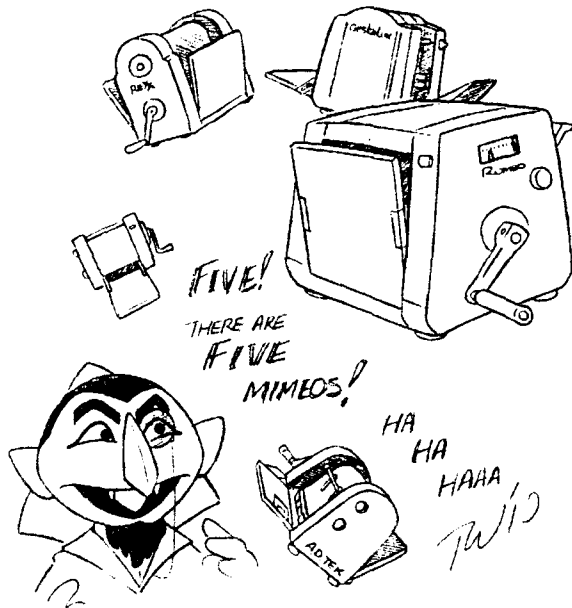




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CHALLENGER NO. 34 ...

unless we have enough material to justify another military-oriented issue ... will have as its theme(s) SEX and ROMANCE. (For a long time, such were certainly science fiction for *me*.)
Deadline (for the moment) JUNE 30TH, 2011.

CHALLENGER 33

Winter-Spring 2011

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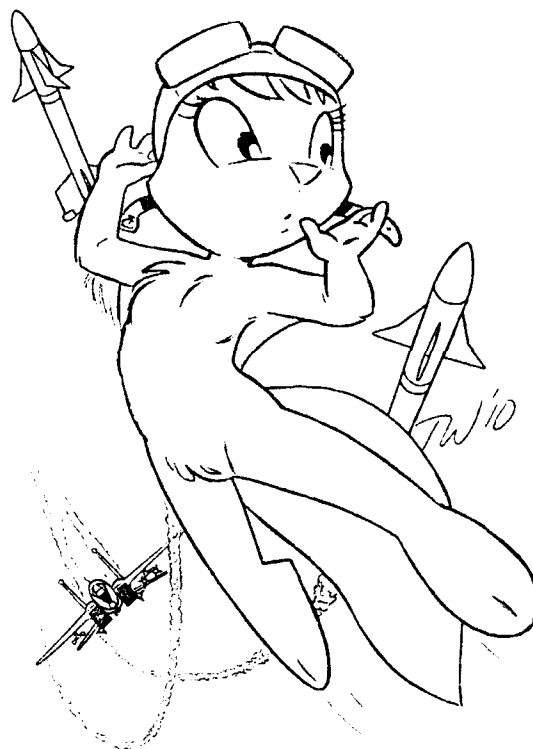
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**Cover by
ALAN WHITE**

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Illo by **Taral Wayne**. Ten-hut!

WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR, DADDY?

Ian Nichols

War has been a central theme of science fiction ever since George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking*, written in 1871, just after the Franco-Prussian war. This was the start of military SF, a relatively obscure novel now, but one which led directly to the seminal works of H G Wells. *The War of the Worlds* was the first of Wells' novels to deal with war, in 1898, followed by *The War in the Air* (1908), *The World Set Free* (1914) and *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933). Wells prefigured many of the ideas that were to follow in later military SF; the alien invasion, technological advances, the 'future history' and nuclear weapons.

Chesney's novel was a response to his experiences in the Franco-Prussian War, and Wells' were cautionary tales looking at future wars, particularly *The Shape of Things to Come*. However, these early novels were more oriented towards dystopian futures, a la *Brave New World* and *1984*, often involving war and the abuse of technology. They were more the precursors of post-holocaust fiction, still a strong sub-genre, than of military fiction as we know it today.

When discussing military fiction, it is inevitable that Robert Heinlein's name comes up. There are two novels in Heinlein's oeuvre that serve to define military science fiction as we know it today. The first of these is *Space Cadet* in 1948 and the second is *Starship Troopers*, in 1959. *Space Cadet* was his second juvenile novel for Scribner's, following *Rocket Ship Galileo* in 1947. The novel traces the training and early missions of Mat Dodson, a cadet in the Space Patrol, who survives the rigors of his early training to perform heroically after the ship he is on is disabled on Venus. It brings into play many of the ideas that Heinlein would use in the later *Starship Troopers*, such as that of rejecting national differences in favour of an allegiance to humanity as a whole, and rejecting racism as a consequence.

Starship Troopers was the book that ended Heinlein's long and profitable association with Scribner's publishing company. They complained that the book was too grown-up to be a juvenile novel, and rejected it. This caused Heinlein to dissolve his relationship with them and concentrate on writing more adult novels from that point on. From its first appearance, *Starship Troopers* has attracted controversy, perhaps more so than any other of Heinlein's novels, with the exception of *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Like *Space Cadet*, it tells the story of a young man, Johnnie Rico, who undergoes military training. Unlike Matt Dodson, Rico enlists in the Mobile Infantry, a futuristic version of the Marines who are carried by starship from planet to planet to fight their battles.

Much of the novel is concerned with the training of Rico and his early missions. The text seems to be influenced by Leon Uris' *Battle Cry* of 1955, which portrays the training of marines in New Zealand in WW II, and their first missions to the Pacific Islands. It is interesting that Putnam's published both books. Rico, from a wealthy family, enlists for two reasons; the first to get the respect of a girl he likes, and the second to gain full citizenship; only veterans can vote or hold public office in this future society. The story opens when Rico is preparing for a drop with the Mobile Infantry, a drop that goes horribly wrong. From there much of the rest of the story is told in flashback, and it focuses on Rico's training, first as a trooper and then, later as an officer.

Jarhead is a book by a Marine, who never fired a bullet in anger during operation Desert Storm. It is an incredible book, and we follow the author Anthony Swofford throughout his time. It is a brutal book, not for the violence, or gruesomeness of war, that one expects, but because it shines a terrible torch light upon the mental war that young men fight. Swofford was a sniper, he served the Surveillance and Target Acquisition Platoon of 2nd Battalion 7th Marines. He relays the mental trauma that combatants go through. The annoying boredom, the sexual frustration, the relationship issues that arise from their absence, it's really very unpleasant. One wonders, why would one fight at all, let alone questioning the causes or correctness of the actual war. His anguish with having prepared so hard, toughened, ready for the fight, to only find that the war is over, is poignant.

I also enjoyed the movie, and there is one moment that sticks with me. Jake Gyllenhaal, a favourite actor since *Donnie Darko*, explains in *Jarhead* the movie how even an anti-war movie like *Platoon* has no "anti-war" effect by hyped up and ready for action troops, and in actual fact only hypes them into more of a war frenzy. A moment of clarity, and insight into the "anti war movie" that has stayed with me.

I liked the book a lot, not because it shows the visceral harshness of war, the violence and horror, but because it actually shows the honest consequences, of young men in combat, or in this case, just in a combat theatre, not even fighting.

Generation Kill was released originally in part form in *Rolling Stone*, which seems appropriate, I mentally link it with Hunter S. Thompson being a writing for the same said magazine, and somehow his *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* also had moments of insanity and war, albeit in a hotel bedroom, but *Generation Kill* was an incredible work.

Marine Facts. Size.

The USMC at 201,000 personel is 43% larger than the regular British Army at 113,000. US Marine reserves are only 8% larger, In actual fact, the USMC have more personnel than The Royal Airforce (41k), British Army (113k) and Royal Navy (37k) togther.

According to the Marines Aviation Plans and Programme guide, the USMC has PAA for some some 1154 aircraft. This compares against The Royal Airforce, which have some 1069 aircraft including reserves. In Europe, apart from Russia, with some 3,000 planes in total, there is no country with a larger airforce, than the US Marine Corps.

Space Marines

And John Glenn was a Marine. As were many other astronauts. Seventy Seven he flew again, Ess Tea Ess Niner Fiver. Two on Mercury, Five in Apollo, nuh nuh nuh nineteen on the Shuttle Ninteen Ninety Nine, and Dalhquist is in the Space Patrol, written in Forty One. They bring Death to the Daleks, float out to destroy Drax. They are in chapters, and fight chaos in 40,000, in power armour, against aliens and chaos. They fight them when they come at night, mostly.

Anyhow.

I hope you enjoy all the bits and pieces so many people have kindly helped me with, from photo permission from press officers to emails passed on from guys out there, to professionals of many kinds, and fans of many things. I think we need to remember that talking and listening is still a good thing.



lesser significance as time goes by. The News Media grasps at anything that sets the deaths apart from the ongoing losses. Yet it is always there. Years of it.

I wanted to elucidate on my interest in Marines. I decided I should write specifically about The United States Marine Corps and started this as a piece about current books, but it soon grew from an article, to, well as you will see, a little more.

I am a fairly liberal left wing person, politically, although, since even America has embraced nationalisation, and an interesting attitude towards social assistance of late, I wonder am I really that far left. I always used to ponder how Americans could allow their health care system to be just so uncaring, without insurance, one perceives you are stuffed, but I came to understand that such social equality is seen as quite a departure towards leftist leanings.

So, take it that I am leaning to the left and yet I have great respect for any person who stands for their country, I suppose that is being Irish for you. I am lucky, as I am a Train Driver (Railroad Engineer) and have never enlisted or needed to be drafted. Fighting against another country is now an anathema to the Irish Defence Forces, whose main roles have been peace keeping missions on behalf of the United Nations.

Ireland has about 8,000 soldiers. Congo, Lebanon, Sierra Leon, Bosnia, Cyprus, these are all places Irish Soldiers have worn the blue helmet of diplomacy. There was quite the slaughter at (Congo) and Irish Soldiers have been in quite a few fraught situations, but they are not a standing army, ready at the drop of a hat, to climb into the back of a cavernous MAC heavylift C-52, or land in a (helicopter) on an amphibious assault ship.

I met a cadre of Naval Officers from the USS *Reagan* and spent some real good time with them, in San Diego, including the CAG, who was more than "just a captain" as many of his pilots were at great pains to explain. They were superb officers, I was very taken by them, polite and honest, they were taken aback by my friendliness. I was especially enamoured by the Female Officers whom I met, charming, as they stood in dress whites, is not the word I would use. Once they understood me a bit better, we agreed on things a lot of things, and I think that's important.

I hope to manage to explain to you dear readers, as I did successfully to them, that just because I am opposed to the War in Iraq, which is a democratic right, does not mean I have any resentment or ill feeling towards any combatants personally, in actual fact the opposite, as we shared beers, they understood that they were actually fighting, or could be fighting for that right. It is important that as I have a right to oppose politicians, these naval personnel have the right to stand for their nation, follow orders and do their job, and I respect that. That respect is all they need, to be reminded that their job is to protect my right to object to whatever their political masters are instigating and so a positive cycle occurs.

The books about now and then.

Mostly I have read many biographies from the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. I doubt people, here (in London) are aware that the USMC is a larger force than the British Army, or that it has such a long history, having originated in 1775. I have been surprised and impressed by some of the writings about and by Marines.

Two books which have had an impact are *Generation Kill* about the beginning of the current activities in Iraq, written by Rolling Stone staffer, Evan Wright, who was embedded with the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion of the United States Marine Corps in 2003, during the invasion of Iraq. I have always liked Journalistic Writing, whether it be the likes of Steinbeck's World War 2 reportage, or *Dispatches*, Michal Herr's book about Vietnam, or *U-Boats at War* by Harold Busch. There is always something very interesting about a journalist at war. Watching, part but not really, in the deep end but not kicking.

Intro to the Stuff from *James Bacon*

by the man himself

I am a Science Fiction Fan. I just co-chaired Eastercon, the National Con here in the UK, two weekends ago, (editors note James means LX 2009– James started working on his massive military project for *Challenger* nearly *two* years ago!) but I have always been interested in reading about Military History. I enjoy reading books with a military theme, historically, currently and also when in a science fictional setting.

I am always intrigued by the similarities and differences between men who fight for real, and in fiction.

Marines are in themselves an interesting class of soldier. Generally they are a tougher breed of warrior, although they could come from a back ground just like me. There is something seemingly accessible about being a Marine, despite the toughened aspect, they are just regular folk, in extreme conditions, ready to go into a situation in the vanguard, into even the unknown.

It is too simple to just say that Marines are a special force, they are equally able on sea and on land, a force of soldiers borne by sea, amphibious, they are highly mobile, adaptable, very tough and with a reputation and ability to fight in any combat scenario. If one were to have a military force on a space ship, it would be Marines, boarding other ships, repelling boarders, landing on planets, equally at home, on the capital ship in a 'space naval' situations, as they are in a tight unit in hostile territory.

Marine derivatives have been used in science fictional settings, whether named or not (well in my opinion anyhow).

In my mind, John Rico, from *Starship Troopers*, although identified as Mobile Infantry, was more of a marine than anything else, and Heinlein had used the term "Space Marine" in previous stories. Doc E.E. Smith had Galactic Marines in his *Lensmen* books and since then we have had Colonial Marines in *Aliens* and *BattleStar: Galactica*. *Space Above and Beyond* obviously had a descendent corps in the United States Marine Corps Space Aviator Cavalry, sounds like they wanted a bit of everything there.

Babylon 5 had the EarthForce Marine Corps interestingly nicknamed "Ground Pounders", David Weber's Honor Harrington series has the Royal Manticoran Marine Corps, and those men in space suits who exit and fight against Drax's besuited laser wielding villains, in the James Bond movie *Moonraker* are U.S. Marines.

Marvel comics produced *Semper Fi*, a comic solely dedicated to Marines as its subject, although I was never really a fan. I much preferred *The 'Nam*, also from Marvel, drawn by Michael Golden and written by Doug Murray, especially the first 12 issues. In the UK, the British weekly anthology comic *Warlord* had a character called Union Jack Jackson. A Royal Marine, serving with the USMC in the Pacific theatre, he wears a US uniform, and paints a Union Flag on his helmet. Another British comic which was a favourite was *2000AD* and they had a series in 1979 called *The V.C.s*. It followed a group of Star Troopers, from the Global Combat Corps in their battles with the Alien enemy, The Geeks.

I like an interesting selection of military fiction.

Meanwhile in the real world it is hard to avoid the current wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Although it is sometimes hard to contemplate that there is actual a War being fought, what with the UK not resembling anything near a war footing as a nation, and only occasional pomp and circumstance reminding people of what is going on. The continual fatalities seem to blur and contain a



Oh, you're probably wondering my choice to edit the 2012 program/souvenir book. My first and easiest appointment, she actually *asked* for the job: Rose-Marie. Lest an accusation of "Nepotism!" spring to your lips, let me reassure you: she's experienced, having worked with Geri Sullivan and *moi* on the Noreascon 4 souvenir tome, she's well-qualified, being a professor of communications and completely computer savvy, and she's clued-in, being good buddies with two of Chicon's Guests of Honor, Fan Peggy Rae Sapienza (a recent, always-welcome visitor to our home) and Pro Mike Resnick. Rosy is also the most feminine person I have ever known, which should mesh well with the art we hope to obtain from Rowena Morell, the convention's Artist GoH. I look forward to seeing her touch on the page.

And how can you see our efforts? Join Chicon! (And Reno! And DSC 50 in Huntsville in 2012! And Contraflow in New Orleans next November – source of the *very interesting* ad you'll find on page 58! And ...)



Counting *Challenger's* feathers ...

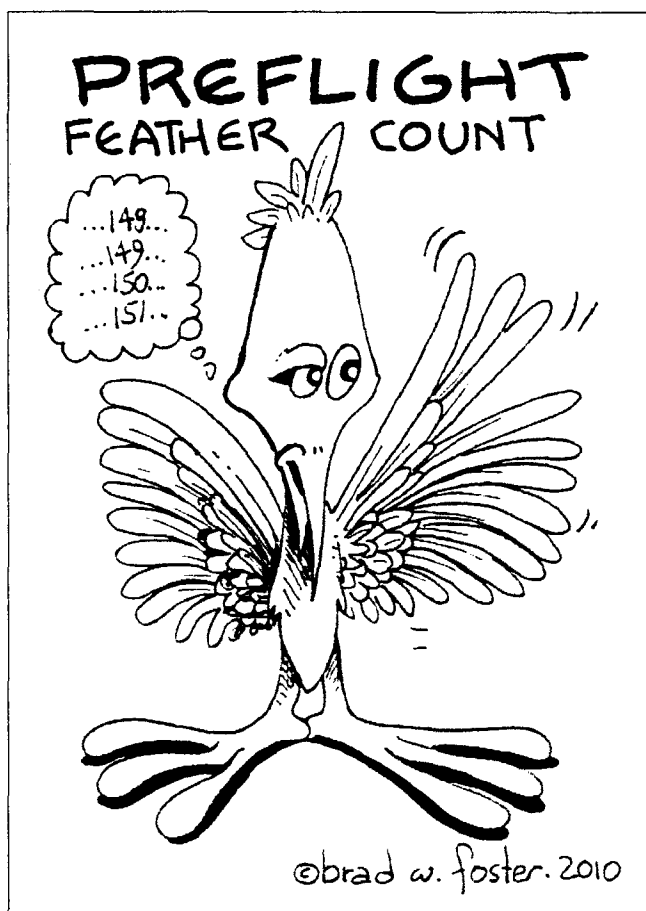
This issue of *Challenger* owes its existence, and much of its text, to James Bacon, that grand British gentleman whom I have oft touted as the best fan writer extant. James has taken a break from his editing efforts on *Journey Planet* to pen a number of fine articles for us on our military theme. He brings an enthusiastic and caring center to this issue. My thanks to him, however fervent, are utterly inadequate for the service he's done *Challenger*. I mean, wow.

(Possibly the most interesting article James submits is his interview with the Hugo-nominated novelist, Elizabeth Moon. If anyone is interested, I disagree strongly with Elizabeth's take on Muslim Americans, and disagree *frothingly* with Wiscon's dis-invitation of the lady from its guest list because of her opinions. To quote my editorial above, free speech is as close to an absolute as America has, and *no one* should be censored because of his/her political thoughts – bottom line, no discussion, the end, *thirty*.)

Recruited (hahaha) specifically for this issue is our cover by the Las Vegas genius, Alan White. I plan to feature Alan's brilliance atop the Chicon progress reports, and HINTHINT bring him further to the notice of Hugo voters.

Following the military theme, Ian Nichols, a Chum from the fabulous listserv **fictionmags.com**, provides SF context, Greg Benford contributes a terrific memoir of his boyhood during World War II, *Askance's* John Purcell clues us in on some fannish research, and *Alexiad's* Joe Major adds words on two heroes of the last century: the great explorer Shackelford and Frank Buckles, last veteran of World War I, who answered his final bugle call February 27, 2011.

On other topics, in other tonalities, Mike Resnick provides a laff or fifty, *la belle* Rose-Marie discusses another great SF soul captured in her Photo Album, and SFPA Brothers Dave Schlosser and Gary Brown spin very different tales about the past. Plus there's great artwork from Alan White, Brad Foster, Taral Wayne, Alexis Gilliland ... and some of my own stuff. Overall, is good; I'm proud to present it. Hope you enjoy the issue. **WRITE LOTSA LOCS!**



marking the only man there I'd met, Earl Warren, the gold lettering on the graves of Medal of Honor winners, or the side-by-side resting places of Gus Grissom and Roger Chaffee, of Apollo 1. It was a place where you feel American history not as a series of facts and dates and movements and policies, but as a set of lives lived and lost in its service. Were this all America is, the Supreme Court decision in *Snyder v. Phelps*, this very week, would be an outrage.

One can see why many think it so. Snyder is the father of a young man – 19, for God's sakes – killed in Iraq. His funeral was picketed by members of Phelps' Westboro Baptist Church, a Kansas congregation professing loathing for America for its tolerance of gay rights. The church members have made a practice of haunting the burials of G.I.s killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, shouting and carrying signs conveying the most reprehensible and hurtful of messages, that because "God Hates Fags" – according to them – and America acknowledges homosexual rights, He hates America, and rejoices in the death and suffering of American soldiers. It is a loathsome and thoroughly unchristian point of view. Angered to the quick by the insensitivity and cruelty of the demonstration at his son's funeral, Snyder sued Phelps and his church for emotional distress and won a huge judgment against them, which, by an 8-1 vote, the Supremes reversed. The rationale was simple: as the issue was public, the site of the demonstration was public, as the congregation broke no laws, Freedom of Speech is invoked – and prevails.

Granting psychopathic fanatics the right to broadcast hatred against grieving innocents goes against fundamental notions of decent behavior. The church's obnoxiousness paints our country and its soldiers in the most contemptible terms. It is an obvious insult not only to the family of the dead soldier, but to the soldier himself and all American soldiers who have gone before, many of whom rest at Arlington. But as the Court rightly pointed out, America is more than the lives surrendered in its service. America is its *ideas*. Freedom of Speech, even repulsive and ridiculous spew such as emits from Phelps' people, is as absolute as law can make it. It is never enough to look on Arlington – or Gettysburg, where there's a sign with an identical message – and think only that these people died. Their honor demands that we realize and remember *why*.

The answer to sickening and hateful speech is not censorship. It is *more* speech. It is argument and testament and proof of the lie behind the Phelps of this world. It is, to an extent prideful and satisfying – for me as editor – what you will read here, in this issue of *Challenger* built upon the military.

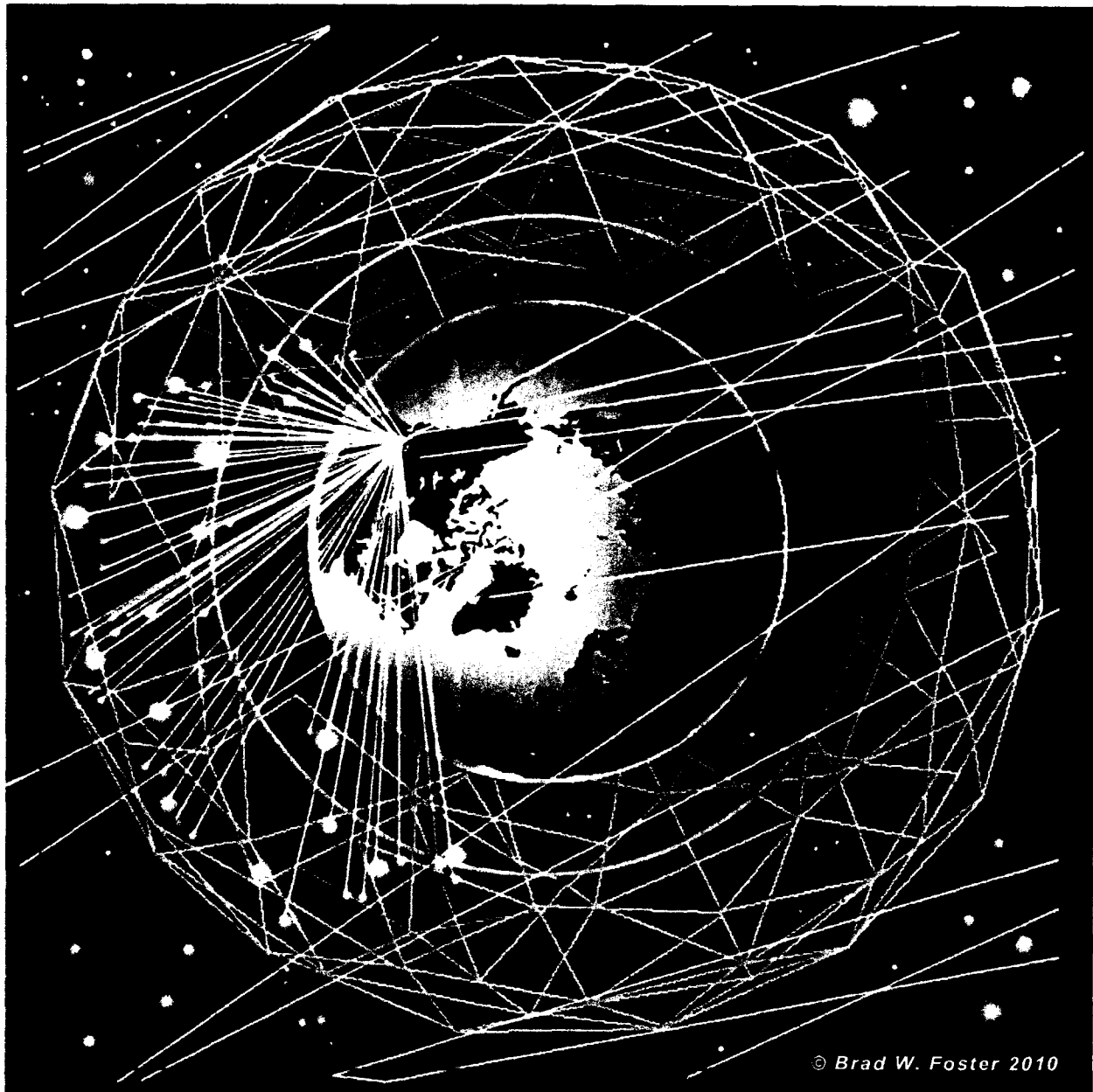


I was only able to produce one issue of *Challenger* in 2010, a dereliction I ascribe to two fannish distractions. One, not surprisingly, was our journey to Aussiecon 4 and the extensive report I did on the trip. Those interested can find *The Aboriginal Route* on eFanzines.com, Bill Burns' invaluable website, and gaze upon tales and photos from downunder. Bottom line: beautiful place, great people, rained a lot, would return tomorrow and stay forever if I could. Love it there among the gum trees.

The other distraction was the souvenir-slash-program book for the Raleigh NASFiC, of which I was editor. I had a splendid supervisor in Tim Miller, the Division Head, and the universe's supreme helpmate and amateur therapist in Rose-Marie. As always she artfully handled the myriad problems into which I blundered and kept me from dissolving into viscous lunacy. We could not attend the NASFiC, but I'm told that the book was well received at the con.

"*Never again!*" I swore. So, when I was asked to edit the program book for the 50th DeepSouthCon, coming in 2012, I was curt in my reply. "*Absolutely!*" I beamed. And when Steven Silver asked me to head the Publications Division for Chicon VII, also next year, which will entail supervising the creation of several worldcon progress reports as well as overseeing the souvenir book, "*No problem!*" I exulted.

If I manage to keep above water, I expect to find time for a spare breath sometime in the fall of next year. Hopefully this *Challenger* won't be the only one I manage to produce between now and Chicon – but I wouldn't be surprised.

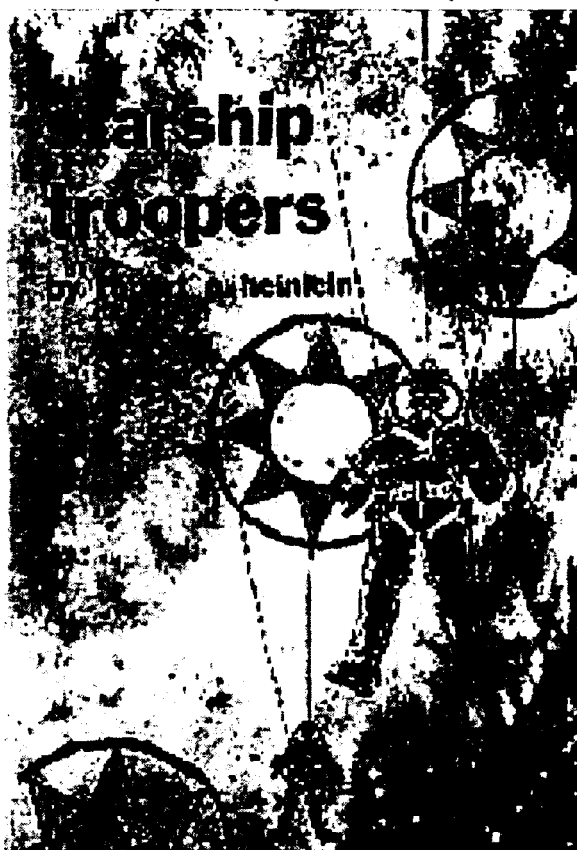


EDITORIAL THOUGHTS

The COST of FREEDOM

At the gates of Arlington National Cemetery there is a simple metal sign conveying the site's simple rules. It reads SILENCE AND RESPECT. Many years ago I went to the great national cemetery on my way north. At the Tomb of the Unknowns, watching the marine on duty march in his pantherish lope back and forth, back and forth before the marble sarcophagus, I encountered by chance the cemetery historian, who drove me around the immense facility. I don't know what impressed me more – JFK's grave, the spiked crests atop the Confederate tombstones, the mast of the *Maine*, the solitary stone

A great deal of the book is taken up with philosophising and Heinlein's favourite character, the Crusty Old Philosopher, talking about moral values and practical applications of them. There is not a great deal of actual fighting, but the strength of the book is not so much its plot, which is a standard rite du passage via the military, as the iconic characters. There's Rico the young, aimless rich kid who makes good; Sergeant Zim, the sadistic but fair training sergeant; Lt Col Dubois, Crusty Old Philosopher and Heinlein's alter-ego. The story surrounds and embeds these characters, particularly the effect they have on Rico, and how they change his life.



The technological maguffin in the novel, apart from the standard interstellar travel via unexplained means, is the Powered Armour of the Mobile Infantry. This is a closed-environment powered exoskeleton that makes the trooper wearing it a cross between a tank and an infantryman, more agile than either. The suits are dropped in a capsule from far above the target planet, gradually shedding the capsule and landing by parachute. The suits are enormously strong and have limited flight capability, with heads-up displays feeding the wearer constant information for the targeting of their many weapons. The suits, like the characters, have become iconic creations.

The idea of the intelligent armoured fighter was extended by Keith Laumer with his Bolo series. These were mostly short stories, later collected into several books, about giant, self aware tanks. The tanks were developed on Earth around the year 2000, initially weighing in at 150 tonnes, later developing into the giant 32,000 tanks that could guard an entire planet. The first story in the series was "Combat Unit"

(F&SF, 1960), and a similar concept makes its appearance in *A Plague of Demons* in 1963. However, in the latter the protagonist, John Bravais, is first turned into a cyborg, and then has his consciousness implanted in a fighting vehicle similar to a Bolo. Many of the Bolo stories focus on the moral choices that these self-aware machines must make as they become more sophisticated.

A reversal of the idea of big machines fighting for us is found in Fred Saberhagen's Berserker series, where the big machines are leftovers from the traditional prior interstellar war between ancient civilisations, which never seem to learn to get along together. The Berserkers vary from human size to ones as big as asteroids, and their mission is to kill everything that is or might become intelligent, which gives them a lot of targets. The series began in 1963 with "Fortress Ship" (*Worlds of If*), and continued in short stories, novels and collections until 2005, with *Rogue Berserker*. Humans are the ones charged with fighting the Berserkers, because only they have the necessary aggression. Many of the stories are complex puzzles, with humans having to work out how to fool the Berserkers. Humanity's quirks and foibles often turn out to be the key to turning the tables on the giant, utterly logical machines.

