for almost 20 years. My brother Lance told her that they were going out to look for a new place. Instead, L.E. drove her to a brand new nursing home across the Niagara River. The last time I was in Buffalo, I visited a retirement community operated by the same outfit, a beautiful facility, and I regretted that my mother was too deep into Alzheimer's to handle it. But, I was told, they were building a home for the "memory impaired," to be available in June 2000, and on June 10, 2000, that's where she went.

That's where I visited her over the week of July 4th. My brother announced his intent to clean out Mam's apartment and told me to come fetch what I wanted. My car had 135,000 miles on it, I was beginning a new job, in no shape to deal with family crisis. But crisis doesn't wait until you're ready for it. Dreading everything, I drove up. I stopped in Meridian, Mississippi to eat at Weidmann's, and the walls full of dusty 1940's celebrity photos seemed emblematic of the grim passage of time.

But to my astonishment, once I got to Buffalo, everything looked brighter. Grand Island, where my brother and his family live, was springlike, and the temperate weather felt heavenly to a boy from tropical New Orleans.

I delved through boxes of smelly books from Lance's garage, culling out my Fu Manchu collection (which I just replaced *grr*), and several boxes of apa mailings — SAPS, RAPS, lots of K-a. Gritting my teeth, I ruthlessly trashed everything that wasn't in some way memorable. Yes, glorious stuff from the '70s apa scene went into the dumpster. But I saved everything by the late Cara Sherman — I want to memorialize her in the next **Challenger** — and the project I consider B'rer Gary Brown's youthful masterpiece: **Prime**, the best practical joke I've ever seen in fandom. Tell them the story, Gary!

Fun to revisit my past, especially since my nephews, Steve and John, came out to the garage to kibbitz. Steve is almost 8, wise beyond time. I gave him a facsimile of the Declaration of Independence I found, and as is his way, he asked question upon question upon question. John got me to help him swing and proved that four is one of the ideal ages. My nephews ... I just can't express it. I went north wondering if I'd be welcomed. By the time I left, I didn't want to go. I had to remind myself of Buffalo's repulsive winters, of the fact that I'm 50 — 51 by now — and couldn't practice in New York, of the tiny number of people I know there beyond my relatives and L.E.'s in-laws. But those dudes made up for all of that.

As for my mother, I visited her three times, and each time she seemed brighter and more accustomed to the home. She seemed genuinely delighted when I brought her a doll and some bric-a-brac from her apartment. My mother spread knick-knacks she cared about at every spot where one's eye might light. It helps that she has a small part of her stuff within a glance. I want Lance to take her a TV. It's not that it would hurt her socialization — the other people in that place seem much worse off than she is, some little more than zombies. But if a couple of visits and some mementoes could cheer her so much ...

Of course I didn't reveal how her sons were gutting her place. Going through my mother's apartment was painful. I felt, and feel, more than a little ashamed. My brother and sister-in-law have suffered terribly during Mama's descent into the clench of Alzheimer's, and have just bought a beautiful new home, so I can't blame them for wanting to get rid of everything and put the whole business behind them. But *things have power*, while they can provoke memories. I did my best to bring things back here that meant

something to me.: Family heirlooms of the kind my brother has no use for, but I value above diamonds. Photos, a painting or two, my father's slide rule, high school athletic letter and yearbook, a childhood sculpture. And the glittering rock, about the size of a shoe, that I picked up as my family was leaving Claymont, Delaware, for our first sojourn in the Buffalo area. Decades ago my father glued felt on its flattest surface, and since then it's been a door stop. Now it's a door stop here. Sickeningly limited in terms of space and money, I had to leave much behind. But ... you always do. This wheel keep on turnin'.

Pennsylvania and West Virginia, traversed on the way home, shone so brilliantly in the sun that I thought the forests near to blaze. You could distinguish every leaf.

DEDICATION

On July 4th Lance's in-laws allowed me to join their traditional family backyard get-together. My sister-in-law Marie made me a concoction called "Smore" which she had learned in the Girl Scouts: roasted marshmellow and chocolate between Graham crackers. Eat one and you want ... "Smore!" While the kids waved sparklers, her sister Jane Castiglione and I yapped about life, as we always do when we meet. She's my age, an experienced businesswoman, with grown kids, a glorious smile, and as of now, a Spiritus Mundi to call her own.

COVER

Thanks to Chicago and its cows, many American cities are covering their streets with plexiglass sculptures, hand-painted by the city's *artistes*. Cincinnati, for instance, has pigs. New Orleans has fish. Here are some, as photographed and montaged by me. The wooden one represents, of course, fish sticks.

I TOLD YOU -
NEVER FOLLOW
ME HERE!



SO COVER ME
WITH A CONDOM
AND CALL ME A
COLOSTOMY BAG.



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The Southerner #215 : Toni I see I'm overwhelmingly outvoted on the question of setting up a SFPA website. Therefore, good citizen that I am, I concede defeat. Now that you describe the goodies to be placed therein, I can hardly wait to scan it! Steve — let me know what you need of me.

Three Dinguses : DSCers Clever idea, to feature photos of the contributors typing away at their contributions to this year's oneshot. Rosy looks wonderful, even wearing a denim jacket. E's Joan Rivers says the things are the stylistic rage this summer, but hey, it was over 90 degrees outside. And my Gawd, am I *bald!* There's only one explanation — it's Joe Celko's revenge. If I ever start fondling tin cans in a suspicious manner, call the men in white coats.][General comment, which I hope will go no further. DeepSouthCon was a pretty dull event, and I understand, an unsuccessful one. The committee relied on the beach and our natural Southern camaraderie to fill the void left by a dearth of programming, and so when it needed members to attend con events — like the banquet — it couldn't bring them in. They couldn't make minimum hotel guarantees and lost their shirts. But the aforementioned comradeship, and the sun, and the beach, made up for a lot. As you saw in my photozine earlier, I really did not want the weekend to end.

