



The Texas SF Inquirer
Issue 53 September 1994

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Editor: Alexander R. Slate

Howdy

What can I say? Almost anything, it's a fairly free country. But, my idiotic humor aside, welcome to another issue of *The Texas SF Inquirer*. You might notice two things; one, most of you received your last issue months after the date listed on the cover, and two, this issue is dated many a month after the last. I will deal with each separately.

Item the first. I did indeed have the last issue printed and packaged for delivery in the month of April, though I expected that they would be mailed the beginning of May. I live in San Antonio, our bulk mail permit resides in Austin. The zines sat around in someone's garage for quite a while (For more than one reason, I understand.) before they got taken to the Post Office. I was, and still am, upset about this. Hopefully, it will never happen again. Yet some people, notably many of the overseas (and I think the Canadian trades, too) were sent out much earlier, because I mail these myself.

Item the second. Because of budgetary considerations, we've had to decrease the number of issues for this year. The next issue after this will probably be in late January or in February. With luck, this state of affairs will not last past this year. But, this issue is a bit larger than normal, one side effect of delayed publication.

(Continued on page ?)

Personal Commentary:

Occasional Thoughts and Meanderings

by Casey Hamilton

Unlike most people in the country, I have not been transfixed by the goings-on in the O.J. Simpson murder case. I'm probably one of the few people who are semi-actively trying to avoid the tabloid TV shows, news reports and the near-constant coverage and speculation about the case.

Perhaps I feel that the judicial system should be left alone, that I strongly believe in the American presumption of innocence until proven guilty. Or perhaps I'm in denial, that I don't want to believe that a man whose public career I've followed for over half my life could be capable of spousal abuse and homicide.

Not to slight or diminish in any way the pain and suffering of the two victims' families, but the hearts of Buffalo Bills fans are breaking. This whole thing hurts like hell.

I grew up in a very small town in Western New York, and have been a Buffalo Bills fan for just about as long as I can remember. The last four years haven't been particularly fun for us Bills fans, especially in January. And now this...

To understand what the Bills and O.J. Simpson mean to people like me, you first have to understand what Western New York is like. There isn't much there. There are very few big towns; Buffalo's the only city with any kind of culture or shopping, and what's there isn't terrific; the economy is slow.

I remember when a Burger King franchise first came to Olean, the small city/big town closest to where I grew up. Before that, McDonalds was all there was. Getting a Burger King felt almost miraculous, like the outside world had seen us for once.

Secondly, you have to get a feel for what winters are like in Western New York. First and foremost, they are long; snow can be on the ground for nearly seven whole months, from October to April. Winter is cold and dark and snowy, and long. If you're not a skier, there's not much to do or to occupy your mind or your time.

My little high school had good teams: an undefeated football team my senior year, an undefeated wrestling team for about three years, and a basketball team that often made it to the play-offs. But a high school football or basketball game on a Friday night or Saturday afternoon doesn't necessarily maintain your interest over the rest of a cold, snowy weekend.

St. Bonaventure University, a small Catholic college down the road, had a pretty good basketball

team, especially when Bob Lanier played there. But they only played other small schools in the area like Canisius and Villanova. And they never really hit it big, mostly just the NIT Tournament and losing to North Carolina in the first or second round the one time I remember them making the NCAA.

So for big-time sports, for something to hopefully brighten up those long, dark winters, all there was were the Buffalo Bills, and they stunk. They were bad. It seems almost impossible that the same franchise who's been to the Super Bowl the last four years in a row could barely win a game back in the 1970s. It's true. They were awful.

Then came O.J. Simpson, and things got better. Oh, the rest of the team wasn't magically transformed, but they started winning about as often as they'd lose. And the way he used to run a broken field pattern was grace in athleticism in action. I loved to watch him run.

Eventually, the team got enough better that they actually made the play-offs. Didn't get very far, but they were finally respectable enough that Western New York didn't feel like it had to apologize for its football team. And O.J. was a star.

I don't necessarily want to imply that he was my hero, although I'm sure he was a hero to many people in Western New York. O.J. certainly was a celebrity, showing grace under pressure regardless of whether the Bills won or lost, and he had a megawatt smile that reached up to his eyes and into your heart.

So O.J. was a big part of what made those long winters in Western New York during the 70s a little bit more bearable.

I will have to plead more than a little bit of ignorance; I was completely unaware of his spousal abuse conviction during the 1980s. All I knew about was his sports commentary and pre-game show, and his acting. If I had known, I'm not sure how I would have been able to reconcile that with the image I thought I knew, or whether that would have lessened the impact of the double homicide he's now accused of committing.

As I write this, the preliminary hearing is in its third day, and at some point, the judge will rule on a defense motion to quash evidence gathered at his house almost immediately after the victims' bodies were discovered. The DNA test results won't be in for quite some time.

(Continued on page 19)

Article:

1994 Nebula Awards Weekend - Eugene, Oregon

by John Moore

April in Eugene, Oregon is cool, rainy, and overcast, but the flowering cherry trees that surrounded the Valley River Inn were in full bloom, and pink and white petals drifted across the faux rustic setting. The lobby boasted a stone fireplace that provided a constant cheerful blaze. The restaurant is the only four star restaurant in Oregon, and the crab chowder is a delight. I liked the place.

Eugene is the home of Pulphouse Publishing and Blue Moon Books, and has a substantial colony of SF writers (all of whom seem to belong to the same giant workshop group), so attendance was pretty good, about 225 people. This is about double the number that attended in New Orleans, and about half of what they got in New York, I'm told. I arrived very late Friday night, in time to catch only the tail end of the pre-Neb party. Last call is at 1:00 AM in Eugene, so the parties tended to break up quickly afterward.

Saturday opened with the SFWA business meeting, which was very much less contentious than SFWA meetings often are -- possibly influenced by the laid-back, mellow atmosphere of the Pacific Northwest. The afternoon was taken by a few business related topics such as "Selling Electronic Rights." I skipped these, however. After spending the previous day sitting on planes and in airports, I was too twitchy to sit through a panel. Instead I walked to the mall and bought postcards of Oregon banana slugs. What better way to cheer up a loved one than by sending them a postcard of an Oregon banana slug?

The Award Dinner opened with a cocktail party that gave an opportunity for the flashy dressers among us to show off our finery. Geoffrey Landis sported a bolo tie made from a length of missile booster o-ring. Joe Haldeman was resplendent in a cream yellow tuxedo. Top honors in the kick-ass dress department went to Barbara Hambly, in a drop-back red silk dress, and Alexandra Honisberg, whose burgundy dress was slit up the thigh to reveal micro-fishnet hose. Martha Soukup wore an excellent sequined jacket with a butterfly design. Later she removed the jacket to expose a décolleté catsuit.

(By the way, why do so many writers wear fake bow ties? They look so cheap. Jeez, if you're going through all the trouble of donning evening dress, why not take an extra two minutes and tie a real bow tie? End of editorial.)

Connie Willis and Ed Bryant were co-toastmasters. They were amusing, but I've seen them both speak at cons and they're better separately than they are together. Eric Drexler, the nano-technology prophet, was the keynote speaker. He talks exactly the way he writes his books and I liked his speech. But some people complained that his speech wasn't technical enough. Others wanted more introductory information. Well, you can't please everyone.

The actual award ceremony went smoothly, except for a delay while the toastmasters labored to remove the extremely sticky tape that Dean Smith used to conceal the names of the winners on the baseplates. The tape was eventually removed at the sacrifice of Ed Bryant's fingernails. The winners were gracious, the losers were philosophical about the loss, although Nancy Kress took it quite hard -- she was sobbing openly before she returned to her room. Once again the party afterward broke up early, even young guys like Will McCarthy were in bed by midnight. Or perhaps they all disappeared into private publisher's parties. (I haven't learned the secret knock yet.)

I flew out the next morning on a Fairchild Metro, an 18 seat turboprop. This is the smallest plane I've ever been on and the only one that actually gave me a feeling of flying. As we lifted off, the sun finally broke out, rewarding us with a view of the beautiful Willamette valley, and Mt. Hood in the distance.



Awards

1994 Nebula Awards

Novel: *Red Mars* by Kim Stanley Robinson
 Novella: *The Night We Buried Road Dog* by Jack Cady [F&SF]
 Novelette: "Georgia On My Mind" by Charles Sheffield [Analog]
 Short Story: "Graves" by Joe Haldeman [F&SF]

1994 Hugo Awards

Best Novel: *Green Mars* by Kim Stanley Robinson
 Best Novella: "Down in the Bottomlands" by Harry Turtledove
 Best Novellette: "Georgia on My Mind" by Charles Sheffield
 Best Short Story: "Death on the Nile" by Connie Willis
 Best Professional Editor: John Clute and Peter Nicholls (*The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*)
 Best Professional Artist: Bob Eggleton
 Best Fanzine: *Mimosa* from Dick and Nicki Lynch
 Best Fan Writer: Dae Langford
 Best Fan Artist: Brad W. Foster
 Best Semi-Prozine: *Science Fiction Chronicle* edited by Andrew Porter
 Best Dramatic Presentation: *Jurassic Park* (Universal Pictures)
 Best Original Artwork: Space Fantasy Commemorative Stamp Booklet by Steohen Hickman



John W. Campbell Award for Best New Science Fiction writer of 1992-1993: Amy Thomson

Big Heart Award: Jack Williamson
 First Fandom Award: Andre Norton

Golden Duck Awards for excellence in Childrens' Science Fiction
 Best Picture Book: *Ritchie's Rocket* illustrated and photographed by Joan Anderson
 Childrens' Book (Grades 2-6): *Wolf's First Adventure* by Peter David
 Young Adults' Book (Grades 6-10): *The Giver* by Lois Lowery
 Special Award: *Invitation to the Game* by Monica Hughes



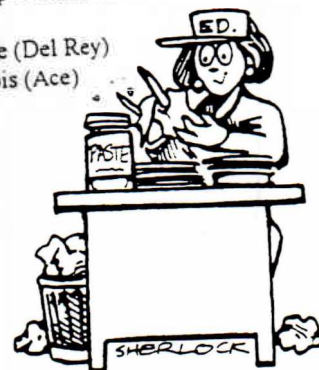
Auroras (Canada's national SF awards)
 Long form, English: Guy Gavriel Kay, Robert J. Sawyer, Sean Stewart, William Gibson
 Long form, French: Jacques Brossard, Joel Champetier, Daniel Serigne

Chesley Awards (Assoc of Science Fiction & Fantasy Artists)

Best cover illustration, magazine: Wojtek Studmak for *Asimov's* Dec 1993
 Best 3-dimensional art: Jennifer Weyland for "I Am the Shining Star"
 Best interior illustration: Alan M. Clark for "The Toad of Heaven", *Asimov's* June 1993 (p. 70-71)
 Best monochrome work, unpublished: Carl Lundgren for "Imprudence"
 Best color work, unpublished: James Gurney for "Garden of Hope"
 Best art director: Jamie Warren Youll, Bantam Books
 Contribution to ASFA: tie David Lee Pancake for printing & mailing all ASFA publications
 Teresa Patterson and Pegasus Management Crew for ASFA print shop at ConFransisco
 Award for Artistic Achievement: Kelly Freas, body of work
 Best Cover Illustration, hardback: Tom Kidd for *The Far Kingdoms* by Chris Bunch and Allen Cole (Del Rey)
 Best Cover Illustration, paperback: Bob Eggleton for *Dragons* ed. by Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois (Ace)

Canadian Masquerade Awards (Short List)

NOVICE CLASS
 Honorable Mention for the Chronologically Gifted: Captain Harlock (David Doering)
 Honorable Mention for Presentation: Series W.T.3 (Walter Thompson III)
 Best Death: *The Only Good Romulan* (Krikor Ajemian)
 Most Beautiful novice: *My Midwinter Nights Dream* (Keri Lyn Doering)



Too Cute to Live: radioactive Hamsters for a Planet Near Mars (Ed Charpentier, Louise Hypher, Cathy Leeson, Cindy Huckle)
designed by - Louse, Ed, Cathy & Collee Hillerup

Best Recreation: Imperial Ground Assault Forces (Jphn Mitchel and Scott Corwin)

JOURNEYMAN CLASS

Honorable Mentions:

Eos, the Goddess of the Dawn (Janet Paderewski)

Rainstick (Ionian Duet) Blues and Kazoo (Mixolydian Trio) Blues, Titaniades (Zoanne Allen and Susan Eisenhour)

An Award in 4 Acts:

A Glasgow Gopher (Pat Vandenberg & Rich Stoddart)

designed & constructed by: Allan Kent, Pat Vandenberg, Jill Eastlake, Peggy Chernoff and Donald Eastlake; UFO
by Rich Stoddart

Working With a Rat (John Willis and Zanne Labonville)

designed & constructed by: Zanne Labonville, Jill Eastlake, John Willis, Rich Stoddart, Pat Vandenberg, Peggy
Chernoff, Ross Pavlac, and Donald Eastlake; UFO by Rich Stoddart

Committed (Skip Morris and Donald Eastlake)

designed & constructed by: Jill Eastlake, Pat Vandenberg, Allan Kent, Peggy Chernoff and Skip Morris, UFO by
Rich Stoddart