Gordon R Dickson's Childe Cycle stories feature the human splinter group the Dorsai, who live

on the resource-poor planet of the same name and hire themselves out as mercenary soldiers to supplement their planetary income. While not enhanced or using remarkable gadgets, they are successful, simply because they are the best-trained soldiers around, and have an unbreakable pride, and dedication to, their profession. In the first novel in the series, originally serialised as "Dorsai" in *Astounding*, later published in a heavily edited version as *The Geneteic General*, and later re-published under its original title in an expanded edition. The original novel traces the career of Donal Graeme, from junior officer to high command, and in the process of his rise he discovers that his talents for warfare go beyond natural abilities. He is gifted with a genetic difference that makes him the supreme strategist and tactician. While there are plenty of battles in the series, there is a great deal of focus on the concepts of honour and the military code, and whether these constitute a morality for the warrior.

Echoes of Laumer's Bolo series can be found in David Drake's Hammer's Slammers stories. The powerguns which form the main armament of the soldiers in these mercenary units use a technology very reminiscent of the hellebores in Laumer's universe, and the tanks resemble early-model Bolo units. However, the Slammer's series, beginning with a few sales to magazines and an eponymous 1979 collection, feature many more battle scenes and combat. Many of the stories draw on Drake's own combat experiences in the Vietnam War, and Drake has said of them, "the stories were more important to me as self-therapy than they were as the start of a career. They gave me a chance to write about what I'd seen and heard; about the men I'd served with and person I'd become in that time." [1] They tell the story of a mercenary group under the command of Colonel Alois Hammer as they rise from soldiers looking for employment to the first regiment of Hammer's government when he becomes president. Fast-paced, the stories are also a thoughtful treatment of the reality of a combat soldier's life. There are currently thirteen books, some of them repackaging earlier stories, in the series, the last published being *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Vol 3*.

A later entrant to the field of military science fiction is John Scalzi with his novel *Old Man's War*. Scalzi admits, in his introduction to this first novel in the series, his indebtedness to Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* and Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* as models for his book, which follows a 75 year-old writer, John Perry, as he enters the Colonial Defence Forces and rises from recruit to the rank of captain. Unlike Heinlein's Mobile Infantry, the soldiers in Scalzi's novel are old people who have their minds transferred to cloned bodies with vastly enhanced powers and a 'Brainpal' interface that allows communications with other CDF members. In the novel, Perry, in his new body, follows much the same path as Juan Rico in Heinlein's. After transfer to his new body, he is sent to a remote camp for basic training and inculcation in "the rifleman's creed," which is borrowed from the American Marines. As does Rico, he rises through the ranks, partly due to his ingenuity and partly due to the influence of a clone of his dead wife. Later stories in the series expand on the concepts of the first novel, using other characters but maintaining a connection to the first set of characters.

At the other end of the age spectrum is Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* and its sequels. In this universe, humanity is engaged in a desperate war against the Buggers and, to produce soldiers capable of fighting in the interstellar engagements, take gifted children who are very young from their families to train them in isolation. Ender (Andrew) Wiggins is a polymath genius who has been bred to be the commander of the Earth forces, and he begins his training when he is six, and ends the war when he is nine. The training is very detailed in the novel, based around a series of games, both physical and intellectual, and the battles in the training room are the most detailed. All the later games feature action at a distance, rather than close-up, but are as riveting as close-action sequences. The novel constantly questions what Ender does, and the morality of turning a child into an ever-victorious warrior and killer. It spawned several sequels, and won both the

Hugo and Nebula awards.

Finally, there is the aforementioned *The Forever War*, by Joe Haldeman. A complex view of warfare is fuelled, like David Drake's, by the author's experiences in Vietnam. Like Heinlein and Scalzi, Haldeman's novel examines the career of an entrant to the military, in this case a conscript rather than a volunteer, William Mandella. He enters the United Nations Exploratory Force where the training is rigorous and deadly; they use live weapons. After his first mission results in a massacre of unresisting enemy Taurans, Mandella begins to experience one of the significant disadvantages of his role in the military; the time dilation effect of space travel causes him to age at a significantly slower rate than those on Earth. At the end of the novel, only four years have passed for him, whereas three thousand have passed on Earth, and the world has changed significantly, including finding a way to end the war.

Some of the things the novel examines are the way that simple misunderstandings may lead to bloody conflicts, and the alienation that a soldier experiences when returning from war to what may be, for them, an alien nation. The novel won the Hugo, Nebula and Locus awards.

Military fiction, as can be seen, covers a wide spectrum of ideas about war and the military, often drawn from experience, sometimes written to drive out some of the demons associated with that experience. It is often controversial, sometimes prophetic, sometimes placing the actual combat on the periphery of the story. But since its inception, it has always had, and always will have, its own army of fans.

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[1] Author's Website. <http://david-drake.com/2000/hammers-slamers-1979/>



*I had the honor and pleasure of meeting the great
Shelby Vick on New Year's Eve, and am proud to
welcome him to the ranks of **Chall** Pals.*

ONE FAN'S UNUSUAL RELIGIOUS OPINIONS

Shelby Vick

*Read this with an open mind -- and I don't mean so
open that ideas just go in one side and out the
other. From the extremes of the staunch atheist to
the devoutly religious, think about these
conclusions.*

I believe in one God.

What's so unusual about that?

The God I believe in (and, to simplify it, let's say
'god-force') is the same one the Israelites believed
in, the same one Christians believe in, the same one
the Vikings, Romans, Greeks and Egyptians
believed in.

How could that be?

It is the fault of humanity, of the different
civilizations that tried to relate their beliefs, the way
different story-tellers told their stories of a God they

did not, could not understand.

But many of those believed in multiple gods --
Odin, Thor, Zeus, Mercury, and so on. How could
that be all one God?

Because, as I said, God is not something mankind
can understand. Different gods are just different
ways of trying to understand the unfathomable.

But behind it all is one god-force that many sense
and, to one degree or another, worship.

Does this mean I disregard the Holy Bible? Not at
all. It's an important historical record. Nor do I
consider myself 'above' the Bible, or even parallel
with it, just as I don't feel myself equal to Socrates
or Homer or daVinci or Einstein. Of course, that
doesn't keep me from speculating about their ideas
or theories!

There's even a chance the Bible actually was
inspired by the god force -- but then written by man,
who didn't have the knowledge to translate the
inspiration into the exact message that might have
been intended.

Worse, then man -- under the guise of The Church --
decided on meanings that weren't actually there, as
"The World Is Flat" or "The World is the Center of
the Universe" or that "The World is only Six
Thousand Years Old", none of which is found in the
Bible itself.

There is much wisdom in the Bible -- wisdom
concerning Man, not the god-force, because the
god-force is so far beyond our understanding. How
can mortal Man understand an intelligence that is
eternal and infinite? How could a photograph
understand the photographer?

Let us take a rational and scientific look at things.

Scientists determined that there was far more matter
in the universe than all their instruments could

detect, so they labeled the unaccounted-for matter "Dark Matter" – "dark" because it could not be seen. With a label, it was acceptable. Later, they discovered that the universe was still expanding, even though gravity should have, over the billions of years, slowed it down. There was another energy at work that was unseen – so, they labeled it "Dark Energy" and it joined "Dark Matter".

Now, back to the beginning, to the Big Bang.

At that point, the entire universe had been shrunk to a small ball of pure energy. It had to be pure energy, because it was too tightly-packed to contain molecules, atoms or even electrons.

Then it exploded.

In the first millisecond, the impossible happened: The universe expanded far faster than the speed of light! Scientists needed to explain this, so they labeled it "Planck Time", which was many, many multiples of lightspeed.

But it was labeled!

As the universe expanded, rules and regulations were established. Gravity came to be. Lightspeed became official. Order came to chaos. But why? What force was behind this abrupt appearance of order in the universe?

Label it "God".

Or, as I prefer, the god-force, which is responsible for all religions, even Mother Nature.

You object. Why? You don't believe in a naturally-occurring intelligence? No one objects to the naturally-occurring intelligence of worker-bees and their fantastic building abilities. No one objects to the naturally-occurring intelligence of a spider, in creating a marvelous – and marvelously-effective – web.

There are many, many other examples of both individual and group intelligence. Couldn't they be a reflection of a greater intelligence that, like Dark Energy, penetrates the universe?

Let's take the Dark Energy/god-force a step further. If the expansion continues, solar systems will be pushed away from galaxies, planets away from suns, atoms out of molecules, until nothing remains but pure energy. The pressure continues until the pure energy is all gathered in one small ball.

Ultimately, the pressure is so intense that the ball of pure energy explodes, and things start over again. I don't mean history will repeat itself, but just that universes and galaxies and solar systems will again be formed. Earth may be there, but maybe not.

Many, perhaps most, scientists seem to believe that the rules and regulations they discover move them farther away from religion. A few other scientists feel, instead, that the same rules and regulations are actually bringing God closer, as the rules and regulations require a designer; the creation of the universe needed an architect.

I agree with the latter.

Let me put it this way: It is said, "His eye is on the sparrow." In my own way, I agree – sparrows, insects, sand, molecules, electrons; all are tied into the god-force. All are part of it.

Let's look at evolution. (Yes, I favor evolution.) After everything began, evolution – especially its "survival of the fittest" – became an excellent tool for polishing things up over the millennial. After all, the god-force is eternal, so time means very little in the formation of the universe and everything in it.

Back to the Bible. If it were regarded as 'historical', more would understand that the rules, laws and suggestions in it were aimed at the people of that time. For instance, the dietary laws would have been strongly endorsed by the Center of Disease Control, if such had existed. The dietary laws were

based on the non-existent sanitation of the time!

Just as the rules against "casting your seed upon the ground" (masturbation) and the stuff against homosexuality went back to the rule to "go forth and multiply." Such activities do not yield themselves to "multiply."

Some say they can't understand how such founders as King David can be so highly regarded, considering what they did later in life.

That is just proof that it is a realistic historical account.

Then there are the Books of the Bible. Many people forget that there were these books long before there was a Bible. Thus, where Revelation instructs you not to change a word of this book, it is the book of Revelation that is being referred to, NOT the Bible.

In any case, many thousands of words have been changed, if nothing more than in multiple translations. For instance, when the King James Bible was being assembled, it was purposefully decided by those same assemblers to put in 'thee' and 'thou' and use 'amen' instead of 'so be it', and such -- to give the Bible the appearance of antiquity.

Thus, changes were made.

A brief aside before I go on: I feel that the god-force is an eternal and infinite force that is aware of us and everything in the universe.

At that point, some would declare: "Impossible! No one mind could do that. Even our greatest super computers can't --"

"So?" I would interrupt. "Can you or your computers conceive infinity? That's your problem, not the problem of the god-force!"

I believe that "Created in our image," did NOT

mean that God has a body, two arms, two legs, a torso and a head. How could an eternal, infinite being be so limited? Instead, I take it to mean more like "spirit" or "mind" instead of physical resemblance. That is, within the limits of our physical, non-eternal minds, we think in the same manner -- thus we are curious, creative, desire to learn more, are explorers, and always want to expand our horizons.

How do we communicate with the god-force? Let's talk about prayer.

The most famous prayer seems to be the Lord's Prayer, the prayer Jesus presented as an example of how we should all pray.

But a brief aside, first: Several times, Jesus was asked if he wasn't the Son of God. Sometimes he answered obliquely, but take a look at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer:

"Our Father ..."

Jesus said we should all pray, as I said, in this manner. All of us. And said we should begin with, "Our Father".

'Nuff said.

Otherwise, you will note that the majority of the prayer is veneration, praising God, asking for little for ourselves: 'Give us this day our daily bread' is only asking that we can eat. "Forgive us our trespasses" is followed by some teaching, "...as we forgive those who trespass against us". Sounds to me like we are being instructed to ask little and praise much.

Let me re-phrase that: Food is vital to our existence, so asking for "our daily bread" is, in actuality, asking for life. What I meant was, we should not ask for unusual things, for things beyond our normal daily lives. Of course, even there we are instructed to say, "Give us THIS DAY ... " instead of "EACH day ... ", so we are asked to pray EACH

DAY for our food. It is not a prayer to CONTINUALLY be fed, just a reminder that we should ask EACH DAY.

Many have asked if prayers are answered. One wise person said that we need to understand that, often, the answer is "No." I would add that there are many times when we simply do not properly interpret the answer, as our minds are not as wise. Even though we are 'in His image', we are still mortal.

Possibly prayer was, originally, a method whereby early man could directly tap the power of the god-force, thus the veneration and adulation would have been to help make contact, to smooth the way, to help us forget our ego and freely open our minds to that god-force. It also must be realized that even the god-force does not break its own rules: Gravity would not be turned upside-down, we wouldn't walk through walls, just as we can neither create nor destroy energy. We must stay within the rules.

Of course, remember that we still do not know ALL the rules.

Now, I said that 'early man could', meaning that, over the generations and expansion of mankind, we have gathered many doubts, have splintered our mind in many directions, and have lost much of our original "innocence". I think that is why it is said, "And a little child shall lead them," because a child's mind has not yet been inflicted with all the things that affect most of our minds. A young enough child is still "innocent," and his mind is more open to belief and faith and the god-force can more easily operate through such a mind.

Then, prayer could have increased fertility, both in plants and animals. Prayer could cause rain – but

not whip up an immediate thunderstorm! No, it would be much like the tale of a storm being caused by the flutter of a butterfly's wings, where one tiny ripple would combine with another ripple, which could encounter an area of warmth where it would be further increased and, eventually, clouds would form and rain would fall.

Within the rules.

Under proper circumstances, use of the god-force might return life to a body, in much the same way that electroshock can do so today, restarting a heart or breaking a coma – but the god-force would be much more gentle on the recipient than electroshock.

Within the rules.

Some say religion is just a lot of superstitious nonsense. Then I bring out the old cliché, "Yesterday's magic is today's science." Yesterday's miracles are commonplace today – we can send voice and pictures around the world at lightspeed; nuclear devices can destroy a large city; we have sent men to walk on the moon; thanks to lasers, surgery can be done without metal scalpels. As knowledge increases, there could come the day when science and religion meet – if man's mind can open enough to accept it.

I suppose I could be called a Christian, in that I believe the Christ, Jesus, did exist. He WAS "the Son of God" – just as ANY man is!

"Unusual"? Maybe not, at least among people who have given in-depth thought to religions. I wouldn't be surprised to find there are many who share most, if not all, of my opinions.





Rosy's Photo Album

Rose-Marie Lillian

Roger Zelazny was creating magic long before he wrote about it. To say he had a way with words is like saying Einstein had a way with physics. His titles alone made you want to leap into his prose. Who can forget *Damnation Alley*, *A Rose for Ecclesiastes*, *Doorways in the Sand*, *A Night in the Lonesome October*, or the utterly unforgettable *The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth*?

I knew him as a science fiction writer before he cast himself in amber. Roger was one of the many pros who came down for an Apollo launch party at our house in the evening, then jumped on a bus for the long, slow 20 mile ride to Apollo destiny at Cape Canaveral the next morning. His wife, Judy, was there as well. They were fun to be around, unassuming, thoughtful and with a terrific sense of humor.

Family friend and professional photographer Charley Wise captured him in this shot at the Cape, puffing on the singular habit that was partly responsible for his gravelly voice. Or maybe he was just thinking about the *Lord of Light*.



THE ACTUAL GUYS OUT THERE.

James Bacon

Curt Phillips got in touch with me, and as he said himself, "If a USMC *reenactor* would be of any use to you, I re-enact WWII as a Marine with the Joint Allied Signal Company and as such get to hang around with Marines and former Marines at veteran's reunions every now and then. I do know a couple of Marines who read SF occasionally, but they're not involved with fandom at all and one of those is currently deployed in Afghanistan and is unreachable for the present."

This was a boon; Curt was the conduit I needed. What's the point in pontificating from some kitchen table, in a city miles from mayhem? I wondered if Marines enjoyed comics and books, although it soon got into a discussion about "receiving things" from home.

I engaged with Curt, and through his good offices, I soon gathered some excellent input from a number of warriors.

Brian is a Battalion Commander in the USMC. Two tours in Iraq.

"Speaking as one that really saw both extremes (no PX period, and a relatively nice one that carried what I needed, both with the Marines), it didn't matter whether we had absolutely nothing (as during the battles of Fallujah - nothing moved west) or wanted for nothing after the peace broke out - it was the thought that counted. I don't recall ever needing *anything* that I couldn't already get from the stockage that had already been built up or the PX, but was always ecstatic when a box arrived - just knowing that people cared and we weren't completely forgotten about made the difference. If not needed / used by me, it went to whoever wanted it. Very little goes to waste there. Books, games, etc, they all get circulated around." *Brian*

Don agreed with Brian, but a comment from a Full Bird Army Colonel is worthy of any zine.

"I have to agree with Brian, in both Afghanistan and Iraq (which were extremes ... one without, one with plenty), it means a lot to know somebody cares." *Colonel Don Amburn. US Army*

A message from an unknown soldier, in Afghanistan, details deleted as he is in the field.

"Just dropping you a line to let you know that I am doing good. I also have internet in my room now so I can be back in the world so to speak. There is still snow here in some parts of the mountains and at night it can get cold here. We are about ----- feet above sea level and I can feel it at times. I was dismounted a few days ago at a dam that we had to check out. After walking the area of the dam which was about 3 miles with 70 lbs of gear. I was sucking wind so bad it hurt because the air is so thin. I was like an old man after that for a few mins. This camp here really sucks I have a p.x. here if you want to call it that. It only has a few female products in it and that's it. We all so have the best cooks here in the army. If you can eat their food with out getting sick. I think they can only cook BBQ because we have it 4 times a week. Thank god no one knows I can cook or I would be in there with them. We are a 11B unit (foot soldier) on this mission so they think we are dumb I guess. After walking some of these mountains here I think I am dumb. My mind tells me I can do it but now my body is starting to tell me you can't do that anymore..."

This one is from Marine Captain David M. who did one tour in Iraq early in the war, about 2005. I would assume the dental tools would be very useful in cleaning rifles.

"I was always thrilled to get two things. 1) Old dental tools from my wife's uncle who is a dentist. If you're scratching your head ask an infantryman why dental tools are good to have. 2 Toothbrushes to hand out to the little kids. Of course I am sure the little hajji kids sharpened one end and then shanked a friend." *Capt. David M.*

Finally, another word from an Army man, a PFC, Shane, details redacted.

"We didn't have any PX at all. We lived off the local economy or stole, I mean secured unsecured equipment, when we were in Bagram.

"I can only speak from my experience from being here in Iraq... Any time my mother or friends sends me a book I am very pleased to receive it... the PX here on Taji doesn't have much of a selection. Most items we can get, but sometimes it depends if the PX is sold out or not. Like I had a problem one time getting Crest toothpaste... I had to have it sent to me and the PX really doesn't have any now, just the travel very small size. A lot of us here end up ordering a lot of things on line to get what we really need or want. I have ordered several books from amazon.com and gotten some stuff from eBay. Basically I think everyone is pleased to get almost anything sent from home. My best advice from experience is if someone wants to send a care package to troops and have it distributed out to others then send it to a Chaplain and let them give it to troops who need it... maybe they know of someone that never receives any mail or care packages from home. OH yea ... and never send chocolate in the summer time... this is also from experience heheheh." *PFC. Shane Currently in Taji, Iraq*

Closer to home, from John Purcell

"My father – Jack Purcell – was a radioman, second class, on the USS *Kitkun Bay*, an escort carrier, during 1943 and 1944; I can't remember the name of the destroyer he was on during the Solomon Island campaign (1942-43), but the *Kitkun Bay* got nailed at the second battle of Leyte Gulf, hit by a couple kamikazes. Also, he got busted to 3rd class on 18 August 1945 (or something like that) for reporting to duty drunk. Then again, chances are he wasn't the only sailor to do so since the Japanese had just surrendered a couple days earlier. Dad still earned an honorable discharge in early 1946."

Top illo: Lance Cpl. Brandon M. Barnes, 21, a team leader from Fairbanks, Ala., assigned to I Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, holds out one of the comic books that Marines pass out to Iraqi children at Camp Hit, Iraq, April 10. Barnes' uncle and mom sent him packages with comic books in them. Barnes' decided to hand out the comics he doesn't read to the kids in the city. Before Marines give them away, he scans the comics for any pictures that may be offensive to the Iraqi people. (Photo by Cpl Erik Villagran)



Iraqi children react after Lance Cpl. Miguel F. Alvarez, 20, a rifleman with I Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, from La Habra, Calif., hands them comic books at Hit, Iraq, April 10. Marines with I Company have been passing out comics to kids in Hit since they got here in March. Marines say they like handing out comics better than candy because the children can hold onto them longer. (Photo by Cpl Erik Villagran)



TUSCON – AN EDITORIAL COMMENT

GHLIII

I suppose it's incumbent on every American to comment on the Tucson atrocity of mid-January, 2011. I hope it won't sound typically arrogant of me to say that I knew from jump that the shootings were not political. I felt right away that they were a shout of unfocused rage, purely psychotic, without even the most absurd point or purpose. Extrapolating politics from a maniac's spasm cheapens the lives lost, somehow, so I'm glad that no one has done so. That the public reaction has been a general plea for politeness and civility in our public discourse only shows that that topic has been on everyone's mind since well before the shootings. Our vicious politics had nothing to do with the killings; they're just a cyst we can try to excise with this monstrosity as an excuse.

If there are policy points to be sensibly made, they would involve untouchable subjects: gun control and society's responsibility for the mad. But such topics haven't been brought up. If we've learned anything in our lifetime's exposure to murder and lunacy, it's that American society pays no attention to such talk. Crazy though it sounds, and is, we've made up our minds; we've decided: America is gun-obsessed and indifferent to the suffering of the insane, and that's the way we like it.

But we're *not* indifferent to the suffering crazy people cause. While we'd never take a gun away from even the most impossible psychopath, we'll mourn the innocent he maims. We'll feel the horror of a murdered child, a slaughtered judge, a dead husband, a dead wife, a wounded public servant. We'll always recoil in anguish over the horrid losses. We'll always cheer the brave recoveries. But we won't take action. Our politics won't permit us to prevent such nightmares.

As if we could, though, even with the strictest laws. The true horror of Tucson is that *madness abides*, and it has no genesis we can pinpoint and eradicate. It is in the human composition, a dark passenger always poised to worm its dark way into light. If there is cowardice in our politics, there is comfort in the caring with which we meet such tragedy, mourn it and carry on. This is in us too.

Jules Verne is generally regarded as one of SF's founders. He got the spirit right ... but how about specifics?

The Predictions of Jules Verne

Joseph Green

Several years ago I did a study on the accuracy of science-fiction predictions by four acknowledged masters of the field, two older (Verne and Wells) and two modern (Heinlein and Clarke). That scholarly study appears elsewhere. This is a condensed and abridged version of the article on Verne. The fine



detail in the numerous notes accompanying the original has been either omitted or incorporated within the text. The articles on Clarke and Heinlein have already appeared in *Challenger*, and the one on Wells will follow.

Jules Verne is generally acknowledged to be one of the two major influences that shaped modern science fiction.. He published over fifty novels, as well as some non-fiction. Most, though popular in their day, have not fared well over time. Dozens of movies were made from his works. One of those, "Le Voyage dans la Lune" (1902) was a very early feature film. For modern viewers his novels often acquired a type of 'period charm' on the movie screen, partially accounting for their popularity. Several, including *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, and *Around the World in 80 Days* (not science fiction), have been big financial successes.

Only four of Verne's better known and enduring science fiction novels were analyzed for this study.

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea is typical of Verne's best work. At one point the central protagonist, Captain Nemo, in a lengthy explanation to the

book's viewpoint character, Professor Aronnax, explains the principles behind the operation of his marvelous submarine, the *Nautilus*. The story is set in 1866. Verne has the vessel operating on electricity, a clear 'hit' in prediction — early submarines were indeed powered by batteries and diesel/electric generators. The *Nautilus* is so large and powerful, however, that in operation it more nearly resembles a modern atomic-powered vessel.

Captain Nemo quotes real scientists and real new discoveries to make his claims of superior technology more believable. Several of the ways in which he uses electricity, for heat, light, and engine power, have come true. But he also describes an electrically-charged bullet that still cannot be produced today. And while he correctly uses electricity to provide heat, the idea of air conditioning never seems to have occurred to him. The crew suffers when moving through the (in the story) volcano-heated waters around the Greek island of Santorini.

On another occasion Captain Nemo speculates on the future of mankind in the sea. He foresees the day when whole towns will exist on the ocean floor, in clusters of submarine houses that rise to the surface once a day to change their air. The idea of extracting oxygen by breaking apart water molecules, actually a much more practical idea, was apparently not considered a future possibility.

In a prediction of his own, Professor Aronnax foresees the day when the great whales will have been hunted to extinction, due to the greed of professional whalers — a forecast that very nearly came true before recent preservation efforts began to have an effect.

Overall, perhaps the most important predictions found in this book are in the *concepts* of electricity as a powerful, versatile, and useful servant, and of massive armed submarines capable of ranging widely over the seas of the world without surface support. Both have come true, though not in the fashions Verne envisioned.

A Journey to the Center of the Earth contains an unbelievable premise, namely, that a vast hollow space exists below the surface of our planet. This book contains a host of scientific errors. It is, in fact, basically unbelievable. But it does have one outstanding example of shrewd speculation. Verne describes the appearance of ball lightning, a phenomenon stoutly proclaimed by reputable scientists as impossible until a few decades ago — despite the fact the physical presence of ball lightning had been recorded many times by reliable witnesses.

This was a good action-adventure novel, filled with Verne's usual scientific facts (including some then believed to be true which in fact are not) and interesting geographical data. As science fiction, including predictions for the future, it is rather bad.

From the Earth to The Moon and *A Trip Around It* are two short novels combined within a single volume. These books are noteworthy because Verne, for unknown reasons, had his fictional characters build the gigantic gun that was to shoot a manned capsule to the Moon in Florida. It was located very close to the same latitude as the actual launch site of the Apollo/Saturn vehicles that did indeed carry men to the Moon. It's difficult to credit this to anything but the wildest of coincidences.

Some of the premises in this book are so ridiculous it is difficult to take them seriously. But Verne did do his math, calculating that an initial velocity of 12,000 meters per second would provide adequate speed. This translates to about 22,500 miles per hour, and the actual figure for an Earth escape velocity is roughly 24,600 miles per hour (less to reach the Moon, because of the attraction of its gravity). But then, once the decision is made to launch a conical shell with humans inside, Verne has his three adventurers shield themselves from acceleration forces by water cushions. In actual fact they would have been squashed into jelly by such G forces, with the water cushions beneath them becoming as hard as concrete.

In essence, Verne wrote action-adventure books, strongly leavened with scientific fact and conjecture. But regardless of his shortcomings as a writer — and they were many — Verne had the great virtue of originality of concept. Many of his ideas were apparently original with him. In other cases, he was the first to take little-used or explored ideas and work them out in full-length novels. He crossed easily from the realm of then physically possible adventures, such as balloon flights or trips around the world, to marvelous scientific discoveries not yet made. Verne could make one seem almost as believable as the other to the reader of his day.

Verne also suffered from a major shortcoming, one evident in the work of many of his imitators down through the years. He tended to project into the future in a straight linear fashion, with little allowance for side turns or totally new discoveries. Hence his idea of a flying battleship consisted of balloons providing lift

to a regular ship equipped with several propellers. He sent people to the moon by building the largest and longest cannon then imaginable. Verne paid no attention to the concept of the fixed wing aircraft, or the possibility of equipping a passenger capsule with its own propulsion capability instead of firing it from a cannon.

This tendency toward linear extrapolation is one of the worst traps awaiting the science fiction writer, of any time period. Totally new discoveries, by their very nature, are extremely difficult to predict. Sometimes wild imagination can be more accurate than a reasoned forecast, if the subject area is little unexplored. It was logical, in the 1850s, to project faster or larger horses, not the automobile and the truck. To look at an abacus and predict the adding machine would have been an act of creative imagination; to foresee the computer would have been sheer genius. The last is a very rare quality.

The unfortunate result of linear extrapolation was that Verne made far more 'misses' than 'hits' in his fictional predictions. Some projections were insightful and astute; for each of these, there were twenty that were simply wrong. But the readers of his day, even the scientifically educated ones, would have found it very difficult to determine which of his projections were likely to be accurate. Scientists, in fact, suffered from the extra handicap of 'knowing to be true' many things which were in fact wrong. Not infrequently they held strongly conservative views, these severely limited by the amount of knowledge then available in a given field.

Overall, it seems clear that Verne used scientific projection as an adjunct to the main task of telling a good story. Some were insightful, and later became a part of modern life. These are also the ones best remembered; inaccurate predictions seem to fairly quickly fade from public consciousness.

Overall, it seems fair to conclude Verne fully earned his place in science fiction as the acknowledged first master of the scientific adventure. His shortcomings pale before this achievement.

Verne and Wells – A Short Comparison

Verne far exceeded H. G. Wells, a contemporary after the publication of the latter's first science fiction novel in 1895, in his grasp of basic physics. Apparently he chose to avoid the subject of speculative biology, a favorite of Wells.. His books were far more educational than those of Wells, and often more entertaining, despite the noticeably lower quality of the writing.

Verne wrote essentially action-adventure books strongly leavened with scientific fact or conjecture. He fed the reader long lectures or needed background in much too obvious a fashion. He strived to be entertaining, often overwhelming the reader with 'sense of wonder' ideas to the detriment of believability. One can understand, after comparing the two, why Wells is often considered the superior and more influential writer — despite the fact his science is even less believable than that of Verne!

Regardless of his shortcomings, Verne had the great virtue of originality of concept. But so did Wells, so comparing one set of speculative predictions to the other is probably a fruitless task. Verne also resembled many early science fiction writers of the modern era in one respect, in that the stories he told were often far superior to the characters in them. The story, the adventure, dominated, and the people involved were frequently stock figures cut from whole cloth. Also, many of his characters tended to repeat themselves from book to book, under new names.

Verne never received the respect accorded to Wells, either in his day or the history books. Wells became a recognized scholar, a savant, who wrote acclaimed books such as his *The Outline of History* and *The Shape of Things to Come*. He consorted with presidents and kings, had a notorious affair with a grand dame of letters, and lived to see some of his works made into influential movies. Verne lived the quiet life of the country gentleman, apparently desiring no more than to entertain his readers and make lots of money. He did both. Overall, he fully earned his place in science fiction as the acknowledged first master of the scientific adventure, one of the basic categories the genre is usually divided into today. A second, the detailed examination of the possible effects of new technology or discoveries on society, acknowledges Wells as the founding father and guiding spirit. Both have a secure place in history.



The Wonderful Future that Never Was is my candidate for this year's "Best Related Book" Hugo. This piece originally appeared on the website of the University of California, Irvine.

"BACK TO THE FUTURE"

The Wonderful Future that Never Was

Tom Vasich, University of California at Irvine

Although the prediction of the flying car did not come true, much of *The Wonderful Future That Never Was* "is about transport, travel and getting away," says UCI physics professor **Gregory Benford**. "It's the idea of liberation by movement, which is a very American idea."

Waterproof houses that can be washed down inside with a hose. Personal commuter helicopters. Massive, odorless cities with elevated moving sidewalks. Colonization of the solar system.

All these ideas, and more, appeared in the pages of *Popular Mechanics* magazine between 1903 and 1969, when scientists and other experts made hundreds of predictions of what the future would hold. Most didn't happen; others, such as video phones, supermarket frozen foods and global positioning systems did.

