



SPIRITUS MUNDI 189

A SFPazine for SFPA #227 by

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GHLIII Press Publication #932* April-May 2002

cover by George Alec Effinger

On May 16 Rose-Marie and I attended a very special science fiction event. The site was an uptown New Orleans bookstore. The occasion was a memorial for George Alec Effinger, and it consisted of testimonials and readings from a number of George's friends and students. I was impressed that so many folks were from his writing seminar at the University of New Orleans, and that one of them, at least, had broken through and sold a novel. I wished I'd joined his class. In addition to us, John Guidry, and Dennis Dolbear, Debbie Hodgkinson – who had lived with George here in New Orleans – was there, and Dr. Jack Stocker, the good and kind retired professor who helped George through his last years, who read from a sold but still unpublished short story, and Effinger's ex-wife, Barbara Hambly, who read some of his *haiku*. Tears flowed, amid muted laughter; Effinger, to the end, was a much beloved man.

I didn't speak, and I wish now I had, but I didn't want to assert myself at a moment that belonged to others. Now I wish I should have. I could have read from my *genzine*:

George was, like me, an adopted Orleanian; like me, he lived in the Easy because he loved it here. I enjoyed his work – particularly **When Gravity Fails** and the hilarious Maureen Birnbaum stories – and I liked the guy. We weren't friends, but we were friendly. I have nice memories of playing pinball with him on Royal Street (he considered the modern electronic games soulless), of doing the Wave with him at a Saints game, of driving him home from a Baton Rouge convention, of a writing class we shared, of watching him transform, with his charm, an angry collegiate Communist (the worst kind) into a shy, smiling girl. As the city's premiere SF presence he was of inestimable help when New Orleans bid for the worldcon, and he and his lady friend saved our hapless pocket program by staying up all night typing the thing. The last time I visited him – disgracefully long ago – I interviewed him for a convention program book. I admired the Nebula and Hugo he won for "Schrodinger's Kitten", and photographed him feeding toast to his cat as it sat in a box. For some reason we thought that spectacularly clever.

Effinger always had money problems and health problems, which apparently fed on one another to both spur and constrict his career. He was prolific because he had to be: there were always more medical bills to be paid. I understand from Dr. Stocker that those bills tied up all the rights to his work – including the unpublished fourth Marid Audran novel. It's a cruel thing to be sick, it's a cruel thing to be broke, it's a profoundly sadistic thing to be brilliant yet be unable to exercise that brilliance. But according to Stocker, the lawsuit had recently been dropped, that George's work was his own again, and that he was both writing and selling. He was on his way back.

Effinger was cheated of his comeback. He died in his sleep in late April, a natural death, except for the horrible fact that George was only 54 or 55 years old. Ray Lafferty, who died in

March, was 87. The Patrick of Tulsa had his innings. George – a baseball nut, he'd appreciate even the hackneyed metaphor – deserved more time at bat.

One young fella there I particularly noted. I knew him from my years in Jefferson Parish, where he'd been a clerk of court; we'd gabbed a lot about science fiction and I read a story he'd written about one of Santa Claus' elves. He'd taken Effinger's UNO class, and now he had something more substantial than elves to write about. It took me a moment to notice that his left leg was Gone. In its stead he stood on a Terminator-like prosthesis. A year or so before, he'd been on a street corner targeted by a drunk driver.

He was in constant pain, he said – ghost pain or not, I didn't ask. He was seeing a pain management doctor, and a shrink. But he seemed solid, together, capable, and perhaps that was because he was writing. If that was due to George, and he implied that it was, that's a pretty excellent epitaph.

Peggy Ranson was also in attendance at the memorial. She and I were cornered for an interview by a young reporter, our subject the weird beast that is fandom. Talking about ourselves was a terrible trial for reticent and retiring souls such as ourselves, but we forced back our crippling shyness to regale the scribe with the tale of our Nolacon II collaboration and our ascendance into the brightness and glory of the Hugo (or its penumbra, in my case). Which leads me to another story ...

Rosy and I had just returned from a visit to the Symphony Book Fair and a voracious feast with the Sons of the Sand at a local seafood restaurant. Checked my e-mail, and found one from John Lorentz. *Congratulations from the ConJose Hugo Committee.*

I'd been weary, glum because of taxes, guilt-struck because I didn't like inflicting such a mood on Rose-Marie. But now I called her over in a tizzy of excitement. I keyed on the e-letter.

"Alison, Mike & Steve, I've just finished counting this year's 627 Hugo and John W. Campbell Award nominating ballots and I am very pleased to tell you that **Plokta** is one of the 2002 Hugo nominees in the Fanzine category."

Well, you *should* be pleased, I thought. **Plokta** is a terrific zine. But – I do a **zine**, too. What about **Challenger**? I dialed Lorentz's phone number. I read him the e-mail. He laughed with warm embarrassment. "I just hope I didn't send them *yours*," he mused. For indeed, he told me, **Challenger** is a nominee for the ConJose Hugo.

Key applause -thank you, thank you - I owe it all to Rose-Marie and the kind folks at CopyMax - thank you - thank you -

Hugo schmugo, I have some perfectly wonderful real-world news. **Rosy has found a job.**

It was a brave and crazy thing she did, moving to New Orleans to be with me. The 800 miles between her Florida home and this burg might as well be 800 light-years, for this is a whole 'nother world from the universe she was used to. When she got down here, she found it nigh upon impossible to dent New Orleans' constricted job market. Until now.

The job she's won is not in New Orleans – in fact, it's an hour outside of the Easy, in a country town known as Thibodeaux (TIB-o-dough). She'll be reporting for **The Daily Comet** -- she's quite sure of its obvious nickname – a local paper owned by **The New York Times**. Considering that NOLA's **Times-Picayune** – the only game in town -- is stuck in the middle of a hiring freeze, this position is a lucky stroke.

