

Avatar Press

This is the fourteenth issue of the second volume of the personal zine, Avatar Press, published by Randy B. Cleary on March Twenty-ninth, Two Thousand One Anno Domini., for inclusion in the two hundred nineteenth issue of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance Amateur Press Association. All rights reserved. No copyright infringement intended. Permission to use any part may be obtained at 365 Shelton Road #105, Madison, Alabama 35758-1936 or (256) 461-6395, rbcleary@bellsouth.net or <http://personal.rdu.bellsouth.net/~rbcleary>



UP FRONT

Hi everyone! I hope the past few months have been great for y'all. I've had a pretty good time and am thrilled that Spring is here. I love Spring. It's one of my four favorite seasons. Once again I've put off working on my 'zine until the last moment (I thrive under pressure). Thanks to Jeff Copeland for

extending the deadline one week from the published one. I really needed it and have used it to produce one of my biggest issues. By the way, I finally found the 600 dpi drivers for my old printer for Windows 98 (on a web site in Japan) so this issue should look a little sharper.

PHOTOGENIC PHAT?

My friend, Jon Amis, took this picture of me, when we were in Chattanooga, Tennessee to see the Aquarium, January 27. More on that later. How one head can hold so much fat is amazing. I'm working on being less of a fat head though. ☺

EGOBOO FROM FRIENDS

A friend sent out one of those e-mail questionnaires about yourself that you send to other friends. Here are some nice things they said about me (I needed the ego boost and was pleasantly surprised). *The question was "SAY ONE NICE THING ABOUT THE PERSON WHO SENT THIS TO YOU." The answers I got were:*

Randy lightens every heart he touches.

He has a fantastic art talent.

Randy is hands-down one of the funniest people I've ever known, by far. His Pun-Fu skills are truly a wonder to behold.

Great sense of humor, and never selfish.

Very talented.

One of the easiest going people I know - a true friend.

INTEGRAPH ITEMS

Work as been going well with the Release to Manufacturing of our latest version of SmartPlant Review 4.2.1. at the end of February. We actually got the company to buy the Visualization team, a lunch (of submarine sandwiches) to celebrate. The current April issue of the magazine, CADENCE, has quite a positive review of our product. Stop by a Books-A-Million and check out the article if you are curious. I'm now working on the next version, which should have some significant changes and features.

FAMILY FOIBLES

My Mom was had an heart "incident" (they do not want to call it a heart attack) and was in ICU for two days. They released her with very little follow up in my opinion. She says she's feeling better but was really ill for a while. The stress of dealing with my nephew, Jeremy, was probably what did it. He got in some trouble with some local hoodlums and fled town for a few days and the hoodlums harassed my mother looking for him. This has since calmed down and his most recent legal problems were postponed and finally dismissed, so he is still only on probation and out of school and out of work and doing what ever he pleases. Sigh. I can only pray he either grows up or moves out or both.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

One of the reasons I've not had much time to spend on this issue is due to a woman who I went to High School with. She tracked me down out of the blue after 17 years. Since then she has kept me quite busy answering her e-mail. All the attention was flattering but a bit overwhelming. I think she has grown impatient and angry with me, and that I do not met her expectations. Hopefully, we can still be friends. She's divorced with a little girl and lives in my hometown. I hope she finds someone who is good for her and her child. I am more convinced than ever that I should stay away from any relationships (other than friends) as I really suck at them. ☺

CLUB CONTROL

I don't know if I mentioned this before, but I'm the Programming Director for the North Alabama Science-Fiction Association this year. The first month, I talked in depth about the world of fannish fanzines (and used SPFA as an example of an APA). The second month, I had everyone talk and/or do a show and tell about their hobbies. I talked about my comic book addiction. This last month, I presented SF Movie Parodies that I had downloaded off the web, "Troops", "Trooper Clerks", "Babylon Park", "Park Wars", "LOTR trailers", etc. All the programs seem well received so far. Next month will be tests of our psychic abilities and the month after that will be a trip to see the Huntsville Stars minor league baseball team play.

COMPUTER WOES

I decided to try to upgrade my oldest computer with the hopes of either putting Linux on it or giving it to my youngest nephew eventually. I upgraded the CPU from a 120 Mhz Pentium to the equivalent of a 166 Mhz Pentium with MMX (the fastest that my motherboard can support). I then tried to maximize the memory to 128 MB but when I installed it, it would not boot. It then would not boot with the old memory either. I just got it back from in the shop (with a 10 day wait before they can even get to it) without any repairs. They say it's the CPU. So either I return to my old one (which means reinstalling Windows (due to MMX usage)) or just write it off. When I get a spare moment, I'm going to try getting the new CPU running again (by changing various hardware settings). If it works, then the last thing I will do is install an 8.4 MB hard drive and Windows ME.

GOOD HOUSE HUNTING

I've been looking for a home to call my own more actively lately. I've been driving around Madison most weekends and picking up flyers and also looking in local home magazines (free) and on-the-web listings. So far I've decided on the following basic criteria to help narrow down the selections:

- All Brick
- Vinyl Trim
- 3 Bedrooms
- 2 Baths
- 2 Car Garage
- Central Air, Electric
- Central Heating, Electric
- Less than \$150,000

Based on the price, I think I probably need to wait several months as my short-term investments become available. Then I'll have enough for a 20% down payment, closing costs, and a 30-year mortgage. It's a big step for me and I look forward to being a homeowner with no neighbors behind the walls, ceilings, and/or floors.

FENCING FAR AND NEAR

This month has seen me trying to get back into fencing in a more serious way. This means driving to another state on most weekends, either to Chattanooga, Tennessee or Kennesaw, Georgia. So far, it's been fun and a good excuse to get out the state and go other places. Hopefully, I can keep up the commitment. My friend John Justice also travels to these classes when he can and we practice locally occasionally. However, he has even a busier schedule than me so it's a struggle to find time between classes when we can both practice.

I SEE *BARENAKED LADIES* AND IT'S NOT MARDI GRAS

BarenakedLadies

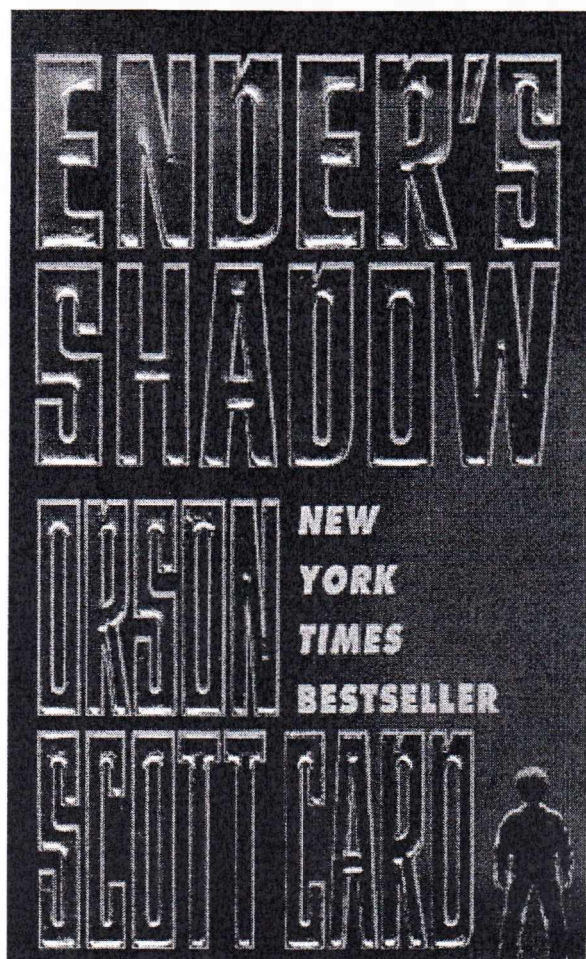
On March 16, 2001, my friend Leana Grice and I went to see the band, *Barenaked Ladies*, live and in concert. I had a very enjoyable time and they put on a great and fun show. We had good seats that gave up a great view but were far enough away that I did not even need to use earplugs to protect my hearing. I also discovered that the Von Braun Center sells mixed drinks. I liked this, as I don't much care for beer. I was stopped by an attractive blond woman, who took a sip from what I just bought (a Hurricane). Strange (at least for me).



