

# This is Not a Minacazine #87

☞ from **Richard Lynch** for **SFPA 204** ☞

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This will probably be another short fanzine. June has been pretty busy, and I'm a bit worn out; I don't seem to have much of an attention span right at the moment. But I'm now out from under two publishing projects, the new issue of *Mimosa* and the Souvenir Book for the Baltimore Worldcon. Could not attend DeepSouthCon, mostly because of the Souvenir Book project; it was just too close to the deadline with too much yet to do. Nicki and I had been to all the other Birmingham DeepSouthCons (we received the Rebel Award at the 1981 B'HamaCon, in fact), so it was disappointing to break that string. We won't be able to go to next year's DSC, either (we need the vacation time for Conucopia and Aussiecon Three), but we are looking to attend the 2000 DSC on the Georgia coast.

It's the end of June! The first half of this year has really flown by. This past weekend was MidWestCon, and we \*did\* get to that convention (our first convention of the year, actually) but the only other SFPA member there was Toni. Five weeks from now is Bucconeer. Hope to see some SFPAns there.

Enough babbling for now...

## Mailing Comments, SFPA 203

### Ned Brooks

"I had wondered about doing columns in HTML, but what you describe seems very crude — apparently the text does not flow within the column." Actually, it does flow; we want the web version of *Mimosa* to be as close a rendering to the printed version as possible, so we brute-force line endings to match those in the printed fanzine. Leave out the `<br>` at the end of each line and the text will seek its own length, depending on how you've defined the width of the columns and/or table (assuming you do).

"...my 4-page rant against TQM was used as a training aid." It will be your legacy, no doubt... I've been able to avoid Total Quality Management, indeed all forms of "self-assessment" stuff the government seems so high on at the moment. So what's your complaint about it? (Other than the tedious amount of reportage.)

### Binker Hughes

Thanks for including the DSC program book in the mailing! That was Nicki's and my first DeepSouthCon (we'd moved from New York to Tennessee at the end of 1973), and there are still some pretty vivid memories of the convention.

### Irv Koch

"I've had some medical problems, mostly something causing my ears to fill up wit wax. ... They cleaned it out with hydrogen peroxide, and, for now, the problem seems to have gone away." Glad to hear it wasn't serious, but all you really need to remove impacted ear wax is an ear syringe (which you can get at any drugstore) and warm water. Just rinse the ear syringe with some alcohol each time before you use it to make sure it's reasonably sterile. Essentially zero cost.

Hey, I like the way you find illos for your SFPazine, at random, by looking to see what's in your `WINDOWS\TEMP` directory. Just about all of them are commercials, but they look good in color in the middle of your zine.

"Sharon Farber ... besides being a published writer ... is a real world neurological detective. She and her partner(s) reportedly took the cases/patients that no one else can solve." Sounds like her, all right. Are you basing this on her articles in *Mimosa* (which are now on hiatus, \*sigh\*) or on something from the news?

Ah, so that's what the computer-related problem is. You're right, you have to copy files you want to save out of a dynamic directory or they will eventually be lost. But hard disk memory is cheap, and getting even cheaper.

### **Guy Lillian**

"Darlene became the rarest of clients ... she *paid* me." You sound like most of your clients don't (the ones you're not representing via the Public Defender Office, that is). It said a lot when you mentioned that your accountant is living a vastly more lavish lifestyle than you are.

"I'm shopping for my own machine with enough muscle to handle the Internet." Prices are coming down and computing power is continuing to increase. The system I'm using here was pretty good about three years ago, but it's obsolete now. How obsolete? Well, I was looking through the Gateway 2000 ad in a computer magazine a few weeks ago (I have a Gateway 2000 at work) and I was startled to see that the very bottom of the line machine they sell is a lot more capable than this computer, in terms of processor, peripherals, and memory. Maybe next year we can get one.