Well, perhaps luck had little to do with it. Rose *went after* this job. She made the long drive into the pines and volunteered an unpaid tryout to prove her worth. She *got* it ... possibly the only journalistic job in this part of the state. I'm so proud of her I could spit.

Just in time, too. Money has been incredibly, incredibly tight. Rosy needed to come onto my insurance at the IDB, which sucked up a huge chunk of my take-home salary, and as of April, I have old tax debts coming due. Now – if we watch ourselves – we might just be able to survive.

However, almost certainly, we *won't* be able to make it to ConJose. Even without a Hugo nomination, we would have wanted to go. There are few trips I'm less tired of than driving west. I love the wonderful, terrible wide-open spaces of the desert, and the way the light looks falling onto the Pacific. Besides, Rose-Marie is with me now, and how great it would be to walk with her through Carlsbad Caverns, ride with her over California 1, wander the weirdness of the Winchester House and do all the other things we want to do out there, out west.

My own fault. Had I not been so nihilistic, so stubbornly hopeless, and so irresponsible about taxes during the years before withholding, we could have made it easily. If, as seems likely, ConJose must go on without us, we will miss much. Being a Hugo nominee at a worldcon is a fannish experience matched only by being a Guest of Honor. The Hugo reception, the losers nominees' party, the panels, the right to hang with hotshots and to pretend that, in company you care about, you're something of a cheese ... No lie, and no denying, it's fun, and it's heady, and we'll miss it. I owe Rose-Marie for this, and I owe her Big. But how, when I was alone in the world and ignored any thought of the future, could I have imagined that such a miracle as her was possible in my life?

As for **Challenger**, even with a generous loan from Bruce Pelz, received only days before his death, and one promised from Sheila Lightsey, I'll only be able to print and mail a very limited run. And that will dig us even deeper into debt, since of course I'll repay Sheila, and in Bruce's name, Elayne. Whatever, bittersweet honor this Hugo nomination is or not, honor it is. **Chall** has done it – been named one of the five best SF fanzines – three years running. If it can do it *four* years running, without personal politicking at ConJose, is something we'll know *next* spring.

This issue's cover is a Pogo pastiche, obviously, dating from Effinger's college days. I have no memory of how it fell into my hands. The ancient among SFPAns may recall that I ran two other such pages fore and aft atop **Spiritus Mundi** 40, in 1977 ... just before I met Rosy. Hopefully, next issue, you'll see a cover I really want to run – *my mother-in-law's shower curtain!*

As for the dedication to this issue ... it goes to Barbara Hambly, in respect for her loss, and the dignity she showed at the memorial for George.

xxx

MAILING CAUSTICS -

SFPA 226

The Southerner #226 / Jeff Trinlay Khadro has been in touch with me, too – contributing some cute illos to **Challenger**. I'll keep her well-supplied with garbage from the GHLIII chute. She also sent me a postcard broadcasting a rather cute project she's got going. To quote:

Pass the word around – I'm constructing a journal of my fannish friends. I've got a 4 in x 5 in (10 cm x 12.5 cm) page set aside for each person to fill as they'd like. (Potscrads are also excellent!) Key thing is to express yourself & have fun! Previous journals have been both great fun & become very precious to me. (This one is Vol. 3!)

Of course I'll contribute. We all should!

Tyndallite Vol. 3 No. 100 / NORM! Welcome to the centennial club, reserved for SFPAn who reach their 100th issue! ## Rosy bought me NESFA's complete Fredric Brown collection; it's superb, of course. I still scour myself with Brillo pads because I passed up a chance to buy a program book from the original Nolacon – with not only *his* autograph, but Fritz Leiber's, and every other professional attendee! Rusty Burke grabbed it. ## Yes, I admit to not knowing "The Syndic". I am a fakefan ... or, perhaps I just have a lot of good stuff left to read.

Confessions of a Consistent Liar 76 / Arthur I used one of those expensive holographic stamps to send an M-Bag full of **Challengers** to England. Chauvinist to the end, I just wanted to show us off. ## Yes, alas, F.M. Busby did things to your name during the 1978 Hugo ceremonies that would shame a scorpion. He's good buds with my father-in-law, Joe Green. ## Regarding writers being liars, remember Lafferty's dissertation on mermaids in **The Devil is Dead**. He just stopped his story to talk about them, culminating with the glorious phrase, "They do not appear in the Adriatic. They lie who claim to have seen them in the Adriatic." Damn alive, that was a great writer ... and liar, in the best way. ## Catherine Asaro won the Nebula this year for

The Quantum Rose. I'm a big fan of hers, and someday may even read something she's written.

The New Port News #202 / Ned One reason the *Seiun* Awards feel interminable is Hugo nominee tension – waiting for the charming people in the beautiful clothing to get their awards presented and leave the damned stage so *I* can lose *mine*. To be honest, though, I was tired of them long before I made the ballot. ## Yes, **The Haunting** film – the real one – was a splendid adaptation of ... **Of Hill House**. Better and more clear plotwise than the book, although nothing could ever match the first and last paragraphs of Shirley Jackson's masterwork. ## Your source, please, for the statement that *thousands* of black men were lynched for being accused of raping white women. I have no doubt it happened, and once is ten times too many, but *thousands*? ## Funny listening as our old wind-tunnel engineer debunks that theory regarding the balls on a brass monkey. *That's* expertise.