COOL, if Obsolete, TOYS / The Marsh Creek Gazette : Steve Obsolete or not, your foil press produces a pretty result! It looks like an ornament on a candle chime — the sort Childe GHLIII would watch for hours as the flames swung such around and around, bells tinkling ...][I have flying dreams all the time, which are often anxiety-related (remember how I hate flying). Often I'm in an airplane — which is always larger than a real plane, with bigger windows — preparing to take off. I have had the sort of dreams of the pleasant sort you relate, drifting *sans* airplane over beautiful landscapes, but I've never had your courage and made the dreams real. Your hang-

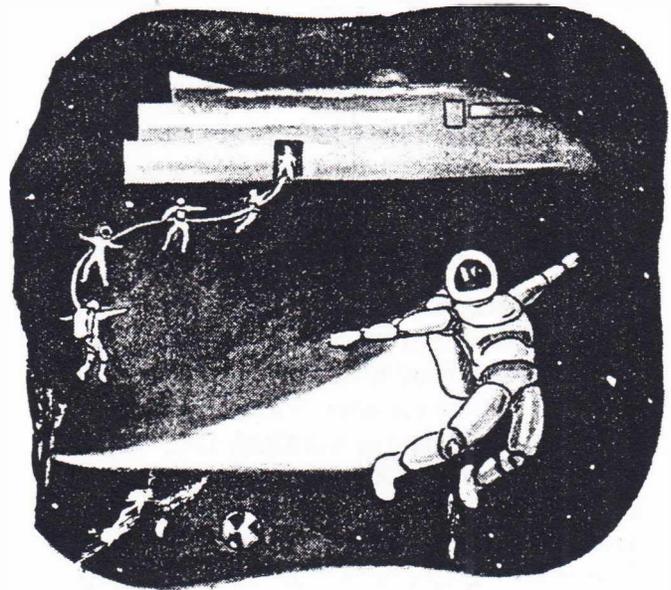
gliding article and photos are an exaltation. I wonder if anyone's ever sailed one of those puppies off of Half Dome at Yosemite?

The New Port News 191 : Ned All hail the Fan Guest of Honor at the 2001 DSC! About damned time!][Local Dan Meyer, worshiper of the Great Green Frog, would love your cover!][What an interesting flaw in H.G. Wells' **Invisible Man** — that if his retinas did not reflect light (in short, if they were invisible) they couldn't form an image on his lenses, and he'd be blind. Someone must have written a short story along those lines — or should, for **Challenger** if not a better outlet.][Impressive that your 91-year-old mother can still drive, do water aerobics, enjoy life. I can barely do *one* of those things at 50!][*yih* Just reading the Mardi Gras song title "If Ever I Cease to Love" starts its hideous refrain within my head. Thanks loads!][The bottom half of the B'ham statue Vulcan has always been weighted with concrete, so there's no way anyone could go *inside* the statue, but in my childhood I remember seeing people on an exterior walkway at the top of its supporting pylon. It was enclosed by the time I went up there myself, and the new model will undoubtedly be even more improved.][My ceiling fan is a mere decoration these days. If I could find the handyman who installed it, I'd try to get him to fix the thing, but like so many people I've known over the past few, he's thin air. Speaking of air, I get by fairly well with two floor fans and my pitiful air conditioner.][SFPA 100 was indeed "1500+ pages." Plus 250 — it was 1750 pages long. Of course, maybe you weren't counting Shadow-SFPA!][I may need a job with the census before this summer is over. Can I ask your sis for a reference?][You explain the efficient appeal of the airplane jackscrew very well, but when I heard about the gizmo after the Air Alaska crash, I thought it an already primitive device for a complex critter like a jet. Isn't a screw just a ramp — one of the basic machines — wrapped around a tapered cylinder? Jets need laser beams and gyroscopes and multi-dimensional

flux phasers and so forth to keep them off the ground.][The DSC took place the week before the worldcon in both '76 and '77; when J.R. Madden tried to bring it back to that date in 1984 he was hooted down. I dislike the spring dates it's been held for the past several; it'll be in May 2001, but I forget when Huntsville will host it in '02.][The reddest lunar eclipse I ever saw was in 1968. Appropriate year. Martin Luther King was already dead, I think, but Bobby Kennedy had yet to meet Sirhan Sirhan. Later Nixon was elected President. So bad was the effect of the moon that year that we had to send Apollo 8 there to tame it!

Frequent Flyer : Tom My brother warned me about the ILOVEYOU computer virus, but he needn't have bothered. My machine was never tetchted ... which **sigh** only figures. ...][Shame on you for forbidding feline Emily access to your fellow toms! When I was in high school, and sexual intercourse was a concept only slightly higher in future probability than faster-than-light travel, cats from miles around would gather *beneath my bedroom window* for hours of spirited and noisome romance. Had they been fighting or eating or anything but what they were doing, it would have been much easier to bear. Bow wow.][I like Springsteen more than you do, but I also have nasty memories of my one E Street Band concert. I was living in Greensboro, then, and the pharmacists my then-wif' worked for bought tickets — did the legwork, anyway — for the whole crew. Because Beth was only a tech, they stuck her (and me) *behind the stage*. Springsteen made a point of coming to the rear to perform, and we missed nothing as far as sound was concerned, but I was p.o.ed, and resolved to become a lawyer so no one would ever treat me and mine so shabbily again. *Hahahaha*][Nice Parthecon report. I like Nashville, Nashville fandom, and Nashville conventions — but I am old now, in fact I am *fubbo*, and the drive and the expense and the feminine pickin's are too long, too much, and too savvy nowadays ...][U-571 was just another submarine movie. "Depth charges! Hang on!" BOOMSHAKEBOOM "Captain, this hulk can't go this deep!" SPRANG "Watch that rivet!" SPURT "Fix that leak!" "I've got it — shoot Waldo out the torpedo tube to make the Germans think we've sunk!" "But I'm still alive!" Bah —

unfit to scrape the torpedo tubes of *Das Boot* or *Run Silent, Run Deep* or *The Enemy Below* or *Operation Pacific*, which has a great John Wayne *look*, frying Martin Milner in his shoes as he cheers a Jap sub going down. With just his expression, the Duke says "That could be *us*, pilgrim."][The dopes who accuse Heinlein of fascism don't know what fascism is — total commitment to the state. He never had much use for governments. A better argument exists that he was a *militarist*, who believed in martial values, but I'd never have the balls to say that to his face.][Mike Resnick's screenplays *have* been produced ... but not the good ones. He got his start scripting schlock gore films for directors who made Roger Corman look like Ingmar Bergman.