Popular Mechanics editors collected these predictions in a book *The Wonderful Future That Never Was*, and asked UC Irvine physics professor and award-winning science fiction author Gregory Benford to write the introductory essays. As with science fiction, the predictions not only point to the future, they reveal much of society's mood at the time. Whimsical in places, *The Wonderful Future* offers a bracing history of our hopes and fears, and the boundless optimism of



the human spirit.

Benford sat down with **Jonathan Alexander**, UCI Chancellor's Fellow, professor of English and a science fiction scholar, to discuss the *The Wonderful Future* and the relationship between science fiction and 20th century society.

Q: What are your impressions of *The Wonderful Future That Never Was*?

GB: It struck me that much of book, as with science fiction, is about transport, travel and getting away — often getting away from the past. It's the idea of liberation by movement, which is a very American idea.

JA: That makes a tremendous amount of sense, particularly the idea of movement as liberation. The further we got into the 20th century, the more society was thinking expansively about travel, about "leaving the farm." You have this massive mobilization of people from the countryside into urban areas, and that movement can be tracked with how we imaged future technologies and urban areas during the 1930s and '40s.

GB: Just as it was inevitable that Americans would be fascinated with transport and would go to the moon, they also pioneered home-based technologies, and in *The Wonderful Future* there are images of people at home talking to people they can see on-screen in other continents — just as we do now on Skype. One striking thing this book and science fiction didn't see is that so much interconnectivity is free right now. They always thought it would follow a commercial model.

JA: While the book imagines the centrality of travel and of bridging distances, it doesn't fully imagine the revolution in communications that has occurred, which is so key in our increasingly "globalized" world. I don't know if people could have envisioned that. In some ways, this ability to telecommunicate has replaced our need to travel, to bridge distances. Subsequently, there has been a decline in the effort to explore or colonize the solar system. It seems more pressing in mid-century science fiction and less a part of it now.

GB: Manned space travel turned out to be harder than we thought and has essentially ceased.

JA: But we can send our devices to those places, and they can beam back amazing images and amazing amounts of data.

GB: You're right, and that's a thing *Popular Mechanics* and science fiction didn't anticipate — that the true utility of unmanned space travel would dominate exploration.

Q: The book's content covers the first seven decades of the 20th century. How did predictions reflect the mood of the times?

GB: Strikingly, in the 1930s, during the heart of the Depression, science fiction and *Popular Mechanics* predictions were very optimistic, just as '30s movies were full of rich people doing dances. And just as strikingly, science fiction, beginning around 1970, started to become more and more dystopian, to paint worlds in which societies did not work and were oppressive, such as the movie *Blade Runner*.

JA: The really interesting thing about science fiction is that sometimes it's about the future but mostly about the present in which it was actually written. I'm thinking particularly about the mid-1950s movie *Forbidden Planet*, in which we hear about this ancient civilization, the Krell, who created a massive technological apparatus that freed them to do other things, like create art and engage in self-development. That kind of emphasis on labor-saving devices was common thematically in science fiction at the time, and *The Wonderful Future* shows it well. You see technology as labor-saving, as freeing people — not just

letting them get off the farm but also allowing them fuller explorations of their lives. Curiously, the Krell became extinct because of their technology. What allowed them to save time, to explore themselves, ultimately led to self-destruction. In the 20th century, we created all these labor-saving devices, but we also have intercontinental ballistic missiles. So, our imagination of science and technology by mid-century becomes double-edged.

Q: How has science fiction teamed with science and technology to create this vision of the future? Do art and science walk hand in hand?

GB: It's more like a dance. In a 1912 novel, H.G. Wells anticipated nuclear weapons, which influenced physicist Leo Szilard to come up with the idea of the nuclear chain reaction in 1933. The point is that the central idea was inspired by a science fiction novel, and it makes you wonder how different the world would be if Szilard hadn't read that book, because he was the driver in the U.S. for the nuclear weapons program.

JA: There are many instances like this. Arthur C. Clarke imagined satellites before any were created. Many scientists say that science fiction inspired them to pursue science.

GB: Like reading *Popular Mechanics* did for me! Modern science fiction is the expression of the technological-scientific class in world literature, because this was not being expressed by the literary community. It's no accident that many science fiction writers, especially in the early pulp magazines, were engineers and scientists.

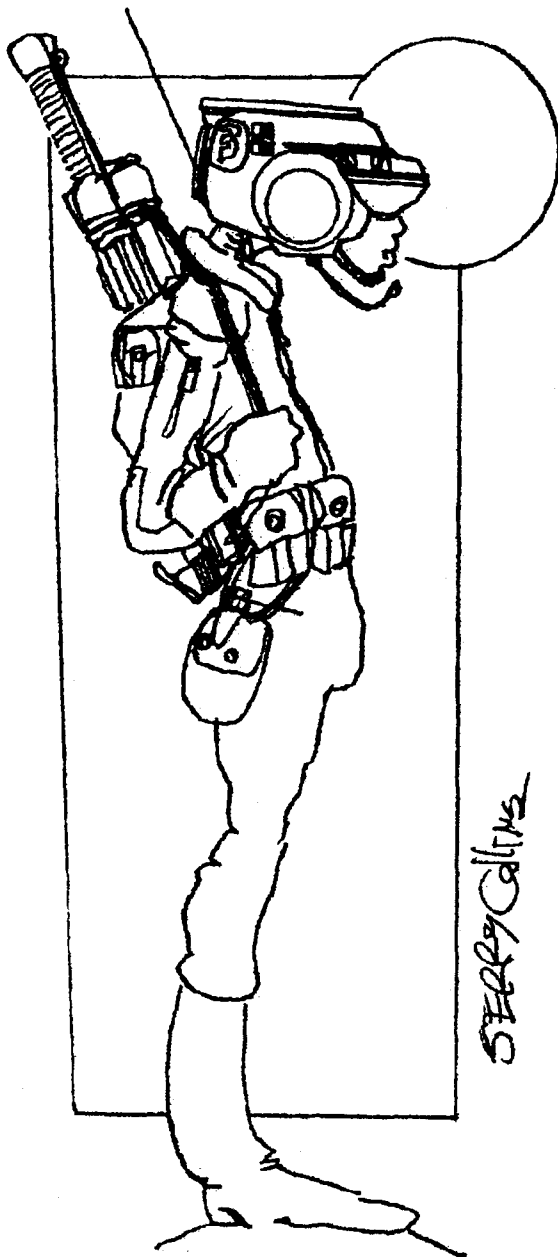
JA: Most recently, though, we see the emergence of slipstream literature, where important literary authors like Michael Chabon and Richard Powers borrow from science fiction to grapple with important questions of technology and science and what it means to be human. This represents a profound recognition among literary authors that technology is so suffused into society. We are cyborgs in significant ways. We need to be reflecting on what this means for our humanity.

Q: What would this book include if it came out 50 years from now?

GB: The thing that will dominate world affairs is when we actually and finally, both politically and technically, realize that we are stewards of the earth, and if we don't take care of our planet, we will perish. That's going to be the major agenda of the century, which will be clear 50 years from now.

JA: I think that's right, and there are some very good science fiction writers who have talked about the need to think about the planet more carefully, such as Ursula K. LeGuin. Additionally, lots of science fiction today is about artificial intelligence and the cyborgization of our own bodies, as we see in cyberpunk science fiction. I think that our own interconnectivity with technology will continue to fascinate authors. As for artificial intelligence? Eh, I don't know. Robotics? Absolutely. Also, this book 50 years from now will predict things that probably won't come true. *Star Trek* for instance gives us lots of ideas, but I don't think we're going to reach warp drive.





A Chat with Bill Gawne

James Bacon

This is the first of two pieces that Marine for 22 Years Bill Gawne contributed to. The second is about Operation Hot Eagle – but more about that elsewhere.

I jump straight in, and asked Bill about reading SF.

BG: I've read a lot of SF over the years. Gave up on comics when I was about 15, though I'm told they're better now.

I am looking for connections between the profession of Marine, and reading speculative works.

BG: Oh, it certainly exists. I've known a lot of Marines who've had wall lockers crammed with SF books and board games.

Are you always a Marine?

BG: I am. Once a Marine, always a Marine.

How do you feel currently about Marines doing their Jobs, in Iraq and Afghanistan?

BG: I think the Marine Corps has done its job as well as it possibly can. There have been some very unfortunate incidents, including the massacre at Haditha. But to the credit of the Corps our Commandant didn't try to bury that. Rather, it was prosecuted in the full light of day.

Is the "brothers" mythos correct, and you support them?

BG: Oh, sort of. I think that the discussion of "band of brothers" is something of a crock, put forth largely by people who are trying to hook a historical play (*Henry V*) to a modern day fighting force. But it is true that Marines tend to be very close to one another.

As a Marine, why did you read science fiction?

BG: Because it was there. When I was on active duty there were in general those Marines who only read porn, and the rest who read anything they could get their hands on.

Now, when I had a choice of SF, I tended to read Heinlein, since he'd been to the Naval Academy and had a pretty good understanding of the realities of military life. I also read Asimov because he wrote great stuff, and I probably read as much of his nonfiction as his fiction. When Joe Haldeman brought out *The Forever War* I read it, and liked it. I liked Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, or Niven alone, for the quality of the work. I also read an awful lot of "Best SF of 19xx" anthologies.

I think the appeal of SF to military people in general is the "what if?" nature of the storytelling. We spend a lot of our lives dwelling on "what if" scenarios, and it's sort of natural to be attracted to them in speculative literature.

Was it a continuation of a hobby, or were there any other reasons?

BG: Oh, yes, I read SF before I joined the Corps.

Lockers full of Books and Games, sounds good, Is there any reason why that connection exists, or is it just that Marines are as diverse as any other group of folks?

BG: The Marine Corps seems to attract a fair lot of people who (a) like to read, and (b) like to play the sort of board games that Avalon Hill used to make. I imagine a lot of the people like that now play online MMORPGs.

I am wondering if Military SF was a noticeable favorite or not as the case may be.

BG: Some military SF is downright painful for a military person to read, because it's so damn bad. Some is hard to read because the author obviously has an agenda. John Ringo falls into this category for me. I can't read his stories because he crafts his stories to fit his own notions too much for my taste. (Heinlein, in contrast, always maintained a reasonable grasp of reality even when he was obviously pushing a specific set of ideas.)

I asked about why so many SF works seem to feature Marines, and you said 'Marines are legend'. Why do you say that?

It's been paid for in blood. Just read the inscriptions around the base of the Iwo Jima memorial. Or John A. LeJune's letter to "all Marines, everywhere" that he published back in 1921 on the Marine Corps birthday:

"On November 10, 1775, a Corps of Marines was created by a resolution of the Continental Congress. Since that date many thousands of men have borne that name Marine. In memory of them it is fitting that we who are Marines should commemorate the Birthday of our Corps by calling to mind the glories of its long and illustrious history.

The record of our Corps is one which bear comparison with that of the most famous military organizations in the world's history. During 90 of the 146 years of its existence the Marine Corps has been in action against the Nation's foes. From the Battle of Trenton to the

Argonne, Marines have won foremost honors in war and in the long era of tranquillity at home generation after generation of Marines have grown gray in war in both hemispheres, and in every corner of the seven seas so that our country and its citizens might enjoy peace and security.

In every battle and skirmish since the Birth of the Corps, Marines have acquitted themselves with the greatest distinction, winning new honors on each occasion until the term "Marine" has come to signify all that is highest in military efficiency and soldierly virtue.

This high name of distinction and soldierly repute we who are Marines today have received from those who preceded us in the Corps. With it we also received from them the eternal spirit which has animated our Corps from generation and has long been the distinguishing mark of Marines in every age. So long as that spirit continues to flourish Marines will be found equal to every emergency in the future as they have been in the past, and the me of our nation will regard us as worthy successors to the long line of illustrious men who have served as "Soldiers of the Sea" since the founding of the Corps."

(<http://www.grunt.com/scuttlebutt/corps-stories/geninfo/birthday.asp>)

Since 1921 a lot has been added to the history of the Corps, but it's all been in the same vein. We continue to be the world's preeminent fighting force.



Are there any science fictional "Marine" type characters that you identified with through your book reading?

BG: No, not particularly. I do feel a kinship with the NCOs in *Starship Troopers*, but that's because Heinlein based them on the Marine drill instructors he'd had at the USNA.

Are there any stories that you especially liked, because of the link to your profession?

BG: *Starship Troopers* is the only SF story that I ever felt got it right. Outside of SF, I've liked WEB Griffin's series, *The Corps*. But Griffin's stories are historical fiction set in WWII and Korea.

How do you feel about the portrayal of Marine-like characters in Science Fiction?

BG: I think most writers get Marines wrong. More often out of misunderstanding than malice.

Have you been to conventions, or involved in other aspects of SF fandom?

BG: Some. I go to DarkoverCon in Baltimore most years, and sometimes to Balticon. I've been to OVFF a few times for the music, and I went twice to Chattacon. In general I don't travel for cons these days, and I've never connected strongly to the fannish community. I know them, but I am not of them.

You are not the atypical marine, so much science work, but then is that misconception, and really Science is as important to the USMC as a well a well armed man?

BG: Yes, technology is extremely important to the modern Marine Corps. Ever since the late 19th century the USMC has been an early adopter of emerging technologies that provide us with force multipliers. The most obvious that I can think of right now is Marine Corps aviation, and the way we used aircraft in lieu of artillery to create expeditionary combined arms teams starting before WW I.

(I am going to mention the MV-22 osprey and also the Small Unit Space Transport and Insertion/ Project Hot Eagle)

BG: The history of the Osprey is long and painful. While the aircraft itself is good, the funding decisions over the years have meant that Marines continue to fly the CH-46 helicopters that came into the force in the early 60s. We should have bought CH-60 Blackhawks in the 80s to replace those, but we didn't. Instead we plowed the money into the OV-22 program. This resulted in many deaths due to overage CH-46 crashes.

Elizabeth Moon, (1st Lt. retrd. Marine and SF author) is also contributing, so wondering: If you have read any of her work?

Yeah, I read her *Deed of Paksanarion* stuff years ago. I liked those stories, especially the religion she developed based around the farm workers. I should note that she's a friend of a friend of mine.

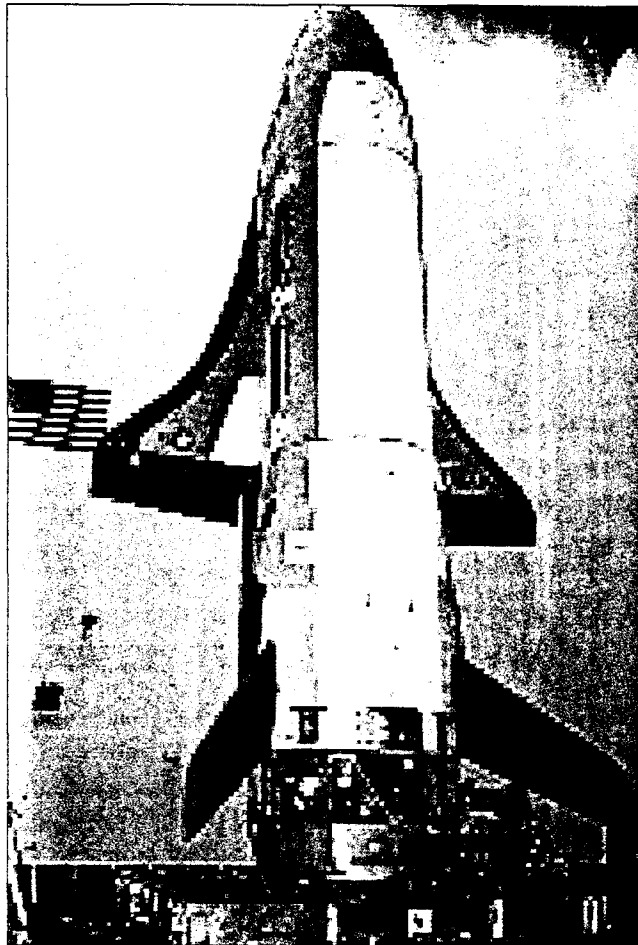
Is it the training, the tight spots you end up in, or the feeling of esprit d'corps that makes you feel "Once a marine – always ..."

BG: Probably "all the above."

You are not only a marine but a rocket scientist?

BG: Yes, it's true. I'm currently working as an aerospace engineer employed by Honeywell under contract to NASA.

And there we left it. Bill then went on to give considerable insight and opinion on Project Hot Eagle. I am grateful for his time, and I will always bear in mind that "On the bounce" is as close as it can be in SF.



I was a member of LASFAPA for many years. I deny everything David says below.

They called us the “*Friendly*” APA

Dave Schlosser

And why not? Back in the early days of LASFAPA (oh, long about 30+ years ago), thanks to the efforts of our Glorious Flounder many of us younger (or more neoish) fen were getting our first real chance to interact with fen from other areas. Folks from SoCal, the MidWest, the South and the East Coast were interacting for the first time. People made long-distance phone calls to meet their new pen pals, people took trips or detours of already planned trips to visit and hang out with people they’d only known through longer distance modes of communication. Flirtations blossomed and bloomed and, in the more-or-less pre-AIDs atmosphere, birds and bees abounded.

Certainly these calls and visits were not being kept secret – although what may or may not have transpired during visits was generally left as an exercise to the reader. But speculation did abound and somehow the tides of data flow were such that much of that data seemed wash ashore on the beaches of 3-4 members (me being one of them).

This, in itself, would have been mostly trivial gossip-fodder but for a related (and more general) phenomenon in fandom. There was, around that time, a moderate amount of discussion (or thought) (either in print or not) about the theoretical fannish construct known as The Chart. For the unfamiliar, The Chart, was something like the laws of motion where, if you had the location and velocity of sufficient objects in the universe, you could predict where they all would be at any time in the past or future. The difference being that The Chart was a more ... static? ... construct which traced the thread of intimate connections that fen had with each other. Well, as many fen are punsters who “can put disparate pieces of information together to an anti-social end”, having both the thought of The Chart wandering through our minds and a pool of information to draw from, the upshot was somehow inevitable.

Notes were compared to produce a larger data base and when our plan to collect data was revealed - like a gravitational effect - more data was brought to our attention, which increased the mass and brought even more data in. Was the data accurate? The best I can say about that is that we only took 1st hand info (ie X and I) rather than anything involving third party info. I will admit that we didn’t cross verify claims with the other party by any planning but neither did we get any complaints and really, considering the years, I don’t think anyone was either bragging or being overly reticent about the information.

While the data collection was mostly via a few people, it devolved to me to somehow sort, collate and find a way to visually present the information (sans key of course). After much effort with paper and pencil (remember when this was now) it became obvious that - while that could be used as a key - it was not a viable way to truly represent the complexity of even this small part of the larger object. (Oh, somewhere I think I do have the 2D version with its lines leaping around other lines.)

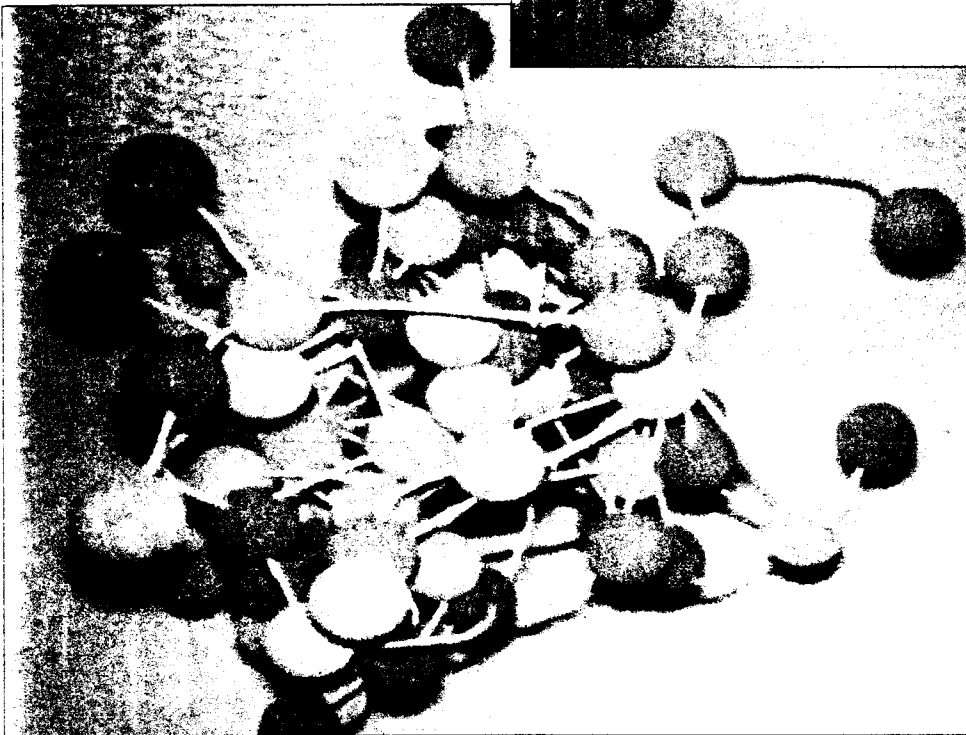
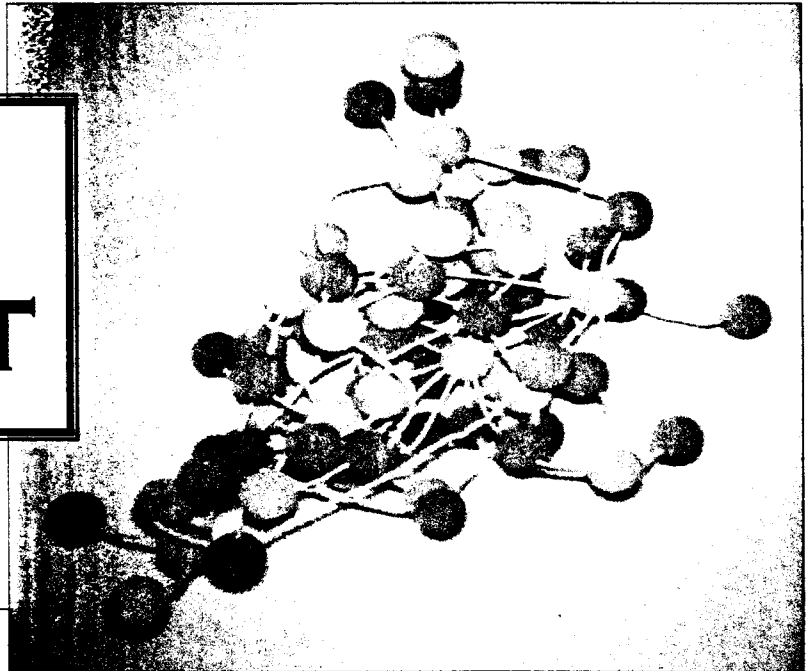
With all due consideration, it became clear to me that what we had, nearly enough was a complex organic (or other, similar-sounding word) molecule and that, to really grasp this, the thing had to be expressed 3-dimensionally. The upshot of this - with a bit of help from my co-vivant of the time, Lee Ann Goldstein - was a styrofoam ball-and-pipe cleaner molecule. Balls representing men were painted pink, those representing women painted blue.

Now some people might think that the best thing to do with such a construct was tuck it away. But that isn’t how we thought. As it happened we were organizing a LASFAPAcon for the membership

and decided that that would be the perfect time to unveil this work of art. Keeping in mind that the other item being unveiled at this little gathering was a board game entitled "The LASFAPA Chart Game" that involved going to conventions and acquiring Chart connections. That being the case it really wasn't a bad idea to show the construct off. I will say that we only revealed which ball was who's to the person – mind if they didn't care that others were around, why would we?

I think that was the only public viewing and I also think that that may have been the last time the 3D version was added too. There may be an item or two added to the master key but I'm really not sure of that. Oh and the 3D version is still in existence as well - and soon to come back to its creator.

THE CHART





A tremendous memoir from a brother SFPAn and one of comics fandom's shining lights.

Gary at 14

GARY BROWN

I came across this photo of myself from March 1961 in late 2010 and I propped it up on my desk. A few days after, I scanned it and sent copies to my sons,

mother and sister, plus a few friends.

For some reason, the photo haunts me.

It was taken in the front yard of our Hialeah home at 5430 West 6th Court. My mom and I couldn't remember taking it, but we agreed that she probably had a few pictures left on a roll and wanted to finish it and get it developed, so she had me stand outside and snapped the photograph..

I'm standing there in what I usually wore when I wasn't in school – jeans, T-shirt and my white Keds tennis shoes. And looking pretty buff, if I do say so myself. The shadow in the bottom left of the photo is from a tree we had in our front yard. I had forgotten all about it until I was staring at the photo and saw the shadow. The tree was pushed over by a hurricane a few years later and we pulled it out. We then planted a palm tree to the left of the front yard.

Caddy-corner across the street behind me, with that old car in the driveway, lived the Bradley family. Brad and Laurie and their five kids. Nice couple. I would baby-sit for them around this time when they went out Saturday nights. Years later, when I was in college, Brad would leave Laurie and the kids for a rich older woman.

Further down the street, over my right shoulder, there is a car in front of a house. That's where the Whitakers lived. Earlier in 2010, Mrs. Whitaker died and I went to her funeral, where Mike, Tom and Tim (twins) and I got together. All three were about my age and we played every sport there was on our street and the next street over. We rode our bikes to the store, went to baseball games at Miami Stadium and talked neighborhood girls into playing Spin-the-Bottle with some of them. We're still good friends.

My life revolved around three things at that time: school, sports and my comic-book collection. However, I was in ninth grade and had come off of two terrible years in junior high school. In seventh grade, an older kid named John Kodiak decided I was his target for the year and he picked on me unmercifully. He'd slug me in the shoulder, steal my lunch, rip up my homework and challenge me to fights after school. I took it all in silence, crying on my way home and not telling my parents or friends.

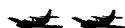
When my eighth-grade year started, Kodiak began picking on me again in gym class. This time, I stood up to him, taking my tennis shoes and hitting him in the back after he slugged me as he walked by. He turned and started laughing and put up his fists. We fought for maybe three or four minutes before the physical education teachers came and broke it up. I got a black eye. He got a bloody, broken nose. He was suspended and never came back to school.

No one ever picked on me again.

I also wondered about the size of my comic-book collection about the time of this photo. I kept all my comics on the floor of my bedroom closet. Every few weeks, I'd take them out, spread them on my bed and put the new comics in order. But I also had this habit of talking to my comics. Or, maybe it was just talking to myself. I'd be saying things like, "Here's a new *Brave and Bold* comic with the *Justice League of America* in it. This is great." Sort of silly, but I had this idea that I must be the only person in the world who collected comic books and the several hundred I owned must have been the largest collection there was. Little did I know how wrong I was.

So, I'll say that Gary at 14 was a good kid. I started getting direction, in that I knew I wanted to work on newspapers. And my world was secure with good friends and a wonderful family life.

And some comic books I could always talk to if I wanted.



A review.

“FER YEW DER VOR ISS OBER”

GHLIII

Two issues ago *Challenger* ran an article by Jeff Copeland dealing with his father Lawrence's experiences as a POW in World War II. It was an astonishing, life-affirming story. Recently, Lawrence released his personal version of the story in the form of *Fer Yew Der Vor Iss Ober*, a huge, fascinating volume – and a masterpiece.

Intriguingly illustrated (on first-class slick paper) with Copeland's own drawings and material collected at the time – the cover, for instance, duplicates the design of his *Stalag* mattress – the memoir follows the young aviator from his first flights through his war experiences as a navigator through the disaster that brought him to Earth in Nazi Germany through his imprisonment to a post release encounter with – of all people – Gertrude Stein. His tale of his life as a POW, or “kriegie,” is compelling stuff indeed, as the POWs attempt, through camp shows and newspapers and endless games of wit with their captors, to maintain themselves as soldiers and as men. They achieved a surreal mundanity in the midst of insanity, while facing the many threats to their lives and sanity – incompetent, trigger-happy guards (a pestilence on prisoners of war since Andersonville), officious countrymen, and the constant uncertainty of what would happen next. Lawrence Copeland endured, preserved his memories, and here conveys them – unforgettably.

Even though Lawrence's son is one of my best friends in fandom (*snark* – maybe now he'll lend me some money) and I've known many members of the greatest generation (heck, two of them raised me!), I am still astonished by this man. Incidents terrifying simply to read about slide right off him. Those guys could take it. His book is an essential human document for anyone who would understand World War II. It is an epic adventure of an uncommon common man caught in a nightmarish situation, handling it with courage, resilience and – his greatest attribute – humor.

Fer Yew Der Vor Iss Ober is available for \$113 from Jeff, reachable at copeland@alumni.caltech.edu. It's one of the best books I've ever read about the Second World War.

Operation Hot Eagle – Space Marines.

James Bacon

There are many space moments that I especially adore that put the image of soldiers in space in my mind. Whether it be the VC's in comic *2000AD* or the moment when a space shuttle disgorges Marines to attack Drax's space station in *Moonraker*. The idea of Space being a battle ground of some sorts has of course been a mainstay of science fiction for some length of time. The various space programmes in early part the latter half of the 20th century, were based upon the science and development of military ballistic missiles, while the desire of communications, observation and global positioning satellites have impacted upon the needs of space

The concept of space being used now in any military form is fascinating. There was a period of time, around 2006, when the concept of Hot Eagle, a method of deploying Marines quite quickly without any issues of overflying, was and is fascinating.

I asked Bill Gawne to have a look and see and give some commentary, or even an informed person's synopsis of what is going on:

It's true that I'm currently working as an aerospace engineer employed by Honeywell under contract to NASA. I'll note that the idea of launching Marines in sub-orbital craft to anywhere in the world is one I first heard in 1978 at Camp Pendleton. It was already well established among those looking to the future of Marine Corps operations at the time. So the concept isn't new. It's a direct extension of the logic that put Marines into helicopters in the 1950s, and into amphibious landing craft in the 1920s.

The biggest challenge I see to this project (Hot Eagle) is cost. The USMC is traditionally and historically an organization that does things on the cheap. The OV-22 program has proven the perils of trying to be the drivers of new technologies. I can easily see Hot Eagle becoming the next Osprey program, eating up increasing amounts of the Marine Corps aviation budget over many procurement cycles. Furthermore, when the Osprey was conceived as an idea in the 1960s Boeing had demonstrated tilt-rotor technology. Right now the only craft that has flown sub-orbital flights like this is SpaceShipOne, a one man vehicle that takes off and lands in the California desert. I'd want to see some success for the SpaceShipTwo program and Virgin Galactic in general actually making sub-orbital flights half way around the world before the Corps makes a commitment to this program. If you look at the disaster that was the X-33 program, you can easily see why I'm concerned.

I do feel sure that the Marine Corps will eventually have such a capability. It's a natural step in our mission, and an obvious force multiplier.

I asked Elizabeth Moon, if she had heard about the Small Unit Space Transport and Insertion/Project Hot Eagle and if so, what's your make of the idea?

Yes. Frankly, I think it's one of those nifty-cool ideas that would work better in fiction than in practice. It might be successful in some very specific limited situations, but in the sense of sending a squad anywhere there's trouble unobtrusively...that initial rocket launch off an aircraft carrier is hardly the most secretive way to go, given that we're on a world where satellite surveillance, cellphone communication, and computer hackers are ubiquitous.