Ed Robertson -- acoustic and electric guitars, singing
Kevin Hearn -- keyboards, accordion, singing, electric
Jim Creeggan -- double bass, bass guitar, singing
Steven Page -- singing, acoustic and electric guitars
guitar
Tyler Stewart -- drums, singing

BOOKS

I've actually read several books this year so far that I will review here.



Ender's Shadow

by Orson Scott Card

List Price: \$6.99

Category: Science Fiction & Fantasy

Mass Market Paperback - 469 pages

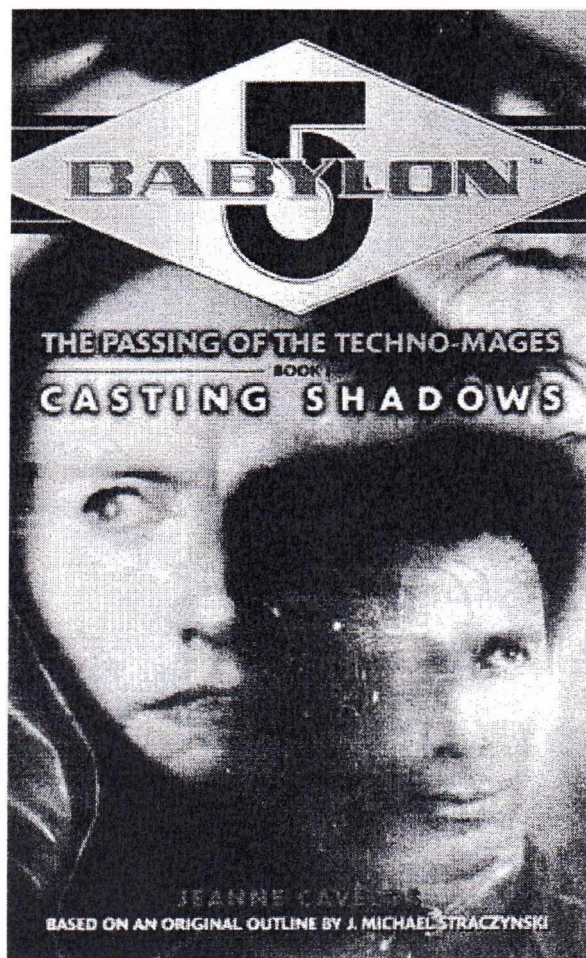
1st edition (December 2000)

Tor Books

ISBN: 0812575717;

Dimensions (in inches): 1.26 x 6.80 x 4.17

I got this for Christmas. Thanks Mom! I really enjoyed all the books in this series and enjoyed this one also. I think Orson Scott Card is often at his best when he writes young characters. This is an in dept prequel and/or parallel novel to Card's Hugo and Nebula Award-winning *Ender's Game*. It focuses on the story of Ender's best friend and/or second in command, "Bean", where he comes from and where he ends up and how he gets there. It is a very interesting novel and an enjoyable read. I look forward to the sequel, *Shadow of Hegemon*, coming out in paperback. I rate this book with a grade of an "A".



Babylon 5 Casting Shadows : The Passing of the Techno-Mages, Book I

by Jeanne Cavelos

List Price: \$6.50

Category: Science Fiction & Fantasy

Mass Market Paperback - 352 pages

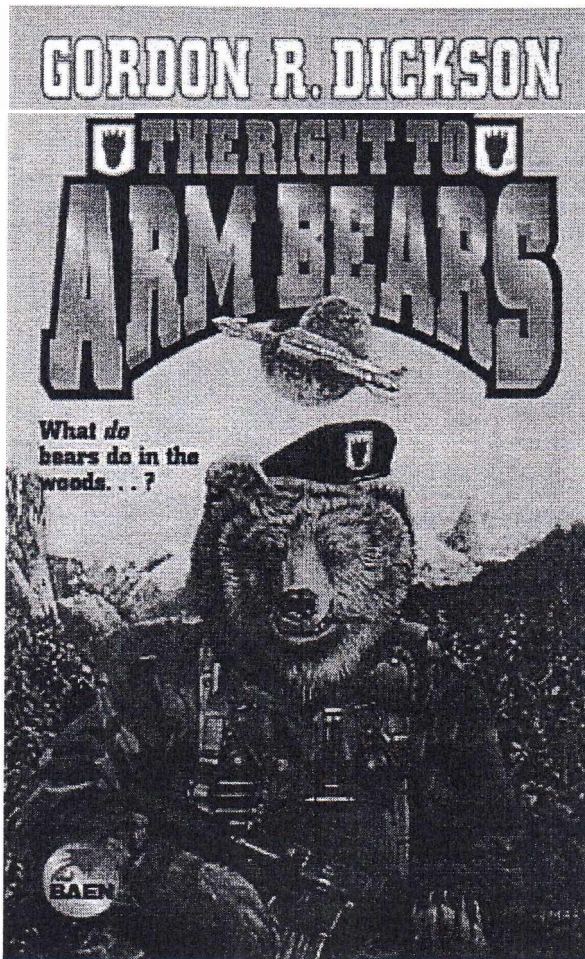
(February 27, 2001)

Ballantine Books

ISBN: 0345427211

Dimensions (in inches): 0.99 x 6.86 x 4.17

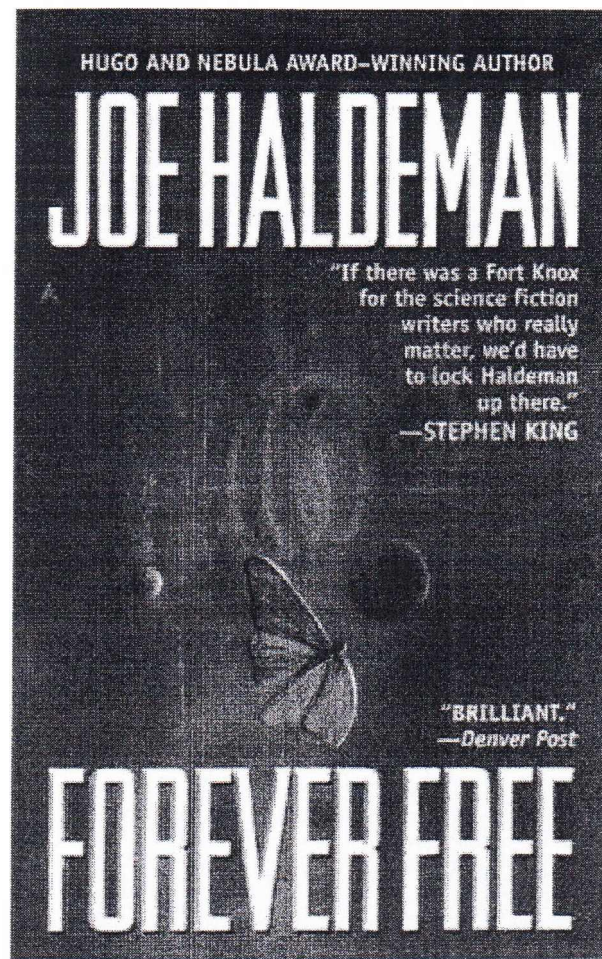
I bought this on impulse at *The Comic Shop* when I picked up comics a few Wednesdays ago. I read it the next Sunday evening (and did not get to sleep until late because of it). I enjoyed it and look forward to the rest of the series. *Babylon 5* is the only media tie-in fiction that I've ever seriously gotten into. This book explains the origin of the Techomages (who use traditional stage magic techniques, and alien science so advanced, that it seems like real magic). It also tells their behind the scenes story during the *Babylon 5* time period. So far, the first installment has focused on Galen (the technomage in the *Crusades* spin-off TV show) and his becoming a technomage (with an amazing and dangerous new power) during the coming of the Shadows back to the galaxy. I look forward to the rest of the series. I rate this book with a grade of "A-".