This is Not a Minaczine #99 : Richard L. I'm really glad your family had its reunion. Going 8 years without seeing a really close relative would cause my blood to chill.][Your interest in classical music grows as the years mount. I'll have to bum one of your old tapes for my next long road trip. And by the way, if you're not going to write about longhair music in *Mimosa*, I know a zine which would love to publish your appreciation thereof ... I promise more devastating Lynch caricatures by Bryan Norris.][You missed

a boring DSC but a beautiful site and wonderful company.][The fact that **Star Wars I** failed to make the Hugo ballot is a direct rebuke, a purposeful slap at a film that promised much more than it delivered. What's Hugo quality this year? **Titan A.E.**? **Frequency**?][Yes, the TV version of **Fail Safe** did seem dated — and it was, both in subject matter and in presentation. It was a stunt — live TV drama — by actors who never had the chance to do **Playhouse 90**. Speaking of which, I want to see some of those shows ... I liked the TV versions of **Requiem for a Heavyweight** and **Days of Wine and Roses** more than the movies, and I'm told **The Two Worlds of Charlie Gordon** is far better than **Charly**.][Check out George Macdonald Fraser's **Hollywood History of the World** for films in their period, how the movies reflect and distort contemporary history.][Have a happy 100th issue!

Revenant #1 : Sheila Hi and welcome! Since you come from Baton Rouge, we must know each other.][We don't hear a lot about Aggiecon here in SFPA — I myself have attended only one, and that very briefly — so your report is fresh and nifty. I'm sorry you skipped all of Harlan Ellison's appearances; he's been a constant in my fannish experiences (since 1967, anyway), and I'm always interested in accounts of his shenanigans.][Jazz Fest not fannish!?! Not nowadays, maybe, but there was an era when it drew as many true believers to this burg as did Mardi Gras. As for the New Leviathan Oriental Fox Trot Orchestra, it was founded by a SFPAn, the immortal Faruk von Turk (a.k.a. the very mortal Justin Winston). You're talking hardcore SFPA and NOLA history when you talk NLOFTO.][I am proud of your strong fight against cancer. I have a good friend in Georgia who is fighting the same battle with equal panache. Bravo — the guys who swarmed onto Omaha Beach have nothing on you.

Charlotte in 2004 flyer / Offline Reader Vol 1 No. 16 : Irv The flyer looks good, and the Kitty Hawk illo reproduced far better than I thought it would. Lots of luck — keep SFPA posted on the numbers of your presupports, always a good gauge of a bid's progress.][Have I recently described my experience as a census worker in 1980? Two outstanding memories: collecting information from

drivers at a truck stop on a stormy "M" Night, and while checking a non-responding address, chancing upon three voluptuous coeds sunbathing in nothing but suntan oil and bikini bottoms (on their bellies). For some reason my mind lingers on the latter ...][I didn't know you were in Vietnam. What was your "safe" duty there?][I'm so jealous of all this money talk — truly science fiction to me. Once we talked about comics in SFPA, then music, then Hondas, then VCRs, then kids, now retirement funds ... at least, I can talk about comics! But that huge loss in Meditrust ... to what do they ascribe such a disaster?]["[Guy] has much more fun than humans have a right to." You call this fun? *yih*

Light a Candle : George It's surprising — and impressive — how many media conventions you attend with Jill. To us in traditional SF, that's an invisible fandom, an alternate universe of which we know next to nothing. What potential! If all the **X-Files** and **Buffy** partisans would join the worldcon, they'd dominate the Hugos for a decade! Media nuts, *avaunt!*][You mention Perry Como's appearance on a **Superman** cover and make me wonder what celebs of the past have shown up alongside Our Boy in Blue. JFK, of course, on two memorable occasions (once when he dressed up as Clark Kent to safeguard Supes' secret identity), Steve Allen in the daily strip, and my personal favorite, pro wrestler Antonio Rocca — who was a *bad* guy! Too bad I didn't think of this in 1974; it would've made a cool feature for **Amazing World of DC Comics**.][What did I like about **Three Kings**? Rooting for us, the good guys — and the manic direction. Like you say, a middle-eastern western. Didn't see **The Hurricane**, even though I like Denzel Washington and once heard Ruben Carter give a speech. The reviews put me off, and I was annoyed at certain PC focus-group strategems of the trailer, about which I will say no more.][**Fantasia 2000**, while nowhere near the equal of the first film, which had its originality and the direct personal involvement of Walt Disney to its credit, had beautiful computer graphics (particularly in the arctic whales / "Pines of Rome" sequence), a nice sense of whimsy (Donald Duck fills Noah's Ark to the tune of "Pomp & Circumstance"), and the obligatory terrifying scenes ("The Firebird")

metaphorized as Mount St. Helens, doubtless this movie's attempt to match "Night on Bald Mountain" *sans* Disney's moral posturing). Strangely, I'd rank the "Rhapsody in Blue" episode *low* — the animated story was overwhelmed, for me, by the divine music. I give F2K (to coin an abbreviation) a solid A-, the minus coming only because the idea has been done before, and better, but that's no shame, since that "better" was better than anything of its sort, ever.] [**Frequency** really excited and pleased a lot of people. "H" word, "H" word!