Twygdrasil #74 / Richard Your opening piece on a Catholic funeral is timely, considering the wide-ranging priest scandals. I envy Catholic education, but am rather glad I didn't experience the complete curriculum offered many boys, which seemed to include a doctoral course in ankle-grabbing. ## I raised the apa dues from \$5 to \$8 in 1980; I don't think you were in SFPA then. The move was something of a gamble, since I was then embroiled in an OElection battle with Bob Jennings, but I won the election – and the right to put out SFPA 100 – 22-3. ## I don't recall porn "crawling around in the mud" after the '60s; it became commercialized, through Ted Mark novels and their imitators. You could buy dirty books almost anywhere; that's no longer true. ## Metcalf keeps sending me Jon-Benet stories from Boulder newspapers. If that detective on **Today** is to be believed, the culprit could probably be found, given a strong and thorough investigation – apparently beyond the capacity of the Boulder police. ## A virus recently got loose in the computers at my job, necessitating a massive scouring of all C-drives. We don't know how the worm got in – my home machine is clean according to Norton, and I'm the only one who has used a foreign disc at the office, so we're thinking the boss brought it in via

his e-mail. Anyway, the word has come down, no alien floppies. ## Actually, I credit you with a lot of **Challenger's** success. Your contribs are always erudite and unique. You, Resnick, Benford – can't imagine the zine without you. ## If the Constitution is designed as a limit on government power, as I believe it is, then aliens would indeed enjoy the same protections from abuse as we citizens allegedly do. Of course, Ashcroft's philosophy – like Scalia's – declares that the Bill of Rights applies only to citizens, so dirty foreigners like Inge Glass and Lloyd Penney visit America at their own risk. Is that the country we want? ## I got lost in Philly; led Rosy away from Independence Hall when we first tried to find the Liberty Bell. ## Never saw the Bakshi **Lord of the Rings**; is it out on video. ## Actually, the serial rapist I once considered writing about has resurfaced in my imagination, as a fictional character. Quinn Yarbrow said that was what I should have been doing with him in the first place. ## As for exercise and diet, we don't walk as much as we should, but I've still lost 12 pounds since my wedding. More to come, or go. ## No, **Reptilicus** wasn't the movie with the hideous puppet bird – that was **The Giant Claw**. **Reptilicus'** dinosaur looked like it was made out of upholstery. ## That was **The Creation of the Humanoids**, and I'm proud to say that I saw it at the drive-in. Unfortunately, my companions were my father and my brother, not a junior high school hottie (it was 1962, and I couldn't drive, anyway). Even then I hated it. ## If W wins in 2004, it'll be his personal harmlessness that puts him over. Certainly he has little personal magnetism, nor a coherent political philosophy. ## If the White House was the target of Flight 93's hijackers, they might have found themselves sucking on an anti-aircraft missile; I understand such are hidden on the grounds. Richard Reid, to continue on this repulsive topic, was a surprising choice to field as a suicide bomber: he had gone to great pains to look Arabic, thus attracting attention to himself and all but insuring that his shoelace-bomb would be discovered. Somehow it's a comfort to know that not only are our enemies crazy, they can be stupid as well. ## You remind me of the recent series of televised H.G. Wells stories, which were by and large excellent, especially the "Accelerator." ## True, the line so many of our

generation heard from our parents while we were in college was "Don't be an anti-war conformist; act like *we* want you to." ## A receipt for your vote sounds like a superb idea -- it would have prevented the Florida debacle *and* the W presidency. Good results all around.

Variations on a Theme #11 / Rich Speaking of Apollo equipment breakdowns, some goofy reporter asked Buzz Aldrin, before 11 went up, if the engine didn't work to lift them off the moon, how he would spend the time before the oxygen ran out. The scribe doubtless expected him to sob about prayer and his family. What he got was something like, "I'd spend the time working on the engine." ## Speaking of **The Planet**, the early '30s clubzine of the Scienceers, I xeroxed Julie Schwartz's copy and franked it through SFPA in 1974. ## I like the Einstein statue in D.C.; photographed Beth there once. He's like a giant bronze grandpa.

The Sphere vol. #197 no. 1 / Don Good luck in protecting Toonopedia from internet thieves. Obviously, you have rights to the intellectual property. Might make an interesting federal case if one of those "archivers" refused to remove your site from public access on demand. ## As for the site itself, it's still a hoot to see people I knew at DC Comics – like Henry Boltinoff, a very nice fella – listed. ## Larry Epke is a three-time grandfather?!? I didn't even know he was married! A frightening memory of him: he was a federal grain inspector at the time of a terrible Grain Elevator explosion across the river from New Orleans. Dozens died. I was in Buffalo for Christmas break at the time, and kept calling the Times-Picayune to see if his name had turned up among the victims. Thank God it did not. Would love to send him **Challenger** if someone will supply his address! ## The only successful self-defense claim I've ever seen in a court was a white working guy who, when hassled by some black dudes in a car, shot one when he reached underneath his seat. Reasonable fear of death or great bodily injury. Of course, that was in Jefferson Parish, known affectionately hereabouts as the Fourth Reich, and I hesitate to guess the verdict had the principals been reversed.

Peter, Pan & Merry #42 / Dave Rosy recently had me cart Jesse, our yorkie, to a very fancy veterinary hospital for a teeth-cleaning. They X-rayed her, and found that she had an enlarged heart. Heartworms were sort-of suspected, even though the critter showed no symptoms; we live in a mosquito-infested climate and such infection is always a possibility. On the other hand, she comes from a litter with cardiac problems, so the condition could have been something she was born with. "Jesse, Jesse-may-mucho ..." ## The trouble with accepting W's presidency as legitimate is that doing so legitimates the sleazy manner in which he achieved office. Rotten precedent for a rotten president. Is this the standard we want to accept for selecting our chief executive – cynicism, chicanery, voter fraud? The Amurrrrican people seem willing to allow that, which is a true disappointment; I thought we could be better than that, but I see we're not. ## Hey, no fair! You tell us you won a Pun-Off, then don't give us any examples!