The Right to Arm Bears
by Gordon R. Dickson

List Price: \$6.99
Category: Science Fiction & Fantasy
Mass Market Paperback - 448 pages
(November 28, 2000)
Baen Books
ISBN: 0671319590
Dimensions (in inches): 1.00 x 6.75 x 4.20

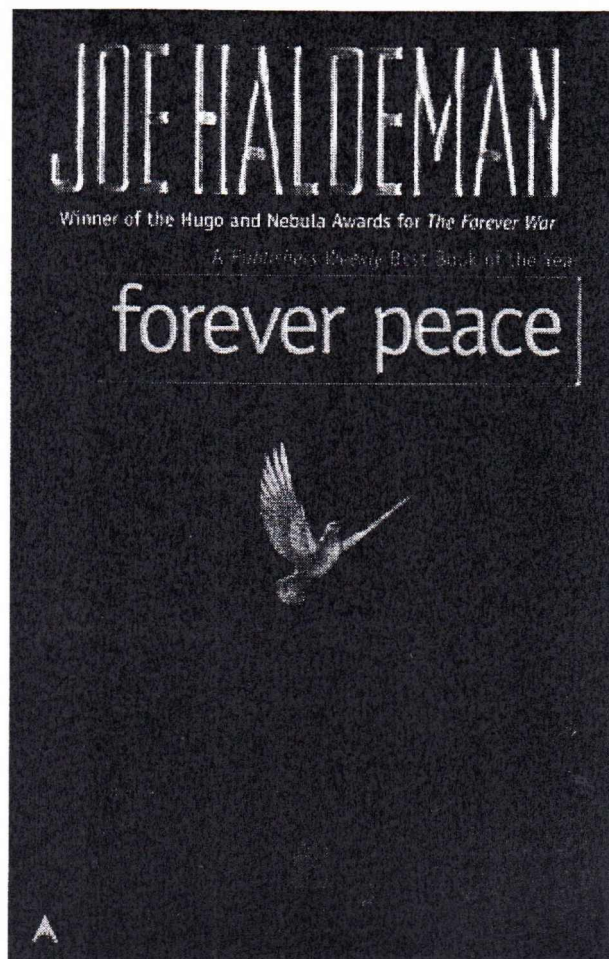
I picked this up on at the *Atlanta SF and Mystery Bookstore* (along with the Bob Eggleton art book reviewed later in this issue) using a Gift Certificate from the Atlanta Science Fiction Society on my way home from my annual Christmas visit with my family in Lexington, NC. The cover of this book won me a free book from Toni Weisskopf (as I guessed the title before anyone else in the audience at one of her infamous Baen traveling slide shows). It's basically a reprint collection of a series of fish-out-of-water type stories, where an unsuspecting human is tossed into the (seemingly) primitive and alien culture of these very bear-like aliens (called Dilbians). It's ripping good fun with lots of laughs and adventure. Note that the cover image does not actually match any of the stories inside. I rate this book with a grade of "B+". Now that Gordon R. Dickson has left us, I really will miss him. I did not realize he could write should fun fare, as most of his other works that I love are so much more serious in tone.



Forever Free

by Joe Haldeman
List Price: \$6.99
Category: Science Fiction & Fantasy
Mass Market Paperback - 288 pages
(October 31, 2000)
Ace Books; ISBN: 0441007872 ; Dimensions (in inches):
0.79 x 6.76 x 4.24

I picked this one up at *Book Mark* at the same time as Forever Peace. Urg! This book was truly a punch to the gut. Image a double take and a "What the!?" expression and you'll get why I had so much trouble with this book. Some people may like the experimental nature of the plot twist at the end but I felt set up and betrayed. The first part of the book is pedantic and seems to be setting up to a good adventure. The second half feels like the author decided that he had enough and needed to meet a deadline and wanted to shake things up for the reader. Overall, I rate this book with a grade of "C". It's a sequence to Forever War only in name in my opinion.



Forever Peace

by Joe Haldeman

List Price: \$6.99

Category: Science Fiction & Fantasy

Mass Market Paperback - 351 pages

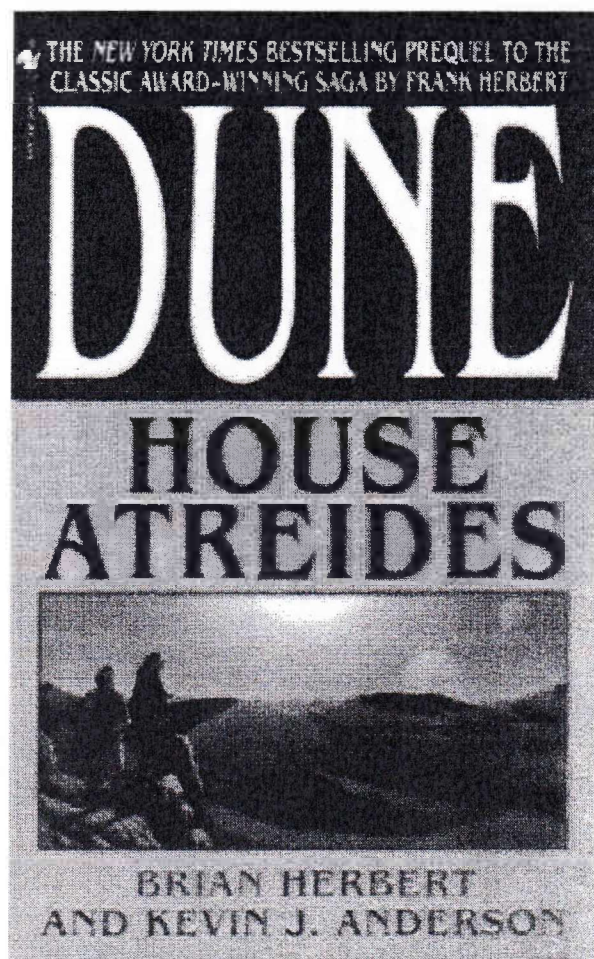
(October 1998)

Berkley Pub Group

ISBN: 0441005667

Dimensions (in inches): 0.96 x 6.74 x 4.21

I picked this book up at *Book Mark* in Huntsville. I enjoyed it a lot. It's about Julian Class who is a full-time professor and a part-time combat veteran in a "Soldierboy" (sort of like a virtual reality super robotic extension of himself with awesome powers of destruction). This book ties a lot of neat SF ideas, such as power armor, nanotechnology, and mankind's quest for peace, in an interesting and exciting way. This is not a sequel to the Forever War but is closer in spirit than Forever Free was. It's a good solid adventure story with an uplifting and desirable ending. I rate this book with a grade of "A".