In addition, what do you do when your one squad isn't enough? This isn't 19th century Texas: one riot may need more than one Ranger, and two six-shooters aren't enough firepower. What's the backup--what's the delivery system for the backup (not the same, not if you want surprise.) What's the supply capability? What if your squad runs out of ammo? (I was talking to a supply officer last summer about a situation resulting in shortage of ammunition for a unit in combat.) At the end of the mission, how do you extract them from the situation you put them into? (The notion that they'll be gratefully received and rewarded by the place they invaded is naive.)

Bill Gawne came back to me with some more thoughts:

This has been kicking around in the back of my head today, and somewhere along the line some things bubbled up that I thought worth sharing with you. You are now seeing a bit of how the Operations Analysts at Marine Corps Studies and Analysis think. I was once one of them.

1) If you launch a ballistic object into an arc that is going to carry it to \$TARGET, it's very hard for missile defense officers in Russia and China to determine that it's really headed toward \$TARGET and not, say, Russia or China. This is because detection happens during the boost burn phase of the arc. It's only after that when the ballistic object is near the top of its arc and descending that any steering happens.

2) If you decide to get around the risk of triggering a counter-strike as suggested in 1, above, by keeping something like WhiteKnight (the launch vehicle for SpaceShip2) aloft at all hours ready to launch a squad of Marines on their ballistic flight, you run into the problems we saw with the B-52 long range flights in the 60s. Crews suffer mission fatigue. The embarked troops will suffer from being in their transfer ships for who knows how many hours, etc...

3) If you decide to avoid the problems suggested by 1, and 2, then you keep the mother ship on the ground and only put it up when there's a mission. But then the heat signature of the engine flare from the semi-ballistic rocket still has the potential to cause the problem outlined in 1 above. If the target is some group of terrorists, chances are they have allies who tell them the bird is in the sky about 90 minutes before the Marines arrive. This pretty much guarantees that the element of surprise is lost.

4) Landing a semi-ballistic ship on rough terrain is a chancy proposition. About the only thing that *might* work would be something like the landing leg structures used on the DC/X vehicle that was tested by the BMDO in the 90s. If it uses wings it pretty much needs a runway to land. So it's going to have to come down on a jet of fire and land on its tail, once again blowing any possible element of surprise. This also gives a whole new meaning to the

term Hot LZ.

5) A possible way to avoid the problems in 4 above is to put the Marines into capsules like Heinlein's cap troopers in *Starship Troopers*. Then the semi-ballistic vehicle either lands somewhere far from the target zone or crashes into (hopefully) unoccupied terrain. But now you have an egress problem that may require LPCs (leather personnel carriers) to get the troops out.

6) Of course, capsules dropping out of the sky under parachutes make nice fat targets.

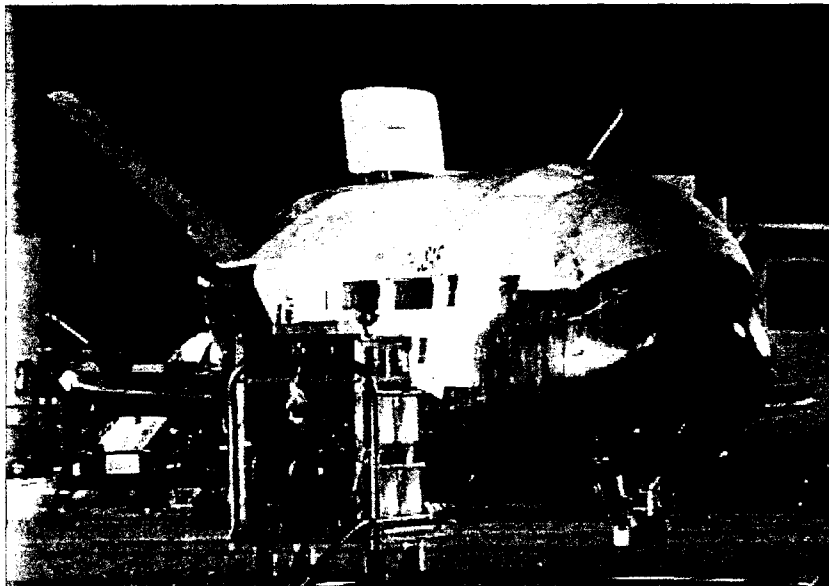
7) In a space vehicle weight is at a premium. The Marines will have to be selected from the smallest and lightest in the Corps. This may prove to be a premier billet for highly motivated Woman Marines. Even then they'll have to carry supplies enough to sustain them through several days of combat, including lots and lots of ammunition.

8) Marines traditionally are task organized into MAGTFs (Marine Air-Ground Task Forces) to provide combined arms teams. But these Marines will be on their own when they land.

They'll have no air support, no naval gunfire support, no artillery support, no medevac capability, nothing. This will require a return to ideas developed by the Marine Raiders of WW II, but for even smaller units. Instead of fighting as part of a combined arms team these Marines will have to train to fight all alone, far from any kind of support.

9) The details outlined in (4) above mean that there's no chance for stealth in one of these raids. Once the ship is in flight it will be obvious to anyone in the half of the world it passes over who owns a C-band radar that something is going on. So these missions will require close coordination with the State Department before they launch, because State is going to be very busy very quickly.

I am grateful to Bill and Elizabeth for their insight. I would like to look at the the XB-37 unmanned space vessel, UAV's and UGC's, the X-51 Scramjet powered Mach 6 (4,000 mph) waverider which by kinetic energy alone could deliver some hell of a punch, as well as rail guns and The Long



Endurance Multi Intelligence Vehicle, an airship, which are all very incredible things, that for me, are bringing SFnal concepts closer, albeit perhaps not in a way I desire, but if you have any thoughts or input on these, do let Guy know.



The X-37B

(from Black Horizon)

An original and personal memoir.

THE SOUND OF NEARBY GUNFIRE

Gregory Benford

We slept fitfully and woke several times to the rattle of machine gun fire. Probably to scare them off, I thought. Then M1 rifle shots, sharp hard raps in the night. I looked out our bedroom window and saw a flare blaze into the dark night sky. More snapping shots. Nearby, clearly.

We lay and watched the fitful glows fall on smoky tendrils from the black sky. Nothing more sounded. No doors opened. Our parents maybe didn't hear. Or maybe they didn't want to deal with it. But we did, yes. Oh yes. Silence.

Too early to go, so my brother Jim and I went back to sleep. But at 5 AM the first orange feelers of dawn crept across the Japanese sky and we got up quietly. Dressed, down the stairs with shoes held in hand, out the back door. The Narimasu base perimeter at the edge of Tokyo was only three blocks away. The base the USA had built atop a large airfield and was perfectly flat. We used bushes for some cover as the dawn was lifting quickly.

There had been riots in Tokyo led by the Communist Party. As many as half a million people surged through the streets. Our father came home to tell of US cars burned in the streets as the human tide rushed path—one would open the gas tank, a follower would push a cloth into the tank to draw gasoline up through wicking, and a third lit the result. The opposition to our occupation tried to provoke incidents. Bands would try to get into the US residence camps where we lived.

By the time we got to the perimeter the sun sent slanting rays across the rice patties. US Marines went out into the patties and as we arrived they were pulling bodies out. They had been lying there for hours and certainly dead. A med team with stretchers followed at a trot along the raised paths between patties. I counted three bodies.

The Marines saw us and shooed us away.

We slipped back home and got back into our beds without the parents waking. But we did get a curious look from our maid who came out of her room and saw us creeping light-footed in our socks down the hallway.

We had come to Tokyo midwinter of 1949-50. Before that we had grown up around Fairhope, Alabama. We spent a year in Lawton, Oklahoma after our father gave up his high school teaching position and accepted a Regular Army commission as a Captain. He had fought in WWII, called up from the Reserves a week after Pearl Harbor. In the 3rd Army he went into Normandy the 5th day and fought across France, at the Bulge, and all the way into Austria by the end. Of the 16 forward observers who went in at Normandy he was the only survivor. A farm boy, he knew how to move in the natural world.

Now the Korean War was in its first raging battles. Dad was a senior staff officer for General MacArthur and often worked weekends and came home late at night. We had less time with him, and though our mother compensated, it's not the same kind of fun.

Jim and I had the vast strange land beyond our perimeter to explore, an alien landscape of fascinating detail -- a daily excitement. But we had larger horizons still.

I recall vividly reading the Heinlein juveniles, which helped direct our attention to space, science, the limitless future. I've noticed that many Army brats turn up in fandom and sfdom generally. In foreign lands while young, the book is a good friend. My brother and I were self-reinforcing, united in the focused effort to understand the strange forces all around us, to make sense of it all. Heinlein played a major role in giving us a viewpoint, from within the military culture, of how to think about the enormous events

transpiring around us.

There is a further commonality between sf and the South: we're outsiders. Though the South has dominated conventional culture to an impressive extent, and sf is the champion American genre (still alive in the magazines, and ruling Hollywood), both derive power and profit from taking an exterior angle. We look askance at the expansive Northern culture. For a Southerner this is automatic. When Japanese rioted through the streets, shouting "Yankee Go Home!" I had been scared, but then felt relief; after all, I wasn't a Yankee.

By the time we had reached Giessen, Germany in 1955 our father commanded a field artillery battalion. We served drinks and canapés at the battalion parties in our home, three-story 19th century stonework with a maid and fireman and gardener. A long way from Fairhope.

During the Hungarian revolt of 1956 the battalion deployed to the Austrian border and my reaction was to imagine a story with us on a school bus, caught in a suddenly escalating war that became nuclear in Europe. We had to seize the bus and drive west to avoid the front. I tried to write some of it and suddenly realized that I liked telling stories. I wrote some for our fanzine, *Void* – simple idea stories, very short. One contained quite clearly the precursor ideas to my novel *Timescape*.

But lurking all around this imaginary future of Mars colonies and time paradoxes was the Cold War, standing in the bombed out shadows of WWII. The present seemed choked with war just brimming over the horizon. The future, ripe with promise, was a much finer place to live in one's mind's eye.

I have many memories of those years. Dad driving us from the *Shanks* berth in Yokahama to Narimasu. I looked out over fields of grass and suddenly saw jutting from that waving ocean a chimney. In an instant I recalled car voyages across Georgia, where Dad held a post at Fort McPherson, along the route Sherman took. Across

vacant fields the sole tribute to the Civil War were the brick chimneys standing forlorn above seas of grass.

We were on the way then to my first funeral. My uncle had been Sheriff of his county. He had led a party up a steep hill to a tin distillery specializing in white lightnin'. They found it by the cottonwood smoke, an amateur's error. The entrepreneurs had vanished, taking some of their product, and on that hot July day my uncle asked for a dipper of water. There seemed some confusion over whether he had gotten water or white lightnin' in that dipper but beyond dispute was that he had toppled backward, a man in his forties, and died as he hit the ground.

Death, yes. So the grass fields in Japan hid a similar secret. The fire bombings of Tokyo killed more than Hiroshima and stopped nothing, except over 100,000 lives.

Only long after that morning of flares and rifle fire did I realize that I wanted none of that. I wanted the future I had read about, not the hard slog of the Cold War, which looked as though it could last forever.

Jim and I dutifully took ROTC at university for two years and signed on for the two years more to get a Lieutenant commission. But then we both decided to follow our noses, not our origins. We failed to appear to re-sign up when we registered for our junior year. We were bound for the profession of physics, which came directly out of our sf reading.

It was a strange path indeed to the abstract graces of theory and experiment. Science tries to understand the world, at least in constricted, controlled ways. But in physics when you understood something, it meant more than the chaos of the world itself could ever mean. It somehow lived above the fray, eternal and true. That was a blessing.

And we would not have to pick bodies out of a rice patty.



THE CHALLENGER TRIBUTE

LEZLI ROBYN



To anyone who's read my report on Aussiecon 4 and the trip that surrounded it, *The Aboriginal Route*, this tribute should come as no surprise. No one so enriched the Australian experience as did our brilliant and beautiful buddy Lezli (shown above with our constant chaperone, Mib the Panda).

She came with us to Hanging Rock and braved the elements to climb it with us. She shared her hotel with us before and after the con. Down the line, she was a boon companion and pal, all while glowing with anticipation (since young ladies do not "sweat out") over her nomination for the 2010 John W. Campbell Award as one of SF's best new writers.

A frequent collaborator with Mike Resnick, Lezli wrote "Soulmates", "Report from the Field" and "Benchwarmer" (among others) with Mike and on her own has published gems like "The Dawn of Reason" and "Android of Green Gables", which she read at Aussiecon 4. She's also a *Chall* Pal with several articles here. She writes with passion and compassion and embraces life the same way. She is a truly beloved friend.

Ticonderoga Publications will publish a collection of her stories in 2012. Long live the lovely Lezli!

-- GHLIII

Wings O'Bannon Rides Again

Mike Resnick

art by KURT ERICHSEN

If there's one kind of book I like as much as science fiction, it's the hardboiled private eye novel, especially as practiced by Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, and Ross MacDonald.

While I was writing my series of tongue-in-cheek fantasy detective stories featuring John Justin Mallory (*Stalking the Unicorn*, *Stalking the Vampire*, *Stalking the Dragon*, and half a dozen novelettes), I had presented Mallory with legitimate (if fantastic) problems to solve, and I couldn't descend into parody, much as I would have loved to.

But each of the novels has a number of appendices, fictional bits and pieces related but peripheral to the main story, and about a third of the way through 2008's *Stalking the Vampire* I saw a way to do my parody after all. Mallory is always, through plot machinations, attracting well-meaning but not very helpful sidekicks, and in this case it was a dragon named Nathan who wrote hardboiled mysteries on the side under the pseudonym of "Scaly Jim Chandler".

As the novel proceeds, Nathan – whose fictional hero is Wings O'Bannon, and whose last O'Bannon book sold 651 copies worldwide – is constantly taking notes on Mallory's methodology, and just as constantly explaining the difference between O'Bannon and the disappointing (to him) Mallory. O'Bannon beds a gorgeous woman every chapter, never asks for information when he can beat it out of a bad guy, and, like Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer, has an oversexed secretary named Velma. (Mallory has a 63-year-old gun-toting partner named Winnifred).

Eventually the dragon starts writing his version of the adventure they're on, also titling it *Stalking the Vampire*, and when Mallory's adventure was over, I decided to display the start of Botts' version in one of the appendices, which the illustrious Mr. Lillian is now letting me share with you.

Stalking the Vampire

by Scaly Jim Chandler

(excerpt)

She was prime stuff. She had long blonde hair, cool blue eyes, curves in places where most broads didn't even have places, and only the floor stopped her legs from going on forever. I looked at that full heaving neckline, and figured if she heaved it just a little harder I could catch it without getting up from my chair.

"You were recommended to me, Mr. O'Bannon," she said.

"Was it Fifi?" I asked. "Fatima? Bubbles? Mitzie?"

"Malcolm Burke," she said.

"Oh," I replied. "So it's business."
 "I'm in desperate trouble, Mr. O'Bannon!"
 "Call me Wings," I replied.
 "I'm being blackmailed, Mr. O'Bannon!"
 "Wings," I said.
 "All right – Wings," she said. "You've got to help me."
 "What seems to be the problem?" I asked.
 "It's so humiliating."
 "Yeah, it usually is," I said. "You want a hit from the office bottle?"
 She shook her head. "I am Mrs. Wilbur Carlisle..." she began.
 "Are we talking about the Wilbur Carlisle?" I asked. "The eccentric reclusive millionaire?"
 "Yes." Then: "Well, no, actually. He's a billionaire."
 I frowned. "Isn't he something like 75 years old?"
 "98," she corrected me.
 "If we add your 38-22-36 all together, he's still got you beat by a couple of years."
 "Wilbur and I are very much in love," she assured me.
 "He's probably mistaking you for your great-grandmother," I suggested.
 "Are you going to help me or insult me?" she demanded.
 "I thought I was insulting your husband," I said. "But let's get down to business. I get seventy-five a day plus expenses."
 "Agreed."
 "Velma – that's my secretary – is on her lunch break," I told her. "I'll have her draw up a contract when she gets back."
 She pulled a handful of C-notes from her purse and held them out to me. "Will this be enough, Mr. O'Bannon?"
 "Wings," I said, taking the cash and sticking it in a vest pocket. "Yeah, it'll do fine. Now suppose you tell me about your problem."
 "We were at a high society party," she said. "Do you know the Cuthbertson-Smythes?"
 "How many of them are there?" I asked.
 "Just two."
 "All right," I said, "fill me in. All my experience has been in low society."
 "We were all drinking and laughing and having a fine time," she said. "And then...well, I guess I must have drunk more than I thought, because I can't remember another thing."
 "Sounds like someone slipped you a Mickey Finn," I said.
 "Is that his name?"
 "Whose name?" I asked.
 "I guess I'd better explain. You see, I woke up in a strange hotel room – and there was a dead man on the floor. His throat had been slit from ear to ear. Is he Mickey Finn?"
 "Probably not," I said. "And someone's blackmailing you, threatening to expose you as a murderess?"
 She shook her head. "He was a nobody. Wilbur could have bought the police off in a minute, if anyone even cared who killed him."
 "I can believe it, Mrs. Carlyle."
 "My name is Moira," she said.
 "If you don't mind sharing a hotel room with a stiff, I fail to see what your problem is, Moira."
 "That was yesterday." She reached into her purse. "Today I received this in the mail." She pulled out a plain manila envelope, but didn't offer it to me.
 "I get plain manila envelopes in the mail all the time," I said. "Usually girlie magazines, sometimes bills."

"This contains some very humiliating photographs of me with a man I've never seen before," she said. "If Wilbur saw them..."

"He'd throw you out?" I suggested.

She shook her head. "He'd get so excited he might keel over with a heart attack."

"Let's have 'em," I said, reaching my hand out.

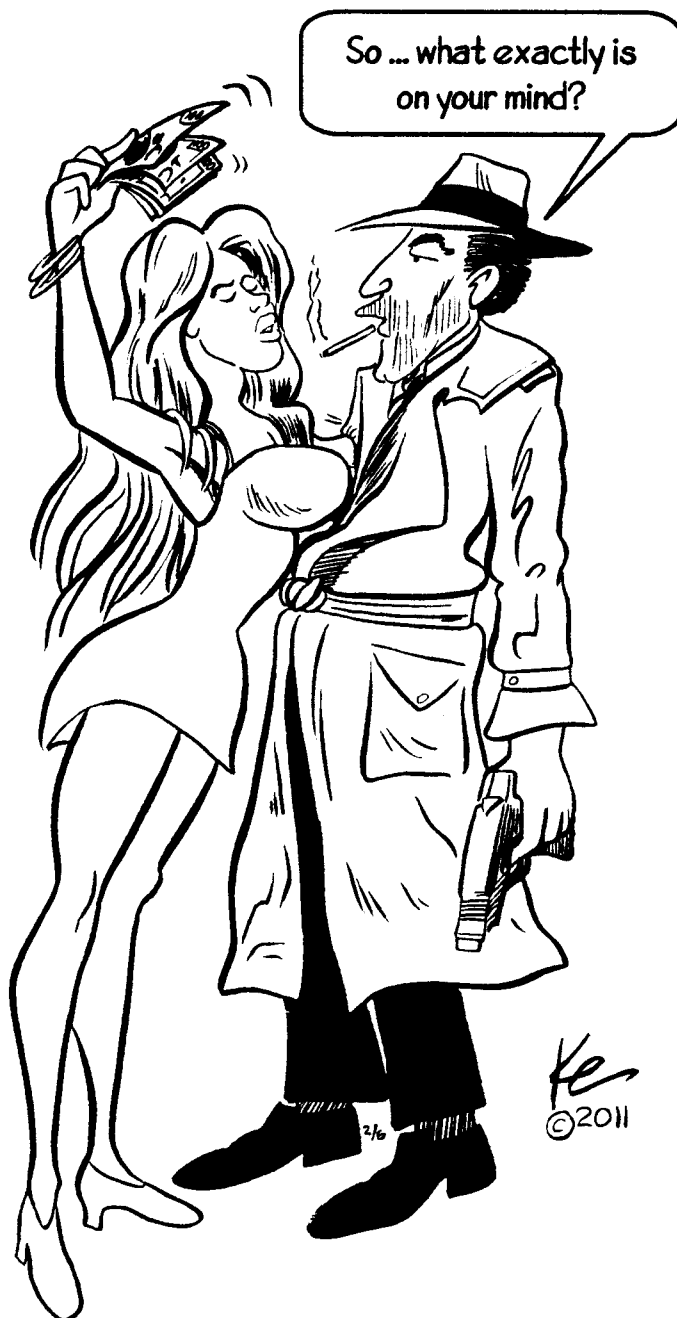
"I'm too embarrassed to show them to you."

"I've got to know what they are before I can do anything about it."

She walked around the desk. "I'm ashamed to show you the pictures. I'd rather just show you what I did."

"That's less embarrassing than the photos?" I asked.

"My hair was a mess," she explained, slipping out of her clothes.



She was a Moira, all right, with an emphasis on the "Moi". I slid my hand down her back, over the lush smooth curve of her hips, and [censored]

"Oh!" she moaned. "Don't stop!"

[censored]

"Oh God God God!" she breathed.

[censored, next three pages of manuscript burned, octogenarian proofreader hospitalized]

"Okay, Moira," I said, fixing my tie. "I'll be in touch."

"Again?" she said hopefully.

"By phone," I said.

She looked like someone had run over her pet chimera with a car – probably a Mercedes convertible with gull-wing doors, or maybe a Lamborghini, given the circles she traveled in – and undulated out of the office.

"Can I come in now?"

Velma's sultry voice came through the side door.

"Why not?" I said. "Have you been there long?"

"Long enough to be jealous," she said, slinking into the room.

"You could have joined us," I said.

"You have a filthy mind, Wings," she chided me.

"Yeah, but I clean under my fingernails," I shot back.

"So is she your new client?" she asked.

"Yeah, looks like it."

"What's her problem?"

"I'll show you," I said, reaching out for her. Her blouse came away in my hand.

"Velcro," she said. "It was getting expensive, replacing all the clothes you're always ripping off me."

"And some people still think I didn't hire you for your brains," I said as I grabbed her and pulled her to me.

An hour later we began getting dressed again.

"Wow!" said Velma, her face still flushed. "That's some problem!"

"That's why she came to me," I said. "She's being blackmailed."

"Blackmail is an ugly word," said Velma with a shudder that would have had most men baying at the moon.

"So is myxophyceae," I said. "But myxophyceae's not against the law except in Albania."

The phone rang and I picked it up. For a moment all I could hear was the sound of heavy breathing.

"It's for you," I said, offering the receiver to Velma.

"No, it's for you, Shamus!" said a voice at the other end of the phone. "It took me a minute to catch my breath. I had to beat an old lady to the phone booth."

"Why don't you get a cell phone?" I said.

"You gonna listen or you gonna criticize?"

"Who am I talking to?" I asked.

"Don't worry about that now," said the voice. "I got an important message for you."

"If it's that important, use Western Union and stop keeping little old ladies from calling their grandkids."

"Listen to me and listen good, Shamus!" said the voice. "We're gonna be watching your every move. Don't take the Carlisle case or you're a dead man."

"Carlisle who?" I asked innocently.

"You know," said the voice. "She's the dame who..." It took him half an hour to finish describing what was going on in the photos, by which time I was breathing as hard as he was, and he was drooling so much that he finally shorted out his phone.

"Who was it, Wings?" asked Velma, who was sitting at her desk reading a gossip magazine.

"Just another death threat," I said with a shrug.

"That's your ninth this week," she noted.

"Yeah," I said. "Business has been slow." Then I did some serious thinking. "Listen, Angel," I told her, "I've got to start working on the Carlisle case before she asks for her retainer back, and I don't need any interference from a bunch of hired gunsels, so I think we're going to outsmart them."

"How?" she asked, wide-eyed with wonder.

"I've got an extra suit in the closet," I said. "I want you to get into it, wear my hat, and go for a nice long walk in the park. They'll think it's me, they won't shoot as long as you're not following leads for Mrs. Carlisle, and that'll leave me free to operate."

"It'll never work, Wings," said Velma.

"Why not?"

"Because I'm a 44-D," she said, taking a deep breath and thrusting back her shoulders.

"No problem," I said. "My chest is 44 normal and 46 expanded."

"Gee!" she said with a smile. "Maybe it'll work after all."

"Right," I said. "Anyone approaches you, just grunt, lower your voice, and talk about baseball. They'll never spot the difference."

"You're a genius, Wings," she said admiringly.

"Hey, thinking is my business," I said. "Getting shot at all the time is just for exercise."

It took her about five minutes to change into my suit, and then she left by the front door. I waited another ten minutes, then cut out the back way.

I knew that my first order of business was to find out who had taken the photos. There weren't more than six, maybe seven thousand professional pornographers in town, plus another twelve thousand talented amateurs, which mean I had my work cut out for me, hitting porn studio after porn studio, beating time with all the naked oversexed girls until the photographers had time to speak to me. Still, it might prove distracting; there were probably as many as twenty of the girls I'd never met before.

Then I started doing the math, and realized I'd never hit all the pornographers before I ran through my retainer, so even though it wasn't going to be as much fun, I decided that the easiest way to get the job done was go have a chat with Blind Benny, who works the ritziest part of town, tin cup in hand.

It took me about twenty minutes to get there, and it wasn't long before I heard Blind Benny begging for alms while adding saying that he'd also settle for any bill that had Ben Franklin's or Andy Jackson's likeness on it.

"Hi, Benny," I said, walking up to him and giving Buster, his guide dog, a friendly pat on the head.

"Hiya, Wings," he said, studying me through his dark glasses. "You're looking well."

"Yeah," I replied. "I haven't had a shoot-out in a week. How are things with you?"

"Just trying to get used to this new dog," said Blind Benny.

"Isn't that Buster?"

"Nah. I sold Buster to some guy who needed him for an art film."

"I thought you loved that dog," I said.

"Loving dogs is another union," said Blind Benny. "I liked him. Still, this guy paid through the nose for him. I guess he planned to make a killing off that rich Carlisle broad, and—"

"Moira Carlisle?" I interrupted.

"Unless there are two knockouts married to billionaires named Carlisle," said Blind Benny.

"Where can I find him?"

"Carlisle? Penthouse of the Diamond Tower."

"No, the guy who bought your dog."

"It's kind of complicated," said Blind Benny, pulling a pen and a sheet of paper out of his pocket. "I'd better draw you a map."

"He won't be using it," said a voice from behind me.

I spun around and found myself facing two tough-looking gunsels.

"I never saw a tail," I said, surprised.

"We didn't follow you," said the taller of the two.

"Then what are you doing here?"

"We took a cab," he said. "Everyone knows that whenever you need information you come to Blind Benny."

"Right," said the shorter one. "You think we don't read your books?"

"You do?" I said, surprised.

"Everyone does," said the shorter one. He pulled a copy of *The Bloody Corpse Cries Foul* and walked up to me. "Would you autograph it?"

"Sure," I said, reaching for a pen.

"Could you say 'To Vinnie, the one man I was always afeared of'?"

"You got to excuse my partner," said the taller gunsel. "He ain't never got past third grade. It's 'the one man I was always ascared of.'"

"I liked third grade," said Vinnie defensively.

I scribbled an inscription and handed it back to him.

"I can't read your signature," said Vinnie, peering at it.

"That's okay," I told him. "I didn't write it anyway. I thought everyone knew that Scaly Jim Chandler writes them."

"That's why it's so good!" exclaimed the taller gungel.

"I really appreciate this, Wings," said Vinnie. "It almost makes me sorry about what I got to do next."

He slugged me in the belly, and as I doubled over he cracked me over the head with a club I hadn't even seen in his hand.

I spat blood. It tasted salty. The salt invigorated me, and I caught Vinnie with a roundhouse left, but before I could follow up his partner had sapped me from behind with a blackjack. I started seeing images of Velma with her clothes on, so I knew they'd done me some serious damage. I came up swinging, catching Vinnie with a right to the jaw and Blind Benny with a left to the solar plexus.

"What the hell are you hitting me for?" he demanded.

"When I have time for aimed shots, you'll be the first to know," I grated through torn lips.

The blackjack caught me on the side of the head again, and as I fell to the ground Vinnie and his partner began covering my unprotected body with kicks that would have done a soccer player proud. Time after time one foot or another would crunch into my face. I felt the cartilage in my nose give way, and I heard the sharp crack! as my jaw broke.

Finally Vinnie pulled out a pistol and aimed it at me.

"You can't say you wasn't warned, Shamus," he said, pulling the trigger. Five shots buried themselves deep in my liver and spleen.

That did it. Before I'd merely been annoyed. Now I was mad.

-end of excerpt-



A chat with ex Marine and Science Fiction Writer

Elizabeth Moon

James Bacon

I knew that Elizabeth Moon served in the United States Marine Corps, I had read about that, and I knew from her writings that she had an inspired insight into the mind and instincts of those in the military which I feel, as a reader, have stood her in good stead. I am very grateful that she was happy to answer my questions. I was grateful that Elizabeth helped this interview, at times I am clumsy, trying to get answers to ideas and understandings I have in my head, and she helped, as you will see.

First, as a Marine, what did you do?

While on active duty, I worked in systems design and programming. It is possible (but not ideal) to write a very large relational database in COBOL.

Are you always a Marine?

Yes.



You joined in 1968, not exactly a prime time to be voluntarily joining the Marines. Do you have any reasons why you joined?

I always planned to serve in the military. It would take pages of explanation to make it clear why. It didn't bother me that it was an unpopular choice in 1968. As for why the Marines--because I went to talk to Army, Air Force, and Navy recruiters, and they all flattered me and told me what wonderful things they could do for me. The Marine recruiter looked at me and said "You MIGHT make it through OCS." Irresistible.

How do you feel about the Marines doing their jobs in Iraq and Afghanistan? (Is the "brothers" mythos correct, and you support them?)

I support Marines and the Corps. I don't always support the political decisions that deploy Marines. There's a distinct difference there. I want all military personnel to be provided with good equipment, good food, good support services, medical care in the field and back home, with respect for them as citizens and warriors both, and--extremely important--leadership that makes good decisions in terms of deployment and mission. There are times when supporting the troops means opposing the political decisions that put them in the field when the strategy is flawed.

As a Marine, did you continue with science fiction while on service?

Read it? Yup. Write it? Sort of, but I was not submitting work for publication. I thought my writing stank, and I wasn't enjoying the "New Wave" SF much anyway.

What's your opinion on allowing women to be in the Front Line Combat roles?

In modern warfare, there's no clear distinction between front line and support in terms of danger and the need to be capable in combat. All military personnel may find themselves in a front-line situation and need to be trained for it and capable. In my opinion, some women are as well-suited for intentional front-line combat as any men.

Why do you think for the military it is OK for women to be Combat pilots, but not Combat Marines on the ground?