Revenant #11 / Sheila Speaking of oregano, I knew a guy at Berkeley who put marijuana on his pizza. (Guess that's a generational joke.) ## My grandmother was a Southern Baptist (my cousins still are) and I was brought up a Methodist, so I know the essential differences between the two sects: Methodists can dance and their ministers have better teeth. ## Quick! See **Lord of the Rings** again at the movie theatre – you'll get a sumptuous taste of **The Two Towers** – lots of Christopher Lee – as well! ## Rose-Marie prefers icon commands on the computer but I hate the things. Give me idiot-proof English! ## I'm interested in those common "forgotten class" anxiety dreams. I've had lots of them. Why do so many people share them? Do folks from other cultures, where school and accomplishment are less valued, have such terrors in the night? We recently bought some Fiddle Faddle at the "dent" grocery – it's made by Nabisco in Lincoln, Nebraska. My mind was warped into thinking it a Canadian product by the fact that I first bought it ... in Canada! Speaking of which, if we don't see you in San Jose, we'll see you in Toronto ... and of course, Huntsville in between! ## Speaking of Huntsville, see if you agree with me, and find its Space Museum a little depressing, celebrating the glories of days long gone, when

spaceflight was still thrilling. Nevertheless, its IMAX is the best I've ever seen, and I can only imagine how the marvelous 3-D film about the space station – which we recently saw here on a flat screen – would play on its hemispherical surface.

Frequent Flyer / Tom I've been taping **Smallville** since word of its excellence finally penetrated my concrete brain. A couple of episodes, at least, have been excellent. It tickles me to think of Clark Kent as a contemporary teenager; comforting to know that we'll have a grown-up Supes in our future. I've grown fond of the Luthor character – I wonder if Mark Verheiden named his late mother *Lillian*, and thought of *me* when he did it – and I like the others, although dammit, the show commits the ultimate sacrilege: its Lana Lang is a brunette! Ages me *fast* to think of Annette O'Toole playing Ma Kent, though. ## Saint Simons looks like a wondrous place – it's too bad the last DSC on the Georgia coast was a financial disaster for Bill Francis, because I'd love the excuse to return.

Offline Reader Vol. 1 Issue 27 / Irvin I sometimes wish I'd gotten into Federal civil service; God knows there's job security, as long as you don't work in Oklahoma City. ## There's a photo of me on Google from ancient NOSFA days. I look ridiculous. ## Won't the '05 NASFiC be decided this year, since UK in '05 is unopposed? I'll vote for Charlotte over Seattle – I won't travel across the country for any convention where they don't give out Hugos.

Oblio No. 139 / Gary B. **E-Man** was definitely Joe Staton's best comic work; it had energy, it had whimsy, it had personal style ... things mostly missing from his DC comics (like that **Green Lantern** Bob Jennings ran through our 100th mailing). Besides which, he caricatured me twice in a single issue. ## Enjoyable interview with Ray Bradbury; he's still the only popularly accepted SF writer. (Cue Martin: "I'm familiar with his work!") I've written about following him and Julie Schwartz about the hucksters room at the last L.A.Con, and the wide eyes and whispers that greeted him. ## Probably my favorite part of this superlative issue is the Megacon report, filled as it is with revered names, some from my

own past: Carmine Infantino, for instance, that great, flawed guy who will always be my favorite boss. Here's a name I never met but which is very familiar: Martin Nodell, whom I know from his superb work on **Faust** and other, later Classics Illustrated. Next time Rosy and I visit WPB, what say we drop in on him? ## A better reply to that twerp in the Klingon costume who gave you grief than the rather commonplace "F. you!" would have been "Want to live long and prosper for *real*? Then F. you!" ## I saw that two-volume response to 9-11 by comic artists, but have yet to pick it up. The sales dude said it had been on hand for months, so no hurry. ## I think the **Challenger** question will resolve itself as it has several times: special SFPA editions lacking the letter column (always the biggest chunk of the issue) and zine reviews (always the *second*-biggest chunk). The zine won't overwhelm the mailing that way. As for the egoboo poll, I said my bit last issue: "members should have the right to vote for any zine that has gone through the apa for that honor. Vox populi and all that." I also think I should get credit for **Challenger's** pages in the box scores, at least if Ned gets credit for **It Goes on the Shelf** or others get credit for allegedly non-SFPA publications. They're your scores, so do as you will, but I do hope for consistent treatment for everyone. ## I don't understand those Democrats who bad-mouth Al Gore, and publicly call for another candidate in '04. The man *won* the election. The Republicans *stole* it from him. He was victimized like no other American alive, and only one other in national history (James G. Blaine). The Demos should stop blaming the victim, rally behind him as the true chief executive and dedicate itself to turning the usurper Out.

Trivial Pursuits #100 / February Flights / Janice So ConJose is only a 20 minute drive from you. I envy that. According to MapBlast, it's a cool *34 hours* from here, by road – 2240 miles. Rosy keeps voicing hope, but I keep voicing realistic despair: can't be done... at least not on our hand-to-mouth budget. ## I am even greener with envy over your Australian junket – I'd really like to see Oz before I'm carted away. Hope I can get to Hanging Rock before I'm too old and leg-sore to climb the damned thing. ## Except for the look on Russell Crowe's face