A Neo at Winnipeg (Jill Eastlake and Allan R. Kent)

designed & constructed by: Allan Kent, Zanne Labonville, Peggy Chernoff, Pat Vandenberg, and Jill Eastlake; UFO
by Rich Stoddart; The Force Horse by Johnna Klukas

Best Journeyman: Xanadu (Nora Mai)

MASTER CLASS

Honorable Mention: The Eagle and the Hawk (Carol Salemi and Eric Cannon)

design: Carol Salemi; construction: Carol Salemi and Laurel Cunningham-Hill

The Nostalgia Award with Tentacle Clusters: The 19th Century League of Futurists (Kathy Sanders, Drew Sanders, Gavin

Claypool, Robbie Cantor, Lauraine Tutuhasi, Len Wein, Twilight)

design: Kathy Sanders

Bram Stoker Memorial Award: Sanguis Aeternae Vitae (Pierre Pettinger, Sandy Pettinger, Karen Heim, Bruce MacDermott)

design & constructed by: Pierre and Sandy Pettinger with special thanks to Michilina Pettinger

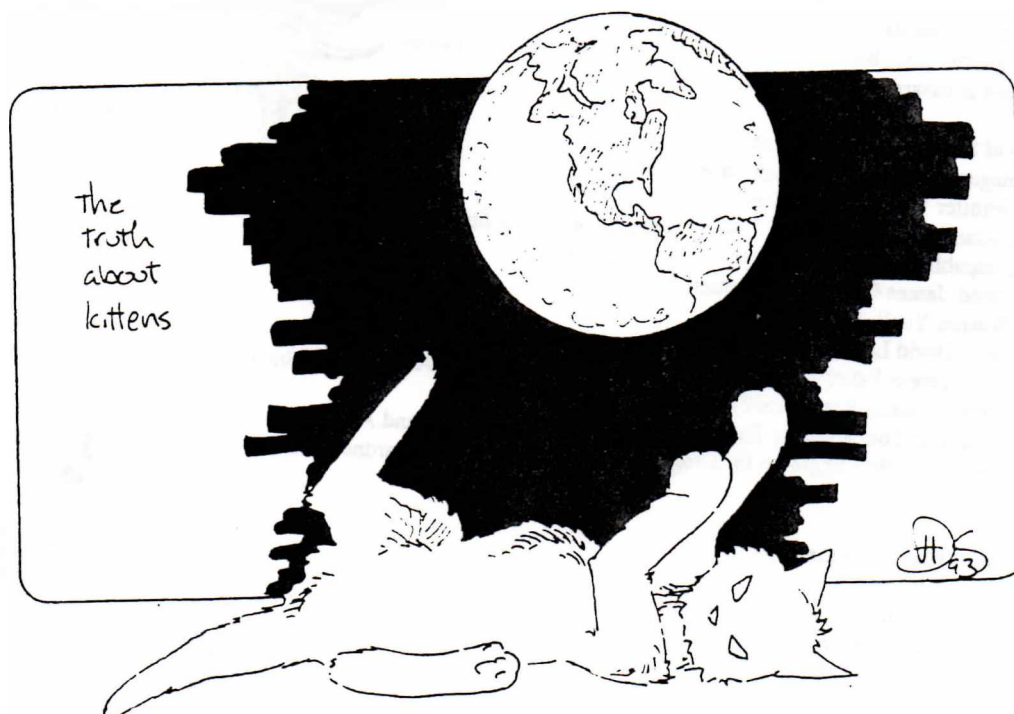
Most Evocative: Ondine (Jacqueline M. Ward)

Best Execution of Concept: Carousel Armor (Gordon Smuder and Jennifer Menken)

OVERALL AWARDS

Judges Choice: The Bitch is Back -Queen Alien and Powerloader (Jeff Bergeron and Stephanie Richardson)

Best in Show: Our Lady of Shadows and Dreams (Deborah K. Jones)



ConFransisco, part 3

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Panel: Economics and Daily Life in Elizabethan Times

Saturday, 4:00 PM

Hilary Ayer (m), William Foss, Josepha Sherman, Karen Shearer Voorhees

"The age of Elizabeth I serves as a model for many cultures we imagine in other universes or on other planets. What was it really like to live in the time of Shakespeare": Well, of all the panels I went to, this certainly classifies as "the panel title most likely to surprise someone who has never been to a science fiction convention." While there was some mention of science fiction (or more accurately, fantasy), this was mostly a background panel on the history of the period so that writers would understand it better before they used it willy-nilly as background in their stories.

The Elizabethan Age was described as an age of transition. It marked the rise of the middle class. Though in many ways we look on it negatively now, it was a society that worked. The whole system of formal social rank resulted in a sense of belonging and a sense of being in place. This sense of belonging was also mentioned by Kim Stanley Robinson in his lecture on Post-modernism and in the "Gender-Bending" panel, so it seems to be a common concern. I would propose this is because we are a much more mobile society now than ever before and people don't feel they belong anywhere particular. This supposition is somewhat supported by what the panelists talked about a little later: that in Elizabethan times people did not move around very much—in fact, often never went more than ten miles from their village in their entire lives—and that meant that your reputation was important and long-lasting. If you cheated someone in business, you couldn't just pick up and move to the next county and start fresh. A woman's chastity was important because of this life-long reputation, but also, of course, because before contraception, sex usually produced babies. So people cared about what other people thought of them, more than they do now. And people felt that they belonged where they were.

The class system led to a lot of the fashions carried through even until today. Long nails meant that you had someone else to do your manual labor. White skin meant that you didn't work out in the sun. It also meant that you covered your face with a

lead-based make-up and probably died of lead poisoning, but what's a little thing like that in the name of fashion? When most work moved indoors during industrialization, suddenly a dark tan became the sign of the upper class—people who had enough spare time to sit around outside and get a tan. Now, of course, a tan means that you're not worried about skin cancer. Women may have followed all these fashion fads, but they were beginning to gain power in the Elizabethan Age as well. In London, the head of the Bakers' Guild and the head of the Brewers' Guild were both women. (One of the panelists recommended WOMEN OF ACTION IN TUDOR ENGLAND by Pearl Hogrefe for more on this subject. I couldn't find that title in BOOKS IN PRINT, but I did find one by Hogrefe titled TUDOR WOMEN: COMMONERS & QUEENS, so perhaps the panelist misremembered the title.)

The best-seller of the time was Erasmus's etiquette book, which suggested (among other things) that people dull their dinner knives so that guests couldn't stab each other. This is why we have dull dinner knives to this day, and also tells us that there was some reasonable chance that guests *would* try to stab each other.

The Elizabethan Age also marked a move from intolerance to tolerance (more or less). There was a break-up of the power of the Church which led to a wider range of opinions being tolerated. This was not an all-encompassing toleration; the Jews, who had been expelled from England in 1290, were not permitted to return until the 1650s under Cromwell, and I don't know if the expulsion order was ever formally repealed.

The economy of the period was an economy of scarcity. Clothes were re-fashioned, cut down, re-used, and so on. The largest person in the family got the new shirt, because that way it could make its way down through all the sizes.

The Elizabethan Age was when empires were extended beyond Europe. (This, of course, is a very Eurocentric view of things. The Mongols might have had a few comments here—or even the Romans.) Before Elizabethan times life was collective; in Elizabethan times it became individual. This means that the Elizabethan Age is really the first period we can understand, or at least that there is a quantum leap in our understanding of it over earlier periods. And

this is no doubt why this period serves as a background for so many stories.

Josepha Sherman plugged her book (co-authored with Mercedes Lackey), *A CAST OF CORBIES*, set in an alternate Elizabethan era.

Masquerade

Saturday, 8:00 PM

As I noted earlier, there was a 2000-person limit on attendees. We waited in line from 7:30 PM to 8:15 PM to get in, and were somewhere around #1500. One good thing was that they were counting the line so that once it reached 2000 people, they could tell latecomers not to waste time standing in line. They also announced how many places/seats a person could save in line, saving embarrassing incidents (although 4 seats per person in line seems a bit high to me). The VIP seating was not announced ahead of time, which probably should be done if there are in fact seats set aside.

There were fifty costumes. The NORTON READER (the daily newsletter) the next day listed forty-six awards. The costumes were almost uniformly (no pun intended) excellent, but that's far too

many awards. With that many, they're more certificates of participation. I would suggest perhaps first and second place in each category (Novice, Journeyman, and Master), first and second place workmanship in each category (Novice, Journeyman, and Master), and Best of Show. Caveat: I am not a costumer. If you are, your mileage may vary.

There were also a few costumes listed as original that I would have described as "re-creations": "The Wedding" (based on the Charles Addams cartoon characters), "Vulcan Barbarian," and "Klingon Ceremonial" (both from STAR TREK).

It was also unnecessary to have a fifteen-minute intermission (which of course stretched to a half-hour) for only fifty costumes. Having the Moscone Center lights randomly cycle on and off during the second half was interesting, but not desirable.

After the first run-through, there was supposed to be a videophone hook-up with Arthur C. Clarke in Sri Lanka, but this was preceded by a couple of short films and a lot of waiting. Eventually we left before it was finished. I heard that the final judging and awards ceremony wasn't done until after 2 AM!

My basic suggestions for the Masquerade would be: big enough room, theater seating, entries limited to around fifty, no intermission during the first run-through, fewer awards, and faster awards.

Panel: Northern California in SF/F

Sunday, 10 AM

David Bratman (m), Don Herron, Pat Murphy, Diana L. Paxson

"The where and why of using real world locations in speculative fiction, with examples drawn from the world right outside the convention's doors": I arrived a little late, and missed the beginning, but Paxson was comparing using northern California to using Britain as an inspiration. In Britain, she said, there are a lot of structures, ancient and not so ancient, that can be used, and northern California lacks those. But northern California does have legends, and those can take the place of buildings. One of the stories set in the area that she talked about was Ursula K. LeGuin's *ALWAYS COMING HOME*, set in the Napa Valley in the far future after an earthquake has changed the contours of the land. To get the geography right, LeGuin had a cartographer friend of hers (George Hirsch) construct a three dimensional map of the area, then tilt the appropriate sections and flood it with water to see what the new shapes of the bodies of land and water would look like.

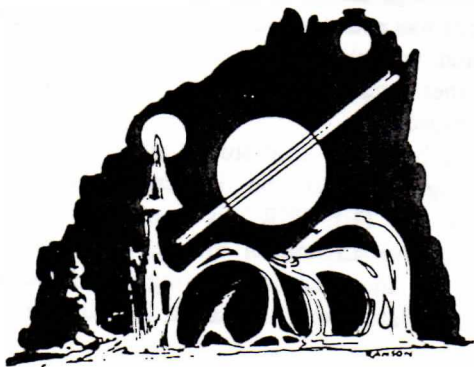
Many authors have used San Francisco as a setting. But do they really have that "sense of place" that is so important? Philip K. Dick had it in *MAR-*



TIAN TIME-SLIP and other stories, according to the panelists, but Dean R. Koontz's *SHATTERED* (written under the pen name K. R. Dwyer) made it obvious that Koontz had never been in San Francisco. *THE NET* by Loren J. MacGregor did a good job of describing the bars south of Market Street. Perhaps the classic use of San Francisco in science fiction/fantasy is Fritz Leiber's *OUR LADY OF DARKNESS*, though Pat Murphy's own *THE CITY, NOT LONG AFTER* certainly ranks up there.

Regarding her work, Murphy said that her work in the Exploratorium trained her to observe and "see beyond the surface," and that is what lets her see the potentials of settings. Someone apparently mapped out all the places mentioned in *THE CITY, NOT LONG AFTER*, though Murphy says that the map would probably be a disappointment to try to follow; for example, the vacant lot where the refrigerator sculpture is in the book has no such sculpture in real life (yet!). Regarding this, one of the joys I find is walking around a new place and finding the settings that were described in literature or even other travelogues. And I am not alone—when we were on a boat of about ninety passengers in the Galapagos Islands a few years ago, at least five of us were reading *GALAPAGOS* by Kurt Vonnegut. Murphy also warned that she and other authors often change some details (such as house numbers) to protect the people who live in the houses. You can claim that room 1247 of the Marriott is haunted—it's a public building and "fair game." But if you claim that 1726 Fairlawn Drive is haunted, the people who live there may not like the reputation their house gets. (Does the name "Amityville" ring a bell?)

And of course this sort of desire has spawned the "literary tour" movement, which has two subcategories: tours that visit places mentioned in books, and tours that visit places connected with the authors of these books. Some tours combine both, perhaps showing you where Dashiell Hammett lived and also the places he wrote about. The places connected with authors are often a disappointment—someone said



that you go to some house where a famous author wrote his first novel, and you discover that it's being inhabited now by a Vietnamese family who can't understand why you are standing on the street taking pictures of their house. (It's sort of like going back to your childhood home years later. People think you're casing the joint.)