Several answers to what is not, after all, a simple question. First, I'm guessing that by "OK" you mean "is allowed by regulations" not "is thought by everyone to be OK." There are plenty of people who still don't think women should be in the military at all, or deployed at all, or combat pilots. Second, I am not going to mind-read the military (which isn't one mindset anyway.) I would guess that contributing to the difference in regulations are one or more of the following points: 1) the skill-sets of pilots and ground troops are different: what is needed (in terms of physical ability, mental ability, emotional stability) is different. Not all pilots would make good ground troops (and vice versa.) 2) Women pilots are a known quantity, and have previously proven their ability to fly military and high-performance aircraft in non-combat situations. When they proved able to succeed in combat training, it then made sense to use them. 3) Women -- despite long exposure to ground combat unofficially -- have little or no track record of performance in those situations. Even those who have been in ground combat in the current wars (again, supposedly while not so engaged) find that their experience is generally denied or ignored. (While following the LiveJournal of a woman serving in Iraq, it was obvious that some

people reading her LJ refused to believe what she said, on the grounds that no women were ever under fire.) 4) Beliefs are stronger than reality, until reality whacks you upside the head. Particularly at the upper levels of command, where those in charge formed their opinions in an earlier era, traditional beliefs about the best roles for men and women ensure that women will not have the opportunity to put facts on the table.

You feature women strongly in your work, do you feel they have or could play a greater role in the services?

Given the right command structure and philosophy, certainly. There's been a steady expansion of women's opportunities in the military from WWII to the present.

In the forces, the loss of people such as Cpl. Sarah Bryant, Maj. Megan McClung and Capt. Kimberly Hatton, seem to be making folks accustomed to the loss of women, in combat situations. How do you feel about that?

About the loss of women, or the change in attitude? I don't like to see any combat casualties...but if you're in a war, they're going to happen.

The change in attitude – accepting that yes, women in uniform – our women – will die if they're serving (not just as unarmed victims of attacks) – is absolutely necessary if women are to achieve the same level of acceptance both in and out of the armed forces. Traditionally, in this country, all men have been accorded respect and some privilege on the grounds that they were subject to the draft and might have to face combat (as many in fact did.) In my childhood, the post WWII and Korean War period, this was the standard reason given for boys and men to have access to opportunities denied girls and women, including public office. Though women now have many opportunities women did not have before, there is still a persistent belief that they are "less equal" in many capacities where combat experience is believed to confer advantage.

Fact is, women have always died in wars, including "our" women, and including our women in uniform (Army nurses during WWII, for example) without that being recognized as combat deaths. Only recently have women's roles in combat settings (not that much as combat troops, but in areas where they were under fire, while in supposedly non-combat roles) been recognized. Personally, as a woman, I do not consider the death of a woman in combat to be any more poignant than the death of a man. Both are human: real people, individuals with a past and a future cut short, with perhaps families – parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, children of their own – who care about them and will grieve at their loss.

Do you feel that bravery by the likes of Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester, Spst. Monica Lin Brown, Major Kim Campbell and Fl. Lt. Michele Goodman, are proof that women can play an equal part?

A) Bravery alone isn't the issue. B) If by "women" you mean some women perform as well as men in combat situations, yes. But the fact is, less than 100% of the human race, male or female, is military material. Not all men make or would make good soldiers. Not all women make or would make good soldiers. So whether women play "an equal part" depends on how you define "equal part." Individual women have shown the mental and physical toughness, the mental and physical skills, of good (and excellent) soldiers, both in modern, well-organized militaries and in irregular warfare. We do not know – because we

have never tapped the resource – what the relative percentages are – for the various skillsets and innate abilities that go into making a good soldier.

I personally doubt that under present social conditions as high a percentage of women would make good combat soldiers as men. Present social conditions include an individual's experience from birth on up: women are still not provided the same opportunities to condition physically, to play aggressive team sports, and to be socially accepted when expressing interests and attitudes known to be precursors of military success. Social concerns about (for instance) gender identity interfere with girls' self-identifying as a) normal women and b) warriors. Boys who play with toy soldiers and act out "battles", who are interested in military history, are considered normal ... girls with the same interests aren't, and the pressure is constant and unrelenting from many segments of society: school, church, family friends if not family itself. But we cannot know until we have a larger sample for analysis.

Have you known this all along?

History certainly suggests it. There are many documented instances of women serving bravely and effectively in battle--particularly in centuries when lack of sanitation and medical exams made it possible for them to serve as "men." They were not discovered until they were severely wounded or killed. In a few cases, their gender was known, at least to a few.

Is there any 'type' of science fiction Marines seemed to enjoy, or you yourself enjoyed? (Wondering if Military SF was a noticeable favorite or not as the case may be, or if you get a lot of correspondence from members of the Corps.)

I don't remember what others were reading in the late '60s, early '70s, I was taking a hiatus from reading SF – at least it was a much smaller part of my reading for about 5-10 years as I began reading heavily in what would become my secondary field, biology, in addition to more military history and technical stuff.

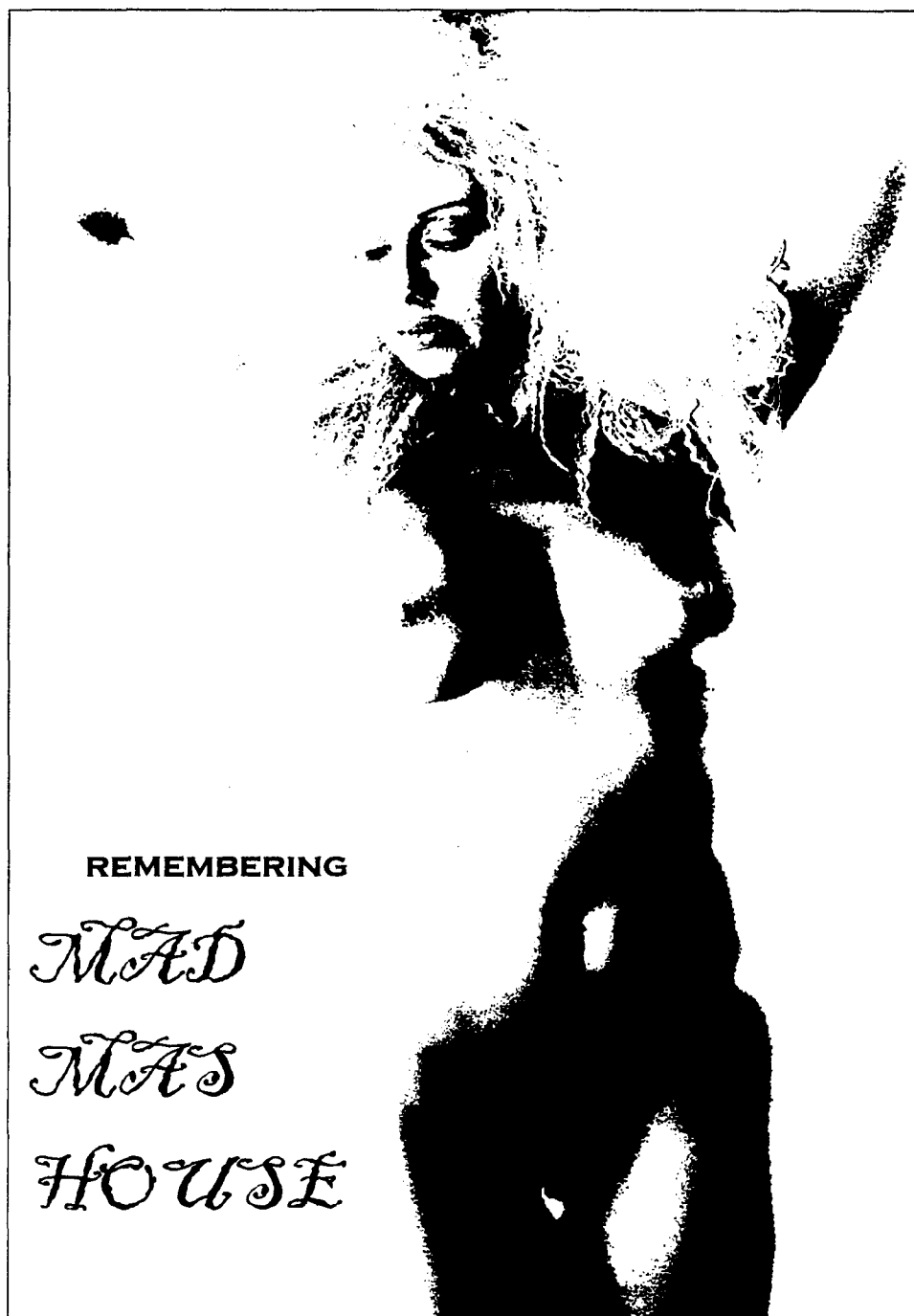
I do get correspondence from both active duty military personnel and veterans, some of whom are Marines. Some of them seem to read much more military SF than other kinds, but that's not true of all – some specifically mention other reading, both within and outside genre. I feel honored when they like my work and feel I've captured the flavor of their experience.

Are there any science fictional "Marine" type characters that you identified with through your book reading or later in your own writing?

In fiction reading, not really. In nonfiction reading (history, memoirs, etc.) yes.

I expect you feel strongly about how Military personnel are portrayed in science fiction. How do you feel about the portrayal of Marines like characters in Science Fiction?

I feel strongly about how military personnel (especially Marines, of course) are portrayed, period. Fiction, nonfiction, any venue. In general (but not always) writers with military experience produce the best writing about the military ... I'm thinking here of Manchester's *Goodbye Darkness* and Crawford's *The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell*, and (in SF) Tanya Huff's "Valor" series and some of Drake's books.



REMEMBERING

MAD MAD HOUSE

a television memory by GHLIII

Surely I have mentioned my 2004 infatuation with a goofy one-season reality show called *Mad Mad House*. I was attracted to the epic by its star, the ridiculously gorgeous Australian Fiona Horne. This is her. Fiona – who has been a rock musician, actress, model and author – is one of those genetic masterpieces that holds my gender in absolute thrall no matter what she does – no wonder the program dubbed her “The Witch”.

What happened in this show was that ten allegedly ordinary citizens were sent to live in a house with five “Alts”, followers of alternative lifestyles. Fiona, for instance, was a Wiccan. The Alts’ stated purpose was to liberate the mundane contestants from their closed, hidebound minds through a series of challenges. Often these challenges involved scrounging through yucky garbage to find some sort of token or somebody getting naked. (Fiona didn’t.) The winner got immunity from an elimination, where the Alts booted off the contestant who least “got it.”

Critics were unanimous. *Mad Mad House* was a “bad, bad show.” What did I care? I got to ogle Fiona.

But after a couple of weeks I found myself drawn to those of the Alts who were sincere in their beliefs. David “Avocado” Wolfe, a.k.a. “The Naturist”, was a herbologist with genuine expertise in his field. Ta’Shia Asanti was likable, even though the show got sued by a voodoo group for calling her “the Priestess”. Art Aguirre made the strongest impression. Sporting heavy tattoos over most of his flesh (including the entire bottom of his face) and multiple metal piercings, “the Modern Primitive” came across as a gentle, inward dude with something to say that he *couldn’t quite* get out. There was something saintly about Art. On the other hand, “The Vampire” struck me as a silly Goth poseur and Fiona soon gravitated to the shallowest jerk among the contestants. She lost all of my regard. Trifle with *my* affections, will you?

As the weeks went on my attention riveted on another of the contestants, a 40ish book editor and mother named **Bonnie**. The woman was light-hearted, smart, sensible, caring. She didn't last much longer than the token black contestant, shown the door the first week. The Alts found they had nothing to offer her: she was in better shape than they were. So she didn't win the \$100,000 grand prize – that went to a somewhat confused stripper-slash-single-mom. But everybody loved, and more importantly, *respected* Bonnie. So did I. A boom-boom like Fiona is all well and good when it comes to fantasy, but when it comes to human contact in reality, I've learned that a woman like Bonnie is beyond fantastic. She's 100% embodied *luck*.

Recently I saw a clip of Fiona's appearance on an Australian version of *Survivor*. Apparently she was as popular as dysentery with her fellow contenders and was voted off the "island" quickly, but a reference to *Mad Mad House* provided information I hadn't had before: the full names of the contestants. Bonnie's full name was **Bonnie Dobkin**.

I googled her and found that since *MMH* she's written several kids' books. Forever the fan-boy, I dropped her a line of fulsome appreciation, and got this back in return:

What a wonderful e-mail! And it's so nice to have an adult fan from MMH--most of the letters I received came from teen Goth girls. (Not that there's anything wrong with teen Goth girls.)

Thanks for the kind words (and for saying you'll look for my books!). MMH, as weird as it was, was one of the best experiences of my life. And actually, it wasn't as weird as they made it look on TV. I learned a lot about myself, and about other people.

In any case, thanks so much for writing. You made my day!

Fondly,

Bonnie

And Bonnie made mine.



SORTING BOOKS - PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

A project undertaken by **John Purcell**

art by Taral Wayne

A few months ago I mentioned in my fanzine, *Askance*, that a project I have accepted is to sort through the science fiction books of Dr. Stephen Atkins, who passed away late last summer. He was on the faculty of Evans Library at Texas A&M University here in College Station, Texas, and enjoyed reading science fiction, besides also being a military history specialist. Not surprisingly, many of his SF books were about future military history. After he passed, I asked his widow Susan if I could sort through his books for the Cushing Library at TAMU, which houses the University's Science Fiction and Fanzine collection. She said "yes," so on the morning of Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011, I began sorting through the stacks of books. And boy, do I mean stacks, besides the overstuffed bookshelves in his home office.

There was really no organization to how Dr. Atkins shelved or piled up his books, so that is going to make my sorting a bit of a chore, but he definitely had his favorites, especially Chris Bunch, Jim Butcher, L. E. Modesitt, Jr., and David Drake. There are many other writers, of course, in this vast stash, but those three stand out in terms of sheer numbers of volumes. Susan Atkins said I could keep whichever ones I wanted, but I'm not much into military SF. Still, there were quite a few books that are now part of my collection. In no particular order, except maybe by the handfuls I'm grabbing, here is the listing of these acquisitions:

John Scalzi, OLD MAN'S WAR

THE GHOST BRIGADES

Jerry Pournelle, THE MERCENARY

Jim Butcher, FURIES OF CALDERON

David Sherman and Dan Cragg, STEEL GAUNTLET (*the third book in the Starfist series; I think I've seen some of the other titles somewhere in that room*)

Robert A. Heinlein, STARSHIP TROOPERS (*fills a hole in my Heinlein collection*)

C. J. Cherryh, DOWNBELOW STATION

F.M. Busby, THE ALIEN DEBT

Bob Shaw, THE RAGGED ASTRONAUTS

THE WOODEN SPACESHIPS

Piers Anthony, BIO OF A SPACE TYRANT VOL 1: REFUGE

(*have not found volume 2 yet in the stacks*)

VOL 3: POLITICIAN

VOL 4: EXECUTIVE

VOL 5: STATESMAN

Chris Bunch: STAR RISK, LTD.

THE SCOUNDREL WORLDS

THE LAST LEGION (*first in series*)

FIREMASK (*second in series*)

STORM FORCE (*third in series*)

HOMEFALL (*fourth in series*)

Graham McNeill, THE ULTRAMARINES OMNIBUS

[includes the novels *Nightbringer*, *Warriors of Ultramar*, and *Dead Sky Black Sun*]

There are probably well over 100 other science fiction books, possibly as many as 200, scattered throughout Dr. Atkins' office, to say nothing of the rest of the house. What I started doing today was sorting them into piles by author. Duplicates abound, indicating that he couldn't remember if he had that book or not. (The poor man died of cancer, so I'm not surprised at his lack of memory.) Once I am done sorting and organizing this SF collection, it will be donated to the SF Collection at Texas A&M University. My goal is to write up my findings on this collection as part of the donation. It is sad work, but the end result will be well worth the effort.

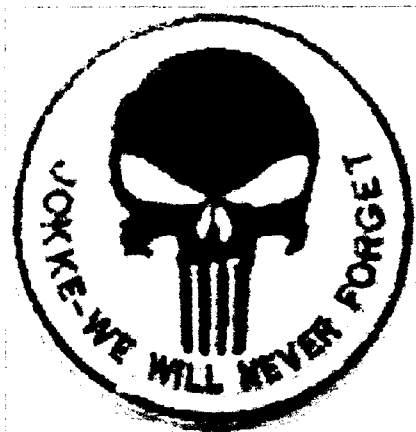
So far I am very surprised to find none of Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Saga* novels; those books definitely fall under the category of Future Warfare, I would have thought Dr. Atkins would have been interested in those, especially from the point of view of training philosophy and its practical application. Like I said before, there are many David Drake and Chris Bunch novels, and I have been fairly surprised by finding eight Alan Dean Foster titles, among which are three Flick novels. There are also quite a few books by Steve Miller, including a few co-written with Sharon Lee.

My personal favorite finds thus far are two F. M. Busby novels, *The Alien Debt* and *Rebel's Quest*, and two Bob Shaw books, *The Ragged Astronauts* and *The Wooden Ships*, which need to be read in that order. *The Ragged Astronauts* was nominated for the Best Novel Hugo Award of 1986; I have yet to find the final book in Shaw's Land and Overland Trilogy, *The Fugitive Worlds*, but I will keep my eyes open for it. If that one is buried somewhere in Dr. Atkins' stacks, I'll find it. Oh, believe me, I will!

As for the hundreds of other books in that office -- well, wow; that's all I can say. There are dozens of titles about the rise and fall of Nazi Germany, also military history in general, with a definite proclivity toward Middle Eastern history and warfare. It is helpful to remember that Dr. Atkins served in Vietnam - as a journalist, if I recall correctly - and he wrote a handful of books about the Mideast before he died.

Eventually I will write a much fuller account of this collection in *Askance*. For now, this is just the tip of the book iceberg I am attempting to chip down to size. This project is going to take me awhile, but it is one that I really don't mind working on. For a science fiction fan and bibliophile like myself, I am in hog heaven.





Norse Warriors

James Bacon

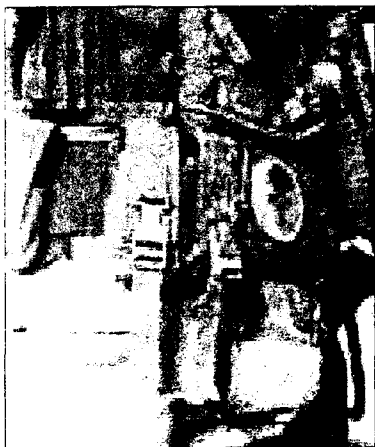
2010 saw Norway have a small crisis of confidence about what their soldiers are doing as part of the ISAF force in Afghanistan. The Norwegian newspaper VG, (www.VG.NO) had a series of article's about a logo that soldiers were using, not only as a patch, but daubed on vehicles and houses of Taliban they had killed. The magazine Alpha, interviewed Norwegian soldiers, who were frank about what they were doing and a photo of a soldier with a patch on his belt, triggered the issue.

The Punisher Skull from the comic book is used as an emblem by soldiers of the Mechanized infantry company 4 (Mek 4) of the Telemark Battalion. Below the skull is the text "Jokke we will never forget". This is in honour of fellow soldier Claes Joachim Olsson who was killed on the 25th of January 2010, while he was driving a small Tank (a CV9030 StormTank – similar to Britain's Warrior or the M2a2 Bradley, turreted, tracked vehicle, with space for eight soldiers in the rear) and hit a roadside bomb. It occurred three miles south east of Ghrowmach in Northern Afghanistan.

"We will never forget" is attributed to the Foo Fighters song of the same name.

This incident seems to have affected men of Mek 4, who Alpha reported were "seeking" firefights and who had started to "take the fight to" the Taliban. The local Taliban leader and alleged maker of the bomb was allegedly killed. Soldiers are reported as painting the Punisher Skull on buildings as warnings to suspected Taliban members.

The Mek 4 also have a war cry. "Til Valhall!" To Valhalla! Apparently this was repeatedly chanted by the unit after a speech by a commanding officer, at the time of Olsson's death. A video of this has now gone online, and the Major can just be seen on top of a vehicle speaking to his men and chanting this war cry. Mek4 also name their tanks and a photo of one called ragnorack has turned up, while the command vehicle of Major Kristian Simonson is daubed with "The Punisher" on its door.



VG quoted the company commander, major Kristian Simonsen; *"I have utilized the troops with the intention of killing, and we have been successful. I don't reflect on having killed someone. They have chosen to enter the battlefield with the intention to kill us, that makes us equally guilty of the outcome. We are the two parties of a war"*. He went on to say "It was beautiful when I

heard that we probably had killed the Taliban leader who made the IED that took the life of Jokke."

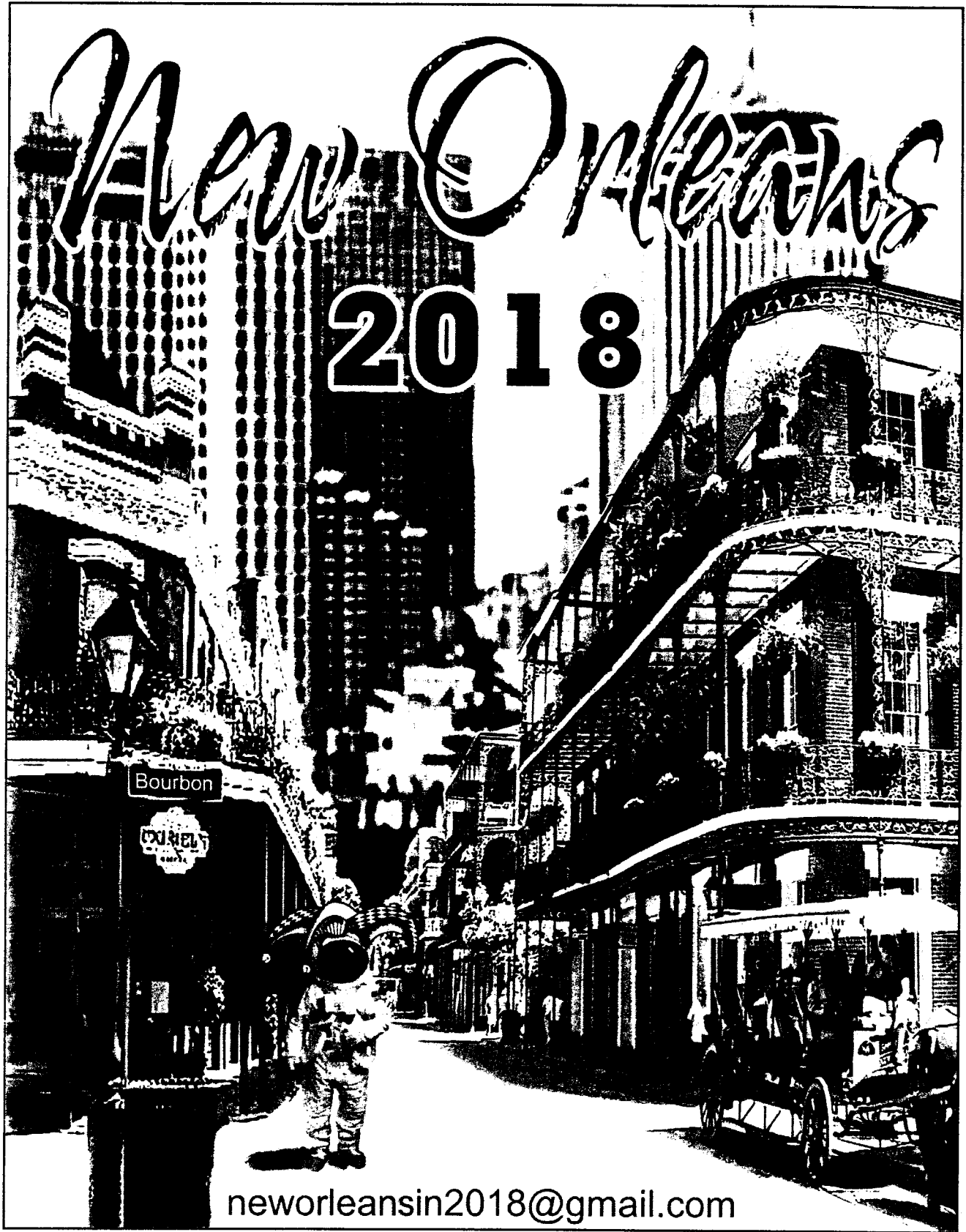
Another Major, Rune Wenneberg subsequently turned up on the internet, not only wearing the "Jokke" badge, but also wearing a Viking Helmet.

Skulls have quite a connotation, and have frequently adorned a variety of military items over the years, the punisher skull has been on Humvees, Helmets, US Seal ST5 have it as a badge logo, and Apache Helicopters (pictured).



Video To Valhalla - <http://www.dagbladet.no/2010/09/28/nyheter/forsvaret/innenriks/13590682/>





Taral Wayne fiction ... but with Stu Shiffman art!



The Fabulous
'Nufties
Taral Wayne
Art by Stu Shiffman

Once there was a fan, who was rather of the opinion of many fans today, that fandom was not what it should be. This was over twenty-five years ago, though. Unlike fans today, Wallace R. Pomfrittⁱ thought he knew what he should do about it. Wally himself was never a prominent fan, and there had been no sign up to that point that he possessed the originality of thought to ever become one. Nor is it likely he ever would have, except for an unusual set of circumstances that brought out the Slan in him, and changed the face of fandom. Otherwise this story might never have happened.

After several years of unfruitful fanac -- including an unpromising fanzine that folded between the second and third numbers, without surviving in the memory of any fan -- Wally had a windfall.

It came in the form of a small collection of older zines, one of them of dubious character published by Claude Degler. Even to Wally, the Cosmic Circle and affiliated products of Claude's mind were a load of ecologically acceptable, aromatic fertilizer. But they contained the sort of energy and ambition that seemed to Wally, to be absent in fandom after the demise of Quandry and its like. Had Jack Speer's investigations into the Cosmic Circle been in the collection also, perhaps Pomfritt would have been deterred by Degler's eventual humiliation, and would never have come up with The Idea.

Unfortunately, this wasn't the case. Wally Pomfritt did invent The Idea of a complete, unrecorded fandom that sprung entirely from his own imagination.

Some necessary references here. Although “Nuftie’s” fandom did make a terrific disturbance after it was revealed as a hoax, the memory of it was altogether overshadowed by later events, such as the Breen Boondoggle, and the second Willis Fund. Then too, there was a dampening effect on the collective memory of the ‘Nufties, caused by the simple reluctance to talk about it after. Possibly there is a third, more insidious reason. But it is premature to speak of it, yet.

I never would have found “Nuftie’s” fandom out if I hadn’t found Wally’s own notes, in a two foot stack of slip-sheets that seemed mainly to be spoiled pages from his early mimeograph zine. These passed to me through a dealer, who couldn’t be bothered sorting through the evidently worthless mound of paper. Insofar as the slip-sheets went, she was quite right. No-one could have expected the treasure of fan history hidden there, between overprinted images of Rotslers, bits of badly rhyming doggerel, and typewritten columns so under-inked as to be illegible.

So far as I can reconstruct it, this is the true history of “Nuftie’s” fandom.

The first thing Pomfritt undertook in that Spring of a new fannish era was to adopt a new pseudonym. He had been unsuccessful in his earlier efforts to become known as “WaRP”, but this was not about remaking *himself*. It was simply that the hand of Wallace R. Pomfritt must not be seen to be pulling the strings in the new order. Events must unfold without suspicion.

Step two. Under his new pseudonym, Wally wrote letters to other fans for the addresses of zines, and then locced them. The incognito Pomfritt continued in this way for nearly six months, until his adopted identity became reasonably well known in fandom. Then he started publishing as well, drawing other well known fans unknowingly into his deception as contributors.

The third step was his “discovery” of new fannish faces, in an imaginary local fandom that Pomfritt, under his pseudonym, carefully nurtured. Their controversial and original contributions, mixed among the established names, soon had everyone talking. After a few rapid issues, Pomfritt folded it without warning. By far the most subtle part of the fanzine’s mystique was that no-one knew whether the last issue was the 7th, 8th, or perhaps even the 9th. Perhaps they had been cut off the mailing list and missed the last one? Few cared to admit they had been dropped by so promising an up-and-comer.

The non-existent contributors, now firmly established as emerging BNF’s, were scattered far and wide among other fanzines, like spores from an exploded puffball.

Instead of one fake identity, Pomfritt now had several, each contributing to real fanzines, writing letters to real fans, and establishing reputations with impeccable backgrounds. His first pen-name was still foremost in this wave of phony new fans, of course, and was publishing yet another zine, preparing for another wave of sporulation.

By this time, even with Pomfritt’s own notes, separating fact from fancy becomes difficult. Among the well known zines and fans of the time, only a few are certainly creatures of Pomfritt’s imagination. There is, for instance, the following example of how confused the scene was. Although to fans at the time it seemed deceptively straightforward, in fact the case below was only a single, carelessly revealed, example of Pomfritt’s unsuspected legerdemain

In one of the earlier issues of Void, by Greg Benford, there is a letter exchange between Ron Ellik and Mal Ashworth about a third fan, one Richard Wingate. Ellik suspected that Wingate was a hoax for a number of reasons, such as a claim to have been at a closed party that Ellik had attended. Ellik had seen no such person. Ellik said also, that George Charters had hinted as much in a letter that

Wingate was a hoax. Ashworth promptly admitted in the next issue, that Charters was a hoax of *his*, and that Wingate was in fact the real fan. Ellik had missed seeing Wingate only because Wingate had confused one party with another, and hadn't been present. This had given Ashworth the amusing idea to plant in Ellik's mind a *false suspicion of a hoax*. Ellik was not such a neo as to be taken in as easily as that, however. In a subsequent issue of Void, he used a hoax fan of his own invention to prove that *he himself* was a hoax.

A second fan, who had the same name as the one Ellik claimed to have invented, wrote to the next issue. Ashworth denounced it as a crude gambit. Refusing to believe that Ellik was only an invention of Bjo Trimble's, he insisted that Ron Ellik was the very fan he purported not to be; that is, he was in fact "The Squirrel" cartooned by Bjo. At this point, almost everyone was confused, and had every right to be.

The truth is, it is highly probable that Wingate was not nearly "outed" at all, but offered by Pomfritt as a distraction. While fandom wondered whether or not the dubious Mr. Wingate existed, other, more deeply concealed creations, proliferated. Of all the participants in those letter columns, only three at most were real, and the rest imaginary. Which was which, had been quite mixed up. Imagine Pomfritt's joy at "proving" two real fans were fake, at the same time as establishing the unquestioned existence of at least one who wasn't!

It was all in good fun of course.

Nevertheless, by this time matters were becoming so complicated that I think Wally was losing control. There was always the danger that some fan would attempt to visit one of his secret identities, for instance. The would-be visitor would only discover there was no Shibboleth, PA, or Yancy Street in New York City.

It was beginning to look more than a bit odd for so many fans to be so elusive, as well. The problem had probably not occurred to Wally at first, at a time when there were few conventions. But as the decade wore on, the number of cons grew, and so did the expectation of social interaction. Several of his established identities had gotten personal invitations to visit, to attend parties, and on occasion even to be Guest of Honour at a convention. It was getting harder to find plausible excuses every time. In the end, frequent CoA's and sudden, unexpected emergencies weren't enough to protect all of his pseudonyms. Several were exposed. Fortunately for Wally, none were of great importance. Penetration into his labyrinth never probed further than the outermost lines of defense. In one especially deft ploy, he explained away one of his exposed hoaxes as the machination of another hoaxter putting the hoax on Pomfritt's hoax.