Dune: House Atreides

by Brian Herbert, Kevin J. Anderson, Frank Herbert

List Price: \$6.99

Category: Science Fiction & Fantasy

Mass Market Paperback - 681 pages

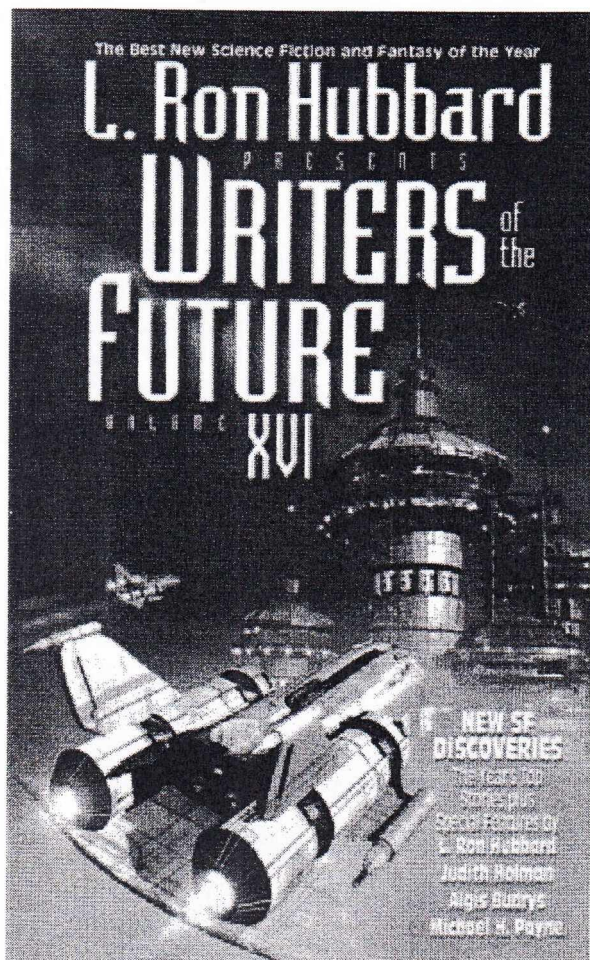
Reprint edition (August 1, 2000)

Spectra

ISBN: 0553580272

Dimensions (in inches): 1.21 x 6.88 x 4.19

This was another Christmas present from Mom. It was a good meaty read with lots of characters and interleaving story plots. It is a prequel to the Dune novel and does not try to duplicate Dune in style or tone. I thought it was well written and did good to explain some of the known and unknown background of the Dune universe leading up to the acclaimed novel. It follows the young Leto Atreides, and younger Duncan Idaho, and the new emperor and adult Baron Harokonnen when he was in his prime, and how planetologist Pardot Kynes paved the way among the Fremen for Paul Atreides. I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of this book and how the characters generally rang true to me. I rate this book with a grade of "A".



L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Vol. 16

by L. Ron Hubbard, Algis Budrys

List Price: \$7.99

Category: Science Fiction & Fantasy

Mass Market Paperback - 495 pages Vol 16

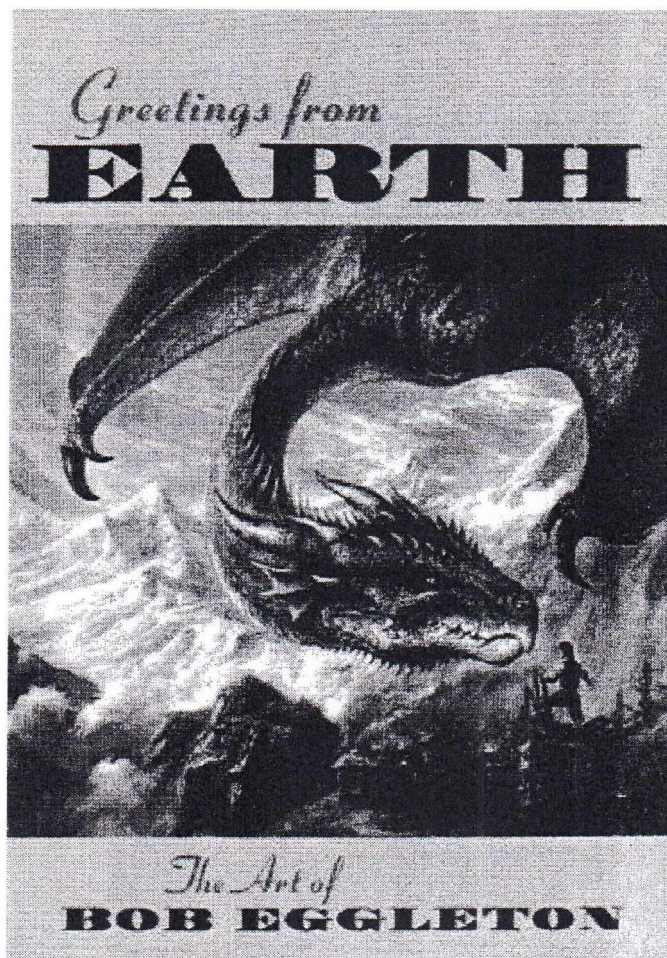
(November 2000)

Bridge Publications

ISBN: 1573182036

Dimensions (in inches): 1.16 x 6.85 x 4.16

I don't recall where I picked this up (either at Chattacon or at Christmas). This latest installment had a great diversity of stories. Most of which were worth the read and had some neat ideas. Some of the illustrations were interesting also. I rate this book as a "B-".



Greetings From Earth: The Art of Bob Eggleton

by Bob Eggleton, Nigel Suckling

List Price: \$21.95

Category: Art, Architecture & Photography

Paperback - 112 pages

(April 2000)

Sterling Publications

ISBN: 185585662X

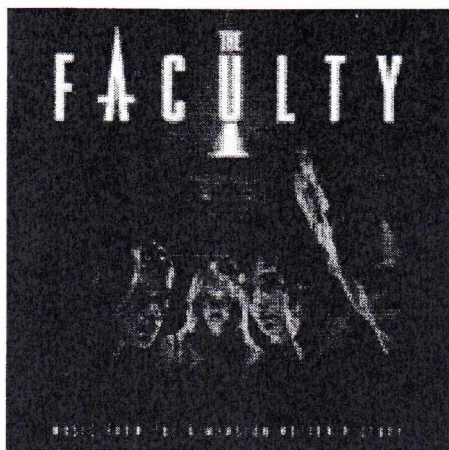
Dimensions (in inches)

0.36 x 11.71 x 8.30

I bought this also at the *Atlanta SF and Mystery Bookstore* to help use up the ASFS gift certificate. It's Bob Eggleton's newest collection of artwork and contains recent cover art and some previously unpublished work. There are plenty of captions that add interest to each piece. The original I own is featured in this book also (much to my glee). I rate this book as a feast for the eyes with a grade of an "A".

CDS

Here are some the CD's I've gotten recently.