Panel: The Holocaust in F & SF

Sunday, 11:00 AM

Eve Ackerman (m), Esther M. Friesner, Lisa Goldstein, David M. Honigsberg

"Does SF/F serve as a useful forum to discuss the Holocaust?": Well, the first question asked was whether you can write about the Holocaust in fantasy or science fiction without trivializing it. Elie Wiesel has claimed that any fiction about it will trivialize it, but Friesner said any fiction about it will keep it alive, and that's important. (The actor Robert Clary, a Holocaust survivor, has said that it is up to people to make sure it is known that it happened.) As for using science fiction or fantasy, others thought that maybe you needed to approach the Holocaust through metaphor (as in *MAUS*) rather than head-on. (This sounded liked Connie Willis's comment on the "Time Travel" panel about using time travel to look at something with peripheral vision. Similarly, someone said that even though we know what's going on in Bosnia, we can't quite grasp it in the present and will only understand it in retrospect.) Goldstein thought fantasy had a particular virtue to bring to a story about the Holocaust, because "fantasy deals with archetypes and deep emotion and can get to places realistic fiction can't." Fiction about the Holocaust tends to be somewhat unpopular, panelists said, because people want to be comforted, not disturbed, but Honigsberg said that "fantasy and science fiction readers have a greater capacity for reading disturbing works."

Ackerman said that in her classes she used *THE DEVIL'S ARITHMETIC* by Jane Yolen to teach teen-agers about the Holocaust. She said that it helps American teenagers to connect with that period and those events. The "traditional" book, *THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK*, doesn't work as well, because it doesn't have any characters like American teenagers today—American teenagers just don't identify with Anne Frank. Outstanding writers can make events personal to the reader, and that is what is important. Can a writer who has no personal connection write a Holocaust book? Well, at Boskone, Jane Yolen said she would not want to see a situation where only Jews could write about Jews, only blacks could write about blacks, and so on, in part because

if that is the case, then you can never have a book that includes people from many groups. What people seem to forget, she continued, was that writers *create*. That's what writing is about. Writers are supposed to be able to write characters other than themselves. Shakespeare may or may not have been Francis Bacon, but he was not a Jew *and* a Moor *and* a teen-age girl *and* a Danish prince *and* an aging king. Here Friesner also pointed out that a writer needs to be able to write about people other than herself or himself.

Members of the audience noted that there have been other holocausts. (I was surprised no one had mentioned Jane Yolen's other Holocaust book, *BRIAR ROSE*, notable for showing other victims of the Nazis besides Jews. One of the main characters, for example, is a gay Holocaust survivor.) In addition to the non-Jewish victims of the Nazis, there have been holocausts in Cambodia and other parts of the world. *THE UNCONQUERED COUNTRY* by Geoff Ryman is an allegory for the Pol Pot era in Cambodia, but on the whole these have been overlooked by science fiction and fantasy writers. (Someone mentioned *YEAR 0* as a good non-fiction book about Cambodia. Though I am reasonably sure that's the correct title, I couldn't find it in *BOOKS IN PRINT*.)

Honigsberg decried the trend toward books about "Nazi vampires," feeling that they take the blame off human beings. He felt that one of the lessons to be learned from the Holocaust was "the banality of evil." Perhaps, but the message can also be read that the monsters we invent and the evils we attribute to them are no worse than ourselves and the evils we do. It's all in how it's written, and in whether the reader can make that jump in understanding. The book *PARIS TROUT* by Pete Dexter was given as a work that studied the matter-of-factness of an evil person.

Friesner said that to some extent people had foreseen the possibility of the Holocaust. Jerome K. Jerome at the turn of the century said that "the German people will follow anything in a uniform," and that this was fine if they had a good leader, but what if they got a bad one? Other people, however, then reminded us that it was important in all this to talk about or show individuals, not "the Nazis" or "the Germans," or we are guilty of the same faults.

People were also looking for something that could explain why or how the Holocaust happened. (This is equally true outside of science fiction and fantasy, of course.) There have been studies done on this. One was the "Milgram Experiment" in which subjects were asked to inflict an electric shock on a person in an isolation booth who couldn't see them.



(Unknown to the subject, the person in the isolation booth was actually one of the team administering the test, and there was no electricity in the wires, but the "victim" would simulate a reaction when the subject pressed the button.) The subject had a dial that could set the intensity of the shock and was told that a maximum-intensity shock would kill the "victim." A surprising number of subjects followed the instructions given them by the tester to increase the intensity, regardless of the screams of the "victim" and regardless of the warnings given them ahead of time, even up to inflicting the maximum intensity. The conclusion of the testers was that people are conditioned from early childhood to follow instructions, particularly instructions given them by someone in authority (including people in white lab coats), and this often over-rode any "common-sense" morality they might feel. There was also an experiment in a high school in which some of the students were formed into an "elite" group and were indoctrinated as to their "superiority" to the other students. This experiment was ended ahead of schedule when it got out of hand, with the elite students beating up some of the other students who didn't show them the "proper respect."

There have also been studies about why some places fought against the Holocaust. The film *WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT* is about the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in France, which hid as many as five thousand Jews during the Holocaust (and its population was only about five thousand!).

The Italians also were more protective of their Jews than other countries. On the other hand, the United States turned away the ship St. Louis, full of Jewish refugees who could find no country to take them in and which eventually returned to Germany, where most of its passengers perished.

Other books recommended included Janet Gluckman and George Guthridges' *CHILD OF THE LIGHT*, Steve Lipman's *LAUGHTER IN HELL: THE USE OF HUMOR DURING THE HOLOCAUST* (about the use of humor during the Holocaust as a means of fighting back) and Thomas Kenally's *SCHINDLER'S LIST* (based on the true story of an industrialist who saved many Jews by concealing them on the employment rolls of his factory).

(In addition to being an interesting panel, this was also when we ran into Chuck Belov, Mark's distant cousin and about the only other member of his family in fandom.)

Lecture: "My Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands"

Sunday, 12 noon

Mark Twain

"Mark Twain was famous not only for his writing, but for his tour on the lecture circuit. Come see him give his most popular speech 'in the flesh': This was in many ways the easiest for Mr. Twain of all his appearances. All he had to do was prepare a two-hour speech and deliver it. (I missed the second hour, so it's possible he had a question-and-answer period.) Compiled from the best of Twain's speeches and writings, it was enormously entertaining, but I will not attempt to relate large sections of it. One representative quote I noted down was his observation that "chamomile tea has nothing on the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for restfulness." For the rest, ... well, go read all the Mark Twain you can lay your hands on. (If someone videotaped this, let me know if there's some way to get a copy.)

Hogu Ranquet, Sunday, 1:00 PM

It's hard to explain the Hogus. Originally the "Hogu Ranquet" was designed by Elliot (Elst) Weinstein as an alternative to the "Hugo Banquet." As conventions got larger, the notion of combining the Hugo Awards ceremony with a banquet lost favor--it was simply impossible to seat anywhere near the number of interested people banquet-style. But the Ranquet continues, held at a McDonald's (or comparable restaurant if a McDonald's is not available). The awards are honestly bought: to get something on the ballot, you send in money with your nomination; to vote for something costs you a dollar

a vote. (Most awards, however, were granted by acclamation, with no vote-buying needed.)

Since I was nominated in one category I felt obliged to attend. It was a lot of fun, even though I had to miss the second half of Mark Twain's speech and another panel. Whether I would go every year is not clear; it depends on its competition. It did give me a chance to eat lunch--a rare event for this convention.

Panel: The Past Seen Through Fictional Eyes Sunday, 3:00 PM

Stu Shiffman, Susan Shwartz (m), S. M. Stirling, Harry Turtledove, William F. Wu

"How historical fictions (including alternate history ones) really reflect present day concerns": The panel did not really address the specific topic, though the first observation here was that xenophobia is the most universal human value, and that's what we see the most of. We have a tendency to see most victories in the past of one group over another as good, and the losers as wrong in their beliefs or attitudes, but that is because the victors write the history books, and as L. Sprague deCamp said, they write it with "satanic gusto." Perhaps we realize this, because Stirling claims that "there's a tendency these days to go overboard on the cultural relativism thing" in compensation. For five hundred years, Columbus was great and the native Americans were savages; now the native Americans are great in spite of their many flaws (such as human sacrifice) because "that was right for their society." Oddly enough, the cultural relativists aren't so forgiving of the Europeans and their cultural quirks, such as imperialism. Then again, someone pointed out that it's easy for the victors to flagellate themselves symbolically and say how guilty they feel. It costs them nothing once they've won to say how sorry they are.

Regarding the whole issue of non-interference in other people's customs, Stirling cited Napier's comment when he tried to ban suttee in India and was told that suttee was the custom there and he shouldn't interfere. Napier said that it was an Indian custom to burn widows, and it was a British custom to hang people who burned widows. They could carry out their custom and he would carry out his. (In science fiction, Sheri Tepper's *SIDESHOW* is set on a planet where cultural relativism and non-interference are carried to an extreme, and should give cultural relativists some pause.)

But in spite of this theoretical trend toward cultural relativism, it is still difficult to make a culture with very different values sympathetic to the reader. Stirling can certainly relate to that; in at-

tempting to portray his Draka fairly, he's managed to convince a large number of people that he's a fascist, when he's trying to say the Draka are the *bad* guys.

The panel warned against imposing our values on other cultures. By this they were not suggesting cultural relativism, but rather saying that when we study a period or a people we should understand that those people had different beliefs than we. For example, during the Inquisition, people thought that torturing people to get them to accept the Church was reasonable, because that would save their souls from eternal torment, and what was a short period of pain on earth compared to what they would suffer if they didn't accept the Church? We may not agree, but we need to realize that the people of that time frequently were acting out of what they saw as love, and not from an innate cruelty. This doesn't make them right, but it does affect how we view them.

The panelists also warned against historical revisionism. They were not talking about the obvious things (like those who claim the Holocaust never happened, though these are the first people that come to mind when the term "historical revisionism" is mentioned), but also such books as Jean Auel's *CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR*, in which a single character discovers just about everything of value to civilization. Or as Stirling expressed it, "A rock. A rock. If I put them together—a porch!" (Turtledove is guilty of this in his "Agent of Byzantium" series, where in each story the main character discovers or adopts from barbarians some amazing new invention: the telescope, inoculations, etc. He at least has the defense that this is an *alternate* history, but I find it stretches the bounds of probability.) People agreed that it was okay to change some details (especially in an alternate history, as I noted), but (as Stirling put it), "you have to know when you're not being true."

Someone asked what historical periods we were especially interested in. Turtledove said that World War II and the Civil War seemed to be the most popular; Shiffman added our westward expansion across the continent, and Schwartz added the Vietnam War era. As for who or what would be remembered from our time two thousand years from now, the only person the panelists could agree on was Adolph Hitler.



For a good book that talks about how to look at history, I would recommend Josephine Tey's *DAUGHTER OF TIME*.

Panel: Mark Twain as a Character in Science Fiction

Sunday, 4:00 PM

Mark Twain, Jody Lynn Nye, Hayford Peirce, Bruce Holland Rogers (m)

"Twain has been a major character in many SF/F stories. Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a well-known person in fiction?": The advantages are somewhat obvious. The author has a ready-made character, with a background that the reader already knows, and does not have to do the work of filling that character in. The disadvantages are perhaps less obvious. With many characters, the reader will have preconceived notions that are at odds either with history or with what the writer wants the reader to think about the character. The example given here was Richard III, who was nowhere near as evil as Shakespeare and others portrayed him, but that image has become so firmly fixed in people's minds that using him *authentically* will probably not ring true with the reader. Also, in fiction one cannot always stick strictly to the truth about a historical character, especially if one wants him or her to interact with fictional characters. So authors must change some details, and picky readers (such as myself) often object to this. Both of these relate to how one deals with "the history we know that just isn't so." If everyone believes George Washington chopped down a cherry tree and then told his father he could not tell a lie, does an author write that, or does he write what really happened (assuming that anything even remotely similar to this did occur)? Robert Silverberg in *UP THE LINE* has a bit of fun with this, when some of his characters go back to hear someone deliver a pious line at the dedication of a Hagia Sophia and instead hear him swear most colorfully at whoever left the scaffolding up by mistake.

One way to use real people without changing details is to use the "missing periods" in their lives. For example, one panelist suggested using the period of ten days that Agatha Christie was missing in a story if you want to use Christie, because no one can say that she was doing something else instead of what you say. (Well, if you have her fly to Mars, they may object.)

Another disadvantage, especially with current figures, is that the references may be transitory, or local. A reference to Jesse Helms may be meaningful in the United States now, but it's not going to go very

far in Europe, or probably in the United States in twenty years. References to people in the entertainment media can be even more transitory. Would having Marlene Dietrich as a character in a story do much for the average reader under the age of thirty?

Regarding Twain, at any rate, one panelist (not Mr. Twain) said that using Twain as a character at least guaranteed good dialogue. Of course, it also guarantees clichés Mark Twain as a character in a novel will say all the things that everyone knows Mark Twain said. Using Oscar Wilde as a character has the same benefit, and the same drawback. If the reader *knows* when Twain (or Wilde) said a particular thing, then reading him saying it at some other occasion entirely is particularly jarring.

Of course, one reason we see Twain and Wilde and others literary figures as characters is that authors like to write about authors. John Kendrick Bangs used Twain in *THE LITERARY GUILLOTINE* and in *A HOUSEBOAT ON THE STYX*, a precursor to Philip Jose Farmer's *RIVERWORLD*. Twain (and others) remain popular as characters, according to Nye, because the author (and the reader) needs a "larger-than-life character, one who leaves larger-than-life footprints."