when he lost to Denzel Washington, I loathed the Oscars this year. While **A Beautiful Mind** wasn't as insipid as I feared it would be, **LotR** was much *better* than I thought it would be, something new and brilliant in cinema. If, as you suggest, it was denied because of the sequels to come, I will rejoice (**The Two Towers** looks grand in previews, too) – but I doubt it. **Star Wars** got a nomination and, like **LotR**, scarfed up many technical awards. But after it failed to win the big Oscar, neither of its sequels was even nominated, and **The Empire Strikes Back** is a better movie. Anyway, Academy Award expert John Guidry and I both agree that Whoopee Goldberg was awful – he thinks they censored her jokes in advance, and that a fight over material is what kept her off stage for a cool 30 minutes. I protest, though, that Randy Newman's consolation trophy was a burn, as it denied honor to Enya's beautiful song of the Shire from **LotR**. I'm beginning to believe all those rotten things people said about the Oscars in my youth. ## As for the Olympics, I too enjoyed the eventual triumph of the Canadian figure skaters, and got a hoot out of their tandem dance with the Russian pair at the closing exhibition. That showed class. ## I too was entitled to a tax refund this year – it could have paid for **Challenger** and worldcon, but was swallowed by my debt. I am reaping what I sowed in the self-indulgent nihilism of my forties. ## That film about beauty contest nonsense makes me remember my favorite film from the '80s – before bland Reaganite conformity took over – **Smile**. Satiric wit once prospered in this country. ## Hmm ... I wonder if being Boskone GoH will help Neil Gaiman's Hugo chances '... ## I have no idea if job opportunities for lawyers – and journalists – would be better in Tennessee than they are here. Tennessee has one sterling advantage over Louisiana. It *isn't* Louisiana. The economy is undoubtedly better there – it's better in Ethiopia than it is here – but it could represent a fresh start without the necessity of a full-bore Bar exam, and that's why I'm investigating it. ## Rosy's a big fan of the **Nero Wolfe** series. Me too, although the title actor, Maury Chaykin, is too young and too svelte for the role. We like the continued casting of Kari Matchett in all the **femme fatale** roles. ## There is a distinction between amateur writers – the group for whom I believe the Fan

Writer Hugo was meant – and professionals that goes beyond merely getting paid for one’s writing. Heck, Harry Warner got paid for his writing, and so have I, on very rare (but precious) occasions. You hit on part of it when you mentioned fannish subject matter, which, considering his work on **Ansible**, qualifies Langford. But I find a more important distinction in *recognition*. Mike Resnick writes about fannish stuff. Greg Benford writes about fannish stuff (because what could be more fannish that visits with idols, which Greg does all the time). These men, unlike Warner or me, are professional writers of science fiction and have been rewarded as such. What could be more significant recognition than awards – four Hugos for Mike, a Nebula for Greg. Now, Langford has that recognition – a Hugo for his fiction. He should abandon the Fan Writing category. ## Cue Homer Simpson sector of my hypothalamus ... “ K r i s p y ... K r e m e s ... mmmmmmmmaagghmm ...” Rose lets me have one very six weeks. ## The best weapon airlines could give their employees is better security, of course, the best defensive weapon: a locked and impenetrable cockpit. But in a pilot’s hand, the stun gun seems adequate. A pistol shot could penetrate the hull and cause a **Goldfinger**-like catastrophe. As for profiling, any terrorist group capable of finding Arabs willing to undertake suicide attacks is capable of finding Caucasian old ladies who don’t fit any stereotype to do the same. ## My hyper-devout Uncle Glen once told me that scripture limited Heaven to 144,000 souls. My argument was that Jesus loosened that stricture, as he did so many others, but that was an argument with a brick wall. ## Annie Winston asked about slash fiction the other night, and Dennis Dolbear and I got to tell her all about it – even the hobbit style you mention here. She didn’t believe it. Of course, it didn’t help that, in years past, we had also told her all about a Laurence Olivier porn film we’d just seen, **Country Matters**, juggling the lie in the air for several minutes before the bullshit became too much for even us to manage. But yes, slash fandom exists. You’ve seen the collections of their fiction on sale at worldcon. The covers are like their contents... indescribable. ## I understand four people who were above the crash

floors in the World Trade Center escaped safely to the street. Almost three thousand did not. ## Cate Blanchett’s Galadriel? Dignity, wisdom, power, yes, but her off-center attractiveness doesn’t match the Queen’s epic and eternal beauty. Who would have been better? **PFEIFFER**? Just did a similar part in that misguided **Midsummer Night’s Dream**. Emma Thompson? As good as retired. Pamela Anderson? Wait ... sorry ... ## Alas, the bones of Chandra Levy have been found, and here’s a prayer that the forensic boys, thanks to ever-advancing CSI skill and technology, will tap her murderer. And who will that be? Condit? John Walsh’s serial killer? I hope we see the answer soon. ## I wish the **Asimov**’s staff would bring their back stock to worldcon so we can snap up missing Hugo winners. Or that some brave and beautiful and enterprising and newlywedded SF book editor would publish another – and up-to-date – anthology. I volunteer to edit it at 2/3 the fee paid Connie Willis. TKF? ## Most of my Ygnacio Valley High School classmates at the terrific .com address are strangers to me, as I’ve said, but I have some fun with those that aren’t. My **Smoke Signal** sports editor, Frank Bosche, now a gay activist in San Jose, visited New Orleans this month (we fell into our old friendship like it was an old couch), and I got to tell Gayle Jarrett via e-mail that, except for my wife (and present company, of course), she’s still the prettiest girl I’ve ever known. She sent her sons and nephews all the way from California to beat me up.

Travelers Tales / Steve Put me down as one who definitely wants this zine to stay in SFPA! It’s my only ticket to locales I’ll never set personal foot or eye upon – except Disneyworld; I’m bound to stop off there on a trip to Rosy’s father’s – and I need the vacations!

Avatar Press 2.20 / Randy Aw, shout for joy! These photos of Hank and Toni’s wedding win the Best Bit in this Mailing Award steaming away – and I like the art you made for the nuptials, too! Damn! I wish we could have been there, but I barely made it to my *own* wedding.

Guilty Pleasures 3 / *Eve* Hope you enjoy the review Rosy gave **Pirate's Price** in **Challenger**. You tell a grand cruise tale this issue – it'd make a great backdrop for a comic novel, a la **National Lampoon's Vacation**. You suggest the real appeal of such jaunts for many: shopping for souvenirs, although if you consider an \$8,000 watch a souvenir, 'at's off. ## Okay, another name to look for: Robert Crais. ## I never donate blood. Too scared of the letter I might get back. "Report at once to the Orleans Parish euthanasia center ..."