It was getting hot for Wally, though, no question of it. Big Name Fan, Joan Carr, had just been shown to be Sandy Sanderson in reality, and cracks were already showing in the façade of Carl Brandon. While not the product of Wally's fertile imagination, so many hoax fans in the news was likely to give people ideas. They might look around and notice Pomfritt's own multiple persona. He decided it was time to retrench on the number of identities he managed, and bring yet another generation of imaginary neos up from the bench.

It was the time of the Phony 7th. Fandom snafu as well. It was difficult for Pomfritt to steer his legions away from the controversy. The number of backgrounds Wally had to remember for each of his persona was beginning to give him trouble too. Each required a believable origin, and bibliography of zines that, individually, were easily accepted by even the most knowledgeable fan. Taken together, though, the sum total of so much make-believe fanac added up to such a ponderous body of fan history, and fanzine publishing, that no-one could be expected to have missed much of it... much less *all* of it. Not even the least attentive fan, if had been active over the last few years,

could help noticing that he hadn't been involved in the least way with so many important events, nor that he hadn't met even one of the principals in person. If a single thread were plucked, the entire skein might unravel.

But, of course, a dangling thread attracts attention by nature. Curious about one of Pomfritt's most successful alter egos, the chairman of Midwestcon invited the non-existent fan to present an award. It wasn't the first such emergency Wally had faced, of course. There were several possible means of escape. But in a flash of inspiration, Wally accepted! No one had seen Wally in person for some years, actually, and few who ever had were of any importance in fandom. It was not a great risk, in his estimate. Wally awarded Isaac Asimov with a parody, king-sized rubber (complete with the accompanying large jar of petroleum jelly) in perfect safety.

Before presenting the award, though, Wally gave the event one of his most brilliant, most devious spins. He began a rumor that he, under his pseudonym, wouldn't appear. That he could not appear, in fact. Soon, it was common knowledge that the reason he couldn't appear at Midwestcon was that the fan in question did not exist. Then, when Wally climbed to the podium, his appearance was a veritable bombshell! Once and for all, it seemed that the existence of his entire underground network of fans was secure.

Throughout the con, Wally was in constant, if minor, danger of facing fans who could catch him out if he was careless in any one of his complicated fictitious references. He had to remember that it was not from Stupido, Texas, that he hailed, but from Midfinger, Mass; that it was *Sapient* he published and not *Alias*; that his best piece was written about his dog Chess, not his brother Harold; that he had feuded with Burbee or that he hadn't feuded with Burbee... Discrepancies inevitably crept into conversations. Wally played to the audience cleverly, never contradicting them, but committing himself to as little as possible to any alleged fact that might be checked.

His record of fanac, that weekend, was very much in the ear of the beholder. Writing years later, Terry Carr spoke of Pomfritt's fandom as a vague period between Quandry's last days and the first Midwestcon. In Ray Nelson's recollection, it was a new generation, just coming into its own. To Bob Tucker (writing as Hoy Ping Pong, ironically) Pomfritt's years must have been some momentary lapse, when he was gafiated. Whenever more than one fan questioned Wally at once, though, simple evasions and complex lies failed. What was established fact to one, would not necessarily jibe with reality for another. In the end Wally simply mumbled a lot.

But astonishingly, he pulled it off.

Moreover, Wally Amblin Pomfritt had enjoyed appearing as one of his most successful puppets. At first, he attended cons occasionally, then regularly. He learned to mumble almost as an automatic reflex. Inarticulate about his past, or the fabulous fandom he created, it was inevitable that he'd become the target of fannish humour. Unintelligible replies became commonplace witticisms in the pages of many zines.

Just what decade did you pub your ish? What year was it you stole Tucker's pillow? Was it Philcon or Torcon you hitchhiked to with a circus clown? Could you repeat that? Yes, I thought that's what you said...

The spelling of the meaningful sounding, but meaningless words varied. In time the obfuscate answers settled down to convention. Wally, as his alter ego, had mailed all his zines from across the river in "St. Ghu", or had gotten drafted on the way to "Chronacon", or had said "apruX" to the waiter when he brought the wrong chowder. Other amusing expressions once common, are now largely

forgotten. (And thankfully, I think.) One survives, and is central to the whole mythos – the Fabulous ‘Nufties; the decade no fan could properly place.

The controversy over 7th. Fandom was reaching a climax. Though wisdom might have suggested a strategic withdrawal, Wally Pomfritt’s puppets were still in full flower. After his success at Midwestcon, Wally believed himself immune from discovery, and of course finally overreached himself. Although he had prudently removed all his aliases from heavily populated fan centers such as St. Louis, Chicago, or Los Angeles (leaving himself only one, rich, eccentric in New York known to be a recluse) he began to take terrible chances at conventions. They were widely separated cons, at least. But he turned up at them now in different personas, almost daring some traveling fan to recognize him as someone else. Each success only emboldened him to take one more chance. Of course, Fate was only inviting him to stretch his neck far enough to take his head off in a clean swipe.

In a word, it finally happened.

The incident began when a pipe-swaggering Harlan Ellison was at a Midwestcon, two or three years later, and was attacked by Jim Harmon. Harlan slammed a door shut between them, but Harmon smashed it down, screaming,

“You’re not Ellison! I saw you at Philly, where you were Art Rapp!”

“Ellison? Rapp?” exclaimed someone else, taken by surprise. “You’re crazy, that’s Bbob Stewart!”

The rest was history, although it is vigorously denied by many eye-witnesses who still have trouble believing it, even after all this time.

After Harmon broke down the door, the resort manager raised so much fuss that Ellison/Pomfritt made his escape. Pomfritt was never again seen in person. He had no desire to face such an uncontained rage again. But, so submerged in unreality was Wally by this time, that even after his cover was blown, he wouldn’t ‘fess up. All of his many, many identities began to protest that they were quite real, even those nobody suspected were otherwise. By the Shoe-Fits Theorem, this called their existence into doubt as well. One by one the dominoes fell. All fandom was shocked. The entire 7th. Fandom collapsed into insubstantiality along with “Harlan Ellison”. In the end, “Ellison” frothed in rabid fashion how the mad dogs had kneed him in the groin. Perhaps it was Wally’s last contribution to fannish legend. Pomfritt was finished.

So was fandom, nearly. Singly, and by batches, fan after fan evaporated into dream-stuff, having never existed at all. Many were shockingly well known and admired, but unreal all the same. The survivors in fandom counted their diminished numbers. As the hoax was penetrated deeper and deeper, it seemed as though at least half of all genzines, scores of apazines, as well as two complete apas, uncountable clubs, all but a handful of members of the N3F (including the entire directorate), armies of letter hacks, writers and artists, and an unnerving number of BNF’s went up in smoke.

Some shocked writers likened the events to the paranoid plot of a bad sci-fi movie about alien body-snatchers. One or two of them were probably serious. Who would be next, they wondered? When at last the slaughter ended, there were no assurances that the infiltration had been rooted out. Might there not be further revelations? Each of Pomfritt’s puppets had perished publishing to the last, and was silenced only when stripped of all credibility and thereafter ignored. Panic had led to several quite real fans being wrongly identified as fakes, and forced to gafiate when ostracized by their peers. Everyone was suspect, long after the purge exposed the last doppelganger.

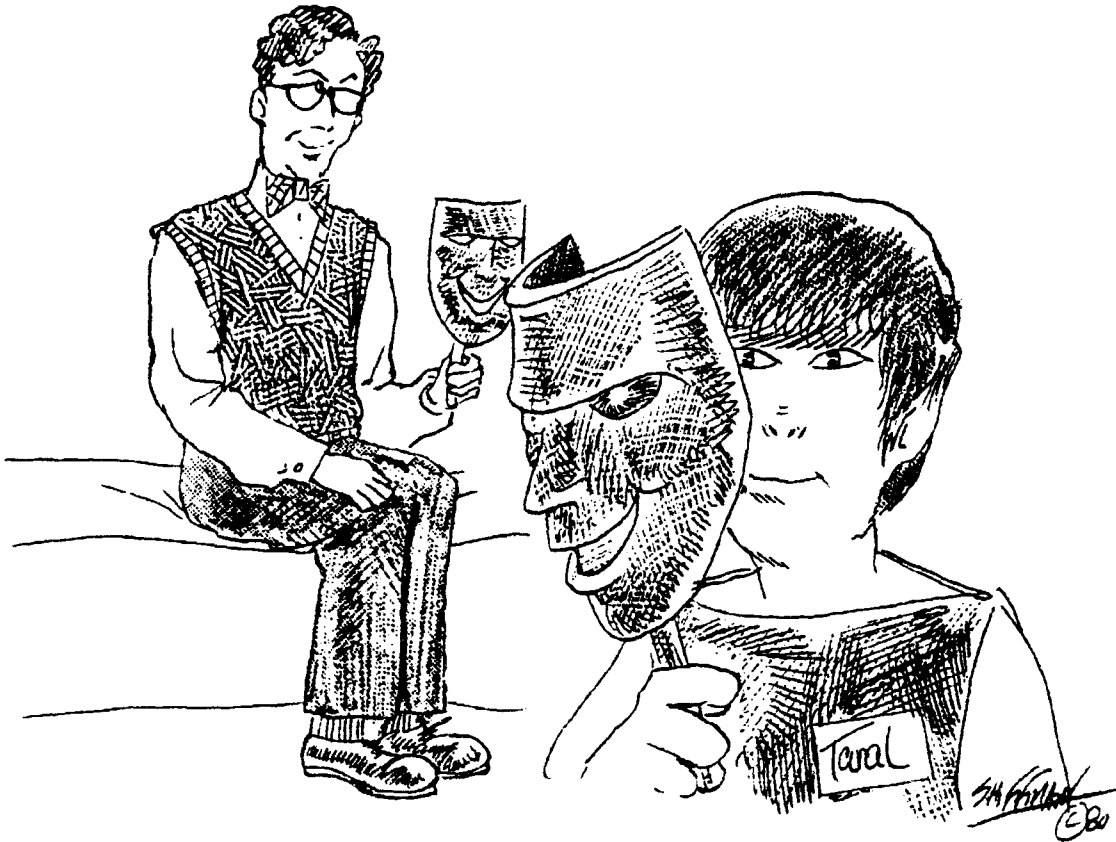
And for good reason.

Pomfritt's chilling last words in print were a promise to return...

Surely Wally A. Pomfritt was the greatest fannish genius of all time. Had only he applied as much energy and creativity in his own name, he would be today as famous as Laney, Willis, or Bowers. One can only wonder what peculiarity of mind led him to hiding his own light under so many bushels.

Long after this was all over, there have been several legitimate fandoms come and go, and the memory of Pomfritt's 'Nufties fandom has died suspiciously fast. How is it such a traumatic episode can be forgotten as totally, and with so little comment, as it has been? Can we glimpse hidden design behind our collective amnesia?

There are only a few fans that I can be certain of. Myself for one, and perhaps a score of friends I have known personally for years. I remind myself to be open minded about even them. After all, I'm not actually too certain of *me*.



ⁱ In the original version the name was Wallace A. Tompsom. No idea if it had any significance or not. "Wallace R. Pomfritt" seems funnier to me, 28 years later...

Joe Major's Alexiad is a star of high magnitude in the fanzine firmament. Here he waxes eloquently on one of his favourite topics.

THE WORLD IS MAD

Joseph Major

As the topic of this issue is a discussion of the military, which seems to be not unpopular as a topic of SF in general, our gallant editor has requested a discussion of matters which are not normally considered in this context. Some people felt the need to apologize (or apologise) for having ducked out of the Great War for Civilization, as it was called then. Among them were some of the people whose warfare was against less armed, if more bitter, foes.

Sir Ernest Shackleton's book *South* (1920) is dedicated:

TO
MY COMRADES
WHO FELL IN THE WHITE WARFARE
OF THE SOUTH AND ON THE
RED FIELDS OF FRANCE
AND FLANDERS

It was notorious that the *Endurance* was setting sail even as the Guns of August were firing, and Shackleton had offered the services of the ship and crew to the Admiralty, only to be told to "PROCEED". The whole bloody thing will be over by Christmas, everyone knew that. And they had proceeded.

Two years later, when the *Endurance* had been crushed in the ice, and the crew had drifted north, then sailed to a tiny island in the middle of nowhere, and Shackleton had taken five men and sailed across the worst seas on the globe to South Georgia island in the boat *James Caird*, then crossed the island with two other men for the first time ever, and the fastest time ever, he had asked his friend Norwegian whaling-camp boss Thoralf Sørle, "Tell me, when was the war over?"

Sørle had to say, "The war is not over. Millions are being killed. The world is mad."

Revisiting this byplay in a report on the Shackleton exhibition of the nineties (which included the *James Caird*), *New Yorker* writer Evan Thomas wondered why after hearing that Shackleton hadn't turned around and gone back into the wilderness.

Five years after the war was formally over, and the year after Shackleton died, the expedition photographer **Frank Hurley** (James Francis Hurley) brought out a film, also titled *South*. They needed to cover the expenses, which as usual were more than had been budgeted for.



The movie is marked by remarkable *live-action* scenes. That's right, not only did Hurley save the film he took before the ship sank, he even took some footage later, movie film made with a hand-cranked camera, on the ice after the ship had been evacuated.

Back then, however, they needed to validate their efforts. And so the film starts with footage taken after everybody was back home. All in uniform. The expeditionaries didn't want to be seen as having slacked off.

For example, **Sir Ernest Shackleton** himself had been in the Army — Major Shackleton, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. His connection to Warwickshire seems not to have been much, had they stuck to a territorial basis he would more likely have been in one of the London based units, or perhaps an Irish regiment, but officers tended to be a bit more spread out. To take one example which you may be acquainted with, Lieutenant Tolkien, J. R. R., from Worcestershire, an Oxford man, ended up in neither the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment or the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, but the Lancashire Fusiliers.

In a bizarre posting, Major Shackleton ended up serving in the ill-fated intervention in Russia, assigned to Archangel. (It's bizarre because here we have someone assigned to do something for which he has the skills and experience.) His name became notorious when the troops were issued ski boots made to his design. But not quite to his specifications, the leather was poorly treated, so the boots did not fit well, and the soldiers cursed their "Shackletons". He was a ski instructor, having learned well enough to teach that arcane art. One of his students was somewhat surprised to hear him quoting poetry, which shows how ill he knew the man.

When the three raggedy travelers showed up at the whaling camp on South Georgia, one of the others asked the third to pin up his trousers, which had disintegrated. After **Frank Worsley**, captain of the *Endurance*, got a new pair of trousers he went into the Royal Navy. He was made commander of a Q-ship; one of the Admiralty's desperate responses to the U-boat peril. The idea was that the ship would have concealed guns, and when the U-boat surfaced to sink this lone, decrepit ship sailing independently, a little surprise would ensue. The *Uboote* of the (*Erste*) *Weltkrieg* more commonly surfaced and sank ships with deck guns — thus the encounter with the U-33 in *The Land that Time Forgot* (1918) does have the right tactics, if a somewhat ambitious portrayal of the range of such a boat.

Worsley won the Distinguished Service Order for his successful command of his ship. Then, he ended up with Shackleton again, at Archangel, and was put in command of a patrol that went behind Bolshevik lines. He brought them back safely, thanks to his navigating skills, and received a repeat award of the DSO.

The man who pinned up Worsley's trousers after their crossing of South Georgia, **Thomas Crean**, was on leave from the Royal Navy. He returned to service as a Warrant Officer and Boatswain, spending his time serving in shore bases and service ships. On his last posting, the depot ship HMS *Hecla*, he injured himself in a fall and was invalided out.

Waiting on Elephant Island was a man who seemed to have a decided fondness for the South, having already been on three Antarctic expeditions before he went on the *Endurance*. **Frank Wild** (John Robert Francis Wild) had also been a sailor in the Royal Navy before he went South. He was given a commission this time and ended up — at Archangel, with Shackleton and Worsley!

Several other of Shackleton's fellows also served with him at Archangel. **Leonard Hussey**, the expedition's meteorologist, who is seen in the opening minutes of *South* with his banjo (entertainment was a significant part of British expeditions, they had to do something to keep from going completely out of their heads during the long polar nights), joined the Royal Artillery, and ended up in North Russia. **Alexander Macklin**, one of the expedition's doctors, and in the Royal Army Medical Corps, also went there. (He would later have the sad experience of observing Shackleton's death on the Shackleton-Rowlett Expedition, at South Georgia in 1922.) **Sir Philip Brocklehurst, Bt.**, a veteran of Shackleton's first expedition (where he had lost a toe and thereby a place on the polar party), of the elite Life Guards cavalry, was another in this group.

As for the photographer and cinematographer, Hurley became a war correspondent photographer for the Australian Imperial Force, serving as an honorary Captain. He took a number of photographs in some very dangerous circumstances during the Battle of Third Ypres.

Tragically, not all of the *Endurance* expedition survivors survived the War. **Timothy McCarthy**, one of the crew of the *James Caird*, died serving in the Royal Navy during a fight in the English Channel. **Alfred Cheetham**, another veteran of several expeditions, Third Officer of the *Endurance*, went into the Merchant Marine, and was killed in August of 1918 when his ship was torpedoed in the North Sea.

As for the other fellow, the most noteworthy of Scott's men was **Edward R. G. R. Evans**, the second in command of the *Terra Nova* expedition. Evans was a regular Royal Navy officer, and commanded several destroyers during the war. In command of HMS *Broke*, Evans conducted a ramming and boarding action in the English Channel, which gained him some notoriety. He ended his naval career as Admiral the Lord Mountevans, and his grandson, the current Lord Mountevans, is named "Broke Evans".



The other chronicler of the expedition, **Apsley Cherry-Garrard**, whose book *The Worst Journey In the World* (1922) is one of the classics of expeditionary writing, signed up to join the Royal Engineers. Somehow, in spite of his nearsightedness and fragile health, he ended up in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve — and then, commanding a company of armored cars fighting in France!

A third member of that expedition was less fortunate. **Harry L. L. Pennell**, who commanded the *Terra Nova* during the trips south, was also on loan from the Royal Navy. In 1914 he got a prize. Scott had commented during the preparations for the expedition that he should, once he returned, be in line to get command of a battlecruiser. Pennell did; HMS *Queen Mary*, the newest of those ships. And in the battle of Jutland, *Queen Mary* was one of those bloody ships of which of which something was wrong that day; she blew up, with 1266 men lost, including Captain Pennell.

Frank Hurley had an associate, **Hubert Wilkins** (George Hubert Wilkins). Wilkins had already been with Vilhjalmur Stefansson during the ill-fated *Karluks* expedition, but had had the luck or sense to

go off early. Wilkins was a little more adventurous, receiving the Military Cross twice for rescuing wounded men, when not photographing. (He would later be on Shackleton's last expedition, make an attempt to go under the Arctic ice cap with a submarine, be knighted, and finally advise Commander James F. Calvert of the U.S. Navy who *did* go under the ice cap with a submarine, USS *Skate* (SSN-578), surfacing at the North Pole to scatter Wilkins's ashes.) The leader of the other expedition that Hurley and Wild were on, **Sir Douglas Mawson**, was a Major in the British Army, working with the Ministry of Munitions. (As Evans had discovered the problems of too little a dosage of vitamins (Vitamin C; he had nearly died of scurvy), Mawson had discovered the problems of too much a dosage of vitamins (hypervitaminosis A). Nutrition is important, though those who have consumed MRE's will comment that other factors ought to be considered.)

As for the other other fellow, **Roald Amundsen** made a bit of money in merchant shipping during the war, taking advantage of Norwegian neutrality. His countryman **Trygve Gran**, the *Terra Nova* expedition's ski expert, joined the Royal Flying Corps and won the Military Cross for bravery. (On a more somber note, Gran later collaborated with the Nazis and Quisling government during the occupation of Norway and was sentenced to death, but reprieved.)

The man Amundsen died looking for, **Umberto Nobile**, perhaps not surprisingly spent the war designing lighter-than-air craft as an officer in the *Regia Aeronautica Italia* (Royal Italian Air Force). The commander of the Italian Adriatic fleet was their Arctic explorer, leader of the 1899-1900 *Stella Polaris* expedition, which had set a record northern attainment, **Luigi Amedeo Giuseppe Maria Ferdinando Francesco di Savoia, duca degli Abruzzi**. Yes, he was the first cousin of the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III (Vittorio Emanuele), and the son of Amadeo, duca d'Aosta, the prince of the Italian royal house of Savoy who briefly became King of Spain.

As for those whose moment in the polar sun was to come, **Richard E. Byrd** was working in the US Navy's new aviation department. His future pilot, **Bernt Balchen**, was in training in the Norwegian Army (and would, it has been claimed, fight in the Finnish Civil War under an assumed name).

Most of these people were citizen-soldiers; doing what was expected of them when the call came, returning to their normal lives (even if their "normal" was highly unusual) when the fighting was over. Some were professionals; doing their bit in wartime, and in peace, finding something unusual that would be worthwhile and challenging. Perhaps they were more used to inconvenience and unusual efforts.

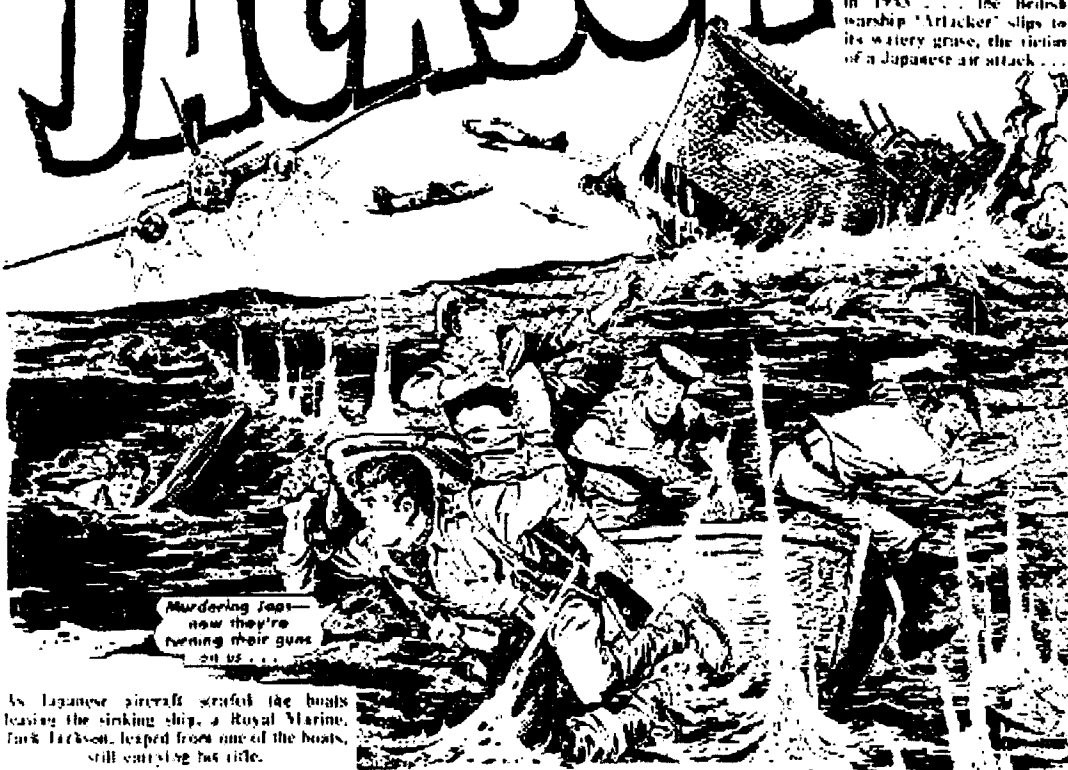
Looking back at the war, sometimes it is hard not to agree with Sørle's comment, "The world is mad." And yet, once in it, there are examples of character and of character-building that should not be forgotten, testings in a fierce environment that can be transferred to more pacific circumstances. The same discipline and testing of one's self that are seen in conflict can be applied in the wilder parts of the world, in a manner less destructive. To quote a former cover subject of *Challenger*: "It is well that war is so terrible, otherwise we should grow too fond of it."



INTO BATTLE AGAINST
THE JAPS WITH -

UNION JACK JACKSON

Somewhere in the Pacific
in 1943 . . . the British
warship "Attacker" slips to
its watery grave, the victim
of a Japanese air attack . . .



Murdering Japs—
now they're
turning their guns
on us . . .

As Japanese aircraft scouted the boats
leaving the sinking ship, a Royal Marine,
Jack Jackson, leaped from one of the boats,
still carrying his rifle.

A Bootneck among the
Leathernecks

Warlord was a boy's comic that began in 1974 and I came to it in the mid to late seventies. It was a military anthology, produced weekly, with about 6 to 7 stories per issue, each about 3 or 4 pages long although this varied, and Codename Warlord, the key title, could go up to nice pages.

Most stories were continuous, and built up a massive following although they would ably tell a story in those few pages sometimes ending on a cliff-hanger sometimes not, while letters, competitions, features on modern and historical military subjects would pepper the comic. This was not my favourite comic of this era, that was *Battle Picture Weekly*, which began a short while later, with the aim of being more gritty. There was so much grit, it was great. Yet, I enjoyed *Warlord* and *Victor*, and it was addictive. As well as the weekly comic there were annuals at Christmas time and Summer Specials about three or four times the size in the summer.

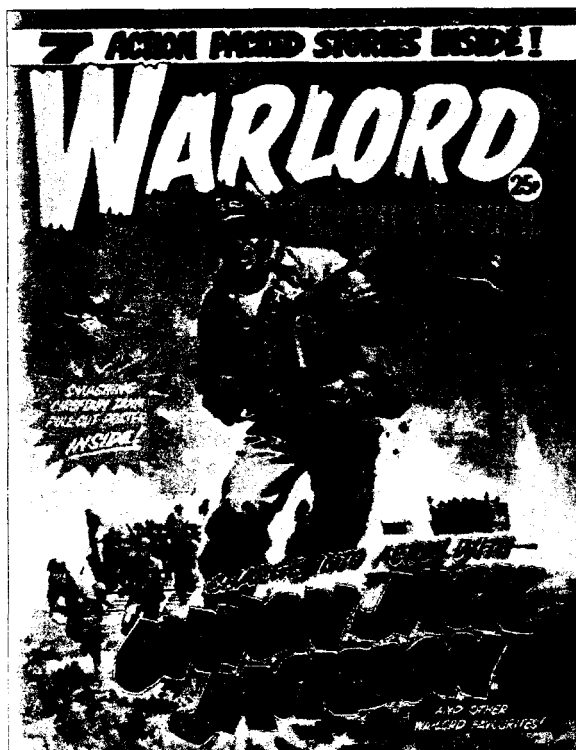


I also think that it was affordable. My dad could easily pick up comics, and it didn't seem to hurt his pocket. I had a look at in 1979, a summer special was 25p, while a regular issue was 9p, and a pint of

Milk in December 1979 was 15p. I could not buy today any comic for less than a pint of Milk.

One of the main characters, who adorned the first issue, and lasted through to the Merger with *Victor* comic in 1986 was **Union Jack Jackson**.

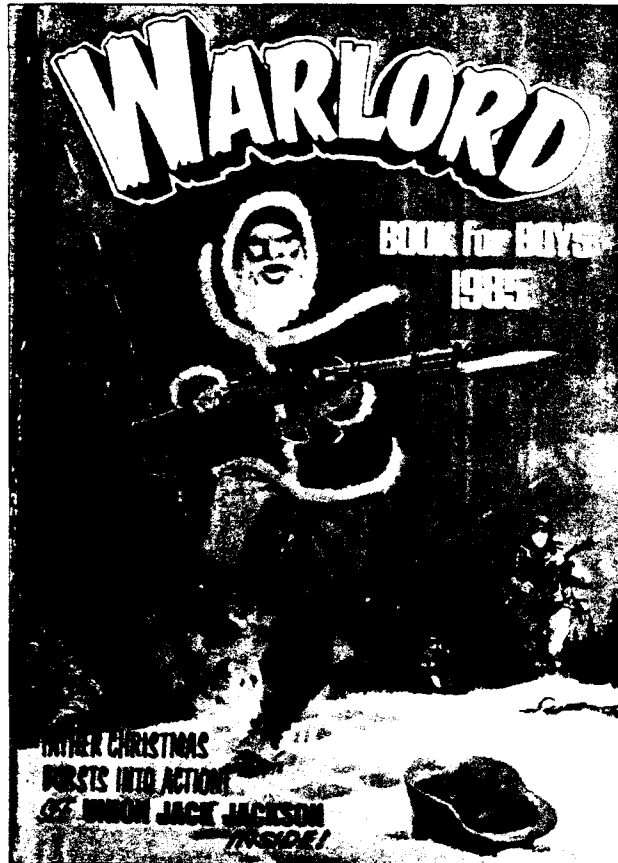
Marine Jackson as he introduced himself, was the sole survivor of a Japanese attack on HMS *Attacker*, a British war ship in the Pacific Theatre in 1943. The Japanese bombers are seen in the opening panel, strafing survivors of the warship, as she slips below the waves in the background. Jackson is found, by some U.S. Marines. Cleaned up, soon he and a large American Irish marine, called Pvt Sean O' Bannion are in a competition, due to O'Bannion mocking Jackson's Lee Enfield rifle. Jackson proves himself, in a target shoot, yet the two men soon come to blows, ending



with Jackson, fighting to a standstill and collapsing, but his courage and temerity earn him much respect.

Simply, Sgt Lonnigan, who is of course chewing on a cigar, tells him that he will let the powers that be know he is with them, and for the moment he is to attach himself to their unit, and so a Marine M1 pot helmet is handed over. Jackson modifies this, with a Union Jack on the front, so everyone knows he is still "One of His Majesties Royal Marines". In later issues UJJ would fight against being transferred as hard as he did against the Japanese.

Together the three fought in the Pacific theatre, against the Japanese. The seventies were not a time of political correctness, and "the Japs" were always on the losing side, and frequently portrayed in a very negative way. The Germans were also frequently portrayed very negatively, especially SS troops, but like all British comics there were good Germans and bad Nazis. Japan was a different matter altogether and for many one which was a sore point. Germany's atrocities were well known, her leaders trialled, some never felt that Japan showed remorse or apologised correctly, how much of that was due to Hirohito avoiding prosecution for war crimes is unclear, but when Britain sent the Duke of Edinburgh to Hirohito's funeral in 1989, one POW wondered what his medals were worth and was filmed posting dropping them in a Jiffy Bagⁱ. Of course things move on and this year, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada apologized to Six US ex-POW's.ⁱⁱ

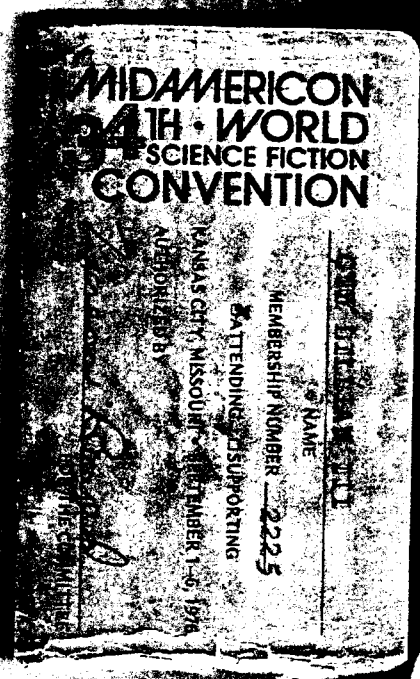


The artwork was very clean, detailed and specific. The artist was Carlos Cruz, a Spaniard born in 1930 who had immigrated to Buenos Aires, returned to Malaga in Andalucía, he had an extensive portfolio before UJJ and was published at the age of 17, in 1947 with "Chatin" Chaves, supplement of La Tarde. He also drew *Dan Dare* and *Sniper*.