Historical personages as characters can get tiresome. Ellen Datlow has said she never wants to see another story with a famous person as a character unless it's written by Howard Waldrop, and I have a similar feeling about all those Sherlock Holmes pastiches in which Holmes has to meet Teddy Roosevelt, Sigmund Freud, Lenin, or whoever. Still, it's possible to do a story with a famous person as a character well even if you're not Howard Waldrop, and so you should probably take this as a caution rather than an out-right ban. It would help if people wouldn't always pick the *same* historical people to write about.

Of course, with alternate histories or time travel stories it's very easy to use historical figures. But you need something besides the gimmick of the person to make the story work.

The Awards

The Seiuns were moved back with the Hugos, leaving the rest of the other awards flapping in the breeze. The Prometheus Awards (*THE MULTIPLEX MAN* by James P. Hogan for Best Libertarian Science Fiction Novel of 1992, and *THE DISPOSSESSED* by Ursula K. LeGuin for Hall of Fame) were announced at "Speakers' Corner" in the Concourse, the Electric SF Awards didn't seem to be announced except at the ClariNet booth (I assume I would have been told, since I won the Best Fan Writer award),

and I have no idea when or where the other awards were given out. (The Rhysling Award for Long Poem went to "To Be from Earth" by William Daciuk; for Short Poem, to "Will" by Jane Yolen.) Strong suggestion number something-or-other (I've lost count): Worldcons should make provision for an alternate awards ceremony, in a suitably festive room (not just an abandoned panel room). If nothing else, they should be awarded at the opening of the Con Suite in the evening (perhaps one or two a night), since people do congregate there. While I'm suggesting, I would also suggest a time limit on speeches be given the nominees (it has been done before)--most speeches were short, but some were quite long and I could hear the crowd getting restless. The planners did separate the non-Hugos from the Hugos with a ten- or fifteen-minute retrospective of the Hugos, which was similar to what was done last year in Orlando. Ironically, during the retrospective, Toastmaster Guy Gavriel Kay talked about the many Hugos LOCUS had won, and referred to Charlie Brown as "always a bride, never a bridesmaid"! Kim Stanley Robinson holds the professional "Always a Bridesmaid" record, by the way, having been nominated nine times without ever having won. This, in my humble opinion, is grossly unfair, and it's unfortunate in a way that he had such stiff competition this year.

The traditional "Hugo Losers Party" afterward, hosted by Conadian, was remarkably under-attended, many of the pro nominees having apparently decided to go to the big Dell party being thrown in the Con Suite. However, they missed some great food: smoked whitefish, cheese, fresh vegetables, pickerel cheeks in a sauce being cooked to order by a chef, and fresh raspberries. Since I hadn't had dinner, I was quite pleased with this arrangement.

And on a personal note, though I placed fourth in my category, I did get the most nominations. And however much that surprises you, trust me--it surprises me more!

Panel: Books You Should Read

Monday, 12:00 noon

Janice M. Eisen, David Kyle, Eric M. Van [written by Mark R. Leeper]

"Some personal recommendations, not limited to SF, of what the well-read fan should read and why": This is a relatively commonly given panel. In this installment the participants were Janice Eisen, a reviewer for *ABORIGINAL SCIENCE FICTION*. Eric Van is a co-founder of Readercon. Eric is famous for somewhat idiosyncratic tastes, nearly the opposite of those of the third panelist David Kyle, member of first fandom and author of *A PICTOR-*

IAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION. Kyle's expertise is predominantly in the science fiction of the pulp and sense of wonder days. Kyle arrived late.

Van started out the panel by distributing a sheet he wrote for the occasion called "Books You Should Read." Included are such odd choices as Graphic Novels: CEREBUS [THE AARDVARK], DAREDEVIL, and WATCHMEN. His humorous must-reads include THE NATIONAL LAMPOON HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK PARODY, Firesign Theater's BIG BOOK OF PLAYS, and any collection of Bob and Ray. He includes a guide to rock 'n' roll by Paul Williams. He also lists two baseball Must-Reads. Under the category of "Change Your World-view" he includes a Miss Manners etiquette book. Let's be fair: some of his must-read list includes some very good books, but it is clear his tastes are not necessarily shared by most people.

Van began by picking a book at random from his sheet. "ARSLAN [by M. J. Engh] *really* blew my mind." It is about a despot who wants to do terrible things. In reading it you will understand a little better how a Hitler could do the things he did.

Eisen had made a list of the core of the best standard science fiction books. Choosing at random she found Cordwainer Smith's "Rediscovery of Man" series. Smith is an acquired taste. Nearly all of his science fiction is in the book THE REDISCOVERY OF MAN being sold at the NESFA table. There is also a novel NORSTRILIA, sold out because of Harlan Ellison's histrionics.

Van talked about "slipstream," a term applied to mainstream writing that has fantasy elements. He said Kurt Vonnegut is epitome of slipstream. He also recommended KRAZY KAT: A NOVEL IN FIVE PANELS by Jay Cantor. He says the novel works on about four levels; it is humorous, serious, it is poetic. The comic strip character Krazy Cat witnesses events in history like the Trinity bomb.

Eisen said she did not like angst-ridden superheroes in comic books, then she saw WATCHMEN. She said she "was knocked over by it." It did things she didn't think were done with super-hero comics.

Van said he agreed with every word and strongly recommended WATCHMEN. The most ambitious thing in the comic book field is CEREBUS THE AARDVARK. Each of the books is thick like a phone book. Each ends with closure, but the next one picks up seamlessly. He calls the books "mind-bogglingly ambitious." He suggested that readers try to get the first one. It does not start profound but gets so as it goes along. He also recommended Frank Miller's redefinition of the Batman story with THE DARK KNIGHT. He attributes to Miller the current

rebirth of popularity in Batman and the resulting Batman films. Earlier Miller took over the comic book DAREDEVIL, Marvel Comics worst-seller, and turned it into their best-seller.

Eisen wanted to recommend two books of science fiction criticism. She likes Damon Knight's IN SEARCH OF WONDER. She really likes Knight's writing style which could be humorous and perceptive at the same time. The book contains a complete "dissection" of A. E. van Vogt, and not to van Vogt's advantage. He can be cruel. She also recommended Ursula K. LeGuin's LANGUAGE OF THE NIGHT.

Van said he was going to recommend a book that sold three million copies but never got respect, NATIONAL LAMPOON HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK PARODY. He has read it cover-to-cover. The more you read, the more you get out of it. It really captures the spirit of the 60's.

NBRIDGE OF BIRDS by Barry Hughart was Ms. Eisen's next recommendation. It is hilarious. She also thought very funny David Langford's THE DRAGON HIKER'S GUIDE TO BATTLEFIELD COVENANT AT DUNE'S EDGE.... It seems like a parody of every popular fantasy/science fiction novel within reach.

Van then revealed what he said was "the best book ever written," John Crowley's ENGINE SUMMER. He had read the book and then circumstances forced him to reread almost immediately after finishing it. He discovered "all the stuff [he] missed." (One wonders if he had been forced to read more books twice in succession, if there would not be more "best books ever written.") The book is "a utopian novel set after civilization has fallen apart. That is only the tiny tip of iceberg."

The next books recommended by Eisen were Raymond Chandler's THE LONG GOOD-BYE and THE BIG SLEEP, and KIM and CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS by Rudyard Kipling. She also suggests people read Dickens, but choose one you didn't have to read in school.

David Kyle, just arriving, said Dickens is a pulp writer who made it. He talked about the pulps and their precursors, the penny dreadfuls. Many writers pre-SF writers used a great deal of imagination. In GULLIVER'S TRAVELS there are islands in air and many strange worlds. Many of the classic fantasies are forerunners of modern fiction. What many people think is dry and outdated is not dry at all. The basis of much modern fantasy is right there.

Van seconded this testimonial for the classics. "PARADISE LOST did not blow my mind but it was good. I got a real buzz from it." The ILIAD and the ODYSSEY were Eisen's recommendation.

Someone from the audience recommended T. S. Elliot's "Four Quartets."

Van suggested SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT is great fantasy.

Kyle said that for more examples read A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION. Someone in the audience asked the author. Kyle pretended to be searching his memory and then as if he found it said brightly "David Kyle."

Van called David Pringle's SCIENCE FICTION: THE 100 BEST NOVELS "a superb book." The same publisher published 100 BEST FANTASY NOVELS which Van said was good up to Tolkien, then not so good. Pringle found a different publisher for his hundred-best fantasy novel list.

Eisen said that the one book she wanted to get to in this panel was HOW TO SUPPRESS WOMEN'S WRITING by Joanna Russ. Kyle responded to the earlier mention of T. S. Elliot. When you mention poetry Tennyson comes to mind. His "Locksley Hall" is almost a song to science fiction.

Eisen thought the best post-holocaust novels were Walter Miller's CANTICLE FOR LIEBOWITZ and Edgar Pangborn's DAVY. (I wonder how much consideration she has given to Leon Uris' EXODUS.) She recommended two publishers: the Collier Nucleus series and Carroll and Graf are both putting good older works into print. (I can second the opinion on Carroll and Graf. With that comment, my Worldcon came to an end. I rushed to the Huckster room to buy one last book—published by Carroll and Graf, by the way—and returned to my hotel.)

Panel: Gripe Session

Monday, 12 noon

Much of what I learned or heard about different aspects of the convention has been expressed in the appropriate section of this report; most of my gripes have been expressed already as well. But a few random items belong here, I suppose. Several people said that they had been contacting the convention with program ideas and offers to work, but never got any response, or got a response just a few weeks before the convention (when they had first written over a year earlier). One problem seems to be that if someone suggests something that doesn't nearly fall into one particular section (for example, something that isn't quite programming, and isn't quite exhibit), then it gets batted back and forth and no one wants to take responsibility to follow up on it.

The claim was made that using the larger hall in the Moscone for the Masquerade and Hugo Awards would have added at least \$20 to each convention membership. This seems hard to believe, but it

underscores the fact that Worldcons are getting too big to be handled in any reasonable and cost-effective way by more than a handful of cities. (Exercise for some Worldcon historian: how many cities which have previously hosted Worldcons are no longer able to do so, from a facilities stand-point?)

Ellison's panels were in small rooms, according to the committee, because Ellison came to them two and a half weeks before the convention (after the programming had been laid out) to tell them he was attending and what time-slots he wanted to speak in.

There was a lack of intermediate-sized rooms: Larry Niven's Guest of Honor speech was in a room holding about 140. The next largest was one holding about 1500. It was decided that it was better to have him speak to a crowded room than a half-empty one, but future conventions should make sure they have at least one room for mid-sized events.

The letters to people who volunteered to be participants but were turned down was a point of contention. No matter how delicately they are phrased, they still will sound like the recipient is being told he or she is not important enough. As it was, ConFrancisco said they had more participants than MagiCon, and possibly more than Noreascon.

People were encouraged to volunteer; the committee claimed it took 10-20% of the attendees to help run a Worldcon. For their part, committees are reminded to touch base with volunteers at least every three months, even if only to say, "Yes, we have your name and will be sending more specific information soon."

The daily newsletter should carry all the various awards presented at the convention (see my notes on "other awards" above), and obviously this means that the presenters of awards must have press releases or the equivalent to give the editors of the newsletter.

Miscellaneous

At each of the last three conventions I've gone to, someone has mistaken me for Connie Willis. I almost got through ConFrancisco without this happening, but just as we were leaving the convention center for the last time, someone passing us asked his friend, "Do you have DOOMSDAY BOOK?" and when she handed it to him, held it out to me. I probably just should have signed it, but instead I said, "I am not Connie Willis. I am not as tall as she is, I do not have the same hair color as she does, and I didn't win two Hugos last night." Maybe I'll have a button made!

The WSFS Business Meeting was at noon instead of the traditional 10 AM on the days it was

held, and at the ANA Hotel, making it very difficult to get to. As a result, attendance was down. The Northwest Territories Division Amendment, the amendment clarifying the best fan writer definition (making it clear it is for work in the previous year), and the amendment reducing NASFiC lead time passed. These had previously been approved at MagiCon, so are now adopted. Passed and passed on to Conadian is an amendment authorizing retrospective Hugos for 50, 75, or 100 years previous to a given convention, so long as Hugos were not awarded for that year already.

The hotel had an automatic check-out through the television, but we couldn't use it when we were checking out at 5:00 AM. Luckily, there was no line.

The Information Desk was not always helpful. In particular, a friend asked them about parking on Sunday and Monday, because the Moscone Center Garage which was recommended in the Pocket Program was closed those days. First the person he talked to said he should look in the book. When he pointed out that he had, and that it was wrong, they basically told him to check with some other garages, at which point he thanked them for their help (no doubt somewhat sarcastically). As he was walking away, the person behind the desk (who must have thought he was out of earshot) said something extremely uncomplimentary about him. The Information Desk should have information, or be willing to find it, perhaps asking the person to check back later. It should under no circumstances be rude and offensive. (This applies even if the "customer" is, though knowing the person involved here, I doubt that was the case.) I would like to think this was a single individual rather than a constant problem at the Information Desk, but a convention should make sure that only people who have the right personality for that job work at the Information Desk.

Panelists were signaled with a "YIELD" sign when there was fifteen minutes left, and a "STOP" sign when time had run out. This was confusing - many panelists thought the "YIELD" sign meant they had to yield the room. It was a good idea to keep panels to fifty minutes instead of an hour, because that gave people time to get to the next item and maybe even have a bathroom break.