Guilty Pleasures : Eve Your experience with Howard's mother — getting her settled in a nursing home and closing down her apartment — echoes my poor brother's duties up in Buffalo. I hope I was some help on my visit. You're right about *stuff* playing too important a role in our lives, but sometimes the memories you say are more vital are tied to the world of *stuff*. *Things* ignite neurons in the mind, reawaken dormant memories — haughtily the English major refers you Proust and the only section of **Remembrance of Things Past** he ever got through, its overture, wherein the taste of a pastry evokes a brilliant reverie of the author's childhood.] [The last seder I attended was at Barrington Hall in Berkeley when I was a college kid. The eldest Jew present was younger than me and about two years older than the youngest, who — correct Goy H. Lillian III if I get this wrong -- had the duty of hiding the matzo or something. I hope Cherokee Shapiro enjoyed his first seder as much I enjoyed my last.

] [Go Howard go! Let me know how I can help his race for the Florida legislature. Since I'm still infamous in Gainesville for that ad Dolbear and I ran in the college newspaper -- that brouhaha still baffles me; what *is* the big deal? — maybe if I endorsed his opponent?

Home with the Armadillo #41 : Liz "April was an interesting month." Yeah, but May and June were *obscene*. If I survive this summer I'll be astonished. Just get me to the Hugo ceremony!] [**Left Hand of Darkness** would be a wonderful book to give to our gal Al(lie). Maybe you could first offer **Rocannon's World** and the other early LeGuin about the ansible universe, set the stage for the masterworks. I don't believe she's written

about that universe since **The Dispossessed**.] [Since you mention him here, I'll give my gloomy assessment: Shrub rides a smirk and a shoeshine to the White House. Gore is by far the better man, but he can't get past his stodgy self and campaign. The wingers will claim Bush's win to be a repudiation of Clinton, though in actuality, it's election of the same sort of personality — without the same level of intelligence, ambition or vision.

Cross-Train at the Office / A Modest (Constitutional) Proposal : Jeff Considering the ugly legal worries the present situation may hold, however unlikely, I'll support your amendment. No copyright suit has ever been brought against any fanzine that I know of, but it doesn't mean it can't happen.] [Educational view of the Microsoft case. Whatever the eventual outcome, the media are treating it as a devastating defeat for Bill Gates — today's "headline" on AOL, for instance, showed his face with the caption, "#1 and Falling Fast". Based on his track record and what you say here, I bet he'll "fall" as far as #1 again. The government may have the wherewithal to cause him trouble, but what other corporation exists to top him? Microsoft may split and stocks may rise and not-rise, but the company's domination of the field will fall when something better comes along. As in, not for the rest of our lives.] [Thanks for reminding me how good it felt to cheer Hilary Swank on to the Oscar.] [**Last Night** just made my "gotta rent" list, thanks to you.] [One nice thing to come out of this past spring: Rudy Guiliani has — at least for now — dropped out of national politics.] [My comments about 1999 not being bad professionally reinforce an old lesson: *don't jinx yourself*. In that respect, 2000 has been horrible.] [No kidding, Allie has assumed the power to turn heads. My lady friend said she was the most beautiful girl at the DSC. The only other teen at the convention, who shall remain nameless, was reduced to a yuppypping gee-gawsh goof by her mere presence. (Saw that coming ...) Great words to Kay, by the way, on child-rearing. Judging by y'all's product, you speak from very positive experience.] [The Waco trial is on now, and I predict a total win for the gummint. On one level, that's fine, since I don't believe they went into the compound with guns blazing and firebombs arcing, as the wingers

imply. The Davidians died of their own choice, their own fire, their own guns. But! The siege itself *was* the government's fault, and it was atrociously handled from the beginning.][Speaking of trips, thanks for the package with the Nawlins-Seattle road maps — actually, the maps displayed alternate routes from this dump all the way to your palace, turn by turn ... and I was damned tempted. Still am. Next to a nice 20-year paid vacation in Florida, a long road trip west is the journey I desire most.][Alas, the G.O.P. probably won't have to attack Al Gore, his daughters, wife, or anything else. Gore seems determined to take root and lose right the hell where he is. C'mon, Al! Shake your booty!]["It's clear George Bush is a yankee born and bred, but I have no idea where his son's from." A drunken experiment with Rohypnol and mayonnaise, best forgot.][All of the kids of Columbine should have been *Time's* People of the Year — yes, even Klebold and Harris. What *all of them* showed us about ourselves, good, awful, evil, angelic, was the great revelation about America in 1999.][I must reproduce your splendid diatribe about Boulder's super-foolish domestic violence policies in **Challenger**. I'll have e-mailed for permission.][Anyone know where the title of the latest Bond, **The World is Not Enough**, comes from? I asked this once before and received no answer, so I'll answer myself: it's the motto of the Bond family, as revealed in **On Her Majesty's Secret Service**, which dealt with heraldry, as you remember.][Co-ed bathrooms at college?!? Cloyne Court boasted a co-ed shower hour, and a crowd of guys was always standing around waiting for girls to show up — funny, though: none ever did.][Do see **American Beauty**. Hilarious, touching, challenging view of the male menopause, a book in which we both have our chapters to write. Also — on another tack — **Blue Velvet**, but only if you're in the mood for a walk — or a crawl — through Pandemonium. *Now it's dark ...*][Speaking of darkness and light, thanks for the complete **Crankshaft** on Kent State. His daughter should have told him the truth, which she knows, and we know, but he never will, the poor bastard.

Trivial Pursuits #89 : Janice OK: "basketball halves" I got, but what was the alternative again?