Faculty : Soundtrack

List: \$17.97

Date: December 8, 1998

Label: SONY/COLUMBIA

Genre: MST

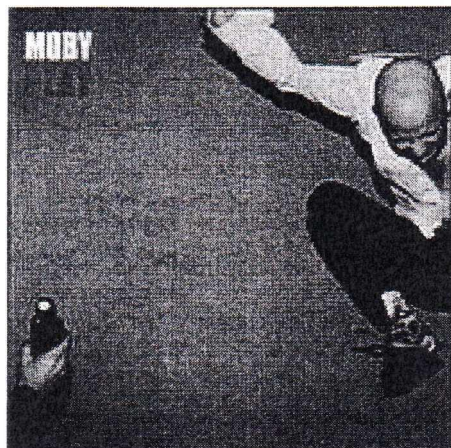
Category: Soundtrack

OASIS / SOUL ASYLUM / USHER / CREED OFFSPRING /
NEVE / CYPRESS HILL

TRACK LISTING

01. Another Brick In The Wall (part 2) - Class Of '99 Waters
02. The Kid's Aren't Alright - The Offspring
03. I'm Eighteen - Creed Bruce
04. Helpless - D Generation Malin
05. School's Out - Soul Asylum Bruce
06. Medication - Garbage
07. Haunting Me - Stabbing Westward
08. Maybe Someday - Flick Thornton
09. Resuscitation - Sheryl Crow
10. It's Over Now - Neve Stephens
11. Changes - Shawn Mullins Bowie
12. Stay Young - Oasis Gallagher
13. Another Brick In The Wall - Class Of '99 Waters

I picked this up at *CD Warehouse*. It's got some interesting remakes and some nice alternative tracks. I enjoyed it and rate this as a "B" grade. The movie was a nice little goof of a SF B movie also.



Moby: Play

CD

Date: June 1, 1999

Length: 58:42 minutes

Label: BMG/V2

Genre: ELEC

Category: Rock/Pop

TRACK LISTING

1. Honey
2. Find My Baby
3. Porcelain
4. Why Does My Heart Feel So Bad?
5. South Side
6. Rushing
7. Bodyrock
8. Natural Blues
9. Machete
10. 7
11. Run On
12. Down Slow
13. If Things Were Perfect
14. Everloving
15. Inside
16. Guitar Flute & String
17. The Sky Is Broken
18. My Weakness

I got this CD for Christmas. Thanks Mom! Moby runs the gamut of several musical styles on this CD, which is a little disconcerting sometimes when listening to it all at one. It has some blues/gospel, hip-hop, dance, and ambient styles. I enjoyed it and I'm sure the album will grow on me the more I listen to it. I rate this as a "B-" effort for now.



U2 : Best Of U2-1980-90

Date: November 10, 1998

Length: 61:48 minutes

Label: UNI/ISLAND

Genre: ROCK

Category: Rock/Pop

TRACK LISTING

01. Pride (In The Name Of Love) U Two 3:48
02. New Year's Day U Two 4:17
03. With Or Without You U Two 4:55
04. I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For U Two 4:38
05. Sunday Bloody Sunday U Two 4:40
06. Bad U Two 5:50

07. Where The Streets Have No Name U Two 4:35
08. I Will Follow U Two 3:36
09. The Unforgettable Fire U Two 4:53
10. Sweetest Thing - (The Single Mix) U Two 3:00
11. Desire U Two 2:59
12. When Love Comes To Town U Two 4:17
13. Angel Of Harlem U Two 3:49
14. All I Want Is You U Two 6:31

Another Christmas present from Mom. What can you say? The track listings speak for themselves (if you are familiar at all with this mega band, from the Eighties, which is still going strong). I really enjoy listing to all these memorable songs from my teenage and college years. I rate this CD as an "A".



CHATTACON

Okay, this is one of my favorite conventions of the year. I'm sorry I did not have time to do a full report last time as my memories are fading fast. I don't have much time now but I'm determined to do a report though. So here goes. Note that some version of this may appear in the Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin eventually.

Chattacon 26 took place January 12-14, 2001 at the Clarion Hotel, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The Guest of Honor was supposed to be David Brin (one of my favorite authors), but he had to cancel due to family illness. The other Guest of Honor was S.M. Sterling. The Artist Guest was Jill Bauman. The Special Guest was James Patrick Kelly. The Toastmaster was Charles Grant. The Regional Artist Guest was David Mathews. The Fan Guest was picked at random. There were about 1200 members. I was not able to stay in the motel so I had to walk in the cold a few blocks (and was glad for the exercise, if not the inconvenience). I did take the shuttle van back one time.

The program book was 40 digest pages with a monochrome maroon cover with an interesting looking Jill Bauman work of a dragon and a girl. It was

dedicated to Stanley Kubrick. It had appreciations, schedules, maps, ads, and interior illustrations. It also had some short fiction. The pocket program was eight digest pages of useful information and program schedules. I did not seem to get any Tracksides daily publications this year though.

The convention Con-suite was on Level B this year in the President's Hall. I liked this layout over last year's, as it was more open. The con-suite had great food (actual entries) and the famous Little Debbie snacks. Oh, they also had Beer, which seemed popular too. The con-suite was open almost continuously. It was non-smoking, which I really appreciated. The dances were also held in the Con-suite and were well attended. I enjoyed a lot of the music (actually danceable) they played.

The Art Show was at lobby level this year in Ballroom A (big improvement over last year). I set up my bay with 21 pieces (13 originals and the rest water colored prints). I sold a couple of items. There were about 60 used panels, four tables, and 33 artists represented. I thought there was a good selection of works there. The Print Shop was on the second floor and had prints from several artists (including me). I sold a few prints of the 6 series that I brought. Check in and out went smoothly and the art show, art auction, and print shop were well staffed and well run. I sent several pieces to auction but did not win any of them in the bidding later. The auction was well attended and there were lots of pieces.

There was an Anime Room in the Lincoln Room and Level B. A schedule was provided of the showings. I was not able to make it by there though. It looked like an interesting and diverse schedule.

The Dealers' Room was in Ballrooms B and C on the Lobby level. There were about 25 dealers with a wide selection of goods, costumes, books, toys, t-shirts, gaming, anime, jewelry, crafts, weapons, and more. I passed through there a few times and picked up a few things.

(This report continues on next page.)



Okay, I "borrowed" this photograph from the Chattacon web site. This is Lewis Murphy, one of the party hosts, about to don his space helmet for this costume of Dave from the movie 2001. The whole party had incredible decorations (note them on the walls in this photograph), and everyone there wore costumes themed on the movie, with great music and a real bar of various mixed drinks. This party won the Golden Margarita award for best party at Chattacon. These folks have won this award before (and are not promoting anything but having a great party). Most of them are members of the Atlanta Science Fiction Society.

I was not able to attend the Masquerade (as I was having fun at a room party). Usually it's too crowded to get in but I heard it was not so crowded this time. It seemed to go well from what I heard. You'll have to get the details elsewhere though. Maybe I'll get to attend next year.

The Computer/Video Gaming room was in the Jefferson room on Level B. It had networked computer gaming, pinball machines, and old style stand up arcade games. It was always well attended when I stopped in. I played a few pinball games at one point.

There was active gaming also, with board games, card games, sanctioned RPGA events, live action role-playing, and open gaming. The events seemed well attended but not crowded from what I saw as I passed by. I did not do any gaming myself (as I do my gaming between conventions).

There were four tracks of programming. I attended several panels over the weekend. The first was "Opening Ceremonies" where James Patrick Kelly revealed he writes under several more famous pen names (he was joking). It was a good panel of speeches and comments. Afterwards was a "Meet the Pros" reception with wine and refreshments. I would have like a wider selection of drinks though.



This is another photograph from the Chattacon website showing the other room of the party. The mural was awesome and there's an actual Monolith just out of shot to the left. I believe this is the actual presentation of the Golden Margarita award to the party hosts.