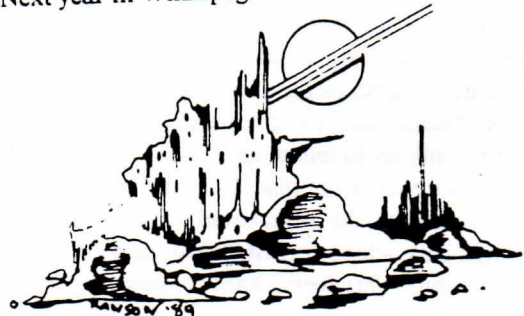
ConFrancisco didn't provide a free drink to participants at the "Meet the VIPs" party as done by previous conventions. Frankly, this is probably a good thing. It seems a better use of the money to spend it on something for the con at large, and I doubt anyone's attendance or non-attendance at the party is determined by whether they get one free drink.

As is traditional, I'll list the Worldcons I've attended and rank them, best to worst (the middle cluster are pretty close together, and it's getting harder and harder to fit the new ones in, perhaps because the cons of fifteen years ago are hard to remember in detail):

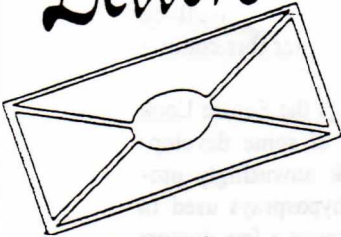
Noreascon II
MagiCon
Noreascon III
Noreascon I
Midamericon
L.A.con II
ConFrancisco
Chicon V
Discon II
Seacon
Confederation
Chicon IV
ConFiction
Conspiracy
Iguanacon
Suncon
Nolacon II
Constellation

Unlike the last couple of years, site selection was *not* a hard-fought battle, Los Angeles (Anaheim) being uncontested. 1286 votes were cast, compared to last year's 2541. James White, Roger Corman, Takumi and Sachiko Shibano are the Guests of Honor. Connie Willis is Toastmaster (their word, not mine). Elsie Wollheim is the Special Guest. The convention will be called L.A.con III (this is what is known as the "typography from Hell") and will be August 29 to September 2, 1996. In spite of the uncontested nature, it was apparently decided that people could *not* buy attending memberships at voting time (as was done with MagiCon), so on Monday there was quite a long line of people wanting to upgrade to attending membership. Bruce Pelz found himself working alone for a while until help arrived, but I'm surprised that the LA committee didn't realize their table would be swamped. (Contact address in the United States is L.A.con III, c/o S.C.I.F.I., P. O. Box 8442, Van Nuys CA 91409.)

Next year in Winnipeg!



Letters- we Get Letters



A B C D E F
G H I J K L

Sheryl Birkhead April 4, 1994
23629 Woodfield Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20882
Dear Alex.

I keep moving zines from one pile to another, but not doing a lot about the stack (ah, but I get such satisfaction from moving stuff around). Your news on the future of TSFI is a lot more positive than I thought it would be after earlier comments.

I DO like that armed 'dillo logo on page 2!

Your column on "media" points up just how difficult it is to actually discuss art (specific pieces?) without actually showing them to your audience. I'm sure that those who made it to Con Fransisco can recall the art you brought up - but I still don't have a real feel for Roland's work - but I will look for a lean to the right if I ever see his material! It isn't easy - is it?

I agree about both movies MEN IN TIGHTS and Hocus Pocus - neither was heavy duty nor great cinematography, but the latter didn't try so hard. I want to see Mrs. Doubtfire, but imagine that, at this late date, I'll wait for the video.

Sherlock (a real eye-twinkler on page 9), Ranson, Stein, Michaels, Foster and Jim Thompson - really spiffy artwork!

Elst's AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOSCAMOLOGY - wonder, after his February wedding what his next pubbing venture will be?

I know how Lloyd (Penny) felt about not getting to ConFransisco (ah - and now everyone is at the Hugos ... and now) - heck, I can even feel that way when I attend! I tried to imagine when the awards ceremony would be over... allow for the time change - and waited for the phone to ring. It didn't, but I was also off by quite a few hours. I DID hear a day or two later - and called Harry Warner to congratulate him. He said that until I called he wasn't sure he'd really won. Someone had called him (Bruce Pelz) but he'd figured that with the time difference it was 5 a.m. and was convinced no one was really up at the con - and wasn't sure the call had been bona fide.

I see you've heard from the Charlie Card Calendar (Fund) - it is really a worthy cause, but I haven't heard from them since they (yippee for them)

became so successful and had, basically, professional/MUCH better contributors.

I got the Intersection PR#3 - uh... interesting cover. It will certainly be an interesting convention. Then, will wonders never cease? I actually remembered to send in my Hugo nominations. I usually fill it out then put it aside in case I come up with any more brainstorm...and forget to mail it - but this year it should have made it under the deadline.

By the way the heavier stock cover protects this nicely - only one dark smudge down the right margin which does not interfere with the cover at all.

Thanks - hope the egoboo makes it all worth it!

Harry Cameron Andruschak 11 April 1994 PO
Box 5309, Torrance CA 90510-5309

Dear Alexander:

Received TSFI-51 awhile ago, and have finally had the time to get around to a quick LOC. And it is nice to see this zine again, even if the schedule is irregular. Heck, you are doing a better job then RUNE, for example.

And I do appreciate the zine listings, since I see a few that I do not trade with yet and which look like good prospects.

It was enjoyable to read Leeper's con report, even though I did not attend and probably would not have, even if I had had the money and time off from the Post Office. I seem to have drifted away from most sci-fi cons. *[Frankly, a little time away from cons can be a good thing. I get to few myself, and enjoy the ones where I'm a guest better. -Alex]* But I did enjoy reading about it, even if I was not there.

For myself, I have been through two medical problems and am facing a third. I had an inflamed leg, am now on the cure from a really painful ear infection, and have decided it is time to try once again to do something about my snoring. (2 previous operations reduced it but did not eliminate it).

I still work for the Post Office, where a couple of weeks ago one of our clerks took a knife to a supervisor, then tried to kill herself. This just a few hundred yards from where I work. Interesting. *[Not quite the word I would use. What is interesting is that a relatively high percentage of random nut violence seems to occur in postal settings and be accomplished by postal or ex-postal workers. Could it be the constant exposure to stamp glue? -Alex]*

I was also on vacation to Scotland last month, and have sent off a report for FOSFAX to publish, should they choose to do so. Weather in Scotland was just about what you could expect in March...snow, sleat *[sic -ARS]*, hail, rain, bitter cold winds, heavy sea swell.....but do remember the

weather is MUCH better in August when the 1995 Worldcon is scheduled. I also ate haggis twice, and will have to write that up for AW.

That is all for now, sorry for the briefness, but I am still quite behind in my mail since my vacation, and being sidelined by the ear-ache pain for a week didn't help either. I am also short of money since I had to buy a new car, so will be missing CORFLU 11.

Yours Aye....

Lloyd Penney
July 6, 1994 412-4
Lisa St., Brampton, ON Canada L6T 4B6

Dear Alex:

Sorry I'm horribly late with this loc...Ad Astra 14 has come and gone, and it disrupted my writing schedule for a full month. My IN box is bulging with fanzines. I am also trying out a new computer system that is making life very difficult. It's a used 286 with a Fujitsu printer, so my letters will look a little different. It's taken so long with doing Ad Astra and getting the computer on the go, it's been about a month since I've answered any correspondence. Help me! I need Warner's dungeon to help me catch up.

I mentioned Ad Astra 14...Fred Duarte and Geige Alec Effinger hosted the San Antonio in '97 room party there, and it was a small and friendly affair on the Friday night of the convention. I think a few pre-fupportings were sold that evening. I think SA's got the inside edge for 1997, and we're looking forward to going.

And now to our fanzine...ST:TNG is now off to rerun-land, and while its final episode was interesting, but not special, the body of week here has been pretty entertaining. ST:DS9 has been a little dull, but the second season finale seems to promise an exciting third season.

We shall see... I could comment more on Babylon 5 and seaQuest DSV, but they seem to keep erratic schedules on the channels I catch them on, and so I couldn't say what's happening with them. B5 can be interesting, and I've only seen an episode or two of seaQuest DSV; I found it quite dull.

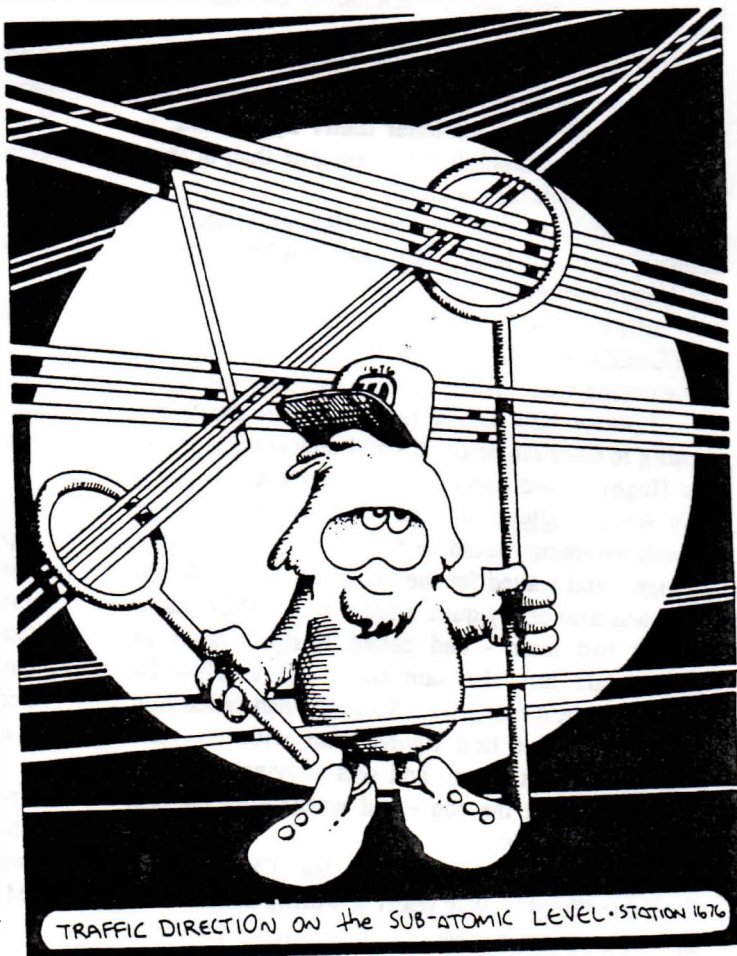
Yvonne and I have guested at a few conventions, and have been treated rather well at all of them. Visibility at cons, willingness to do panels (and just about else at the con) and conversing with those who run cons all seem to be ways to become a fan guest at a con, a position that seems to be rapidly disappearing. Yvonne and I do anywhere between six and ten cons a year between Detroit and Montreal, and we help out by publicizing the con and fielding questions about it. We've been to a

small con in Kitchener, Ontario (Wilcon IV in 1988), and three cons in Ottawa (Pinecone 1 in 1988, Convalescence in 1990 and Mapiecon 12 in 1992 - they seem to like us), and now, we'll be guesting at Astronomicon 4 in Rochester this coming March. It's all been a ton o' fun.

The ConFrancisco panel, "Will the Future Look Like The Movies?", reminds me of some developments that the original Star Trek unwittingly produced. The diagnostic beds and hyposprays used in the sickbay actually now exist because a few doctors looked at them, and thought they were a good idea. I know that some space developers are afraid that the spaceship-builders of the future will use the space-wasting (and shot-effective) designs of popular shows, rather than use the space effective set-ups of modern craft like the shuttles.

Well, this fanzine was a good read, and this computer has been more aggravation than it's worth. I've also been producing this letter with Word-perfect 5.1, which is a big jump from the MultiMate v3.322 I've been using all this time. Forgive me a messy letter, I hope I can master this hunk of junk before the next TSFI. Maybe see you in Winnipeg?

Yours,



TRAFFIC DIRECTION ON the SUB-ATOMIC LEVEL • STATION 1676

© Brad W. Foster 1994

Henry L Welch

7/4/94

Alex,

Thanks for the TX SF Inquirer #52. Evelyn's con report is fascinating in its thoroughness. I could never write so much about each panel.

It seems to me you should be getting more LOCs. I counted 8 plus 7 WAHFs. It is not encouraging. Of course, I would probably trade a few of my LOCs for some more features. It's like squeezing blood from a turnip. *[What you're seeing is the result of the TXSFI being a club zine. Most of the readers feel no need to respond at all. I would like more LOCs as well as more articles.]*

Don Fitch

11 July 1994

3908 Frijo, Covina CA 91722

Dear Alexander:

Maybe you haven't been the best of fan editors, but Clubzines are usually lucky to get and keep an editor at all (& often owe their existence to the fact that someone decides that the Club needs a general circulation fanzine; it's generally not wise to look too closely at a volunteer's teeth). Though the recent issues of *Texas SF Inquirer* may not have been Spectacular, it has continued to serve the functions of presenting FACT as a respectably active member of the National Fan Community, and (presumably) of helping keep FACT members aware that they are part of that Community. Clubzine editors are usually expected, I suppose, to stress the use of material done by members of the Club, and all you can do (without leaning more heavily than might be wise or comfortable) is to invite such contributions, consider them carefully, and publish those you consider most appropriate.