"Other fan writers (and pro artists) have removed themselves from Hugo consideration when it became obvious their continuing wins were matters of routine: Rick Sternbach, for instance. No one complained that the Professional Artist category had been jokified because he left." Not a good example, as he only won twice, in 1977 & 1978. Part of the reason he took himself out of contention is that he started work for the movie and television industry (he's got credits in many episodes of *ST:TNG*), and basically stopped selling his artwork to publishing houses. Even if he hadn't, Michael Whelan's rise to prominence was only a year or so away. It's doubtful that Sternbach would have won any more Hugos no matter what his pronouncement at Iggy. But in any rate, the award *is* supposed to be for "Best of Year," isn't it? Not sure how you could have that if you start to disqualify contenders just because they've been too successful.

"My votes this year go to Joe Mayhew and Ian Gunn ... Both are overdue and I understand that both, alas, are ill." Joe is not ill, having recovered completely from open heart surgery. Ian seems strong, but I wonder how long his reserve will last after all the chemo he's taken. And: although he's not nominated this year, George "Lan" Laskowski is seriously ill, with cancer of the colon or liver, depending on who you hear it from. Not too much news on him.

As for you, get well soon, will ya?

### **Richard Dengrove**

"English is also the *lingua franca* on the web." Maybe once, but not now. There are lots of web sites in other languages, such as French, Swedish, German, and even Japanese (there is some kind of convention in use for simulating Japanese characters using the standard QWERTY keyboard). Eventually, though, HTML will have to be enhanced to allow for some characters you can't get now (I've already run into this problem when working on my Eastern Europe web pages — the Slavic languages have some special characters that aren't yet available in HTML).

"I am proud of my ability to scavenge." A useful skill for a web site developer, for sure.

### **Arthur Hlavaty**

"Several people have removed themselves from Hugo consideration when they were on the Worldcon committee, including Mike Glycer, Teddy Harvia, and Leslie Turek." Mike was pretty much forced to, being the chairman of the convention and needing to know who the winners were before the Awards were presented. Teddy didn't have to; both he and Brad Foster decided

to remove themselves from consideration for reasons of their own; apparently they each thought they had gotten unfair exposure in the Worldcon progress reports and the like. (Personally, I think they were overreacting.)

### **David Schlosser**

You don't have an email account yet? I'm guessing you're one of the few in SFPA who doesn't. We got email, lessee, back in 1993, and back then we were probably among maybe 1 percent or the population who had. Now I'm guessing it must be between 10 and 20 percent who do. It's starting to become almost as common (and as useful) as a telephone.

Not sure when the new space stamps will be coming available. I'm still waiting for the Alexander Calder stamps to make an appearance.

### **Janice Gelb**

On *Titanic*: "By the time the next mailing comes out you probably will have already seen it." Nope, not yet. I don't get to very many movies; I've even missed seeing *Deep Impact*. The ones I have seen lately are *Six Days, Seven Nights* (a lightweight movie with a contrived, predictable plot and some caricatured roles; even Harrison Ford can't save it), *The X-Files* (not bad, but not quite as good as some of their better episodes), and *The Truman Show* (worth seeing, will probably make next year's Hugo ballot). And speaking of *The X-Files*, I can also recommend a recent episode titled "Kill Switch" that was co-written by William Gibson (it's about a rogue cyber intelligence, not unexpectedly); that one really ought to be a Hugo finalist, too. And there's one other TV series that I hope will make next year's Hugo ballot: HBO's *From the Earth to the Moon*, which was a well-done dramatized documentary (mostly) about the U.S. manned space flight program of the 1960s and early 1970s. The best two episodes were excellent, and even the worst two weren't disappointing. Hope you got to see the series.

I liked the feature on Xpressive Markup Language!

### **Steve Hughes**

"What do you think of *Deep Impact*?" Have not seen it, so I can't really say. Actually, I haven't exactly been enthused to see it after all the lukewarm reviews and mediocre trailers. (I \*am\* reasonably sure it's a better than *Armageddon*, though.)

On politics: Gosh, you make the "export of sensitive missile technology" uproar sound almost as bad as the Reagan-Bush Iran-Contra scandal. This new one doesn't have the glamour of Iran-Contra, however; there's just nobody involved who is comparable to Ollie North.