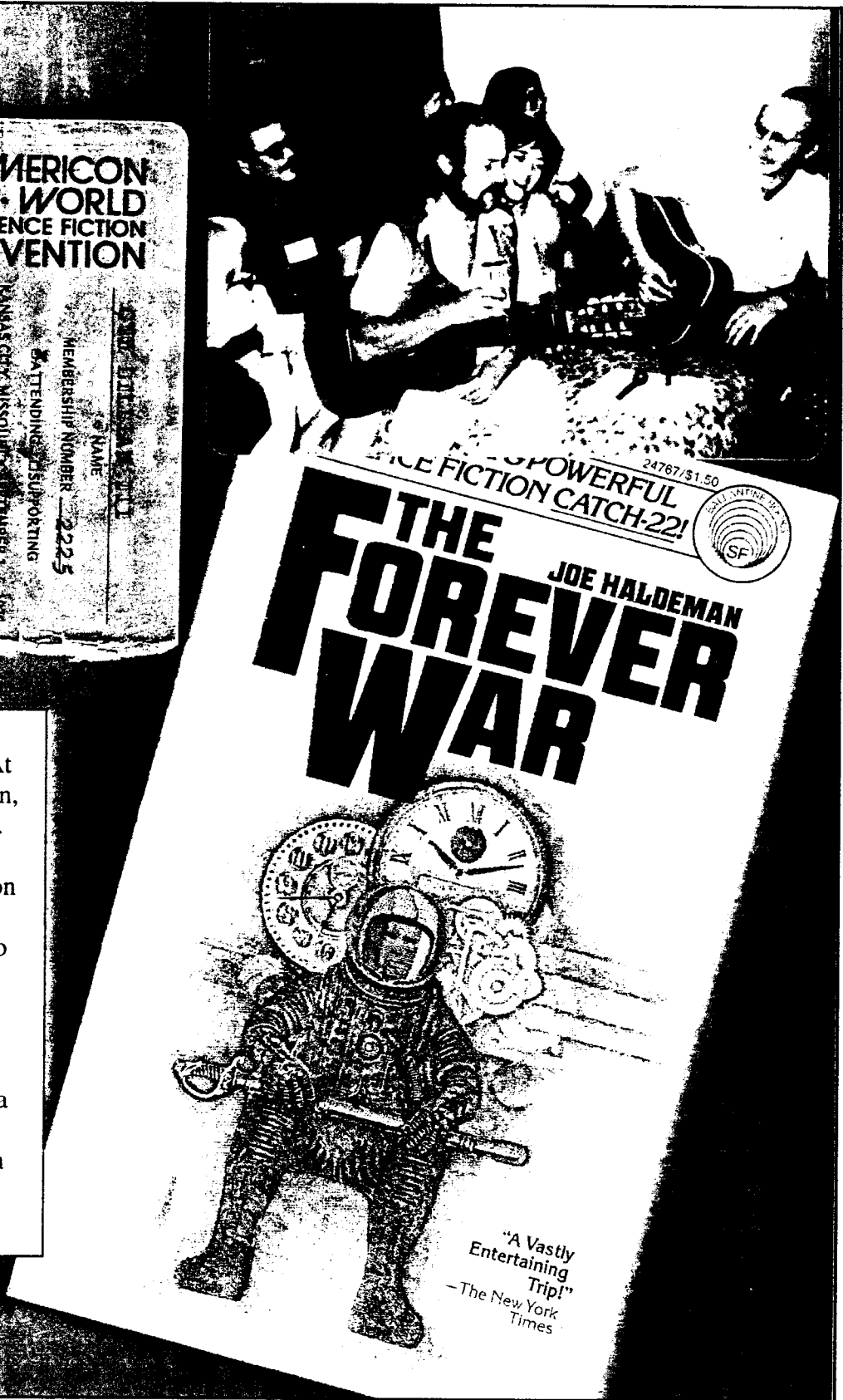
During the 627 issues of *Warlord*, Annuals at Christmas and Summer Specials, the three marines fought in Italy in 1943, Northern Europe in 1944, guarded prisoners in the UK to flush out war criminals, flew to the U.S. and to Moscow and had adventures all over the world. An impossibility of course, but terrific fun for kids, while there was an underlying moralistic code of honour and what is right and wrong. The story also embodied the anti-war message such as many UK comics did, although not as heavily as some, but it did show that war was hell, and that friendships all important.

ⁱ Arthur Christie on NEWS AT TEN 18/01/1989

ⁱⁱ ERIC TALMADGE Associated Press Writer TOKYO 13/09/2010 ABC News



1976 was a great year. At MidAmeriCon, I met Rosy ... and Joe Haldeman won the Hugo for one of the two or three best works of "military SF" ever written. We wish Joe a continued recovery from his recent illness.



THE CHORUS LINES

Illus by BRAD FOSTER, ALEXIS GILLILAND & WILLIAM ROTSLER

*We begin with responses to the last two
Challengers from a brother fan-ed. On issue #31*

John Purcell
3744 Marielene Circle
College Station TX 77845
j_purcell54@yahoo.com

Unlike you, I have never been directly involved with a tornado despite growing up and living in Tornado Alley: Midwest America. My family has had some close calls with tornadoes over the years, even Hurricane Ike a few years ago (the fringes of which swept through the Bryan-College Station, Texas region), but nothing like your experience. Storm stories are something that many of us share, so I fully expect to see a batch of LOCs from folks relating their storm stories. You have been warned. (Hmm... That might be a basis for a *Challenger* arkle from me. We shall see.)

You are probably also going to get a raft of eyesight stories from readers, which should not surprise you at all. One might say you will have an eye-ful of these. I am glad that Lezli Robin has shared her story with us; it gives me a larger appreciation of her as a person. Now I really DO look forward to meeting her someday. You, you lucky dog, get to go to Australia for the worldcon and see her again. *gnash* Say hello to her for me, and so on.

Really liked the Harpo Marx article by Steven H (no period) Silver, and Greg Benford's articles are always fun and interesting. As for Greg's longevity article, I personally do not care to live a super-long life. If I can make it to 80 I will be extremely happy. Neither of my parents lived much past 70; in fact, only my paternal grandmother lived past 80 (she died at the age of 83). So if I can take care of myself and all that rot, it would be fine to be an octogenarian, but not much past that. I definitely do not want to live a long time in this country as a senior citizen; the future bodes ill for my generation once we hit retirement age. Medical advances are fine and dandy, but the day-to-day living prospects for the elderly already are bleak and looking bleaker by the month.

Me, I want to be shot at 105 by a jealous husband, on Mars.

Lester Boutillier's reminiscences about childhood cartoon shows were fun. Morgus the Magnificent sounds like he was quite the character. We didn't have anybody like him hosting late night horror movies on the local channels in Minneapolis-St. Paul; *Horror Incorporated* was one of those nationally distributed syndicated shows that I think KSTP-TV bought to show at midnight on Saturdays.

MUTANT FROG
WITH
TOUNGE CAUGHT
IN A
DIMENSIONAL RIFT!



It was great stuff, but there was nobody like Morgus was involved. No matter. For me and countless other kids, it was the movies that we enjoyed.

Lester also reminded me how much I adored -- and still do -- *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*. Yes, the animation was crude, but the humor was brilliant. In fact, I think adults enjoyed it just as much as the kids because it was so danged intelligent: the cultural, literary and historical references - to say nothing of the dreadful puns -- abounded throughout. My favorite segments were "Peabody's Improbable History" and "Fractured Fairy Tales." One of my dream acquisitions is the complete DVD collection of *Rocky and Bullwinkle* episodes. In checking the Internet (have another tab open right now), the first three [now four] seasons are available for very reasonable prices on Amazon.com. A great show that will probably -- hopefully -- never die, especially since it amply displays how culturally uneducated 21st century American children (and adults) are.

There is a doctoral thesis in that statement.

And on #32 ...

Well, how about that? Another monster issue of *Challenger*. However do you find the time to produce these buggers, Guy? You must not have children eating up all of your extra time and finances. Of course, it would help not to be gallivanting off all over the world or teaching overload classes, too, but I really don't want to talk about those things. Suffice to say, great issue, of course.

When the restored version of *Metropolis* was on TMC recently I naturally watched and enjoyed the film. It is interesting to compare this version to the one I have seen multiple times before, and the recovered bits do plug holes in the more commonly viewed *Metropolis*. Fritz Lang was truly a visionary, and that's pretty cool you had the chance to literally sit at his feet.

The photos of Kelly and Polly Freas reminded me of the many times I saw them over the years at assorted conventions. Great people! Thanks for pubbing these, and keep this feature running; I like Rosy's photo gallery because it reminds me of all the wonderful fans and pros populating our corner of the universe.

The Greg Benford interview was interesting to read, naturally. He always makes such good points -- and good sense, to boot -- when he talks not only about the science in science fiction, but also about the characters, their motivations, and the social aspects of science fiction. It is necessary for a reader to understand a character in the context of their setting and how that character's belief systems work within their fictional world/universe. Just like I tell my literature students, there needs to be a consistency between all elements in fiction in order for any story to work; the genre really doesn't matter, in my view, but character motivation and plot are intrinsically tied together by all of the elements that make up a story. Greg Benford's commentary reinforces my thoughts very nicely. By the way, I enjoyed *Timescape*, too, and always enjoy Greg's company at cons. Hanging out with him and his wife at Fencon VI was a blast. Remember that?

Unforgettable!

I really enjoyed reading Mike Resnick's and Ralph Roberts' take on the problems facing Africa and the stupidity of the ruling elites of the various nations on that continent. While funny reading, it is also sobering to note the message they present: the fate of Africa -- and, by extension, the world -- depends on the sane management of nations by their governments. People are inherently selfish and stupid, or is that selfishly stupid? Take your pick; they're both good choices. A great article!

Another really solid article that I enjoyed in this was your "He She Said" about the Jarmon D. case. There really isn't much I can say about a case such as this, but it definitely gives me an idea of what you have to deal with sometimes in your position as a public defender. It must give you ulcers, I would think, or keep you up at nights. Personally, I would not like having to defend the scum of the earth even though it's a constitutionally provided right for all American citizens. Which makes me wonder if you have ever had to defend an illegal immigrant who has been brought to trial. Just wondering. Seems to me that would be another interesting article for *Challenger* some day.

My office sees illegal immigrants all the time, but I don't recall any who went to trial, and only one or two who were charged with felonies.

Speaking of trials and defendants, your interview-article with Leslie Van Houten was fascinating. The study of the Manson Family is one of those socio-psychological subjects that will be analyzed and debated forever and a day. It is amazing to me that you actually were given the opportunity to sit down and talk with Van Houten. Just incredible. You did a very good job of getting across the significance of this event to the reader, Guy. I am impressed. Quite frankly, I don't know if I would have been able to maintain composure if placed in such a position. This article was one of the strongest in the issue. Placing it near the end of the fanzine ensured that a reader will remember it. Good editorial planning.

As for the two Taral Wayne articles, I think I would have piggy-backed them. You know what I mean: putting the Glossary directly after "Cave Hirsutus Canem", but that's the editor in me talking. Splitting them with the Leslie Van Houten article was a bit jarring; I think having one right after the other would have been more effective and given the zine a bit more of a proper *feng shue* feel to the flow of this issue. Oh, well.

There's a story behind that "split," but as it makes me look stupid, I'll forego it.

Poetry, eh? You and John Nielsen Hall run some good poetry in your zines. I liked Mike Estabrook's "The Wind off Mount Diablo." Arguing with the wind, literally. At least Mike wasn't pissing into the wind. Not fun at all.

Chris Garcia

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The *Metropolis* that will soon be re-gracing screens around the world is almost complete, though there is still missing material. The fact that they could find so much lost material, preserve it, transfer it and have the new version gives me hope for the three movies I know are lost but so very much want to see: The full version of *Greed*, the full *Magnificent Ambersons* and the lost Lon Chaney classic *London After Midnight*. Forry and I talked of *London after Midnight* quite often, and when I met Robert Wise, the last man living who had seen the entire version of *The Magnificent Ambersons*, he told me the entire story as it was shown. He said that it was one of the few movies that he'd been involved with that he could tell you every single thing that happened. That included the films he'd directed and edited! The attempt at reconstructing *Greed* using production stills was interesting, but still, I dream of the day they find the entire film in some vault in Buenos Aires.

*I am extremely impressed that you met Robert Wise! Forget about his Oscars for **West Side Story** and **The Sound of Music**, he worked on **Citizen Kane** and directed **The Day the Earth Stood Still**. Wow!*

The Oil Spill is the definition of the term Clusterfuck. It's just inexcusable from all corners. We learned a lot from the *Valdes*, but not enough. It's a shame I never really got to experience the Gulf Coast. I spent a lot of time in Mobile and around those parts, but it was always one show with Pops and then drive off to the next, or maybe to Memphis or maybe to Knoxville. I don't ever remember even seeing the Gulf at all, and now it's changed forever. Once again, I miss out.

James Bacon is a good guy, and his take on fandom is unique. I think it's great that the two of us work so well together and can get various zines out on various schedules and still have a good time doing it. He'll be at AussieCon and I'm sure we'll have to fight over who gets his report!

I wasn't at MagiCon. Again, I missed out on something magic, pardon the pun. Arnie Katz always raves about it every time I see him, which has sadly been far too long in the past.

The art in this issue is amazing, specifically the pieces by Dany Frolich and Charles Williams. That Brad Foster is also one of his best pieces! It's just so cool. I finally met him at ReConstruction and was very happy to sit down with him and chat for the better part of an hour. Great guy, great artist!

James Bacon

Address in the Aether

Thanks for the last issue of *Chall*. Yes, Aussiecon was pretty ace, I thought there were many superb SF Fans there. Pleased to hear yourself and Rosie had a good train trip, travel by rail is very lovely if you have time, I think. I enjoyed some local historical steam trains, while in Melbourne.

I thought and think that this was a good issue, but you know, felt really odd and somewhat disappointed reading the article, which I understand may be humour, about Africa's failings.

It's all true, I am sure, but I love an Africa that was not represented by these anecdotes. I married a girl from Africa, have visited it twice now, and have perhaps an unusual perception of the trials and tribulations of the transition faced by post colonial countries.

I wondered how my American friends would feel if I listed all the wrongs America has perpetrated that paint it in a very poor light.

I suppose I am a positive person, and negative pithy humour is not to my liking, it is not as if I do not hold one of the writers in the highest possible esteem and respect, which perhaps made it a bit worse.

Many African countries are only sovereign for about 60 years, would we all feel comfortable about the USA when she reached 60? Ireland was not a good place when we were a young nation either, and of course, if we delve deeper to many of these stories, one unfortunately finds western Banks and Business involved in many unseemly situations.

I hope no one minds me saying this, or being critical, I can see the attractiveness of the article, it is in a way humour, and pointing out faults in that, but I just felt there was something out of place about it all. I even find considering some sort of deeper look, or torch shined back at the US to be unpalatable. Do we need to look at such desperate situations, to make our own local issues look better?

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Thanks for sending me your zine.

Congratulations on becoming new homeowners. Best of luck with home ownership.

I hope you had a good trip to Australia. I hope to be reading about it in your next issue. I had hopes of going back there this year, but it just wasn't in the cards. Great place.

I read the Hugo nominees too but had different reactions from yours. I was most impressed by *Julian Comstock* and Rob Sawyer's book. They were both enjoyable and well-crafted. While I thought *The Windup Girl* was well-crafted, I just couldn't get into the characters much.

We haven't been to the cinema since we moved into our house more than a year ago.

I heard an interesting commentary on the Gulf oil spill cleanup. The Netherlands offered to help, but their assistance was turned down. They have lots of experience with this sort of thing in the Baltic.

In Martin Morse Wooster's article about "Metropolis...Etc", he referred to Wallace Berry in the Fatty Arbuckle western *The Round-Up*. I presume he meant Wallace Beery, who was in the film. Was it his typo or your transcription error?

*I accept responsibility for everything in **Challenger** – even dumb typos about the star of **The Champ**.*

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I agree with you that the biggest crime of the Deepwater Horizon disaster is that the drilling was allowed to proceed without actually knowing what the risks were. We had been lulled into a false sense of security in thinking that underwater drilling was so passé that doing it just a bit deeper into a petroleum dome that had never been tapped was just business as usual. Now it looks like cheap cement and a blowout preventer that wasn't nearly as reliable as was touted plus any number of safety shortcuts added up to a disaster staggeringly disproportionate to the estimated risks. An 18th hole in the seafloor equals eleven people dead, billions in property damage, and inestimable damage to the environment.

It is so typical that now the Gulf residents are complaining about the drilling moratorium and the loss of jobs in the drilling industry! I was really mad at how inept the government lawyers were in

arguing in court for the moratorium. Didn't anyone think to argue that one well that blows for unknown reasons trumps however many safely-drilled wells that didn't blow? Okay, if the Deepwater Horizon well was one in 10,000, that at least puts a probability of failure on new drilling. If there is a one in 10,000 chance of doing \$100 billion in damage from a blowout, should we still be drilling there?

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Nice cover by Williams, and both your article and Martin Wooster's on Fritz Lang and *Metropolis* the movie were interesting. I was especially taken by your comments regarding your meeting with Lang in 1969. Frankly my impression was always that Fritz Lang did not enjoy meeting his fans and seldom bothered to attend any kind of special showings of his films. Perhaps he mellowed out in his old age, or perhaps this was something of a unique situation. Even more startling that you actually convinced him to give you an autograph. I agree this was certainly a memorable situation for you all the way round.

The Wooster article on attending a day of Slapsticon and seeing the restored *Metropolis* was also well written. I have friends who attend Slapsticon every year, and although I have a solid interest in silent movies and would dearly love to see some of the material run there every year, the fact that it is far away from me, (in Washington DC) and expensive, with expensive hotel rooms besides, tends to discourage me. I would sure like to see the restored version of *Metropolis* though. Any chance this thing is going to be available on DVD any time soon? Wooster mentioned the F.W. Murnau Foundation in Germany as providing the film for the convention, does that mean they are also in charge of any future releases, or is there a true copyright holder who can authorize commercial release?

One of the high points of this issue was Joseph Green's reminiscences of R. A. Lafferty, even tho the article doesn't inspire any real comments besides my saying Bravo for writing this personal and insightful glimpse of a remarkable writer. I was also not aware that Lafferty has written much non-fiction. I'll have to search some of that material out. Every time I read a Lafferty story I'm reminded of those old helpful library flyers or internet book selling sites with blurbs saying that if you like writer A you might like writers B, C, and D as well. Except when it comes to R. A. Lafferty, it should read if you like R.A. Lafferty, buy everything you can find by him, because there is nothing else like him out there anywhere.

The interview with Gregory Benford was also interesting, altho I think the most insightful comments came at the very end of the interview, when he stated that the primary gift to human civilization from the discovery of the American continents was new ideas, and space for human beings to get away from the stratified societies of the Old World, spread out and begin to experiment and think on their own.

However, I must note that this was not necessarily a universal rule. The Spanish, for example, had no great difficulty imposing their own semi-feudal ranching and agricultural culture on most of South American, and a good chunk of North America as well. They were able to do this because they were able to easily fend off serious competition from other greedy Old World nations. Even blood thirsty English and Dutch pirates couldn't stop the Spanish system from locking in millions of people and millions of square miles of territory into a nearly static social system that was only broken up in the twentieth century.

Given that, it seems to me that expecting expansion into outer space, or visiting other worlds, planetoids, moons, asteroids, whatever, to magically revitalize the human race, inspire new creativity and jump-start latent concepts of individual freedom and free will are delusional day dreams unless there is enough independent free enterprise spirit and quite a bit of strong healthy competition along the way. Otherwise the other globes in the solar system, and beyond, are just going to be carbon copies of the social structures and intellectual concepts already endowed and empowered on the home planet.

Here's another thought, even assuming we can somehow overcome the incredible difficulties of getting human beings from this planet to others, even close places like Luna, the expense involved is so

incredible that only governments or extremely large mega corps are going to be able to finance such operations. It seems to me that under those circumstances the chances of any free radicals trying to establish something new or even much different in the future is going to be extremely slim. Can you picture any government or large corporation funding an expedition of new utopians, or free love nudists, or syndicalism co-op farmers? I think it would be very unlikely. Unless truly inexpensive and easily accessible ways of moving people thru space to new planets is discovered not too much is going to change.



I agree with Benford that chemical rockets have reached their usable limit. What can replace them most effectively remains to be seen. It's all very well to say that nuclear powered space ships are the way to go, but again, what is needed is something that is affordable, and also something that can move people and equipment out there very *very* fast. I don't think anybody (that I've heard of anyway), has the answer to the last part of that problem, and getting people out and back fast seems almost essential to me. Maybe somebody should seriously investigate the idea of teleportation doorways at drop points as a stepping stone network to explore space.

James Bacon's article on the Picocon 2010 left me cold. I have near zero interest in sports of any kind, and less than zero interest in sports about which I know nothing. Since I know nothing about Rugby I was not able to even finish this write-up.

The photos of fans and pros scattered throughout the zine was entertaining. It was nice to see what people really look like, even if the photos were from long ago.

The article on the absurdities of government in Africa by Mike Resnick and Ralph Roberts was amusing and frustrating at the same time. On the one hand, while some of these situations seem nearly mind boggling, the article and the semi-condescending attitude expressed throughout seems to imply that this is all we can expect from these poor benighted native born Africans, who, after all, are inferior in every way to the more civilized races of the world. This is a dangerous and untrue concept.

You don't have to look too far to find massive inefficiency and brutal corruption among the so-called more civilized nations of this planet. In fact, you don't even need to go to Africa at all. Why not spend a few moments examining the Balkan nations for example, which in the past twenty years have seen more than enough corruption, brutality, senseless warfare and bloody massacres to easily keep up with anything the African continent can offer.

You need only move slightly farther north to find even more incredible situations of power grabbing corruption, ruthless repression and inefficiency among the nations that used to form the Soviet empire, including those countries that broke away from the USSR itself and formed their own governments. Or, a short jaunt thru Central and South America looking at the changes of government in the past thirty years would also uncover an equally obnoxious can of worms.

Singling out the African nations for special attention, without at least a token mention that these kinds of problems are almost universal to the human race, especially with the smug condescending writing style used here, is very thinly discussed racism, and ought to be beneath the scope of writers as vestal as Resnick and Roberts. But apparently it isn't

"Two Jokey Stories", by Joseph Major. Again, these went right over me. I didn't think there was any point to these stories, and the setups were just a wasted effort so far as I'm concerned. I realize I'm an old fogy, but I like to read stories that have a point, and a conclusion, and a plot besides. These things didn't.

That also goes for the Taral Wayne Roman recruiter story. First, this long joke is older than dirt. I've heard variations on this exact same theme for decades, generations even. It was never very funny before, and it still isn't. Hard to believe you would print this thing, plus even adding a lexicon section explaining the specific Roman references in the story.

Your article about meeting Leslie Van Houten was excellent. This was a well written, well developed, well thought out presentation. I must note that as well crafted and interesting as this was, I think you failed to come to grips with one of the essential hidden motivations for the article, specifically; why you were drawn to this woman in the first place, why you were almost compelled by whatever inner forces were working on you, to seek out and interview this person. You circle the concept throughout the article but never seem to come to grips with an answer. Obviously Van Houten holds both a fascination-revulsion aura for you, and the interview with her doesn't seem to have dispelled either of those two feelings from your mind.

The theme of redemption and renewal, which is theoretically the basic supposition of modern American penal justice, simply runs into a solid wall of human judgmental prejudice when it comes to certain people and certain crimes. Whether her involvement was large or small, the nature of the hideous crime Manson and his followers committed was so extreme that none of those people who were originally involved is ever going to be freed, no matter how reformed they may have become in prison.

In my opinion there are certain classes and types of crimes for which the death penalty could and should be enacted. Why are we feeding and housing Charles Manson for the rest of his natural life? It seems to me that this is certainly a case where he should have been executed. I can think of a number of other cases where death should have been the penalty rather than life imprisonment. This gets into a lot of serious issues I'm sure you didn't mean to raise with this write-up, but the can of worms is always opened when you or anybody else chooses to write about people involved in the most heinous crimes imaginable. Still, moral quagmires aside, I read and greatly enjoyed your article, even if I still cannot find it in myself to feel too much sympathy for Van Houten herself.

Manson – and Van Houten, and the other girls – were originally condemned to the gas chamber, but their sentences were commuted in February 1972 to life in prison. Case was California v. Anderson, 493 P.2d 880, 6 Cal. 3d 628, a California Supreme Court matter which abolished the death penalty there.

In closing, although it seems I have slammed many parts of your zine, I thought it was a strong issue, with a number of excellent articles, and a particularly strong letter column this time round. I was not impressed by any of the fiction, but the illos scattered throughout were mostly excellent. I look forward to seeing *Challenger* #33 soon.

Ned Brooks

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Odd to see Dennis Hopper grinning – he didn't do it much in his movies.

I love Binker Hughes' tale about "top know – come down". The notion of Biblical inerrancy became really surreal with the use of constant-interval searches of the original text to predict the future. I have puzzled over the plain injunction "Look not upon the wine when it is red" – this seems to imply that it would be okay to get drunk in the dark, or that looking at wine could have any effect at all, or that if you waited the wine might change color, or that red wine was somehow more sinful than other colors.

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Despite my apparent FAFIA [*Henry's joined the ranks of the damned, i.e., become an attorney*] I have managed to read all the zines sent to me, although my comments will be brief.

Chall 31: I've always wanted to see a tornado live. I realize it is irrational and probably a bit daft. Sometimes we have the strangest things on our bucket lists.

Chall 32: The Gulf oil spill is now "contained." Now it is the lawyers who will make all the money trying to sort it all out. The legal blogosphere has regular posts on how it has revitalized a segment of the economy. What is abundantly clear, though, is it wasn't worth it. Hopefully BP and others can learn and design the emergency cut off properly on future wells.

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Greetings, fellow Hugo nominee! I'm afraid we didn't get any further than that, but it's an honour to be nominated, just the same. I can only imagine what you might have said once you found out about the final results. More about that later; in the meantime, here's some comments about 80 great pages of *Challenger 32*.

Looks like you and Rosy have had great luck with your new house and improved jobs. I hope some of that luck will rub off on us. The Law Society of Upper Canada let me go in April after my contract expired, and they at first said that they'd bring me back in the fall. I contacted them last month, and was told that because schedules and workloads have changed, and I did a lot of extra things for them before, they wouldn't need me this time around. Such is the reward for hard work, it seems.

Looks like BP has all but plugged the rupture that soiled the Gulf of Mexico. It is proof that while there is a measure of danger in any drill point, the right safety precautions must be followed to the letter each time, and BP and the other corporations involved did not follow those precautions. I think there is blame to go around to various corporations and individuals, and not just BP.

Both Kelly and Polly are missed, and we were lucky enough to enjoy their company at a number of conventions in Toronto and Detroit. Even Ray Lafferty was visible here and there at Worldcons; few recognized him, but I did, and I believe he was often in the background at Worldcons in the late 80s.

Laws of physics are always considered as immutable, but yet there's been reports in the papers recently saying that some scientists believe the constants we use in math and physics may not be constant throughout the universe. (For those students who had problems with math in their science classes, they might be pleased to learn that somewhere in the universe, their calculations were right.)

Great interview with Greg Benford ... hold it, Chris Empey, how do you know that wasn't Jim Benford you were talking to? They're identical twins, you'd never know ... (Don't mind me, just planting the seeds of doubt...)

Greg has a beard.

Politics sometimes serves up the oddest results when it comes to elections. Britain and Australia have hung Parliaments; Canada has a minority government that is being propped up by the opposition parties, only because we had a quick succession of federal elections, and all the parties figure that no one wants an election at this time. If a third politics party ever springs up in the US, and who knows that will happen with the Tea Party, you will know what you might have in store. James, I think Simoné would have a great time here; pre-season games for the National Hockey League are being played, and think she'd enjoy hockey games here. Where *did* the con get to, James?

We had a great time at the Orlando Worldcon in 1992, too. We met Roger Weddall there for the first and only time; he passed away not long afterwards, if I recall. We brought our niece Nicole along with us, too, her first and only Worldcon. The Peabody Hotel was air conditioned to the point of refrigeration, and the same with the convention centre across the road. It was also hot outside, so I think many people went home with a cold. The Katzes ran the fanzine lounge, and I met Walt Willis there, who said he enjoyed my writing. I'm not sure my feet were touching the floor that day...

No blaming you for that!

M. Lee Rogers' rant on the DSC reminds me that there is also some movement on the idea of shutting down the Westercon in a few years. I know why regional conventions were set up, and there are now many more conventions in between, but there's no reason to shut anything down. If you want a DSC to continue, and you are passionate enough to want those ideas preserved, you may have to do it yourself,

and make sure that future DSC committees know what must be done. Then again, and I may be heretical here, the history of DSCs, and fandom for that matter, may not be relevant for future fans. They may say that such fannish history is fine for you older fans, but we have our own history to make, and I can't fault them for that. Much of what M. Lee proposes for future DSCs, most conventions should do, especially its past history, but future fans may simply not be interested. The history may have to settle for being written down for those who are interested. Westercon and DSC are the only two American regionals left, and I did read there is an idea to set up a fan fund to take a Southern fan to a Westercon, and a Western fan to a DSC, which I think is a great idea. I hope it works and more; it might also keep the regionals going further.

Our friend Mr. Foster got himself another silvery rocket [i.e., he won the Fan Artist Hugo from *Aussiecon IV*], and congrats to him for that. We've got lots of dogs in our apartment building, and one of the newest additions is a Yorkie. The poor thing trembles all the time, and is afraid of everything. I'd love to give him or her a skritch behind the ears, but I'm afraid I'd give it a heart attack.

The last Russian fannish contacts we had were our friend Yuri and his girlfriend Natasha from the Moscow State University SF Club, about 15 years ago, going to Worldcons, and selling Soviet-era badges and pins from the army, navy, air force and space programmes. Perhaps we need to do a little outreach to see where our European and Russian fannish compatriots are. We need to re-establish contact.

My LOC ... with Yvonne's love for the Mini Clubman in check, our Suzuki Esteem station wagon was on the brink, so we traded it in (got \$200 – scrap value, I think) for a 2010 Hyundai Elantra Touring Wagon. Drives like a dream, and it's got bells and whistles like I never imagined. The glove compartment can double as a cooler and warmer. And now that we have more reliable transportation, the payments ensure that we can't afford to travel anywhere.