I *used* to know.][To a non-techie, it seems a trifle early in the game to invest in a digital camera. My undoubtedly ignorant impression is that they store too few shots to justify the cost. In the future, of course, they'll be the common thing, but ... I wonder about their value their pictures will have as *evidence*. A traditional photograph can be checked for its authenticity by examining the negative. Digital shots could be altered on the computer without trace. What's the conclusive value of such a record?][**Making Mr. Right** is my least favorite John Malkovich movie. The story-telling is clumsy (a character *tells* us about a funny incident that should have been *shown*) and the flick's seeming point — that relationships between real, flawed people are impossible — is repugnant. Junk.][Still looking for the photo of you with RR Martin — the negative, that is. The print is missing.][For my baseball nut ex-boss' sake, I want the Red Sox to win the Series. Go, Bo!][Speaking of "forbidden Florida," a friend recently sent me an account of the secession of Key West — the Conch Republic — from the United States. No Gettysburg, but everyone got sun tans.][I didn't enjoy **Fletch** so I haven't read any more Gregory MacDonalds; perhaps I should. Current favorite, since I've exhausted the Michael Connelly shelf at the bookstore, is James Lee Burke, **Dixie City Jam** and **Heartwood** among others. His Dave Robicheaux and Billy Bob Holland characters are essentially identical, but are so well drawn and the writing is so superb that I can forgive the occasional repetitions. His Edgar-winning **Cimarron Rose**, however, suffered a severe flaw: in his account of a trial, he let Holland lead his witnesses like they had chains around their necks, with nary an objection heard from the opposition. Getting a real lawyer to review the scenes would have prevented such a glaring mistake... at least to his attorney readers!

Uncle Lon's Box Scores / Oblio No. 128 : Gary B. Toni tells me I'm first in the 216th mailing, so rest not on your neds, Laur- ... Rest not on your laurels, Ned!][Glorious — literally — cover to **Oblio**. I remember 1968 — assassinations, riots, Vietnam, the rise of Nixon, horror and shame everywhere. And then, right at the end of the year, on Christmas Eve, these three straight-laced, all-American techoids addressed our planet from their

orbit around our moon, and astonished everyone — themselves, I'm sure, included — with a moment of absolute transcendence. You remember. In addition to reading passages from Genesis, they looked down at the moon, this goal and dream, and they saw an uninhabitable rock. And then they talked about the Earth, the sick and savaged planet — and they marveled at its beauty. No one has ever spoken of the love of home so simply and so well. Great cover and a great reminder of a great moment — possibly the best the exploration of space has brought to us.][So they went to the moon and Brown went to Cleveland. Did you get to the Rock'n'Roll Museum? How about the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton?][Over the years SFPAns have collected a lot of Gary Browns. You probably remember my photo of Ruth Judkowitz pointing to the sign touting "your" rhythm'n'blues band in the French Quarter. Maybe it was *that* Gary the Texas parole people were looking for. Anyway, this incident would make a great column for your paper — or *ahem* any other outlet you'd choose *ahem again*.][You speak of typewriter collectors; one of the attorneys I work with collects old radios. Has some beauts, too, but for some reason, those that work get the same programs I pick up on my car set.][No, there *were* tits in the photos printed in SM176, but the repro washed them out. Kinko's has changed its technology and no longer uses the screen that made my pictures in **The Scenic Route**, say, come out so well. The result you see in **Beach Blanketed**, earliest in this mailing, and it's not as sharp.][Alas, I didn't get to see Tony Isabella while he was in town. Boy, though, those were good old days, comics and Brooklyn and Spanier ... Long gone now, with Barry Allen and Hal Jordan, as life pulses inexorably towards the squalid end that awaits all flesh.][During "the PC adventure," which dealt with political correctness and not computers, you say that, as a newspaper editor, you were under constant pressure to watch your language and use only PC terms. Didn't you ever get the urge to turn to your tormentors and say, "Plant your lips on my gluteus maximus and say 'smack!'"? I wonder how many decent people had their lives wrecked, or at least injured, because some neurotic accused them of violating PC. Fortunately, the craze has died down — for now.][If Ms. Mile

High's husband grew outraged by your interest in her seeming offer and gunned you down, the whole plane would be in peril. Remember the climax -- oops -- of **Goldfinger**? *BANG* *WHOOSH* *BUH-LOOP!*][When listing vice presidents who sought their party's nominations for the top spot, don't forget the one who really did face serious opposition: Hubert Humphrey. (Wild — we're talking about 1968 again.)][That **Mystery in Space** cover must predate Adam Strange, since I believe he was never off the cover once his series began (until Jack Schiff took over after Schwartz' shift to **Batman**). Bad cover anyway — no action, and your eye is drawn more to Gil Kane's thickly-rendered hands than to the train, which is the subject of the story.

Derogatory Reference 95 : Arthur Tough break(s) about the busted shoulder. That wouldn't have happened 30 years ago when we were young and supple. Keep recovering.]['m with you about Charles Barkley. He was brash and honest and articulate and brilliant on the court. I loved what he said about their opponents in the Dream Team Olympics. While his mates were mouthing platitudes, he said, "They're in *whole* lotta trouble!" I also admired his denunciation of the idea that he was some sort of a role model because he was a pro athlete. That, he said, let parents off the hook too easily. He was righteous. But please don't compare him to Rodman — a boor without purpose. And Bobby Knight? Well, Bill Walton pretty well hosed him out of existence when comparing him to John Wooten, a man who taught character in addition to winning basketball championships.][I always preferred the term "special person" when talking about someone with Down's or some other such mental handicap. Reminds me of the Arabic attitude towards lunatics: they have been blessed by Allah. At least according to that **Road** picture I saw.