What's this?? Concerning Bill Clinton: "No president has ever been so blatant in his use of his office to block and hinder investigations." I'm gonna have to treat anything you write with a great deal of skepticism after this! Nixon, after all, ordered his Attorney General to \*fire\* the Special Prosecutor (or whatever Archibald Cox's title was back then), which resulted in the great 'Saturday Night Massacre' of 1973. Are you forgetting this? Or just ignoring it?

Congratulations on your retirement! May all your days have pleasant sunrises and warm lazy afternoons.

### **Richard Brandt**

Concerning the Hugo Awards nominating process: "One virtue of preventing people from winning two Hugos (or winning multiple Hugos at all) is that at some point the obviously best contenders would be ineligible and mediocrities such as myself would have a better shot." Agree with you on the first half of the argument, disagree on the second. I've been nominating you for Best Fan Writer for the past four or five years, actually. I'm disappointed you've been overlooked; you are certainly deserving of some honors for your entertaining essays.

"Hey, I talked to Fanthorpe at Worldcon." And I never got around to meeting him, which I regret. I heard he's a regular guy.

"The end credits of *L.A. Confidential* are interspersed with several short bits of business invoking some of the characters and one of the subplots of the movie." Yup, saw them. I was one of the few. When Nicki and I go to the movies, we usually sit through to the very end; most of the other people are out of there when the credits start rolling. The metroplex employees who do a hurried clean-up of the theater usually eyeball us as if we're eccentric for sticking around.

### **Gary Robe**

"A few months ago I got a call from someone telling me that he was from Visa and that my card number had been drawn at random to win **big prizes**." Don't think I've ever had a phone call from a scam artist, though there seems to be a plague of telemarketers lately. Someone asking for your credit card number would seem to be a good warning sign, I'm guessing.

### **Gary Brown**

"I have two of my bills paid through electronic transfer and I suspect there will be more in the future." We're paying most of our bills electronically now, using Nations Bank's PC Banking service. It's convenient, and you get notification when the funds transfer happens. There is a six dollar service charge per month, but we've upgraded our account to eliminate that (they have a 'preferred customer' account for anyone who keeps at least a five thousand dollar balance in checking).

Yes, the dismantling of the Florida Marlins has been discouraging to see (unless you're a Mets or Braves fan). But the same thing has happened several times to the Montreal Expos and nobody has ever blinked.

### **Jeff Copeland**

I fully agree with you about Peter Høeg's *Smilla's Sense of Snow*. It's a wonderful novel with some fine writing (not sure how much of it due to the translators) except for the ending (it doesn't really have one). The movie of the novel finally made it to cable TV a few months ago, and it wasn't the same at all — moderately interesting, but none of the clever writing made the translation to the screen.

"...neither troff nor T<sub>E</sub>X end up as difficult to use (for me) as Microsoft Word, which keeps wanting to 'fix' my punctuation and capitalization." The newest versions of WordPerfect do that too, and it gets to be annoying. I particularly dislike the hyphenation routine (it must have a bug) which keeps inquiring about words you've already given instructions for. But even WordPerfect is a markup language; that's how the instructions for formatting text are presented, if you look at it in the "reveal codes" mode. You just can't physically edit the codes themselves; you can only add them or delete them.

On foreign travel: "I was eating local food ... rather than eating western meat-and-potatoes, and that made a difference of about ... \$80 a day in my expenses." Which tells me that you avoided hotel restaurants like the plague. I do, too, wherever possible. There are no lack of small restaurants in Eastern Europe now, and most of them serve reasonably appetizing food at a price almost too low to believe (e.g., dinner for four for \$20). Even the more upscale restaurants (outside of hotels) that cater to businesspeople and tourists are inexpensive by North American standards.

Ah, you're a *Zits* fan, too. I wasn't sure about the comic strip at first, but I found that I liked the way the characters were drawn, and Jim Borgman has always been one of my favorite political cartoonists. I still miss *Wonk City*, though.

ALL FOR NOW