I USED TO STRUM THE LEAD GUITAR
ON STAGE, AT WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE
THOSE CRITICS WHO WERE TRULY GROUNDED
THOUGHT I WAS BETTER THAN I SOUNDED



Arnie Katz is right when he says there is little leverage for getting feedback of any kind on electronic zines. It's too easy to dismiss an electronic fanzine should it be sent to you, and too easy to remember to go to eFanzines.com to download any new arrivals Bill Burns has installed. I admit there are some zines that I do not respond to because they are simply outside of my experience or knowledge, but I do download the majority of what Bill posts, and I have tried my best to respond to current zines, be they electronic or paper. I understand the current economics, and e-zines get around most of the costs. (However, getting paper zines is still nifty-peachy-keen.)

Joy V. Smith

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It's fantastic that finally *Metropolis* is mostly restored. I didn't know that so much of it was missing! Your Fritz Lang piece went well with the *Metropolis* background, and it was a great idea to have such a classic cover to go with this issue.

I enjoyed the Gregory Benford interview, along with the Ray Lafferty tribute, the James Bond and Joker story by Joe Major, the preacher's editing of the Bible text, the glossary at the end of the issue, and.. Well, as usual, there was a good selection of articles and stories, and James Bacon's not-a-convention report was fun. The Dark Continent compilation was scary, though I sympathized with the elevator cleaner whose elevators would disappear...

Lots more info in the LOCs, thanks to all the LOC'ers, with some help from Google. I remember your interview with Leslie Van Houten. It's interesting to get a closer look at people whom we'd otherwise dismiss when reading about them in the paper, and I'm glad you gave us an update on her.

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Thanks for sending us *Challenger* 32 – I'm sure I've failed to write you about one or two previous issues, so here's a few words on this issue.

I liked the cover illustration by Charles Williams, and read the material on Fritz Lang and *Metropolis* with interest. (One of the movie channels we get just ran an ad for an upcoming showing of *The Return of Frank James*, one of Lang's earlier US movies.) As for Slapsticon, as reported on by Martin, I think I would enjoy attending for a day's viewing. I love Keaton, admire Chaplin, and mildly appreciate some of the other silent screen comics.

I didn't grasp what Greg Benford is trying to do with his concept of a Law of Laws or of some sort of "natural selection" of physical laws. I think of these sorts of laws as descriptions of how physical elements interact. It's a bit beyond me that there would be a higher order process to predict why these interactions always work in the same way and thus be describable by a law.

But I found the interview with Chris Impey much more accessible and interesting.

I find your articles about your experiences as a Public Defender the most interesting pieces in most issues of *Challenger*, and this issue is no exception. Thanks for sharing, as the new cliché goes.

I can barely remember *Ruff'n'Reddy*, but it was one of my favorite shows when I was little. Thanks to Lester for writing about it. I do, however, remember the theme song and can perform it for you sometime. The lyrics, approximately and without Googling for them, go, "They're Ruff and Reddy/always tough and steady ... (can't remember the next lines) ... They sometimes have their little spats/even fight like dogs and cats/ but when there's [something] danger that's/when they're Ruff and Reddy."

Rest of the contents varied as usual from the entertaining to the "not a subject I'm interested in," but as long as you keep providing such a variety of items from the informative to the provocative to the whimsical, I'll keep reading.

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REMEMBERING RAY LAFFERTY. When I've read Ray, his inclination has been to write folk tales rather than tales with a patina of verisimilitude. In them, people did fantastic things without either the slightest reality or detail. His style was direct and unadorned like the Medieval Germans. However, unlike the Germanic myths. Ray's objective was to stimulate thought rather than hidden emotions. Because of that, despite a lack of actual science and of reality bearing detail, I have to regard him as a science fiction author, not a fantasy author.

If I had to categorize the Cosmic Ray, I'd call him a mad Irish genius with strong Catholic underpinnings, but a humorist above all. Cf. "Who wants a smart dog!" "Ears themselves are forever peculiar." And following a page-long lecture on the province of mermaids: "Mermaids do not appear in the Adriatic. They lie who say they appear in the Adriatic." Not to mention ~~camels~~ every line of Space Chantey,

LAW OF LAWS. Intelligent creatures in a universe are what have been generating new universes? Greg's is more the law of the law of humor than of science. However, we need humor.

GREGORY BENFORD INTERVIEW. I have to agree with the Deconstructionists that our science has been the product of racism and sexism. Also, I go on to assert, which they want to hide, that it has also been the product of political correctness. And I end up asserting, which they are even more mum

about, that science, whatever its motivation, works; and if we don't heed it in a myriad of tasks, we will be in deep doodoo.

Speaking of science, I have heard that many physicists have concluded that Tachyons don't exist. Faster than light particles are a concept they have discarded. From what Greg says, that would leave his Timescape time travel series high and dry. Not that I am casting stones: I never knew why physicists accepted Tachyons and I don't know why they are rejecting them.

EFFICIENCIES ON THE DARK CONTINENT. Mike Resnick raises the question: can the Africans rule themselves? Can we? Haven't we had manmade ecological disasters too? Some believe future disasters of our making will dwarf those African boners. Anyway, I gather the Africans, for the most part, always ruled themselves. The colonials were only interested in trade, cash crops and foreign relations.

FUNDIE FOLLIES. Ah, Binker talks about the Reverend William Archibald Spooner (1844-1930), an Oxford don with a speech impediment named after him, Spoonerism. "When the boys comes marching home, the hags will be flung out." "It is kisstomary to cuss the bride." Of course, it's hard to tell the authentic Spoonerisms from the prattling of music hall comedians who tortured the poor don.

THE CHORUS LINES. (LETTERS). I thank Joy V. Smith for her kind words about my article on the 2008 Farm Bill.

I figure I better respond to Milt Stevens' comments about Food Stamps more at length. You're right that leaving Food Stamps as a tip is illegal. Also, buying booze with it is illegal. In fact, using Food Stamps, except to buy food, is illegal. I do the news clippings for the government agency that runs Food Stamps. Every week, sometimes several times a week, somebody is prosecuted for misusing Food Stamps.

Often those prosecuted are shopkeepers who trade Food Stamps, currently debit cards, for less value in cash.

As for Food Stamp recipients eating better than ordinary Joes, not with the allotment they get. As I said in my article, you can't buy much steak with it. Lobster would be the entire allotment. You'd have to have additional income secreted away or be involved in other hanky panky.

Having commented to Milt on Food Stamps, I have a lesser comment for you Guy. When Garth Spenser talks of giving up success, you interpret it as rejecting others' standards of success? That's important but our own standards can be pretty brutal too.

HEALTER SKELTER. Leslie Van Houten is certainly manipulative. However, lots of people going free are manipulative. What is important is that, minus The Family's influence, she probably would have never committed her crimes.

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It's always so great to get a hefty new issue of *Challenger* in the mail. Who says print zines are dead? Fact, I got this, plus *Reluctant Famulus*, *Visions of Paradise*, *Ansible* and *Banana Wings* all in the mail this past month. Go, print, go!

Congrats on your new home, and welcome to the wonderful world of home ownership: has everything started to slowly break down on you yet? Well, don't worry, it will soon! But remember, it's *YOUR* house and stuff to fix or not, as you wish. And, if you decide you would like one big room instead of two small one, then you can go ahead and bash down that wall between them. Go crazy!

Loved all the info on the main focus of this issue, the complete-at-last *Metropolis*. Will probably be a while until I get to see it, but looking forward to it. Last time I saw it was mumble-mumble decades ago in college, and have to admit only certain images remain in my failing brain. So, will be like seeing a brand new movie again.

Metropolis' latest edition is available on DVD/Blu-Ray and has played on Turner. Methinks Murnau, the company responsible for its near-completion and re-release, deserves a Hugo for its service to science fiction cinema. Hell, why not an Oscar? Hell again, let's throw in the Heisman trophy!

Damn, I *LOVE* that photo of Kelly Freas on page 11, a guy so totally into the moment he's in, and probably filing away tons of details that would be coming out in images for years to come.

Cindy and I were at Magicon, but my only really sharp memory of that is watching the ducks do their thing at the Peabody. We had to walk over from our cheaper hotel down the road, so nice of them to let us in. Wasn't Magicon also the convention that had the fannish miniature golf course set up in front of the exhibits?

So pleased to have another of your personal reports on the justice system. The nuts and bolts of how this all works is often so confusing and hard to get a handle on, but your articles help make it personal. Sorry you haven't had the chance for the year-and-a-half to step in front of a jury, but maybe after this case, it will happen a bit more often-- and then we'll get to read more amazing articles like this one.

And *WOW*, you finally answered that lifelong question about the movie I'd seen with the blob-things in storage tanks. *Quatermass 2*, eh? [*A.k.a. Enemy from Space.*] I'll have to keep an eye out for that, maybe it'll pop up on TCM someday (the last home on TV, it seems, for old black and white movies.) Since with that answer you have now proven to me beyond a doubt that you are the font of all wisdom, I'm racking my brain to try to come up with another question. Unfortunately, nothing is coming to mind... wait, I've got it! If saying "rack my brain" means we are trying to find something contained in our brains, shouldn't it be "raked"? I mean, running a rake through my mind, so I can move things around to find what I want, makes more sense than racking my brain, stretching it out on a rack. English is so funny!

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Especially enjoyed Joseph L. Green's remembrance of R. A. Lafferty, a picture of a strange and likable man. Speaking of pictures, it was nice to see the illo by Dany Frolich, whose work I've admired since the late sixties. Given the original controversial reaction to "Healter Skelter," were you at all reluctant to reprint it? [*Not really - I wanted to update my thoughts on the case.*] Overall, it's well-done, but I suspect that I understand the source of the negative reactions. Leslie Van Houten may well have transformed herself into a beautiful and charming woman, but your elaborating on that in the detail to which you did made the article sound a little star-struck at times. Given the context, that seems both incongruous and unsettling. "The Wind off Mount Diablo" hit me where I live. I bet that many folks of a certain age could relate to that poem.

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Thank you for #32. Another outstanding issue.

I hope that you and Rose-Marie enjoyed your trip to AussieCon 4. My condolences on once again not winning what would have been a well deserved Best Fanzine HUGO. Actually, my condolences to all the losers given what did win the Best Fanzine HUGO.

Now to #32. All the pictures were great. Hopefully, next issue will contain pictures from Australia.

I especially enjoyed the following articles: "Efficiencies on the dark Continent or, Darwin was Wrong" by Mike Resnick and Ralph Roberts. "Two Jokey Stories" by Joseph Major. That's not to detract from the other articles. These are just the two that I enjoyed the most not counting the next item.

Now for the one on which I really wish to comment. It's your "He She Said". Given the facts as presented by you I believe that I too would have found the defendant Not Guilty. The supposed "victim" may be a college graduate, but she does not sound very bright. What does confuse me is that you indicate

the jury verdict was 10 Not Guilty, 2 Guilty and that this constituted a verdict of Not Guilty. In California that would be a Hung Jury. The law in Louisiana must be very different than in what I believe exists in most other states. Does this have something to do with a holdover from France? Or is it just Louisiana?

Except for first degree murder trials (and their penalty phase) 10-2 constitutes a legal verdict. Unanimity is required for six-member juries, where no minimum sentence is mandated.

Now for a question regarding rape. It's open to anyone reading this. Who gets raped more, men or women? This is not a trick question. A little thought should produce the correct answer.

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Challenger #32 begins with a great cover by Charles Williams. He always seems to do fine work. If he was more prolific, he should be likely for a Hugo nomination. As to *Metropolis*, I've heard about the new, expanded version, but I haven't seen it. I hope Turner Classic Movies runs the expanded version sometime and gives me a chance to see it.

I'd heard a different story of Fritz Lang leaving Germany. It involved *Last Will of Dr. Mabuse*. It was a definitely anti-Hitler film Lang had made in 1932. Goebbels screened the film and invited Lang to his office. Lang thought it might be a more prudent idea to leave the country at that point. Somehow, the film survived and was released after WWII. The story makes sense. If I was Fritz Lang and had made *Last Will of Dr. Mabuse*, I would not have expected Goebbels to make me head of the German film industry.

I thought the interview with Greg Benford was interesting. Back when I was doing programs for cons, I thought about putting the Greg and Jim on a panel on the menace of genetic duplication. Somehow, I never got around to it. Is it really so awful having a duplicate of yourself wandering around. Clones are usually represented as bad guys even though they are just twins with a technical assist. Greg's comments in the interview made me think of the show *Raising Sextuplets*. I must be reaching the age for grandfatheritis, because I think those six little kids are just *sooo* cute. They seem to form a natural team for the purposes of chaos and destruction. However, you can't get really mad at any of them, because they smile and are cute.

Deconstructionism was after my time as an English Lit major. To me, it always sounded like what our ancestors called sophism. Arguments that sound like they mean something but really don't. I've heard that deconstructionism has gone out of favor. It couldn't have been too soon. This doesn't eliminate jargon splicing in literit. By means of jargon splicing, it is possible to product an article that defies all human understanding.

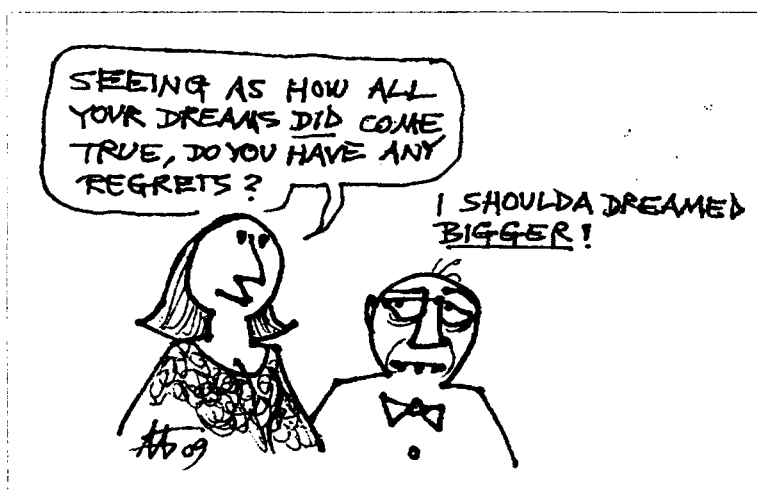
I remember your interview with Leslie Van Houten. I didn't think it was strange at the time. I think I considered your interview as something like my own bouts with morbid curiosity. I've never actually talked to a famous murderer or even an obscure murderer, but I know a whole bunch about the results of murder. The more I forget about murder the happier I am.

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My apologies for not LoCing issue 31, which is still on my To Read pile. I've jumped ahead to the new issue, taking advantage of all the blank spaces in my time that occur while waiting for the computer to do something. I would advise efficiency experts everywhere that one of the great wastes of time in modern life consists of sitting in front of a computer staring at the screen, waiting for it to carry out a command after you've pressed the relevant keys. As much as half your working time can go that way. I find all sorts of useful things to do in these intervals. It is a good time to research coins, repair books, or read fanzines, particularly if the computer is slow today. I'm a Windows Vista victim, so I have quite a lot of this. I managed to read your entire "Healter Skelter" article while waiting for the blank

message to come up to an e-mail after I had hit "reply." I don't see why that's regarded as "controversial." It strikes me as a good piece of reporting. You reported honestly what you saw and experienced. You even questioned your own conclusions. It sounds to me as if Ms. Van Houten has a bit of Charlie Manson's "charm," in that she can manipulate quite effectively. I was particularly intrigued by the reference to *Stranger in a Strange Land*. As we know, Heinlein hired a lawyer to talk to Manson in jail and determined that Manson was virtually illiterate and had read almost nothing. But it's just as clear that Manson's women *had* read the book and doubtless talked about it with Manson. Considering that Valentine Michael Smith is an omnipotent super-stud guru who is above morality and can "discorporate" anyone he chooses at a whim, I can see how this book would have appealed to Manson if he had read it.



Heinlein himself tried to edge away from the really dark implications, by tacking on a cheesy fantasy premise that Valentine Michael Smith isn't "really" killing people, but merely sending them back to learn better manners before they are reincarnated. Therefore it's not really murder and it doesn't matter. Did Manson feel the same way about the people he "discorporated"? One of his women actually wrote to Heinlein (see *Grumbles from the Grave*). Was it Van Houten, by any chance?

Heinlein was allegedly horrified that anyone should have tried to live the lifestyle described in *Stranger*, remarking that you can't do that without the "Martian magic." Well, it seems that people did, and Heinlein wasn't really being honest with the book's subject matter. I have to admit I have never been an admirer of *Stranger*. When I read the uncut version, I began my review, "Needs cutting."

As for Greg Benford's assertion that Deconstruction is a train that has left the station and is unlikely to be heard from again soon, yes, I can see it as a particularly wooly-headed version of Marxist mystical doctrine applied to literature, but I think we can also see its failure as the revenge of yet another 19th century notion, the Darwinist Survival of the Fittest. The weakness of Deconstruction was that most of its proponents spoke or wrote in a nearly incomprehensible gibberish, which, in its occasional flashes of lucidity, only emphasized how silly the whole doctrine was. It was little more than a mass of unproven assumptions, all of which were taken for granted by the faithful as if they were revealed truth, not to be questioned. As a consequence, Deconstruction had little impact on literature, either as literature is written or as real enthusiasts talk about it. The most dramatic display of this failure I ever saw was at the first Readercon, many years ago. Samuel R. Delany was guest of honor and gave a very long speech which was an "introduction" to Deconstruction. I was already deeply unimpressed by what I had read of this doctrine and its methods, and by the arrogance of many of its adherents (though *not*, I emphasize, Delany) who insisted that *their* theory was *the last word* and rendered all other forms of literary discourse obsolete. The purpose of the gibberish, of course, was to exclude anyone who was not part of the charmed circle, to dismiss outsiders as hopelessly ignorant.

I was determined that, in the interests of intellectual fairness, I would give Delany a full hearing. When he began, he had almost the entire membership of the convention in the hall. Delany is a pleasant person and a speaker of some wit and charm, so he held them for a while, but after a while it was clear that the undefined terms and undefended assumptions were beginning to take their toll. About an hour into the speech, a lady I knew got up and left, muttering audibly, "It's all Greek to me." Delany went on. More people began to leave. By the time it was all over, after about two hours later, there were four or five people in the front row, lapping up every word he said, and me in the back. The lady told me later that people came up to her and thanked her for breaking the ice, so that they could leave too.

Later, I read the speech in *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, and it *still* didn't make any sense. One of the *NYRSF* staffers commented that well, sometimes it *almost* comes into focus.

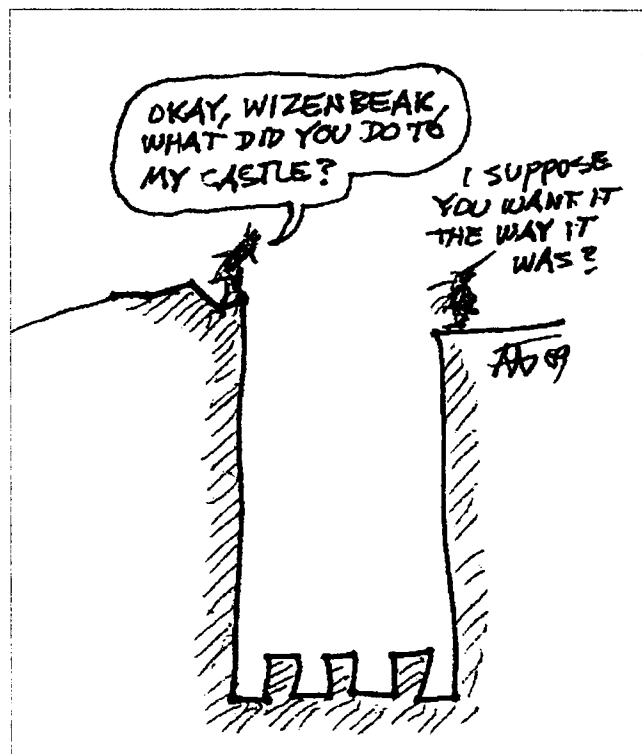
You need look no further for the reason Deconstruction failed to convince very many people. If you want to look further, you can read the works of Don Burleson, who is actually a much more lucid writer than Delany. It's *much* clearer from his work (see *Disturbing the Universe*, in which he applies Deconstruction to Lovecraft) how silly the whole thing is. That any of this stuff was ever taken seriously in academic circles helps us understand why actual practitioners of literature tend to regard academe with suspicion.

Taral's Roman piece goes on rather long for the gag it delivers at the end. I would agree that telling a dupondius from an as can be tricky, particularly after a couple thousand years. At the time, the color was probably the key. The radiate crown was not a reliable indicator, as there are certainly dupondii that don't have a crown. Since sometimes helps, although as things start getting shaky toward the end of the 2nd century, it's hard to tell. As long as you can tell, making change was not all that difficult. Two asses equaled one dupondius. Two dupondii equaled one sestertius. Two sestertii equaled one denarius (small silver coin). It's only at this point that things got tricky, because the quality of the denarius and the relationship of silver to gold could fluctuate wildly in uncertain times. The suspicion that Roman muggers could fill a sock full of heavy sestertii and use this to club their victims is unfounded. The sock hadn't been invented yet, although in good times, at least, the sestertius was a heavy enough coin that you *could* quite effectively disable someone you had hit over the head with a small bag of them.

I should also mention that Taral seems to be undervaluing Pannonia, giving the impression that this was the Roman equivalent of a flyover province, perhaps what you might call a "march-through province," i.e. a place you march through while on your way to someplace else. It may have been a wild and backward place but it produced a few emperors, including Trajan Decius, who celebrated it extensively on his coinage. But Decius was chopped to bits by the Goths in pretty short order, so maybe that didn't impress anybody. Valentinian (who was a tough s.o.b. who *did* impress people) and his less effective brother Valens (the loser at Adrianople, the Roman Custer) also hailed from Pannonia. Later Pannonia was annexed by the Huns and is not much heard from after that.

As for why people joined the Roman army, the main attraction for a lot of poor peasants may well have been the regular meals. If there had been a major famine, or a province had just been pillaged, or one was ruined by taxation, often the only recourse was to join the army. In the later empire people often joined bands of roving bandits instead, called *Bagaudae* and went to enormous lengths not to be drafted into the army. The common dodge was to cut your own thumb off. This met with little sympathy from the draft board. Such malingerers were sometimes drafted anyway, or else burned at the stake. But somehow the Roman army became so unpopular as a career that by the middle of the 5th century, there were no longer any Romans in it.

Concerning for Roman names, and how they used to add more onto the end to distinguish *which* Publius Servius Nero was meant – this started get unwieldy after a while. My favorite example of a compound/complex Roman name (not making this up) is Caius Vibius Afinius Gallus Vendumnianus

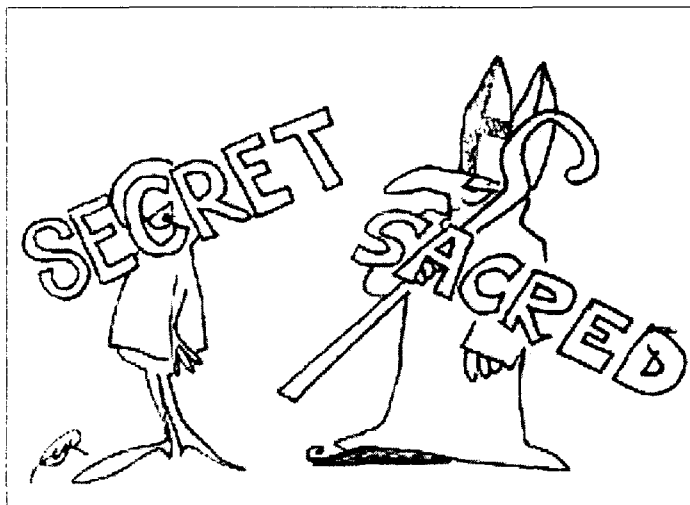


Volusianus, otherwise largely unknown to history as the desperately unimportant emperor Volusian. It is noted that even engravers at the time had trouble getting his name right.

I appreciated the Joseph Green piece about R.A. Lafferty. I only met Lafferty once, in the '80s. I must have caught him sober, because he agreed to be interviewed. You can see the result in *The Crabby Old Man from Tulsa* and also in my *Speaking of the Fantastic II*. I would say he was a bit reserved, but not really shy one-on-one. What I'd also say is that where Green finds Lafferty's work "Bad science fiction" but "of such original character that it assaulted your mind, storming ashore like the US marines, then taking up residence like the Vikings in England and France – there to stay," then maybe this curiously over-extended simile is telling you to revise your definition of science fiction. No good, but better than everything else? We can't accept the old canard that fantasy is just sloppy science fiction. I would agree that much of Lafferty's work is fantasy, but when he was in a speculative frame of mind, he did something *very different* with the material, and the more insightful like of inquiry is surely to examine what that was.

The Resnick/Roberts piece on African follies reminds me of the old observation that European white folks are clearly unfit to govern themselves because if you leave them alone they produce a Hitler or a Stalin. Nicholae Ceaucescu was an obvious match for Bokassa I. After tribal warfare in the Balkans, the result was genocide in Bosnia, just like in Rwanda. I'm not sure who Europe's greatest kleptocrat has been so far, but I might nominate King Leopold II of Belgium, who in the late 19th century killed millions of people exploiting the Congo as his private slave plantation to support his decadent lifestyle. When he died, his mistress stuffed a large portion of the loot into a suitcase and vanished. Leopold could have given Mobutu Sese Seku a few pointers on greed-with-style. Ecology European/American style? One of the more interesting examples occurred in the 19th century when somebody decided to introduce every bird mentioned in Shakespeare into North America. Maybe it made North America more literary, but it can't have been good for native species. Idi Amin was hardly the first ruler to try to print his way out of debt with paper money. This was a constant and ruinous problem in medieval China where they *invented* paper money. It also had famous effects in Weimar Germany.

No, it seems to me that such behaviors are universal, not unique to Africa at all. I was interested to learn that Jomo Kenyatta outlawed hunting. My brother, who visited Kenya, described (and filmed) the wildebeest migration, which stretched from horizon to horizon on a flat plain for three days. Millions of animals. It occurred to me that that's a lot of free hamburger, and no one in Kenya has any reason to be starving. But the Kenyans do not hunt. My brother was told this was because of revulsion at the Great White Hunter stereotype of the colonial British, who slaughtered anything and everything for "sport." There may be a sensible economic reason too, which is that if you live off wildebeest you'd have to follow them, and become nomads, whereas the settled Kenyans find cattle easier to manage.



So I've never been in the service and all I know are stories told by those who have. And this. I know this.

Jimmy My Cousin Who Died in Vietnam

I remember this nice little boy with a beaming smile and a sweet voice. It was on one of our frequent trips out west – we lived in Buffalo then but my mother's folks were in the Antelope Valley northeast of Los Angeles. Jimmy was the son of one of my mother's cousins, and I remember he wore blue dungarees. On this bright desert day he convinced me to climb a tree to the tarpaper roof of their house. I was reticent – scared, I guess – but he scooted up the thick branches like a South Sea Islander after coconuts, so happily that I forgot my trepidation and followed.

And then I remember a later trip, after we'd moved to Riverside, within 100 miles or so of the little town where Jimmy – and my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins – lived. I was about 12 or so, and I saw Jimmy that time at Sunday school. My devout Uncle Glen was having us read Bible verses and he called on Jimmy, assuring him that he'd help him. I remember Jimmy's shy smile, looking so small in his Sunday best, his arms hanging down from the short sleeves of his white shirt. And I remember feeling aghast and embarrassed when Jimmy tried to read his verse. His deeply accented voice was all but inaudible as he stumbled and struggled over the words.

I remember him next from when he was about 18 and I was still in high school. My family had moved to the Bay Area, the length of the San Joaquin from the Antelope Valley, so I hadn't seen him in awhile. I think what had happened is that he'd discovered his limitations, because now he told filthy jokes and seemed bitter and pissed off. I remember walking into my grandmother's house and heading towards my room to take a nap, saying hi to him as he sat on the couch. He didn't reply, and when I roused myself he was gone.

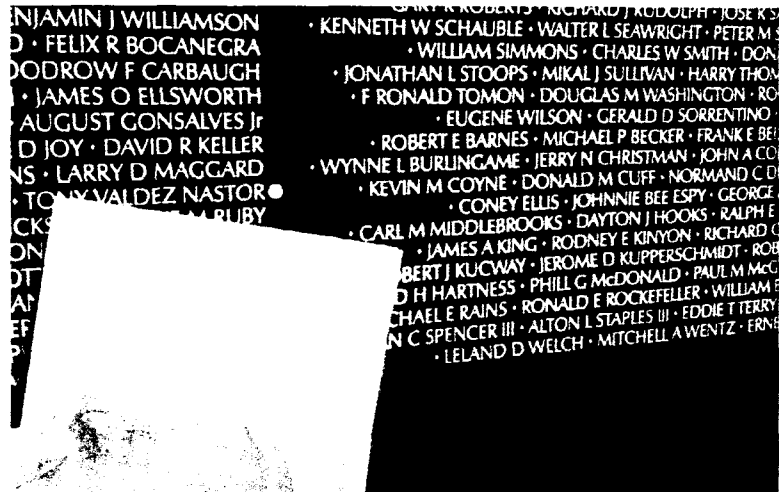
I never saw him again, but I did see a Kodak photo of him in his G.I. fatigues, smiling in that old way.

Our cousin Roger said that he was proud to be in the Army, to be doing something with his life, and it showed. One day when I was at Berkeley – I remember that it was a wet day when Fanny Lou Hamer gave a speech – I talked to my grandmother and she told me what had happened. It took a minute to register. "Jimmy? Jimmy?"

In that moment I became anti-war. "Never again, Granaw," I said to my dear grandmother. "Never again!" Guys like Jimmy didn't need to get murdered on guard duty – as he had been – to have their lives mean something. They didn't need to be fed to Vietnam for purposes lost to sanity.

Many years later I went to Washington D.C. and visited the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall. If you have never been there, it is a magnificent monument, and if you're a boomer, like Jimmy or me, you owe it to yourself and your times and your countrymen to go. Guided by a bearded vet in a G.I. jacket, I found the appropriate panel – E3, early on. I was horrified at how many panels and how many names followed his, but I imagine that Jimmy would find those names good company. I used materials provided by the vet and did a couple of rubbings of Jimmy's name, one of which I sent to my grandmother. I kept the other rubbing and have it someplace, in my diary, perhaps.

Jimmy is buried in Hawaii.



FRANK BUCKLES REPORTS FOR DUTY

Joseph Major



staff beside him, the rest of the ambulance detachment — and somehow, somehow he could see them all, thousands and thousands of them, drawn up in ranks. He saluted, automatically.

“Corporal Buckles reporting sir!”

The general returned his salute. “We don’t mind the wait. But it’s time to go now. Fall in and we will be off.”

The bugle blew reveille, and Frank jerked awake. Automatically he jumped from his bunk and he dashed down to the latrine. He felt better than he had for a while, and got his shave and wash-up done before he realized there was no one else in the barracks.

Incurious, he went back to the bunk, put on his uniform, got the puttees tied right, found his tin hat, made the bunk to the drill-sergeant’s standards, and went out the door at the double.

He stopped for a moment. There they were. General Pershing, on his horse, his