The first panel I attended on Saturday was, "Promotion and How to Do it" with Jill Bauman, David Mathews, David Deitrick, Diana Sharples, and Kenneth Waters. A lot of useful advice was given by the established artist pros and the up and coming ones also. The next panel I attended was "Jill Bauman's Slide Show" which started late due to the earlier panel running over. Jill Bauman commented on her works and was very interesting. The next panel I attended was "Will the Future Look Like the Movies?" with Geoffrey Landis and Jack McDevitt. It was a wide ranging panel discussion with lots of audience participation about books, genetics, society, and the internet and movies.

The last panel I attended was on Sunday, "How not to Get Published" with J.P.Kelly, Jack McDevitt, Wendy Web, and Thomas Smith. The panel got into it by pretending to give advice about how to get published (which was really bad advice if you followed it). They said things like to try calling the editor at home, etc. It was humorous and tongue in cheek.

Chattacon has great parties. I attended as many as I could. I missed a few though due to timing and having too much fun chatting, dancing, etc. at other parties. There were bid parties, convention promotional parties, and just parties to have parties. There also were a few, "Oh My God" parties (as in shocking). Chattacon has a lot to offer any fan but the parties are truly one of the reasons I keep coming back each year. I've included some photographs of the best party, though I may be biased, as I know the people who threw it. I borrowed these from Chattacon's web site. I was also lucky in winning 2001 calendar at the 2001 party.

So overall, I enjoyed Chattacon again this year. I wish I had been in the main hotel though. I got to see lots of friends and had lots of fun. I'm already looking forward to next year. Hope to see you there.

MOVIES

I've not been to many movies lately. Here are a couple of reviews.



Snatch

Art/Foreign and Thriller. 1 hr. 43 min.

Rated R for strong violence, language and nudity.

Starring: Benicio Del Toro, Dennis Farina, Brad Pitt, Jason Flemyng, Vinnie Jones.

Directed by Guy Ritchie.

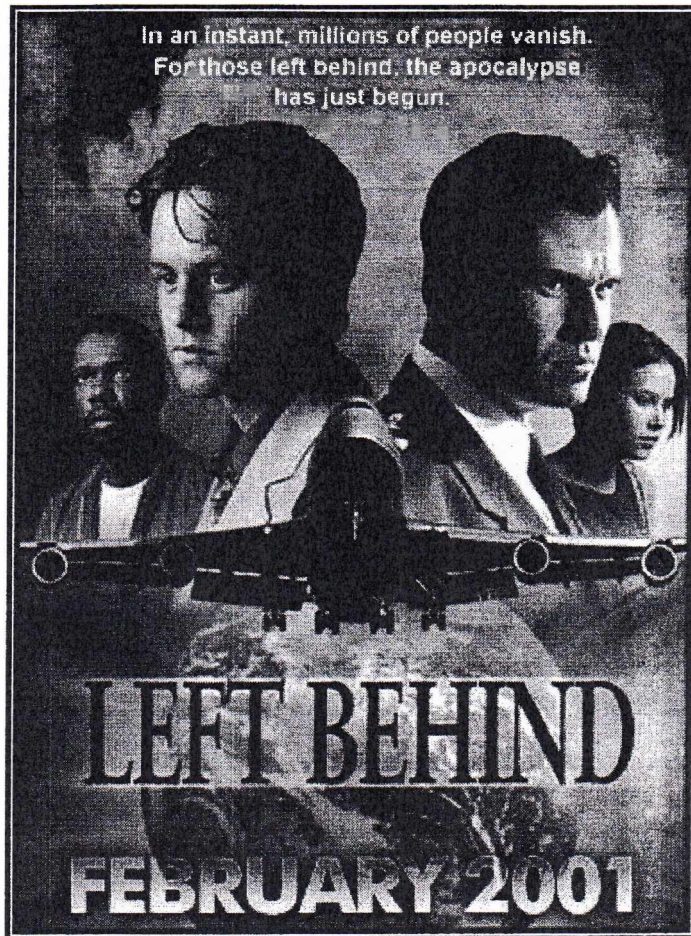
Produced by Matthew Vaughn and Guy Ritchie.

Written by Guy Ritchie.

Distributor: Screen Gems

Release Date: January 19, 2001 Nationwide

My friend Leana Grice and I saw this January 31, 2001. Madonna's husband, Guy Ritchie, also did the "Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels" movie. This movie has a very similar feel to it. So if you like either, then you should check out the other one. It's about a diamond heist that goes wrong and causes all sorts of the London underground characters to get involved in various plots directly or indirectly related. I enjoyed it. It has some funny moments of dark humor and can get a little violent at times but it has its own definite style that interesting in itself. In the end, the characters you root for win out. Brad Pitt excels as playing odd characters and this film is no exception. I rate this film as a "B+".



Left Behind

Cloud Ten Pictures and Namesake Entertainment

February 2, 2001

I went with a group of co-worker friends to eat and then went to see this movie. It's based on a popular book in Christian circles of the same name. It's basically a fictionalization of the End Times as predicted by certain interpretations of the Bible. As a Christian, I found it fairly interesting and a nice little movie. However, as a movie, it was only of average quality. I would rate this movie as a "C". Considering the low budget and lack of big studio promotion and production, it's really pretty good. I would have like it more if it had been a little more character driven.

TRIPS

Tennessee Aquarium

One Broad Street · Chattanooga, TN 37402 · 1/800-262-0695 <http://www.tennis.org/>

My friend Jon Amis organized this group trip (with rented van) of friends and co-workers. It was a pleasant way to spend a Saturday in January. We ate on the way, got there in time to see an amazing 3-D movie ("Into the Deep") at the IMAX theater, and then toured the Aquarium itself. The Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga is the world's largest freshwater aquarium (to quote their web site). I can believe it. Here's the

best picture I took at the Aquarium. It's of two Clown Fish. Most of my other pictures did not turn out so well as I'm not expert at taking pictures in dim lighting through glass.



They also had some non-fish exhibits including gators, turtles, water-fowl, frogs, snakes, and even spiders. Watching fish can be relaxing, as long as it's other people's fish. ☺

New Orleans Mardi Gras

My friend Leana Grice organized this whole trip for several of her friends (including me). I had a blast and only regret that we did not get to stay until actual Fat Tuesday. We were there from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon. We drove down from Huntsville Thursday in an uneventful drive. We checked into our Hotel, the Mid-Town Quality Inn, which was fairly nice but in a slightly seedy area. The hotel banded us and told us to leave the bands on for the duration. There were five of us in the room the first night. We took the hotel shuttle to the French Quarter and begin drinking Hurricanes, and other things, and walking around. We hit the Dungeon club later and danced to some to its cool music. We took a cab back. I understand that I have five distinct snores and that poking and prodding me caused me to stop briefly. I just recall sleeping like a log and apologized for the snoring.

The next day, some of us had upset tummies, headaches, and various complaints but everyone soldiered on. We ate lunch in the hotel, which was surprisingly good. We drove to the Metairie cemetery and walked around admiring all the gravesites. This put us in a sober mood that soon faded once we reached the French quarter (by taxi). Friday night, we saw the Hermes and D'Etat parades. I found us a great spot on a corner, near the barriers, and by a hydrant. One of our group stood on the hydrant with my bracing to get into better bead catching position. We all got lots of beads. After the Hermes parade, we walked down the street where there were no barriers and saw the D'Etat

parade. It was neat being up close and we got lots more beads, cups, and medallions. Afterwards, we ate at Leonardo's in the French Quarter which was fairly good and had live music. No one drank very much that night and most of us got in earlier than the night before. Another one of Leana's friends met us in the French Quarter and he and another friend stayed out later. I commanded myself not to snore (and put on a breathe right strip) and was told that I did not snore that night.