Tennessee Trash #46 / *Gary R* Rheumatic fever ... oh no. My best to Isaac. Keep us advised. ## I once took a cross-country flight in which the movie was either **You Light Up My Life** or its beastly sequel, the title of which is tastefully forgotten. It showed an airplane in flight – effectively doubling my vertigo. I still don't know how you travelin' dudes sleep on planes. I can't sleep in the same *month* as a flight. That experience you had of having your shoes inspected at the airport brings up a funny scenario; imagine some poor schnook whose shoes are taken away for an X-ray, who must then board his plane and fly on to London in sock feet. ## Theresa Threadgill – great name – is also a great person, and Concave has found a treasure in such a hotel rep. She should be cloned. Alert George Lucas. ## Speaking of cons, and the art show you say was so thin, I'm thinking of getting up an exhibit of Nolacon II art – most of the originals of our ads and program book work have turned up, and are still boss. ## Great typos this issue: "his liver Marina." ## Tagua nuts may resemble ivory ... but they're veggie matter; do they decay? ## Again, our salutes to brave Isaac. Tell the dude his daddy's crazy pals are all with him.

A Monument / *mike* Uhh ... I think I can *guess*, but just what was that word bulldozed into existence by that bored weatherman in Canada? ## When I see your words "Nice officer" I flinch, for reasons totally unconnected with national identity cards or my own Berkeley-engendered paranoia. Just today, a young LaPlace cop of my acquaintance responded to a "weird person" call from a bank near my office, encountering a local schizophrenic guy ... who attacked him with

scissors. The deputy – 23, a friendly, funny guy, who enjoyed some laughs at my expense when he got called onto a jury pool and I had to move heaven and earth to get rid of him, a truly nice fella – got his face carved like a Christmas turkey, and had to use his weapon. Now he's killed a man, whose innocent family is in agony. Poor, poor, poor kid. I wonder if he'll ever be the same. ## True, Doenitz didn't receive a fair sentence at Nuremberg – ten years was far too harsh for a sailor simply doing his duty. But, his counterparts among the Western allies, at least, spoke up in his behalf; my appreciation of '40s history is imperfect, but I thought it was only because of the Russians that he was punished at all. ## Your comments about not wanting Superman jokes to get back to people at DC reminds me of an incident during my sojourn there in **gulp** 1974 ... Lester Boutillier wrote to our Rights guy, Bernie Kashdan, complaining about the Supes gags he saw in K-a. Kashdan thought he was Weird. Lester, Lester. Haven't seen him since I moved back to New Orleans, and perhaps I should count my blessings. I well remember Bernie in 1974, closeting himself in DC's board room with a couple of guys named Salkind, a Mysterious Project in the works. It's said he prevented some truly hideous excesses in the Superman movie. ## Yikes! Your "troll" section makes me glad I don't post much on the net. Apac is bad enough! ## Maybe Sherman's March was meant to avoid bitterness, by forcing a quicker end to the Civil War – *a la* Hiroshima – but it sure didn't work, did it? The South bore an animus that didn't even start to fade until Carter was elected – his greatest achievement, as far as I'm concerned.

Home with the Armadillo #52 / *Liz* I have sleep problems all the time. During much of the winter and spring, I'd wake up at 3-4AM and, not wanting to disturb Rosy, worked on the computer. So if some mailing comments in the last few SMs have seemed particularly witless, that's why.

Playing Pepe le Pew / 3 Foreign Countries / For Your Consideration / *Jeff* I envy your ability to write at 30,000 feet. I envy your ability to stay sober and sane at 30,000 feet. The mere thought makes me crave a screwdriver – the

liquid kind. *yih* ## The only thing I know about **Dawson's Creek** is that the lead character was supposed to chafe his charley to Katie Couric every morning. I kept watching **Today** in hopes that she'd look into the camera and yell "Cut that out! You'll go blind!" ## I've never been as fond of Billy Wilder's comedies as some people, although I wish Marilyn Monroe had won an Oscar for **Some Like it Hot**. Nor am I overly fond of the overblown freak show **Sunset Boulevard**, despite its magnificent opening shot. However, I utterly worship the gritty stuff he was doing in the mid-'40s, **The Lost Weekend** (momentary appearance by Douglas Spenser) and especially **Double Indemnity** (the same). I *really* love that movie – great music, great sense of fate and doom in the opening credits, the best performance Edward G. Robinson ever gave, and a last line that digs into your chest like a trowel. Wow! ## You know, this joking around about missing DSC has really gone far enough. Fun's fun but the convention is mere days away from our deadline. See you there. ## Despite his Republican bias, and the unfortunate examples of plagiarism that have recently surfaced, I too am fond of hometown bwah Stephen Ambrose. His lectures – broadcast locally – are works of art. ## Ahem! Tell your daughter that one does not offend the universe by disparaging Michelle P-**PFEIFFER**. Michelle Pf – *that lady* would "get my attention" in a gorilla suit in another time zone. ## Charles Stross has a Hugo nomination this year, for "Lobsters". He might not win, but the best candidates seldom do -- *ahem* ## I'm with you: the Official Editor should never attempt to regulate content. I did so in 1980, to an extent, with Bill Bridget, and regret it now, even though Bridget was being an utter asshole, insulting the Lynches and Atkins and everyone else with incoherent and often illegible one-pagers. I got rid of him by threatening to invoke the expulsion clause, based, alas, on content ... but if the OE *doesn't* consider content, why even have an expulsion clause? ## Alas, there's the name, Effinger. Sad end to a fine fella. ## I think I'll miss the parties the most about the worldcon this year, especially the Hugo Losers' bash, probably the most exclusive soiree at the convention. Last year Sheila Lightsey got me to shake hands with Ted White there, no small feat. ("What's that?