True, there are a few misspellings & typos (more noticeable in such a professional-looking format than in old-style fanzines, but not significant, though perhaps someone ought to have caught the fact that the Spanish "*la pared*" is actually feminine rather than masculine (& I have the vague impression that it's used, here in Southern California, for freestanding walls (as around a garden) rather than for interior ones... but that may be mere regional dialect)). Then there are those Editorial Decisions one can always quibble about - maybe it would have been a good idea to footnote, for the benefit of some U.S. readers, that the British "pants and vest" means (male) underwear, not what the Americans might think, which the English would call "trousers and waistcoat" (or would it be "trowsers"? *sigh*). *(What I really miss about not having Dale Denton as my*

co-editor is that he did a much better job a proofing than I ever did. -ARS)

At the moment, I'm kicking myself for not buying (or at least noting down the publisher of) the (probably British) fanzine-like publication which listed hundreds of Alternate History novels & stories, arranged chronologically according to the date at which they split from "our time-line"; it would be interesting, if only to see what dates/events have been most popular. My own tendency is to think of such past-time Alternate History as being "Fantasy", and to reserve "Science Fiction" for extrapolations into the future, but in the larger sense both fall within the category of "Escape From Contemporary Reality", perhaps with the addition of "Viewing that Reality in a Different [& perhaps more revealing] Light". But then, that could include much or most fiction (mundane as well as "s-f"), and at least the "Escape from Reality" part might easily be argued to include almost everything Fans do at Conventions, and a fair part of what some of us do in Fanzines.

Canadian fan Garth Spencer (among others) has been plugging the idea of a Convention Pass-On Book, describing things and actions that have worked well at previous Cons, and those that have been disastrous (or much less successful), but seems to have regretfully concluded that the people who most need such help would probably ignore it. *[I think it would be a good idea, maybe not everyone would ignore it. We did try such a thing with Aggiecon, though it was just a white paper and not a book. -ARS]* Still ... after the spectacular results (at an LArea Con some years ago) when Harlan Ellison was giving a talk in a room next to the Tesla Coil Demonstration, one would think that ConComs could be expected to be aware of (and do something about) the fact that Tesla Coils in action do usually produce much annoying interference in nearby public-address systems. The idea of scheduling such a Demo at a time when the hotel's amplifying/microphone system won't be in uses does come to mind, along with some speculations concerning the reinvention of the wheel starting from a square (as I overheard someone at ConFrancisco say).

Cindy Foster's account of her first time as a Guest at a Convention was interesting, informative, and engaging - the sort of thing that causes one to wish for The Good Old Days when (as a neofan) she'd have become involved with Fanzines, rather than with Conventions, and by now would have written lots of other things that we who are primarily readers could enjoy. *[Are you reading this, Cindy? Submit more articles. -ARS]*

Best Wishes,

Teddy Harvia

20 July

Dear Alex-

Linda Michaels' candle wraiths are wicked. I'd like to see what she gets if you burn one of her candles at both ends. *[As I am a DOD employee; don't ask, don't tell, don't whatever. - ARS]*

I took Matilda on vacation to Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas Panhandle and nearly killed her with the heat. We did see some beautiful country and a horned lizard the size of my hand. *[We had something of the same experience on our vacation in the desert-like areas of New Mexico, Arizona, and southern Utah. - ARS]*

John Thiel

30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904

Dear Mr. Slate:

Thank you for the 52nd issue of the Texas SF Inquirer. Evelyn Leeper does a good job of preserving some of the vital moments of an sf convention. I found the panel on Wells and Twain interesting enough to think about.

Cindy Foster has epitomized a concept I've seen numerous fan writers try to express, a comparison of science fiction or an sf event to a loss of innocence. I think this is the best job of writing up that viewpoint yet. Others have gotten too discursive to really get the point across or make it clear. But she has devoted an article to the subject and titled it appropriately.

You might get a lot of jawing back about that first drawing. *[Unfortunately, it did not reproduce nearly as well as my tests indicated it would. Repro is out of my hands - Office Depot. - ARS]*

WAHF

Richerson Books -congratulations Carrie on the Campbell Award nomination. Here's keeping our fingers crossed (which explains the typos)

Broken Mirrors Press - announcing 2 books forthcoming in Summer 94; **Bibliomen** by Gene Wolfe & **Esteban** by R.A. Lafferty

Erwin S. Strauss with a new address - 101 S. Whiting #700, Alexandria, VA 22304 (703)461-8645

Tom Kidd - print flyer

Lucy Synk - announcing her new print "Checking It Twice"

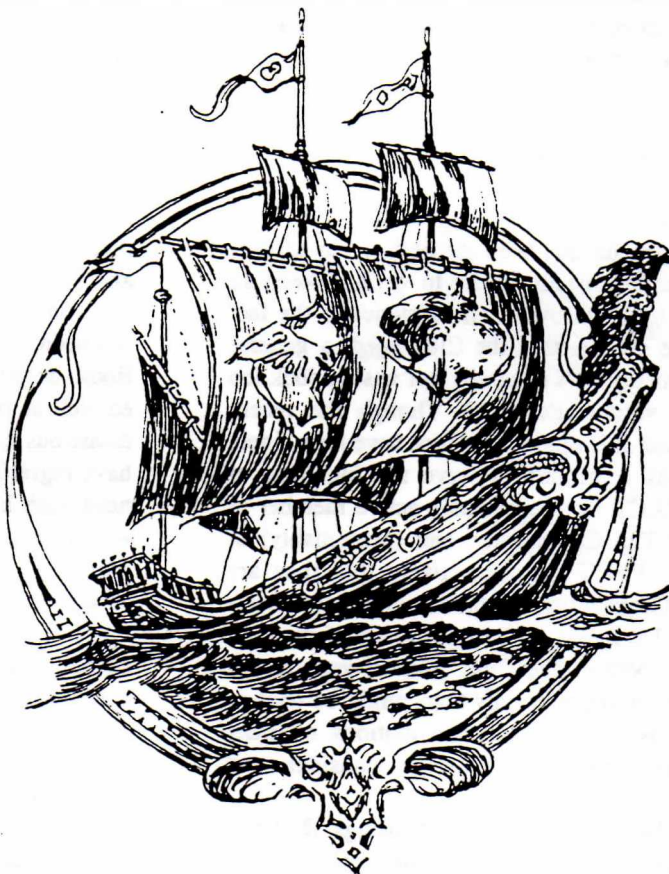
Lloyd & Yvonne Penney re the Worldcon fanzine lounge

Missing in Action

The following had their copy of the Inquirer returned, either address unknown or unable to forward. Can anyone help?

Tony Ubelhor: POB 886, Evansville IN 47707

Usus Imprints (Loehr): 5539 Jackson, Kansas City, MO 64130



Occasional Thoughts (Contd from page 3)

I don't know what will happen with that motion to quash. But I do know that at least some part of me won't believe that O.J. Simpson, the man I watched single-handedly bring some light to Western New York winters, could have committed these murders unless those DNA tests prove he was at the scene of the crime.

And if that happens, I think my heart will break some more.

Alex on Whatever

Crank! [Winter 93, \$3.50, Broken Mirrors Press, PO Box 380473, Cambridge MA 02238, \$12/4 issues; editor - Bryan Cholfin] arrived by surprise. Five stories by well known authors such as Gene Wolfe and lesser or unknown authors such as David R. Bunch or John Lethem.

The story quality is uneven. The best is Wolfe's "Empire of Foliage and Flower." This is a story from within a story; it is one of the tales from *The Book of Wonders of Urth and Sky* which featured in Wolfe's *Shadow of the Torturer*.

Carol Emshwiller's "Venus Rising" is an interesting story told from an alien point of view. Lethem's "The Happy Prince" is a parable that has the feel of a Gene Wolfe story, but lacks the word craftsmanship of the same.

Frankly, I had a hard time following Gerald B. Stephenson's "It Don't Mean a Thing", though it was well crafted. Finally, the only story that I didn't feel belonged in this collection was Bunch's "The Soul Shortchanger." Clearly an early work, with a convived and trivial plot.

The Writers of the Future, Vol. X [\$6.99, Bridge Publications; editor - Dave Wolverton] is obviously the 10th anniversary edition of the winners of the L. Ron Hubbard contest. Vol. X contains one story by an Austinite, Bruce Hallock, and illustrations by one San Antonian, Steve Centeno.

As usual, most of the stories were quite good. There is really only one story which I would not have chosen as a prize winner.

While none of the stories reached out and grabbed my emotions, there were some finely crafted tales: among them Bruce Hallock's "Seekers", Susan J. Kroupa's "The Healer", and James Gladu Jordan's "Storm Jumper." The story that I thought the best was not even one of the quarterly 1st, 2nd or 3rd place winners, but one of the runners up; this was "Achillo" by D.E. Lofgren.

Much of the same types of comments may be made of the illustrations. All are drawn specifically for the story they illustrate, which is good. And while most of them show great talent, there are a couple that make me wonder why the particular artist was chosen.

In all, the L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future Contest has once more discovered a worthy new crop of authors.

Finishing up my reviews of the artists at Con Francisco seems somewhat appropriate for this issue since it also presents the end of Evelyn Leeper's report. With that let me introduce the art of Damen Bard, a young artist dealing in 3-dimensional works, and a friend/protégé of Clayburn Moore.

Damen showed 3 pieces in SF. The first was "Dante" (price - NFS), a dragon done in bronze. A very nice piece that shows promise for Damen's future. The dragon was birdlike in appearance and is realistic and lifelike enough (considering the fantasy nature of the subject).

The second piece was "Parisian Girl", a plaster bust (price - \$150). The work was interesting, but this was not as lifelike a piece as "Dante". The girl's face was too unlined and the proportions seemed off. This last was not helped by the pedestal, which was much too skinny for the piece - giving it an unfinished look. Promising though, was that the hair, usually very difficult to present properly, was well done.

The third piece was a plaster wall hanging titled "Bugface" (price - \$50). A macabre piece, and one where the presentation is more stylistic than realistic in nature. The piece is the face of a screaming (?) man with various bugs and arachnids climbing all around.

I'd like to digress now from a review of the pieces to a commentary to artists (and to art show directors as well). While perhaps not as important as the art itself, the presentation of the pieces can either enhance or detract from the art.

Let me tell you what set this lecture off. Mr. Bard's works were presented in the order addressed above. I think that the order was not the best. I would have made "Dante", not "Parisian Girl", the centerpiece of the exhibit. Not only because "Dante" was the best of the three; but also because it was the only bronze, and would have been enhanced by being flanked on either side by the plaster works. Each of these would have been enhanced by the contrast to the bronze in the center.

Back to generalities. Artists, plan your exhibition space! Don't just throw any piece next to any piece. Don't crowd your works, and remember that you need to leave room for the bid sheets.

I highly recommended matting for all works; framing is even better. That way you don't have unsightly industrial bull clips spoiling the view.

(Continued on page)

Conventional

7-9 October ArmadilloCon

Red Lion Hotel, Austin TX
 Guests: Elizabeth Moon, David Cherry, Gordon Van Gelder, Guy Gavriel Kay
 Info: \$25, FACT address

Saturdays & Sundays in October & November Texas Renaissance Festival

Plantersville, TX
 Info: \$12.95, Rt. 2, Box 650, Plantersville TX 77363, 1-800-451-9198

October 27-30 World Fantasy Convention 1994

Clarion Hotel New Orleans, New Orleans LA
 Guests: William Kotzwinkle, George Alec Effinger, George RR Martin, Tim Powers
 Info: over \$85, PO Box 791302, New Orleans, LA 70179-1302

Nov 4-6 Contradiction 14

Days Inn Fallsview, Niagara Falls, NY
 Guests: Mike Resnick, Janet Kagan, Andy Hooper
 Info: \$21, PO Box 100, Bridge Station, Niagara Falls, NY 14305-0100

Nov 18-20 SoonerCon 10

Oklahoma City, OK
 Guests: Charles de Lint, Mark Ferrari, Alan Steele, E.A. Graham, The Ravens

Nov 25-27 Contex 12

Holiday Inn-Medical Center, Houston TX
 Info: c/o Friends of Fandom, PO Box 541822, Houston, TX 77254-1822

Nov 25-27 Dallas Fantasy Fair

Dallas, TX
 Info: Bulldog Productions, PO Box 820488, Dallas, TX 75382

March 2-5, 1995 World Horror Convention '95

Sheraton Colony Square Hotel, Atlanta GA
 Info: PO Box 148, Clarkston, GA 30021-0148

Mar 10-12 REVELcon 6

Houston, TX
 Info: REVELcon Press, PO Box 980744, Houston, TX 77098-0744, (713)526-5625

July 13-16 NASFIC '95

Atlanta Hilton & Towers, Atlanta GA
 Guests: Orson Scott Card, George Alec Effinger, Bjo Trimble, Michael Whelan, Timothy Zahn
 Info: \$40 until June 15, then \$45. Dragon Office.