We got a late start the next day and went to Mandina's for lunch. Guy had recommended the place and was nice enough to come by to say "hi" while I was there. I also met lovely Rosy there. The place was crowded and we had to park back at the hotel and walk there. However, it was worth the effort in my opinion. Then we returned to the room and everyone took a nap (while I read Dune: House Atreides). We then took a taxi down to the French Quarter, went to the Café Du Monde, looked at the shops and the street performers, including a great street magician.

We then walked a good ways to find a good position for the awesome Endymion parade. We got a great spot behind a barrier in the middle of street intersection, near where the parade did a U-Turn. I held my friend on my shoulders for a few floats before we got up to the rail. Eventually I worked my way right up front and made space for one of our group right on the railing. Thus we got tons of beads, (well probably fifty to an hundred pounds in total among us all). The floats were awesome. I was disappointed that my pictures of them did not turn out at all. After the parade, we went to the ACME Oyster restaurant. It was pretty good also. After walking down the crowded Bourbon Street, some of us went clubbing while others went back to the room carrying lots of the accumulated beads. We went to the "Shim Sham" club first (after walking down Bourbon Street). They played a neat mixture of late seventies and early eighties off beat hits. I hit the dance floor when they played "The Time Warp". It was a nice place to get out of the crush and relax for a while sitting and drinking. Then we walked down Bourbon Street again. Then we went to the Oz club (which had a stiff cover). It was packed with wall-to-wall bodies on the dance floor. We went out on the balcony there also and watched the crowd pass by. Eventually I and another friend walked and caught a cab (with my last ten dollars) that I know defied several laws of physics on the trip back. Saturday night was very warm and muggy (and the expected rain never really materialized).

After another snore-less night (at least by me), we got up, packed our beads and clothes and loaded up the cars. It was starting to rain, so we departed for the trip back. We did stop to buy some souvenirs on the way out. I bought a shot glass. I had a great time and thought I was with a really nice group of friends. Everyone looked out for each other and we all seem to have good time. I could go into more detail about lots of things but unfortunately I've promised "that what happens in New Orleans, stays in New Orleans". ☺

Okay, here's the silliest picture I have from of me at Mardi Gras. I'm the one on the left. Too bad I don't

have a color printer. Our tonques are really quite red from certain drinks we were drinking that night.



SFPA 219 MAILING COMMENTS

Here are some mailing comments done while I'm fairly awake during normal hours for a change.

Frist Zine in the OEship

Hi Gary! Congratulations on being first but don't you know nice guys finish last. On Poe's last encrypted message, "quote the maven, never bore".

The New Port News #195

Hi Ned! Neat cover. On "Orange Mike" Lowrey, I shared a shuttle bus with him at Chattacon. He sent me his 'zine last year (on orange paper of course). One of these days, I need to try LOC'ing 'zines that I get. On Spam e-mail, you are luck to receive so little. I get about a dozen a day. Sorry you did not like my last cover. Your invisible man theory about the coating changing frequencies sounds as good as any other idea. My idea is that the coating "transports" the light from one side to the other and it never passes through the body at all. You might like the band "10,000 Maniacs". I sure do and I've even saw them in concert years ago when Natalie Merchant was still their lead singer. On Birmingham SFPA members, I know someone in Birmingham that I was in a different APA with. Perhaps I should encourage him to join SFPA. On credit card signatures, I've had mine compared on a few rare occasions.

Variations on a Theme #4

Hi Rich! The buffet of the Finland Embassy sounds yummy (says the hungry typist). My investments are down even more now. On the bright side, my 401 K and other regular deductions are buying low now and hopefully in the long run, I'll come out ahead. I will vote for *The Matrix* for the Hugo also (though I did enjoy *Galaxy Quest* a lot also). You guessed it! My cover

model was Julie Wall (in a half-tone close up). Congratulations on your incredible low cholesterol. I'm giving blood tomorrow at work. It'll be a long time before I get to 50 pints like you. It's always neat how one's views color one's perceptions. You thought Baker was the sleaziest and I thought just the opposite. Que sera, sera. I really don't think it matters much in the long run (as as political parties are more alike than they are different (in actions if not words)).

Rear-End'er '00

Hi Guy! Glad that on the whole for you, 2000 was not a bad year. Good luck with the side cases. Best wishes for the new millennium.

Confessions of a Consistent Liar 72

Hi Arthur! I look like Cartman from South Park. Thanks for the comments.

Challenger 13

Hi Guy! Nice cover! It is awesome that you got to see the Shuttle launch. I want to do that someday. I'm glad you were able to use some of my illustrations. Another fine issue. Too bad your editorial could have been written as easily by a Republican had Gore won. I trust we will all muddle through together somehow for the next four years. How do you find time to read all those zines! Nice tribute to Toni! I bet she appreciates you not publishing the more risqué pictures (or is her blackmail ones of you better?).

Uncle Lon's Unofficial Box Scores #13

Hi I'm in lucky 13th place. Oh well. :^)

Technical Toys

Hi Steve! "Where does he get those marvelous toys?", Joker from "Batman" the movie. Cool! You're like a secret agent now. Now Suzanne really has someone to "watch" over her. :^)

Frequent Flyer

Hi Tom! Thanks for the trip and con reports. It was nice seeing y'all at Chattacon. Thanks for the comments.

Peter, Pan & Merry #35

Hi David! Thanks for the NO trip report. From my recent trip there, I could visualize parts of your trip in the French Quarter quite easily. I hope Random got quickly over his ear infection.

Twyqdrasil and Treehouse Gazette #68

Hi Richard! On clothes made out of paper, I have a shirt made out of Tencel (88%) which is wood fiber. Does that count? It's similar in feel to silk. You're the only one to mention the C.E.? I was wondering how long it would be. I don't hate it. I just think renaming things is usually silly. Good luck with the weight workouts. I also do weights but infrequently. Thanks for the comments. Good luck on learning Visual Basic. Microsoft is trying to replace it with Visual .Net (which is not just a newer version of Visual Basic). Uh, excuse my ignorance but what is "oil cracking"?

Spritus Mundi 181

Hi Guy! It was great seeing you at Mardi Gras. Thanks for taking time to see me and have your lovely fiancé introduce herself to me. Thanks for the comments. Will "sports" be the theme for Challenger #15? I've not heard anymore on the news other than the initial story about the man being shot in his own home by the police who had the wrong address in Tennessee. I guess it did not rate an extended investigation. Local news seems to never do any investigating reporting of any debt. I did not remember the Green Lantern's oath. I simply looked it in that Neil Gaiman Green Lantern (which you should probably still be able to find at your better comic stores). DSC40 will be held at the Huntsville Hilton (downtown) and not at the Airport Sheraton.

The Offline Reader 20

Hi Irv! I hope you and Kay have recovered completely from your flu. Thanks for the comments. Glad your stocks seem more up than not.

Oblivion #132

Hi Gary! Seems like many of us got the flu bug. Perhaps, someone inserted it in the last mailing. ;^) Glad to hear you have some free time now. Good luck with your amazing weight loss. I've lost some also but nothing like you and I have a ways to go. I've included a DSC39 flyer in my zine. I hope it helps. Thanks for the Dave Barry end of the year review. I got a Dave Barry desk calendar for Christmas. Thanks for the comments. I'm much better now.