You shook hands with Ted White's *feet*? Weirdness rules.") ## **We Were Soldiers**, since you mention it, was a very good film, depicting the North Vietnamese as brave, worthy opponents, and our guys as brave, worthy soldiers. ## If I sent my brother the **Challenger** masters, he'd probably burn them. He understands fandom a bit better after meeting the Greens and their pals at our wedding, but he still feels I'm wasting my time and money. ## I don't feel like fury tonight, so I won't think about America's rotten Supreme Court. Must say, though, that I agreed with their recent ruling on virtual child pornography. It established that the purpose of anti-porn law is to protect innocents from exploitation, not to protect society from bad taste. ## Since you infer a pattern to your Rules 4, I'll have to review them one of these days ... ## Wasn't that Michael Keaton cloning film **Multiplicity**, not **Duplicity**? Not that I ever saw it. ## Surely I've mentioned that Fred Gwynne was also a skilled artist. I saw a book of funny nudes he did once, and yes, I realize what I just wrote. ## If you saw the superb PBS documentary on the architectural reasons the WTC towers collapsed, you saw that each failed differently – one from the outside in, the other from the inside out, failures of trusses and the core, respectively. A very thin silver lining to the horror, to learn more about structural engineering, but I suppose it's important to know. ## The Frank Langella **Dracula** was insipid – at least on screen; the stage version was better, they say. Bela Lugosi's film is so creaky with age that the sublime excess of the star's bravura performance is lost. I didn't see Jack Palance in the role, think Chris Lee was wasted by silly scripts, and liked Coppola's version until it sank into a goopy chick flick. No, the best Dracs are the two versions of **Nosferatu** – Klaus Kinski was wonderful and Max Schreck was ... well, what was he? – and the exquisitely reptilian Louis Jourdan. *I want a copy of his original broadcast.* ## Still crave – desperately – that 9-23-01 **New Yorker**. Anyone spotting a copy, *kill* for it, and send it to me. ## **24** finally reached its midnight hour this month, a thrilling yet downbeat ending to an outstanding show. Kiefer Sutherland proved himself an actor worthy of his family name, and they brought in **His Holiness Himself**, Dennis Hopper, and who cares about his

stupid accent? I await the sequel season. ##
What's a "source code"? ## I like your criteria
for airport security profil3 targets – first-time
flyers, paying in cash, and so forth; they seem
responsible, sensible and minimally intrusive. I
bet they'd stand up in court. ## We saw National
Guardsmen on the streets at Mardi Gras ... unless
those were merely really effective costumes. ##
One minor disagreement: our reaction to 9-1-1
should have been violent, but not the violence of
a "God-forsaken Berserker." The colder, calmer,
meaner, and more controlled, the better. Wild
sloppy anger makes dumb mistakes, and fades
quickly. Such fury as the WTC killers deserve
should be as precise, as hot, as irresistible as a
laser. ## **Three Foreign Countries** is a hoot,
even if it doesn't inspire many mailing
comments. Envy makes for boring reading, even
if the object of it does not. You definitely win
the title of SFPazine Written Furthest from the
South Award, if that makes a difference in your
life.

Passages #13 / Janet "Solid green stuff is still
coming out of my sinuses." Please, doc! Enough
with the medico-technical jargon! ## 18 months
since the twins were born! They'll be driving
before you know it. Or riding the new pony. ##
If you ever figure out the Middle East, please
don't restrict your insights to SFPA. Sanity –
sitting down and talking things over – *doesn't*
work with these people, either side. The Arabs
seem fanatical, the Israelis all blinded by a 2,000-
yard stare ... Aside from finding a magical spell
effecting a sea-change in human nature, I'm
croggled at what to do. ## Hmm, a misspelling
makes for a terrifying sentence fragment. "So I
just went home and died ... Easter Eggs." "Y"
not?

Spiritus Mundi 188 / The Patriotic Route / me
Where'd I get the idea SM188 was for SFPA
225? The way I keep track of the mailings is to
add 38 to the number of the **Spiritus** I'm working
on, since I joined in mlg 39. Since when do 188
and 38 equal 225? An **Iris** moment: senility is
wasted on the old. I mean, *older*. // We're better
at reproducing photos since **Route** was done.
Check out **Challenger** 16, those of you who see
it – not yet the equal of the good old halftones,
but acceptable.

HOW MUCH CAN I SAY IN HALF A PAGE?

We'll have to see, because that's all I have to
complete this **Spiritus Mundi**. I do so on May
24, 2002, cutting things much closer than I
usually do, but then life is pretty hectic as the
darling buds of May make merry the hearts of
men.

I've just finished a rough three-day trial,
second degree murder, of a rather intelligent,
fairly good-looking black guy, convicted of
shooting his paramour in the head. They were
fighting over his intention to return to his other
girlfriend, in Tupelo, Mississippi, and thence to
his wife, somewhere in South Carolina ...
complex life this guy led. His defense combined
the absurdity of amnesia with the sieaze of
slander – the girl harassed him, harassed his lady
friends, had friends threaten him, all of which
was true, none of which mattered – and might
have worked, had he not had the bad taste to
shoot the woman while her daughter and nephew
were in the next room. Crossing those two was
my first personal experience with child witnesses;
I exposed contradictions and coaching, but they
were cute, so who cared? Also, the cops had don
e no forensic testing. No one noticed. The
newspaper quotes my closing: "You can 't
convict someone with an investigation that is so
sloppy, so incomplete." Sure they can. Bah.

Haven't mentioned anywhere what we
thought of **Star Wars II: Attack of the Clones**,
so here I will. Thrilling FX, excellent action,
good stuff from Ewan MacGregor and the better-
every-time Christopher Lee (give me my **Two**
Towers, now!), well worth seeing, but whenever
the two kids – Annakin and the princess – start to
talk, *leave*. They are dreadful. You can hardly
hear them, either, which is a break, considering
the dialog. Ick. In short, nothing new, but good
for a jolt. And Jar Jar is barely noticeable.

May be off to Atlanta next week to sell
some of Rosy's camera, so enjoy what follows. I
wrote it for **Argentus**, Steven Silver's fanzine, as
part of a panel on the worldcon that never was ...
Minneapolis in '73. Rosy's opening words to me
weren't voiced til '76, but they were as reported.
So is the last line.