Aug 24-28 1995 Intersection (Worldcon 53)

Scottish Exh & Conference Center, Glasgow Scotland
 Guests: Samuel R. Delany, Gerry Anderson
 Info: \$85 (\$25 supporting) 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Mids, B66 4SH UK

July 4-7 1996 ConDiablo (Westercon)

Camino Real Paso del Norte Hotel, El Paso, TX
 Guests: James P. Blaylock, Howard Waldrop, Brad Foster, Arnie & Joyce Katz, Pat Cadigan
 Info: \$30 (until Dec 31), PO Box 3177, El Paso, TX 79923

1996 LAcon III (Worldcon 54)

Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim CA
 Guests: James White, Roger Corman, Takmi & Schiko Shibano, Connie Willis, Elsie Wollheim
 Info: \$75, c/o SCIFI, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409

1997 LoneStarCon 2 (Worldcon 55)

San Antonio Texas

Bids

- 1998 Worldcon - Niagara Falls, NY; Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Atlanta, GA; Arkham, MA; NY, NY; TinyMUD
- 1999 Worldcon - Novosibirsk, Russia; Portland, OR; Wellington, New Zealand; Las Vegas NV; Dusseldorf, Germany; Melbourne, Australia; Kettlemen City, CA
- 2000 - Worldcon - Kansas City, MO; Chicago, IL; Jerusalem, Isreal
- 2001 - Boston, MA; Philadelphia, PA



Con Report:

25 Years of Aggiecon

by Alexander R. Slate

This probably makes Aggiecon the oldest continually held SF convention in the state of Texas. To anyone who knows Texas, by the name it is obvious that it's a college convention, held every spring since 1969 in College Station, at Texas A&M University.

I have been attending Aggiecon since 1978, though not on a continual basis. This was after arriving as a transfer student (a junior). Aggiecon was my first convention, and Cepheid Variable (the A&M science fiction club) my introduction to 'organized' fandom.

This year Aggiecon ran from 24 to 27 March, with the venue being A&M's Memorial Student Center (as it has been since before I started attending). A&M is blessed, and cursed, by a continual crop of new, young workers and folk to head it; unjaded by the cynicism of decades of fannish activities. A fresh viewpoint also means making many of the same mistakes year after year, though.

Let me apologize now. I attended the con this year notebook in hand (inspired by the depth of Evelyn Leeper's and Taras Wolansky's con reports) and actually took notes to write an (at least) somewhat detailed con report. However, my notes got left on a Delta flight somewhere between the San Antonio and Washington National airports. So, I'll just do the best I can to recreate it, which means relying on my oft spotty memory.

Guests of Honor were Julius Schwartz (comics), Nick Smith (Artist), Greg Bear (Author), Charles deLint (Author), and Lois McMaster Bujold (Toast-Mistress). There are also a lot of regional guests.

This year my whole family attended the con; my wife Laurel, my son Josh (age 9), my twin daughters Sarah & Melissa (ages 6 & 6 respectively), and myself (age - I feel like 100). We arrived relatively early on a sunny, pleasant Thursday and checked into the EZ Travel Motor Lodge. While the MSC does have a limited number of attached hotel rooms, you have to reserve them about a full year in advance, and, other than the suites, these rooms are little more than broom closets with beds.

Checking into the con takes little time. The actual number of attendees is pretty small (maybe 100 to 200), though the official attendance is much higher [a largish number of A&M students who buy admission only for the movies are counted in]. The limited attendance means a nice, intimate con and

also means that panels are never (or at least rarely) over-crowded. I got us registered while Laurel got her art put up in the art show.

There were a couple of readings and one panel on Thursday that I didn't attend, but that evening I did something I haven't done at a con in years. I went to the movies. The feature was *The Creature From the Black Lagoon*, in 3-D. This is actually the first time I've ever seen this flick and it was pretty enjoyable, if you discount the problems those of us who wear glasses have with the 3-D specs.

The first panel I attended was "Straddling the Fences #1: Working in Multiple Genres" [Friday, 11 AM, Kathy Kimbriel, Tom Knowles, Joe Lansdale & Ardath Mayhar]. I got some good quotes from this panel; which are, of course, with my lost notes somewhere at 30,000 feet. The panel crossed a number of variations on this topic. There was discussion on writing books in the different genres (or sub-genres) of SF, fantasy, mystery, Westerns, and others to writing books which cross (or carry elements of) different genres. Joe Lansdale stated pretty firmly that he didn't set out to write books that did or didn't fit in a particular genre, who wrote what interested him and if it fits in one or several categories, so be it! The others on the panel stated that this is pretty much what they did, as well. There was also a discussion on the reasons that books are categorized into genres and the advantages and disadvantages thereof.

The Guest of Honor speech by Greg Bear came next [Friday, 3 PM]. Greg talked about coming into writing through fandom; i.e. marrying Poul and Karen Andersons' daughter Astrid, and the inspiration for some of his (Greg's) more recent books. This was all done pretty much off-the cuff (the speaking that is).

Alternate Histories: How and Why [Friday, 4PM, Scott Cupp, Richard Kllaaw & Tom Knowles] quickly gave way to listing "my favorite alternate history stories."

I spent about 30 minutes following this panel getting Greg Bear's and Charles deLint's autographs. Both men are friendly and easy to talk to.

Following dinner came [Shudder!] another movie, *Ladyhawke*, which none of my kids had seen before. We went from the movie to the sock hop.

We had to get to the con fairly early on Saturday so we could get Josh to round one of the AD&D

tournament and I forgot whether it was supposed to start at 9 or 10.

Religion is SF&F [Sat, 10 AM, Kathy Kimbriel, Jerry Emerson Loomis, & Elizabeth Moon] was an interesting panel. Discussion ranged from the influences and evidence of the authors' religion on and in their own works to why religion can't and shouldn't be ignored in setting up ones fictional worlds (Oh, for my lost notes!).

Charles DeLint read a short, 20 minute, prepared speech for is GOH address [Sat, 11 AM] the subject of which I can't remember. This was followed by a Q&A session.

At 2:00, I joined my daughters (and others) in the children's programming at the movies to watch *The Dark Crystal*. I left a little early to get Lois Bujold's autograph. Somehow, I missed out on the History of Fantasy panel with Scott Cupp, Charles DeLint and Elizabeth Moon that I had wanted to see.

Laurel wanted to see how the art auction went, so I kept the kids occupied. After this we went to dinner.

The guest reception was not notable, other than the fact I did get a little chance to talk with Charles DeLint and his wife since we were sitting at the same table. I didn't say much.

The reception was followed by the costume contest/masquerade ball. All three kids participated in the contest and each was given a nice prize. The music was all recorded an not quite as loud as the band last year had been.

I attended absolutely nothing on Sunday. Mostly I talked with people and wandered around the dealers' room. Josh had made it to the 2nd round of play in the AD&D tournament, but didn't do to well in that round. We packed up the stuff from the art show and left for home fairly early.

My overall impression of Aggiecon this year? Okay, but Aggiecon no longer has the same zest it once did. Aggiecon used to be the gathering place for Texas fandom; that role has been taken over by ArmadilloCon. The convention, though it seemed better organized this year than the ones of a few years past, still doesn't run as smoothly as a decade ago. The art show seemed more blasé, but at least book dealers seem to be making a comeback in the dealers' room.

Whether I attend next year will depend upon the choice of guests.



The Sound of Music: Selling the Soul of Rock 'n' Roll

by E. A. Graham, Jr.

I've never been very good at remembering song titles, much less the musicians who wrote and performed them. Of course, a lot of the really GREAT songs and performers stick: for example, I know Cream (featuring Eric Clapton) did "Layla." I guess that means I'm not totally lost.

But I did get a somewhat "late" start in my musical appreciation. I never really listened to the radio when I was much younger. I did have one friend who had a hi-fi stereo and was listening to things like Led Zeppelin, but I was too (hmm) uninterested in such things to pay attention. The only reason I can remember the Led Zeppelin part was because he had a poster in his room of the Hindenburg (pre-burn) printed in garish colors. He even played some of the stuff for me, but I was more interested in going outside and blowing up mailboxes with the infamous M80 firecrackers or swiping wood from housing construction sites for our "hideout."

(A quick aside -- I do vividly remember the Beatles' debut on the "Ed Sullivan Show," but that is mostly because my family ALWAYS watched Ed and because my parents went into cardiac arrest over the *ahem* long hair on those boys.)

Then I got my driver's license. This was the big turning point. My father listened to the radio, but it was sonorous, boring talk radio. When I finagled the car to drive to school, a friend who rode with me turned on the radio and tuned to a different station. Granted, this was an AM radio, but there was this (now) neat music coming out of the speaker and I really liked what I heard. From there on, the music of rock 'n' roll has been a part of my life, much like it has for most of you, fellow Sapiens.

Over the past *mumblety-mumblety* years, I heard just about all of the rock 'n' roll that I missed while I was younger, so I feel that I'm pretty well caught up. In fact, I have favorites from even those early days -- Buddy Holly, Bill Haley and the Comets, and so on. I will admit, though, that the songs and sounds of my college days are the ones treasured the most. This is also when I came to my senses and realized what had been going on in the late 60's and early 70's. The familiar tunes from that time period started making a lot more sense and became much more meaningful. Even if I couldn't remember who sang the damn thing...

Now, whenever I turn on the TV, I'm being bombarded by commercials who are being specifically tailored to people in my basic age group. They're showing "beautiful" people my age, having the fun that I know I would never have in a similar setting (Hey, I'm a Fan, okay? Hanging out in bars trying to pick up women NEVER was a great idea to me...), drinking a beer that gives me hang-overs (too much formaldehyde), and in the background of this picturesque scene is playing one of the old, familiar rock tunes.

I was appalled when Eric Clapton sold out to a brewer for a commercial. Fortunately, that one was relatively short-lived. I don't know why he did it -- he certainly didn't need the money, although I imagine he got a real pocket-full of change for it. Could be it was part of a concert/tour promotion deal. I don't know. Perhaps the same thing went on with Van Halen and a pop manufacturer. Of course, there was a good deal of humor involved in the commercial itself, so I can partially forgive that one. (I'm always a sucker for a decent commercial that at least makes me smile because it's got something blatantly silly in it.) Similarly, the California Raisins are pretty cool. Oh the other hand, the current owner of the Beatles catalog should be shot, in my opinion.

However, Miller Brewing Co. has gone 'way, 'way too far now. They have their "summer" commercial currently playing: shot of scorchingly hot street scene, gorgeous female brunette wiping brow and pushing long, lustrous hair back, gorgeous male hunk with rippling muscles leaning over a balcony railing, watching a huge thermometer blow it's top, etc. There's this bit with the Chrysler building doing a "church key" imitation on the billboard containing the product and a blast of cold air inundates the city, snowflakes and all. This is all more-or-less standard fare. Okay.

Then there's the music. My poor musical memory cannot cough up the name of the band nor the name of the song, but the most recognizable part is "Hey, there, what's that sound/Everybody look what's goin' down!" This is a very familiar tune from the Vietnam era. The first time I saw the commercial, something struck me as odd. The second time I could almost place it. The third time (I channel surf a bit), my wife put her finger on it: there's a line that's been

edited out. That one line changes the whole tenor of the song and by exorcising that phrase, the Miller Brewing Co. and their ad executives, who are probably in the same age range as I am, have betrayed the hopes, despairs, and (I will go so far to say) even their very souls. It's an affront to ANYONE who lived through that time.

"There's a man with a gun over there." That's the missing phrase. Next time you see this abomination, listen and you can hear the edit.

The people who decided to use this music, whoever did the editing, even whoever sold them the rights (for whatever reason), have succumbed to the same pressures and put on the same blinders that kept the U.S. in Vietnam 'way past any reasonable length of time and past any hope of actually resolving the conflict. For me, another little part of the spark, belatedly lit, of the social consciousness that was born in the times of protest died.

I have become even more cynical of our present civilization, but for the most part, if THEY will more or less let me be, I won't screw with them. Hell, I'm not even really down on crass commercialism because that's one of the things that drives our economy. However, this is just another one of those things that truly makes me wonder if the lessons of Vietnam and similar upheavals that formed our present society are being remembered.

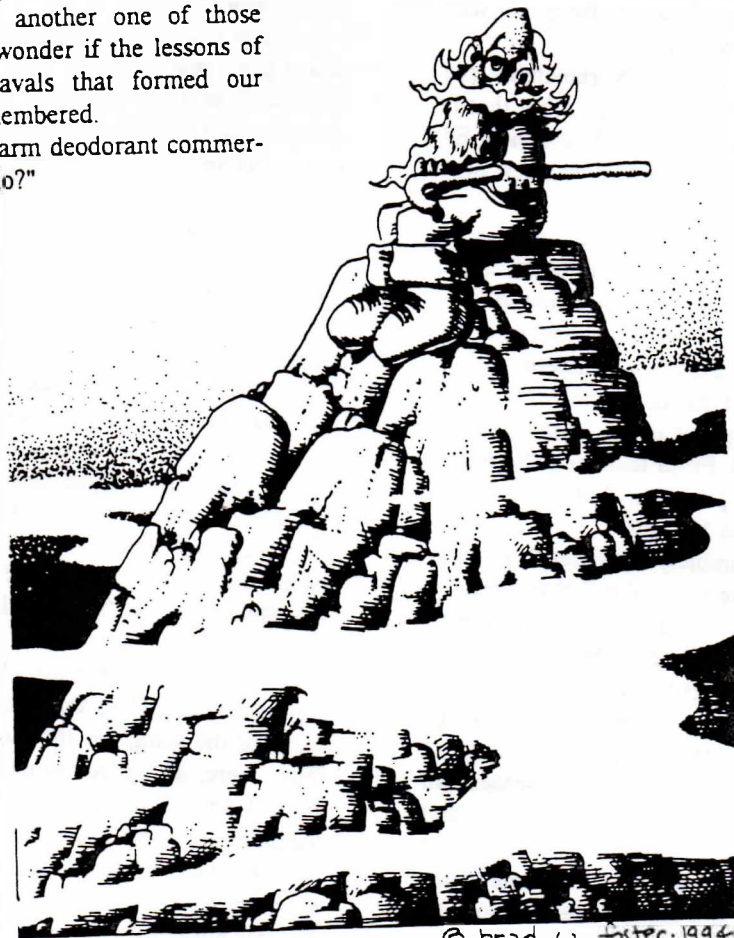
What's next? An underarm deodorant commercial using "Four Dead in Ohio?"

