

Variations on a Theme #9

from Rich Lynch • for SFPA 224 • written in November 2001

First Things First

Some closure on the Markstein business from last time. Since I printed his email to me, I'll also print a belated response, which should be self-explanatory:

Date: Mon, 22 Oct 2001 17:10:06 -0700 (PDT)

From: "Rich Lynch" <rw_lynch@yahoo.com>

To: ddmartstein@home.com

I'm sending you this email so that you won't have to wait until the next SFPA distribution to learn that as of today, the Boutillier article that you so strongly objected to is no longer on the MIMOSA web site.

Don Walsh recently contacted us and also had some objections of his own as to the overall accuracy of that article. We have decided that, rather than research the matter further, we'll instead remove it from the web site. We assume this is also an adequate response to your earlier objections.

Our apologies for the amount of time it has taken to come to a resolution on this.

Regards,
Rich Lynch

As Walsh was the subject of the article, there was no way to do a band-aid fix, like we did with Markstein, by simply blacking out the name.

New *Mimosa* Soon!

Speaking of *Mimosa*, we do have an issue in preparation. This one has a theme of "Welcome to the Future!" and will have essays and articles by 14 contributors, including Eve Ackerman. Eve is such a good writer, in fact, I am going to nominate her for the Fan Writer Hugo Award when the nominating ballots become available early next year. Some of the other contributors include Dave Kyle, who has an article about Arthur C. Clarke (which is appropriate for a fanzine published in 2001), Forry Ackerman, who writes about Boris Karloff, Bob Madle (in the first of a two-part series) who talks about his remembrances of the early days of Philadelphia fandom, Mike Resnick, who puts together a fannish time capsule, Fred Lerner, who describes how fandom discovered the game of Diplomacy, Bruce Pelz, who describes a night he spent in Robert Heinlein's fallout shelter, and Sharon Farber (back after too long an absence), who writes about how *Star Trek* terms infiltrated their way into medical practice. The cover is a splendid collaborative effort by Teddy Harvia and Brad Foster.

The new issue should be ready to mail before the end of December. I won't be sending copies through SFPA (about half the SFPA roster is already on the distribution list), but it will be online at the *Mimosa* web site (<http://jophan.org/mimosa/>) before spring.

There's still a lot to do on the new *Mimosa*, so this SFPAazine will likely be shorter than usual.

Mailing Comments on SFPA 223

Ned Brooks

On climate change: "It seems to me that the best way to get rid of surplus carbon dioxide would be to freeze it and store it at the South Pole." If 'best' means 'most expensive' then I might be in agreement. The logistics of getting carbon dioxide collected from all over the world, and then transported and frozen at the south pole would be overwhelming. Even if you assume the south pole would be, 100% of the time, cold enough to keep the gas frozen. A better approach would be to pipe it down to the bottom of deep ocean trenches, where the combination of temperature and pressure might keep it there for centuries. But even that seems kind of risky to me; there are too many unknowns, and there could be some rather unpleasant environmental consequences.

Richard Dengrove

On Eastern Europe travels: "If the small business initiative is over, why are they having you travel to Eastern Europe?" Some of our other initiatives aren't over, is the short answer. The Commercial Service people in Prague and Budapest, for instance, have told me they appreciate any assistance, as the energy sector is a priority for them and there is a lot of activities with market liberalizations and the like. The Commercial Service people in Prague offered me a two-month posting there if I could find the resources to pay for it on my own. (Which I haven't, and probably won't be able to.) And then there's our Internet site, with about 500 visitors a day; some of the Country Energy Overviews are getting in rather desperate need of updating, and it's hard to get all the information we need without some contacts with people over there. All in all, I can easily find enough justification for one trip per year; how long I stay will depend on how cost effective I can be in my travel plans.

Guy Lillian

On popularity polls: "My genzine, *Challenger*, won [the *Sci Fi Weekly* online Hugo Award straw poll] by fifty votes." And congratulations; even though it wasn't a very accurate predictor of how the actual voting would go, it's still an honor. (But I don't think that poll has ever correctly picked who the eventual Fanzine Hugo winner would be.)

On searching for a web site: "Good note for a future *Chall* website, **fanac.web**." That site doesn't exist, according to my browser. One place that does, and that you ought to check out, though, is **efanzines.com**, which, apparently, has unlimited amounts of space available and is owned by someone (Bill Burns) who is generous enough to make that space available to fanzine editors who want it.

On next year's Hugos: "I'd say *Shrek* was already a favorite in the Dramatic category." A pretty good film, but not even in my top five nominees. I'd say that if *Lord of the Rings* even partially lives up to everybody's hopes for it, it's a lock. And if it doesn't, the *Harry Potter* movie will win. And if both of those turn out to be big disappointments, look for an episode of *Buffy* to win (either the one where Buffy's mother dies, or the musical episode).