Twygdrasil & Treehouse Gazette #64 : Rich D. "Horses have understood our language for years." Reminding me of the joyousness of Cordwainer Smith's "Out of the Gem Planet", when the hero reads a horse's mind, and hears him shouting in glee, "I'm a horse! I'm a horse!"]["The big thing kids should not experiment with is [sic] depression and alienation." Lotsa luck. As Bart

Simpson says, it doesn't take much talent to get teenagers depressed.][It isn't an anti-family stance that makes conservatives hypocritical in the Elian Gonzalez case — it's their feigned dismay over "excessive" government force. Their philosophical forbears cheered Kent State and police slaughter of Black Panthers, but this raid — wherein the police behaved with rigorous professionalism and nobody got hurt — bothered them?][Well-said words on Zane Grey and his comrades writing from and for the heart — or the imagination — not the head, not history.][I saw Burne Hogarth lecture at a comics convention in NY in 1974. His texts on drawing anatomy still line the shelves.][Did any "pundit" — and what's the source of *that* word? — predict Bill Bradley would beat Gore in the primaries? They gave McCain a chance after he outclassed Shrub, but Bradley was never anything more than another suit on the stage. As for why Al is lagging in the polls behind an obviously inferior man, I'd say it was because of complacency, not conservatism. We're fat and happy and we want a President who reflects that amiable sense of gluttony. And, to keep us safe from Crime, who isn't adverse to sticking a needle into anything that moves.][Speaking of the progeny of men and sheep (and that's a lead-in line if I ever heard one), poetry lovers would enjoy James Dickey's "The Sheep Child". Dickey was a popular poet, which usually implies shallowness (cf. Rod McKuen), but full of passion and word play, great for college kids.][Any chance you could make a dupe of **Night of the Living Bread**? For people with a rye sense of humor, no doubt. Crusty, half-baked types who like to loaf. (Your turn.)][Good comments on the need for tolerance of human error and, I would add, imperfection in marriage and — again I would add — every other relationship. We yearn for perfect maternal protection, and so we expect it from everyone we trust. Indeed, we need to relax our expectations, give more, crave less. That's a basic struggle in attaining adulthood; I haven't managed it.][That corny Hoagy Carmichael title "I'm a Cranky Old Yank" etc. makes me wonder: was there much guerilla activity against the occupying forces in post-war Japan? I've never heard of any; the histories say the Japanese handled occupation — and the practical reorganization of their society — with

aplomb. Certainly Hirohito mastered his new, mortal identity ably — to the benefit of his people.][Thanks for the nice words on my place in the legal establishment. I just hope I can continue to claim it.][The Black Guelphs sound ... umm ... interesting. Like Jeffrey Dahmer, only nasty.][Continued recovery wishes to Heidi, but I still haven't forgiven her for interrupting that football game.

Passages #5 : Janet You realize that if you have your twins October 1st, they'll share their birthday with Dennis Dolbear. A horrid beginning to their lives! You should go according to Hoyle, Fred that is, and he says *October the 1st is too late*. Anyway, I'll be looking forward to seeing little Guy and little Lillian at the 2001 DSC. Let's hope they look like their mama!

Avatar Press : Randy Neat swordfighting photos of the Floyds. I wonder if they'll be the same people who performed at that one-day **Trek** convention where I saw William Shatner. I understand they know Himself, the Hank.][As a fanzine editor, I look forward to your new portfolio, and am delighted with the sample page you offer here. I'm even more gratified by your willingness to draw a piece to order. I repeat: you ought to explore professional illustration as a career. You show real imagination and originality and skill. That Columbine illo you did for **Chall #11** was downright superb.][Trying to hit me from left field, my last job interviewer asked me what I thought of the NRA. I told them I thought they were off-base in their reading of the 2nd Amendment, and even dared to criticize Mr. Madison's wording of the clause. He ties the right to bear arms in with the necessity of a state militia, where I would be more generous and remove that requirement altogether. As I've said here, I have no problem with reasonable registration and safety requirements ... and am utterly wild about Charlton Heston, winger wacko or not. Contradiction is my *second* middle name.][Even though you just committed the nigh-onto-unpardonable sin of missing the last DSC, you must stop calling yourself a slacker! Like you tell Toni, you've paid your dues. As for *next* year, three full-page illos for **Challengers 13** and **14** should cover it ...

Peter, Pan & Merry #29 : Dave Before I forget, what are y'all's Christmas plans for New Orleans? I must make plans myself.][A good point: guns are a terribly inefficient and dangerous method of self-protection. The poor would more likely use them to settle arguments than to defend themselves against crime -- creating more of a problem than they would ever solve.][I tried "light packing" on my trip to Buffalo, and ended walking around without underwear one morning while I bought detergent. God, I felt so *sexy*. How did the housewives in that supermarket *stand* it? Now, if I'd also worn *pants* ...][A gripe about recent James Bond developments: Desmond Llewellyn has gone on to the great "Q" Branch in the sky, leaving an admirable successor in John Cleese. But they're calling Cleese "R" ... and that, as you say, violates the internal consistency of the series. "Q" is head of "Q" *Branch*, the section of Her Majesty's Secret Service which manufactures goodies for field operatives. That's why they called him "Q". The head of "R" Branch, be there such a thing, would by rights be called "R" -- Cleese should simply inherit the name of "Q". Unless, of course, the super-being from **ST:TNG** objects.][You ask me why, since I'll probably never be able to climb Australia's Hanging Rock, I don't settle for the pyramids of Mexico. Answer: Peter Weir didn't make a classic allegorical movie about the pyramids of Mexico. The movie he did make about Mexico -- **The Mosquito Coast**, with Harrison Ford -- was a shruggable failure, and featured no pyramids that I recall.][I'd respond to your contention re **The Wizard of Oz's** parting words to the Tin Man by saying that the ugly are hated, no matter how gracious their souls, but I just came back from a spiffy day playing with my nephews, and I just don't believe it.][Indeed, the Constitution once forbade the electors from choosing a President and Veep from the same state, and I believe, still does. If I were at home, with the document close by, I'd check.][After once again driving crosscountry in a Geo Metro -- with nearly 140K miles on it! -- I must proclaim their greatness. Wonderful cars for single people who don't have to impress others.][Aggh! Once again I miss the glory days of LASFAPA! How these days is Celia Chapman, she of the moon pool eyes?][Okay, so we evaluate what is the southernmost, northernmost, easternmost and