Trivial Pursuits #93

Hi Janice! I likewise took a bath in my investment funds this year. Hopefully buying low this year will more than make up for it in the long run. Thanks for the comments. Thanks for the Gore quote clarification. I wonder why the media did not do more to clarify. However, it still sounds like an exaggeration to me from someone who has been portrayed as at least prone to some exaggeration. But this comes from a member of an administration that needs "is" defined, so I should probably cut him more slack. ;^) Good luck on your refinancing. Your Nader cards seem familiar.

More Travel Tales

Hi Janice! Thanks for the trip reports. Nice mental image of you dancing with a peace bonded Viking. Congratulations on making the launch. Cool.

Yngvi is a Louse #69

Hi Toni! Nice rebuttal to all the election opinion in some of the other zines this issue. I suspect they will not be swayed one iota though. ☺ On the Tucker postcard cartoon, I recently learned that BOB, stands for Battery Operated Boyfriend in some women's parlance.

Sing the Praises of the Wolflord: A Birthday Oneshot Paean

Nice one-shot (except for the lack of illustrations). First two years of Detective Comics ruined! Argh!

Guilty Pleasures

Hi Eve! Nice government propaganda style clip art. I hope the e-book is doing well. Congratulations on Micah's Bar Mitzvah.

Tyndallite #93

Hi Norm! On the Galactic Council and Pizza Hut, maybe they like to order out. Thanks for the comments.

Random Thoughts

HiSteve! Thanks for your insight (or incite for those opposed to the implications) into hand recounts in close elections. Good luck with your SF novel.

The Sphere

Hi Don! Good luck trying to form coherent themes from postings on Internet news groups. You might have better luck holding the tides back (IMHO). You seem a bit prone to the "true believer" syndrome of picking all the worst qualities of the your opponent, either from individuals of the group or the group as a whole, and portraying that as the typical and true face of all members of that group and the group as a whole. A very drool and ironical satire on your part. Congratulations on your CBG resource mining. Thanks for the comments. Yes, I'm not an Orthodox Republicanist. Of the two parties, I feel they are the *slightly* less hypocritical ones.

Crouching Tiger, Itchy Swimsuit #1

Hi George! My condolences on the burglary.

Tennessee Trash #39

Hi Gary! Looks like you were in some hot water. Sounds like you had a nice Christmas. I'm glad your van spin ended okay. With your headlight, be careful you never lose your marbles! Congratulations on recognizing Julie Wall (you'll have to ask her about the Rabbit). Thanks for the comments.

Home with the Armadillo #45

Hi Liz! Good luck with the Tarot quilt. Thanks for the articles.

Pluto: The Planet that used to Be

Hi Mike! I'll be dogged if I'll ever not think of Pluto as a planet.

Fantasy and Reality

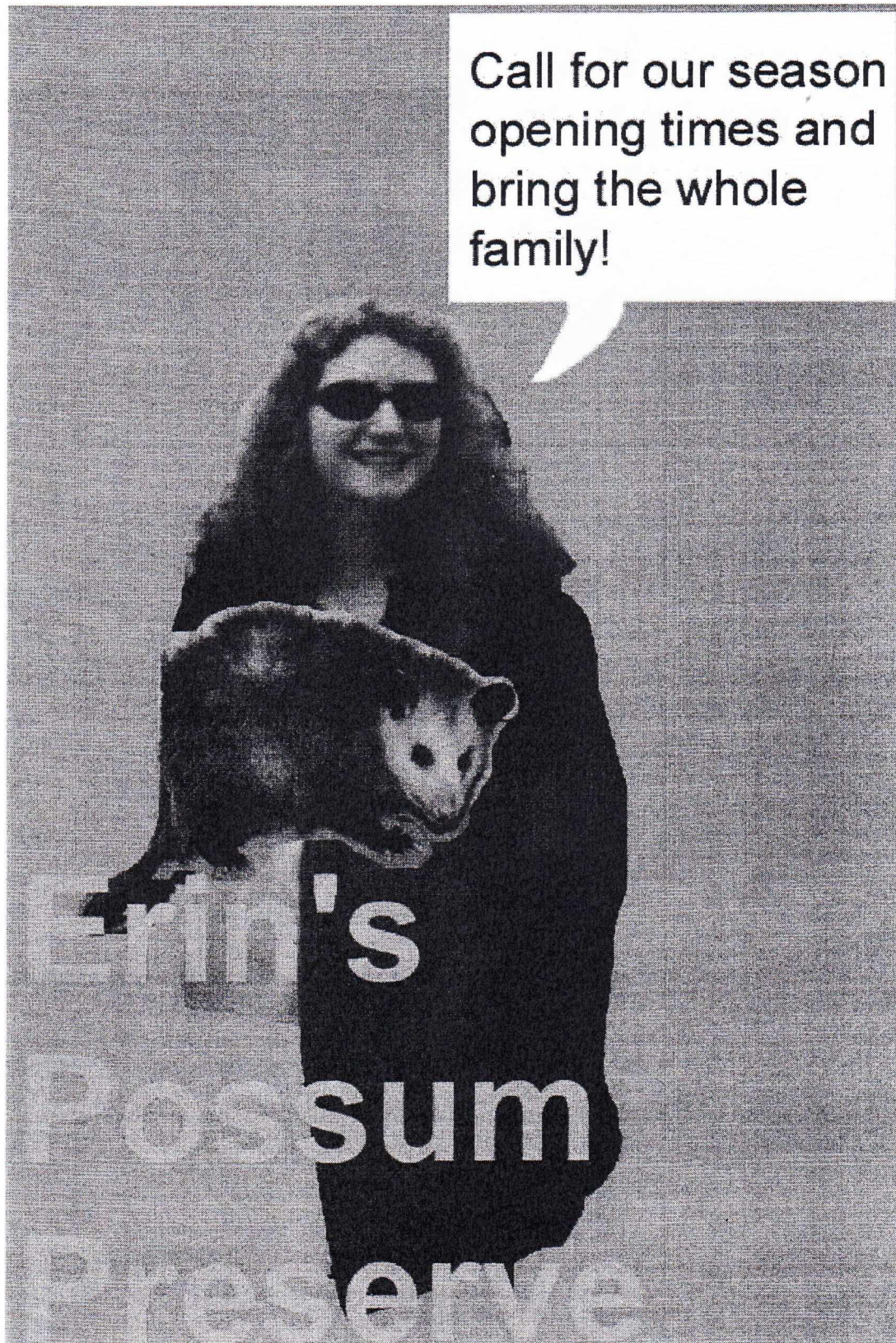
Hi Jeff! Thanks for the space quotes. On the Darwin award, I guess he was a "Dead Ringer". I was amazed at the HTML that Word generates. It's neat if you have lots of space, which is why I converted most of my own web-site to hand coded HTML (to save space). Good luck with the India production of your zines.

CLOSING

Well I had hoped to have had done more this time but fate had other plans as usual. See y'all in sixty! Hopefully there will be less of me by then. I also have to get on the ball and finish (and start) several art projects.

GALLERY

Some back story for this picture. The young lady here is a friend who had a possum on her door step one day. Another friend took the possum's picture which I scanned. I took her picture at Mardi Gras, scanned it, and e-mailed this montage to her under the subject line of something like "Here's a picture of you I found on the Internet from Mardi Gras." She was scared until she opened it and then was amused. However she has not spoken to me since, so maybe she was not that amused. ☺



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