Howdy! (Contd from page 2)

Note, if you will, that Casey's and Ed's essays have nothing to do with SF or fandom. I remember that the ruckus raised a year-and-a-half ago had much to do with the non-SF/fannish content of the zine at the time. BUT, these are what has been sent to me, other than John's Nebula report (Thanks, John!) and what I have written myself. What am I trying to say with the last bit? Shame, shame! You get out of a clubzine what you put into a clubzine. Once more I thank those of you who have submitted - you know who you are. The rest of you better start submitting stuff or quit com-plaining about what you get. I seem to say this a lot in my editorials. Maybe this time it will take.

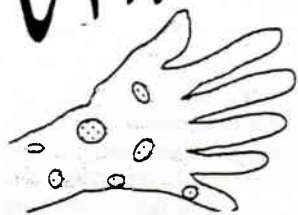
We've also got the end of Evelyn Leeper's review of ConFrancisco and our regular (or semi-regular features and what I believe to be some good artwork.

NOTE TO CINDY FOSTER - SEE LOCS!



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Trades Listing



♣ The Alamo Chronicles

ed. Edw. A. Graham, Jr. & Casey Hamilton; FEAR, PO Box 291015, San Antonio, TX 78229-1015. The last issue.

Austin Writer March 94

ed. Judy Barrett; Austin Writers' League, 1501 West 5th St, #E-2, Austin, TX 78703. An article on the Writers of the Future Contest by one of the local winners (Bruce Hallock, not Karawynn Long).

Australian SF News

BCSFAzine #250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255

ed. R. Graeme Cameron; BCSFA, POB 48478, Bentall Centre, Vancouver, BC Canada, V7X 1A2. Not many fanzines reach this age. BCSFAzine is possibly the most diverse clubzine printed today. The contents are fairly consistent, even if they won't all fascinate everyone. Graham also appears to be picking up some new contributors!

Canadian Progress Report #6

PO Box 2430, Winnipeg MB, R3C 4A7, Canada. Anne McCaffrey on the weather in Ireland, and an important little notice concerning crossing the border and saying the word "work".

Cube #53

ed. Hope Kiefer, SF3, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624. Long time between issues. It seems many Madisonians are moving to Texas.

♣ DASFAx Apr 94, May 94, June 94, July 94

eds. Fred Cleaver & Rose Beetem; DSFA, c/o Rose, 3225 W. 29th Ave., Denver, CO 80211-3705. (New address) Slowly prying away from the "club news syndrome" which has afflicted them on and off over the past two years. Now the question, is this a sign of a revitalized interest in the fanzine or a decline of club activity? Let's hope for the former.

De Profundis #264, 265, 266, 267, 268

ed. Tim Merrigan; LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. News and club minutes. The most important thing these days seems to be the LASFS - Harry Andruschak feud. Finally, with 266 this seems to be ending. Issue 267 takes up 2 major issues, the reelection of Matthew Tepper as president of LASFS and (more importantly) a proposal by Mike Glyer on how to run Loscon and distribute its profits. (268) Sees the advent of a new scribe for LASFS (Alex Pounelle).

♣ DUFFacto Spring 94

Down Under Fan Fund, c/o Dick & Leah Smith. As the last American DUFF winners, Dick & Leah are now the DUFF stewards. They offer to print any of the previous DUFF winners late trip reports. Theirs is in the writing.

♣ Envoy

Aaron Allston, PO Box 564, Round Rock, TX 78680-0564. An announcement of a new effort. Aaron is interested in news about Central Texas Writers, Artists, and Booksellers.

File 770 #102, 103, 104

Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Ave, #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401. (102) Ooh! Two File 770s so close together. A lot in about Star Trek and Worldcon related issues. I think a little too much room is devoted to the new Roddenberry biography. (103) Lot's on the developments on the Hugos. Also a review of Corflu as well as other fannish news. (104) Lots on Westercon & more.

FOSFAx Apr 94, June 94, Aug 94

eds. Timothy Lane & Elizabeth Garrett; FOSFA, POB 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281. (Apr) Lots on spies. The outlook is getting more right-wing, but there is a candy bar review. (June & Aug) The on-going articles by Joseph Major on the works of Robert Heinlein are well done and worth reading. Also, the Aug issue contains an interesting article by Charles Lipsig on the Lubabitcher.

The Frozen Frog #9

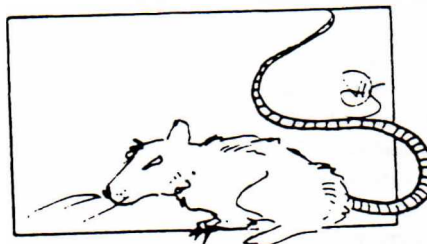
Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boisset, Cap-Rouge, Quebec, Canada G1Y 1Y9. Comics in America (Canada). Also, Frozen Frog is becoming one of those zines whose letter column is becoming longer than the rest of the zine.

Habakkuk Chapter 3, Verse 3

Bill Donaho 628 58th Street, Oakland CA, 94609. This fanzine both grows and improves. Still a lot on Bill's early fannish days; Ted White proves less invective, and an expanded loc column.

The Insider Apr 1984, May 94, July 94

ed. Kay Goode; St. Louis SFS, POB 1058, St. Louis, MO 63188-1058. Just club news this time round. It seems club activity is down. there was a recommendation to combine with the St Charles, MO club, but the vote was 1 yes, 3 no, 1 maybe and 1 abstain. Not promising!



Instant Message #544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551
NESFA, POB 809, Framingham, MA 01701-0203. News.

Journal for Space Development March, Apr, May 94
ed. Richard Braastad; Houston Space Society, PO Box 266151, Houston TX 77207-6151. (Mar) The Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (SEDS) have joined up with JSD. So, just about the whole issue is SEDS related articles. (Apr) I enjoyed Clifford Carley's "Space Nerd and His Adventures in Politics." Has anyone heard of the Atlantis Project? There is a little article in here about it, and frankly, I'm suspicious. (May) Carley continues his adventures, this time at the state Demo convention in "Space Nerd in Fort Worth."

Knarley Knews #45, 46

Henry & Letha Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017. (45) Knarley had a very interesting editorial on some of happenings on the Milwaukee public education scene. I also enjoyed "The Rabbit, the Fox and the Wolf" (off the Internet). (46) Knarley appears to be developing the same attitude as I towards conventions.

♣ **L.A. con III Progress Report One**

ed. Mathew Tepper, (see Conventional). Your basic progress report with a recipe for Margarita Jell-O, "The Top 20 science fictional places you can see in LA today", and the "Top 10 science fictional places in LA that don't exist anymore."

♣ **L. Ron Hubbard's Writers and Illustrators of the Future Contest Newsletter**

POB 1630, Los Angeles, CA 90078. This is the 10th anniversary of the contest, and they have created a gorgeous color illustrated booklet on the contests.

♣ **Mimosa #15**

Dick & Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1350, Germantown, MD 20875. A special food and drink issue. It is almost impossible to pick out only one or two of the submissions for special notice. All were enjoyable. Frankly, I think this was the best issue in the past 2 years.

Mobius Strip Apr 94, May 94, June 94, Jul 94

ed. Roy M. Anthony, El Paso SF&FA, POB 3177, El Paso, TX 79923. Very short, mostly news. The June issue has a lot of fanzine reviews. July sort of responds to my review in *TSFI* 52

♣ **Neophyte 18**

Jeff Behrnes, 11220 Hooper Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70818. A zine that features fiction by new writers. Some good, some not so good. But the best thing is that there is starting to be some feedback to the authors on their stories.

Opuntia #19, 19.1, 19.5, 20

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta Canada, T2P 2E7. (19) The finish of Victoria, Canada's fan history, and a piece on Canadian APAs. (19.1) Capsule fanzine reviews. (19.5) Life in Calgary. (20) A short capsule on Canadian fandom.

♣ **Passionate Fulcrum #2**

Mike Whalen, POB 55422, Metairie, LA 70055-5422. New, unsolicited trade. A perzine, from someone who

seems to have a little trouble with relationships. Also some decent fanzine reviews.

Proper Boskonian #32

ed. Kenneth Knabbe; NESFA. Another Evely Leeper con review, Boskone this time. A section on the artwork of Joe Mayhew (all old convention art), and a piece of fan fiction by George Phillies; editor of the now defunct fanzine, *Eldritch Tales* [At least I think I remember that being the name, pardon if I remember incorrectly - Alex], which was devoted to fan fiction. Large ads by both the San Antonio and St Louis '97 bids.

PSFS News March 94

ed. Rich Kabakjian; PSFS, POB 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101. Mostly club news, some reviews.

Rambling Way #42 (May), #43 (June), #44 (July), #45

W. Andrew York, POB 2307, Universal City, TX 78148-1307. Some excellent commentary on the world situation make this zine worthwhile, even if you don't play diplomacy. I wish I knew what all the moves meant. #43 has an interesting piece on buying a house in Great Britain; quite different than here.

Reasonable Free Thinker #2

Tom Feller, Box 13626, Jackson, MS 39236. 12 of the 30 pages are given to in-depth commentary regarding the movies, including *Schindler's List*, the various movies about Wyatt Earp and the Gunfight at the OK Corral, *Shadowlands*, and *The Piano*. There's also some convention reiews and 12 pages worth of locs.

Shon'ai #36, 37

eds. Sandra Morrese (& Renee Raper); Cherryh's Kemeis, 2405 Shade Oak Court, Waldorf, MD 20601-3544. (36) Features a couple of pages (meant as a preview) of Cherryh's *Foreigner*. (37) features some locs and a convention review.

Spent Brass #26

Andy Hooper & Carrie Root, 4228 Francis Ave. N., #103, Seattle, WA 98103. The start of Ted White's "Ask Dr. Fandom" column, advice to the conlorn.

Sticky Quarters #23

Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224. "Twenty Years of Pubbing My Ish" Congratulations, Brian! I enjoy Brian's reports of life as a father.

Stone Hill Launch Times Jan, Feb & Mar

Ann Morris, POB 2076, Riverview FL 33569. A small newsletter, with a little club news, usually a recipe too.

♣ **Time Warp** Spring 94

Friends of Doctor Who, PO Box 14111, Reading, PA 19612-4111. A new addition to our list. Look at who puts it out and take one guess as to what this is about. Well produced, with good writing and layout.

♣ **Trash Barrel**

Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91606-2308. The return of Don's capsule fanzine reviews after a 2+ year hiatus. This 'zine may also be seen as part of N3Fs zine.

♣ **Unintelligencer #15**

Embassy of Planet Claire, POB 3194, Bellingham, WA 98227. This will be the last time you see this fanzine

listed in this column. Based upon the content of this zine, we are dropping it from our trade list.

Westwind May 94, June 94, July 94, Aug 94

ed. George Nyhen; NWSFS, POB 24207, Seattle, WA 98174. (May) An interesting interview with R. Garcia y Robertson and a Sapphic version of the hero(ine) and the monster (trite and telegraphed). (June) The fiction piece this time is almost not understandable. Also, a proposal for the reorganization of Northwest fandom. (July) Norwescon 17 post con report. (Aug) There are some articles well worth reading: Lisa Wooding's "Ecologically Speaking", "Threads" by Terri Lusian, and the interview with Cathleen Adkison, the Chairman of the Board of Wizards of the Coast, the people who bring you *Magic: the Gathering*.



Bondock Central *continued from page 20*

Art show directors, help the artists. If you are practiced in displays give "younger" artists a hand or at least advise as they set up. Make sure that the art show area is as attractive as possible. That the hanging surfaces will support even heavy pieces. Covers for the tables are nice.

Don't crowd the rows together, many pieces need some space for viewers to step back to properly appreciate the piece. Lighting, of course, is important. If the art show is in a large room with a lot of large windows (like the 88 Portland Westercon) realize that though natural light is fantastic, direct sunlight coming through the windows may cause glare. Especially on those pieces that are glassed. A light, translucent curtain can work wonders.

I am far from an expert in these matters. Maybe some one a little better versed than I can follow this up.

One last book. Something I found in the library recently was *Everything I Need to Know I Learned From Star Trek*. The author was a fan of *Star Trek*, an adman and a member of the Second City Comedy Troup. It is a semi-serious (or semi-not-serious to keep the language sort of straight) takeoff on *Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Things like Kirk proved that you can still have a pot belly and still be fit. Power is a great aphrodisiac. Don't wear red shirts.


Even if you aren't a Trekker, I think you will enjoy this book.



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