Sheila Strickland

On the performing arts: "When I was growing up, my mother used to always listen to the

New York Metropolitan Opera's Saturday matinee broadcasts on the radio. I hated it when I was very young, then it finally sunk in, and I started to love them." I agree it's an acquired taste, at least for me. I've been to only two opera performances – once in Poland, in Polish language, and the other a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in Estonia (in Italian, with Estonian 'subtitles' on an electronic screen over the stage). Both times, the costumes, staging, and music were just wonderful, but I found that my attention tended to wander, perhaps from my inability to understand the languages. In Estonia, the seat was very high up in an opera house that was in need of some rehab; it got very warm up there, which made it even harder to pay close attention. Still, I think I could grow to like it like you did (and you only had the music, with none of the visual color), but I'd have to start with some of the most popular ones with the most familiar music.

Janice Gelb

On travel: "I am curious as to whether you are getting the same questions about being afraid to fly from now on as I am getting from people at work who know that I travel a lot." Not really. Like you, I think commercial air travel is very safe, and getting safer. Not only that, the paradigm has changed, and skyjackings like that would be much more difficult to do again – passengers have become militant, and new protective features are in the works. I've flown once since September 11th – in mid October to Chicago (with Nicki) for the FanHistoricon/Ditto in Bloomington, Illinois. Seven years and one month earlier, I'd flown on the exact same model of Boeing 737 (and same airline, too – USAir) one week after the September 8, 1994 crash of USAir flight 427 near Pittsburgh, on which five of my friends from work were coming back from a convention in Chicago. Guy might remember this, as I came down to New Orleans on a business trip with one of my Polish contacts. Then, too, I wasn't worried that my life might be in danger, as it was near certain that the airplane I was in had undergone some detailed inspections, and that it had been flown dozens of times since the crash the week before without trouble.

Great worldcon report, as usual. You saw an entirely different convention than I did, but it was way too large to see and do everything.

Tom Feller

On meeting people: "I met Yuri Mironets, professor of English at Far Eastern University in Vladivostok, Russia [at MilPhil]." Nicki and I met him, too; he's on our *Mimosa* mailing list. But we only saw him once, the first day of the convention, when we were buying supporting memberships to the L.A.-in-2006 bid. He had somebody take a photo of us, and we'll have the image in the new *Mimosa*.

Randy Cleary

On investing: "I take a perverse pride in doing some personal investing at the height of the market. Hopefully, in thirty years, I'll recoup my losses (as I'm buying low now)." If you were diversified, it shouldn't take thirty years to gain back what you lost. After the mini-crash, our investments were down about \$30,000 from their peak, but already they are recovering. We don't buy individual stocks; we take the advice of our money managers at Merrill Lynch and Smith Barney and go into several different mutual funds. And we'll be patient.

Toni Weisskopf

On the WTC design: "The fact that so many people made it out of the WTC, and that the towers collapsed absolutely straight down and not fall on neighboring buildings was a paean to the architect and builder." That said, though, they can never build towers of that design again; they are just too vulnerable – the fact that one very bad fire could bring down such a tower makes that design obsolete. Designing a building for a worst-case scenario will now be a much more daunting project. The site, once it's cleared, deserves a lasting memorial that will make people remember and think, and it also deserves a world-class building that, frankly, will be a bit more aesthetic than those boxy towers were.

On politics: "Still think Gore would have made a better president?" By that, I assume you're asking if he would have responded to the September 11th attacks as well or better than Bush did. I have no reason to believe he wouldn't have, but I guess it's kind of a moot point.

Gary Robe

On summing it all up: "I'm at a loss for words." Indeed. Your cover, of the wreckage in New York and Arlington, pretty much says it all. I guess I should feel fortunate that nobody I know, either in New York or here in the Washington area, was harmed on September 11th. But my oldest sister, who used to work in the section of the Pentagon that was ground zero (she was moved offsite when that section went under renovation), knew 16 people who didn't make it – two of them fairly close friends. It's one of those imponderable bits of fate that it was that part of the Pentagon that was being renovated, or she might have been one of the names on the list.

Mike Weber

On luck: "Didn't [the late Joe Mayhew] win the lottery a few years back?" No, that was his brother Bill. I'd hate to think that the cosmic scales balanced Joe's bad luck against his brother's good luck.

Jeff Copeland

No real comments this time, but you did have the best line in the mailing: "If we can convince the fundamentalists that it is sufficient to practice their brand of religion without imposing it on the world, we will be better off. (I'm probably fooling myself, though: this argument hasn't worked on Pat Robertson.)"

Gary Brown

On carrying on: "I wonder if the events of the past two weeks have curtailed your flying and your job?" I'd been scheduled to attend PowerGen Asia in Malaysia about a week after the attacks, but I'd canceled out of it earlier because travel funds were not going to be available. I haven't had any business trips scheduled since then, though I do hope to go back to eastern Europe in April or May. Anthrax is affecting us more than anything else; they closed down our mail room for all deliveries and told us to do business by telephone, fax, and email. No telling how long this will last.

All for now, sorry for the brevity!