westernmost SFPazine. What next? I propose we hand out bragging rights based on *sea level*. I win! For surely, unless someone hauls a laptop to the Badwater basin of Death Valley and creates a SFPazine there, no one besides me produces SFPac below sea level. **Spiritus Mundi** -- the lowest of the low!]["Myrmidon" means "unquestioning follower"? No, that's "Republican."][Let's start campaigning to bring a Hugo to honor Honor Harrington. mike needs a rocket in the family.][So Random hides his vitamins. I hear Ned's the same way with his Viagra!][Next time you're in Oregon seek out the Oregon Vortex. Its effects are duplicated in any amusement park funhouse, but no funhouse was ever written up by Frank Edwards! (Who else here remembers **Stranger than Science?**)

The Sphere Vol. 186 No. 1 : Don Too bad you didn't time your spring visit to New Orleans to coincide with Don Walsh's; *that* would have been a touching reunion. And punching and gouging.][It sounds like your Cartoonopedia™ publisher may have run into some difficulties -- it might be best to send him a registered letter expressing concern. Registered or certified mail scares people -- before they see the return address, they're always scared it's the IRS.][A shame about Blake Shira's suicide. True, I didn't know him, but never send to know for whom the bell tolls, and so forth.

Tennessee Trash #35 : Gary R. The solution to Concave's search for a new hotel is obvious. **Wigwam Village**. After all, it's right down the highway from the old site, and if it's big enough for a worldcon, it's big enough for Concave. And if everyone fills their wastebaskets from the showers and pours them on the lawn, you'll have an ice skating rink!][Skipping over your *horrible* travel stories (overnight on an airplane -- didn't turbulence or the sheer lunacy of being aloft ever wake you up?) and reviews of **Buffy** (so addictive some actually touted episodes for Hugo nominations this year), we reach your DSC report, which is probably the best among the many fine ones presented this mailing. You were, as you know, the first SFPAn I saw at the event, and were probably the guy I saw most during the convention, and always in the company of your dudes. I can't tell you how much I envy you ...

even though it must hurt like hell to have to travel away from them so often. I'm glad you mentioned my falling asleep during the SFPArty (blame the heat, not the company), only to wake up with Fifi dancing on my scalp — thank God it wasn't your scorpion! One correction, though. I had offered an alternative Rubble candidate to Naomi Fisher: Pat Molloy, for *marrying* Naomi this past year and taking her out of circulation! It was, indeed, an epic weekend, even if the convention itself left much to be desired. As for whether B'ham next year will be the disaster you fear, well, I've taken on the job of unofficial advisor to the con chairs, but it seems my primary advice — restrict your guests, save your shekels — came too late. I also advised them to confront directly the bad press rising about their victory — achieved with overwhelming huckster support — and get it behind them, fast. Let's hope they do. Ned is decades overdue for a Fan GoHship and the con where he finally receives that honor should be a good one.

“Yngvi is a Louse” and Other Graffitos : Toni
A wonderful report on the DSC and your “triple crown”. In a way, your missing the ceremony was lucky, since it was rather flat, and the *outré* way you actually received your Rebel was unique, epic, and memorable. Bravo again.][I'm glad Hank's mama taught him to be kind to dumb animals. I'm sure that accounts for his vote for W. Bush this November. “Sleaze out of Vietnam through the National Guard and then never report for duty? I don't remember!” *Al Gore is simply a smarter, better man.*][I would *kill* to see Billy Pettit's photos from DSC III! Do you still have his address?][Hope the Gilbreaths do return sometime — they're neat.][So when is the World Fantasy Convention in San Antonio? That's damned tempting — I like Alamo Town a lot.][I feel a lot less cynical about love than I used to — I think age is making me see it in a somewhat less lofty but still exuberant light (mix madly, metaphors!). I shall say no more.

mikey doesn't work her anymore : mike (Uhh, Toni ... it was supposed to be “mikey doesn't work here anymore”. Considering the cover subject — a nude Supergirl; where is Lester Boutillier when we need him? — the connotations of the title you

give could be easily misconstrued!)][Hi mike! Neat color and graphics work this time!][Thanks for the interview with George Macdonald Fraser you e-forwarded to me. Fraser sounds bitter, almost senile. I hope not — that's a genius that needs to last forever, or at least until he *finally* writes the Civil War Flashman.][I've never read *The Cruel Sea*; it's an unforgettable WWII movie, with Jack 'Awkins as the captain. **The Perfect Storm** has me thinking about the ocean — as in, thank God I'm on *land* — but obviously I should scan this epic.][Why *not* have Chinese food in Nawlins? We have excellent restaurants of that variety — I single out The Five Happiness as an obvious example. In fact, New Orleans excels in almost all of the culinary genres — except one: barbecue. When I passed through Memphis just after July 4th, I stopped at a ramshackle joint called the Interstate BBQ, and *feasted*. NOLA's chain barbecue joints — Luther's and Porky's — cannot dream(land) to compare.

Spiritus Mundi 177 : me I made no mention of the D-Day Museum, but I see no better chance to review the experience than here and now. It opened in New Orleans on June 6th to tremendous fanfare. There was a magnificent parade in downtown New Orleans featuring a zillion veterans of the invasion and several winners of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Fresh from my confusing exit interview, where my work was praised to the skies, I skirted its periphery and fetched my mail. Later, I took the tour. The Museum was pretty neat, but I was still disappointed. Unfortunately, there aren't enough exhibits — however well the museum used media, the exhibit I most wanted to see was a small one, a personal one, something the GIs could hold — one of the “crickets” used by the Allies to signal each other, and indeed, they have one on display. Though they have multitudes of individual stories on tape, the place seemed too big for its topic. Somehow the scope and horror of the Normandy invasion escaped the planners; I got much more of that from the first half hour of *Saving Private Ryan*.