TWINCON – the moment that changed it all

Guy Lillian

My major memory of Twincon? The sweetest memory of all. I met my lady there.

Of course, she wasn't my lady then, and at the time, I got the impression that she thought I was something of a dweeb. Or did we have the word "dweeb" back in the early seventies? Let me cast my mind back ...

Let's see: I was 24, a Berkeley graduate, and attending the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, one semester away from finishing the world's most enjoyable and useless graduate degree known to man, a Masters of Fine Arts. I'd driven to Minneapolis with some "mundane" friends of mine from the MFA program, John Hildebrandt and Lynne Barrett. (Hildebrandt now runs a huge amusement park in Ohio and Lynne has won an Edgar Award for a mystery story. Why they wasted their time with my company is anyone's guess.) While they visited Lynne's aunt, I attended the convention, reacquainting myself with Quinn Yarbrow and other stalwarts of the Little Men, the fabled Bay Area SF club, which I'd joined in my undergrad years. I crashed with several guys from my other club, the New Orleans SF Association; the Leamington Hotel didn't mind our crowding our room with cots. I never will forget how Norman Elfer's cot collapsed in the middle of the night ... Norman, now an engineer with Martin Marietta, still shakes his head ruefully when I remind him of it.

Anyway, Quinn was then secretary of the SFWA, and was running the press room. Tom Whitmore and I assisted her as runners, or "Feet." The job usually entailed finding a willing writer or artist for a media interview, and I'd been privileged to fetch Larry Niven, whom I'd met at Berkeley, and the extraordinarily urbane and charming John Brunner, who asked me some very apt questions about the perils of having long hair and living in the South. He was pleased when I told him I'd had no problems. Possibly the most delicate – yet rewarding -- task I was assigned was dragging Ursula K. LeGuin away from a luncheon for a talk with the scribe from **Time**. I knew from my stint as official photographer at the '69 and '70 Nebula banquets that Ms. LeGuin was painfully camera-shy and valued her privacy. That she was lunching with Alfred Bester made my duty all the more horrid.

That's a scene I never will forget – for many reasons. Imagine being a skinny 24-year-old boy, hair to one's shoulders, wearing a patched pair of jeans and a bulky sweatshirt, and having to walk into a pricey restaurant and interrupt a table full of idols. Ms. LeGuin sat to the right of a handsome, smiling man in specs and a goatee. It was, of course, Bester. That incredible gent – whom I'd interview a year later for an article about Julie Schwartz – was inspiring smiles not only from Ms. Ursula but from the others at table with an expansive, hand-waving story about – I gathered – Marilyn Monroe. The rest of the table? Brunner was there, and Gene Wolfe, who looked like an unsmiling version of my high school principal, and Joe Green, the Florida writer whom I had met at a DeepSouthCon in New Orleans. Sitting beside him, watching Bester, was a beautifully-dressed young lady who had to be Joe's daughter. She had dark curly hair, a heart-shaped face, a ski-slope nose, and eyes the size of small counties. Which turned to me as I approached the table.

Now, I've heard this story told by others, and it is *not true* that I interrupted Bester. Even at 24 I wasn't quite that gauche. His Marilyn Monroe anecdote had concluded, and the table was relaxed and smiling as I tore my gaze from the girl and attracted Ms. LeGuin's attention. "Excuse me, ma'am," I said, "but Quinn Yarbrow sent me to find you. That **Time** interviewer is here."

“**Time**?” Bester grinned. “I want her for **Holiday**!”

I gawped and smiled nervously. At the time I didn’t know that the great Bester was a constant contributor for that lamented magazine.

“Oh, Guy!” Joe said. “Come here a second.” He beckoned me around to the other side of the table. “This is my daughter, Rosy.”

The young beauty beside him looked up at me. I gubbed and gabbed a hello. Her smile would have melted a cast iron statue across a soccer field at midnight.

“Are those risque stories I’ve heard about you true?” she asked, teasingly.

“Ubba ubba ubba,” I replied, suave as usual. I was immediately conscious of my tattered jeans and cruddy sweatshirt.

“Sit!” Bester commanded, pointing to the empty chair beside Rosy. “**Time** magazine can wait. Now, Ursula ...”

My utter lack of grace, for remember I was only 24, embarrasses me now, but I did sit. I listened to those immortals of our genre chat for a good fifteen minutes, and if I had space, I’d recount every delightful line, every jolly anecdote, every pointed observation. But here I’ll simply report how dazzled I was by Rosy Green. She was 18 then, with beauty and bearing and that ineffable quality I’ve heard called “class.” With her father there, I couldn’t ask her what I most wanted to ask: “*What* risque stories?”

That quarter hour got me into trouble with Quinn, who came in herself to get LeGuin for her interview. She immediately hustled me out of there to take care of some other bit of press room business. I didn’t see Rosy again until the Hugo ceremonies, when I spotted her and her father chatting with Joanna Russ. She looked over in my direction and smiled.

As I say, I got to interview Alfred Bester a year later, and someday I’ll have to write that afternoon up for my genzine **Challenger**. I saw Brunner again at a DeepSouthCon in New Orleans in 1979. Both gentlemen are missed on this planet and in this field. As for Twincon, there are many other memories I treasure from it. It was only my second worldcon, and as you know it was the largest of all time to that point. I got to witness the famous argument between Harlan and Ed Bryant written up in **The Last Dangerous Visions**. Not much of an argument, really; those guys were and are buddies. I was wowed by Edgar Pangborn; his **Davy** is much better when read by a grown man than it was when read by a dumb teenager.

As for Rosy – well, a mere 27 years after that awkward moment at Twincon, I married her. I’ve grown old, bald, fat. She hasn’t changed a bit. No, that’s not true. She’s even lovelier.