Best Bit: mike's uncovered cover!

Last Page Blues ...

Actually, this last page in *Spiritus Mundi*'s 178th number is nowhere near as "blue" as the first, and I don't refer to the color cover. I began composition of this issue distraught over the end of the Jefferson Parish job, and I end it fumbling around the beginning of the St. John job ... worries about money in the back of my mind, but satisfaction that I found work so quickly in the fore.

Today — July 17th — I drove about rural Louisiana, seeing the lawyers and seeking the defendant in my first scary assignment: a first degree murder. I enjoyed the awesome oaks and the dripping moss, the roadside cranes and everything about the day but the broiling heat. 100 degrees feels twenty degrees hotter in this absolute humidity. I even liked the defendant, a pleasant enough black kid of about 19, who was laughing with his jailers and professed friendly confidence in me. A defense lawyer's ultimate responsibility. Welcome to St. John the Baptist Parish, GH.LIII. No money but enough pressure to make you run screaming into the night.

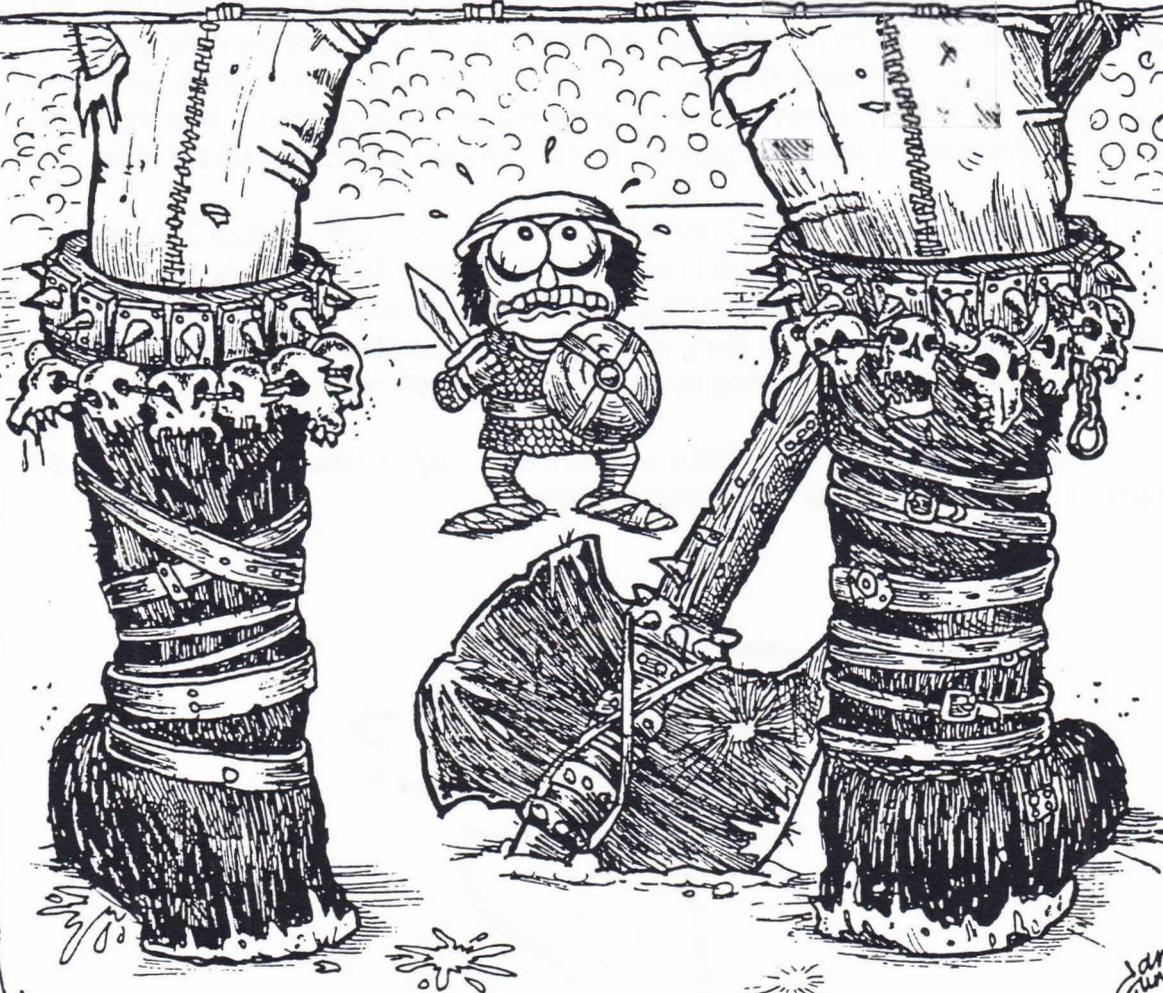
Anyway, I feel ... fairly okay as I turn 51 (on July 20th). Even ... excited. Chicon 2000 is coming, four days which I hereby resolve to savor like cheesecake from Junior's. Note my bacover, an ad I prepared for their last progress report. Hugo nominees are treated royally at worldcons. Of course I won't win the thing only hope to come in ahead of No Award. But brethren and sistren, until then I am going to sop up every drop of cream.

The major reason I look forward to worldcon and the end of August, though, has nothing to do with Hugos. Look me up there and see if you can guess.



Look who's in the arena with the big boys!

CHALLENGER



The editor and contributors to Challenger wish to thank the members of Chicon 2000 for placing their zine on the Hugo ballot! Contact us at P.O. Box 53092 New Orleans LA 70153 or GHLIII@yahoo.com for sample issues, and check out our website, under construction at <http://www.crosswinds.net/~ghliii>
See you at Chicon!