

# Dancing and Joking



fanwriting by John Hertz

Fan Guest of Honor, Westercon LVII, Phoenix

*published November 2005*

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Two Good Playgrounds back page

Merry-making!  
Introduce most any time  
Rationality  
Touches on a comic side  
Heaven must have given us.

With cover art by Ray Nelson, and drawings from *Vanamonde*

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The Nelson first appears here; the Eggleton was originally for a Current Fanzines *Kaffeeklatsch* I hosted at Lunacon (New York); the Berry and the Kelly Freas, used in *Van* by permission; the others first appeared in *Van*.

John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St., Los Angeles, CA 90057, U.S.A. The 2004 Westercon (West Coast Science Fantasy Conference) was produced, as is this fanthology, by Westernsfa, Inc., an Arizona non-profit corporation, P.O. Box 67457, Phoenix, AZ 85052; "Westercon" is a service mark of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, Inc., a California non-profit corporation; "World Science Fiction Convention" & "Worldcon", "WSFS" & "World Science Fiction Society", "Hugo Award", "NASFiC", are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society, an unincorporated literary society. Published November 2005.

## My World and Welcome To It

There are so many interesting things to do in the science fiction community. I feel lucky to take part in a few. At s-f conventions people say I'm a good moderator of panels; I'm sometimes a judge, or Master of Ceremonies, in the costume competition we call a Masquerade; I've led Art Show tours. But let me commend fanwriting.

In the s-f community *fanzine*, a word coined by Russell Chauvenet in the 1940s, means an amateur magazine made by fans and for fans; and among us a fan is more likely to read Avram Davidson than to collect his typewriter ribbons. We admire the light touch, and the taste of imagination. It is a pleasure and a kind of happy exercise to try to tell tales well, to see what might be worth talking about, and to contribute to the conversation.

Fanac ("fan activity") is broad. Not every Fan Guest of Honor is a fanziner, but since as it happens I am, I've put into these pages a sample of my writing, for a souvenir of Westercon LVII. I've begun with my con report, which appeared in *File 770*; here also some of the things I've been writing for *Chronicle*, a Worldcon report, a Worldcon Masquerade report, and my column "It Seemed the Fannish Thing to Do"; in this installment of "Seemed" you can see me talk about Westercon LVII, and about collaborating with Larry Niven on a fanzine piece you'll find here. The end of a life is a supreme occasion for thought; the loss of the outstanding fan Bruce Pelz gave us all pause, and I include here my memorial. And here are some verses, book notes, and this and that from my own fanzine *Vanamonde* (named for a creature in Clarke's enduring classic *The City and the Stars*, 1956). I wish you joy of it.



### To Tell the Truth

Although Westercon LVII was called ConKopelli after the dancer-joker god beloved as the flutist, trickster, and rule-breaker of Southwestern U.S. iconography, whom Ray Nelson drew for the cover of this fanthology, in truth Kokopelli lives not in the mythology of the Red Man, but of the White. For all his ubiquity, "mediator between heaven and earth, the connecting link between worlds and master of ceremonies ... bringer of corn and seducer of women ... a cross between a magician, the Pied Piper, and Johnny Appleseed", these flights of fancy are ours; we seem to have found it necessary to invent him; "the current popularity of Kokopelli is based on a misunderstanding," Ekkehart Malotki, *Kokopelli* pp. 11, ix (2000). Malotki, a professor at Northern Arizona University who speaks Hopi, went and looked. Likewise he refutes the "epochal yet erroneous claim that the Hopi language contains no reference to time."

## Dancing and Joking

Westercon is the annual West Coast Science Fantasy Conference, which I report in Mike Glyer's *File 770*. He calls it "John Hertz's Westercon Notebook". Somehow I began quoting what I was reading at the time; *Vanamonde* readers know this creeps in there too.

### Westercon VII, "ConKopelli"

July 2-5, 2004

The Wigwam Resort, Litchfield Park, Arizona

Author Guest of Honor C.J. Cherryh, Illustrator GoH David Cherry, Fan GoH me, Filker GoH Heather Alexander, Local Author GoH Diana Gabaldon. Cherryh's unhappily taking sick on the road and having to turn back prevented choruses of *GoH, GoH Five!* (Moshe Feder, is this obscure?) Attendance 800. In the Art Show, 1,200 pieces by 90 artists, sales \$14,000.

The con committee felt it scored by striking a deal with the Wigwam, a Four-Star, Four-Diamond resort made available to us at our kind of prices. In July days the Sonora Desert is hot, but low humidity helped, as did a fleet of golf carts and a luxury-trained staff off-season with no one but us to serve. Night made a pleasant stroll. We

Wherein many things are very good and some frivolous.

Pepys

lived in little houses spread over pathways we got lost in, even veterans of New York's Lunacon at the Klein Bottle Hotel, but party hosts put up signs, and lights, and set chairs and dances on the lawn.

The Wigwam, in its 75th year as a hotel, once mainly a guest ranch, is now famed for golf; two of its courses were designed by Robert Trent Jones. I saw a swell croquet field. Goodyear began enterprise on the site in 1916 when boll weevils ruined Sea Island cotton from Georgia, German submarines thwarted imports from Egypt, and tires needed long staple from somewhere. Of such things is s-f too made. The odd name *Wigwam*, like the mysterious building numbers, was historical. The place was gorgeous. Was it too far from Phoenix to attract new chums?

Soon after I unpacked, a hotel man behind a desk looked at my propeller beanie and asked "How do you earn it?" This question was, I hoped, a good omen. A strong delegation came from the Nippon 2007 Worldcon bid: chairman Inoue Hiroaki, his wife Inoue Tamie, Hachiya Shouichi, Imaoka Masaharu, and Musubuchi Kaku. I brought them Saturn peaches, ring-like fruit just in season at Los Angeles where I live, which I gave partly in honor of the Cassini-Huygens space probe just arriving. For a local touch I wrapped them in cloth from the Wigwam gift shop decorated with images of Kokopelli, the flute-playing dancer-joker of Southwestern myth, after whom the con was named. Later I observed to the con-

com that it might not have been so wise to invoke him.

In the bar Hachiya and Musubuchi, to be local, drank tequila. Joni Dashoff drank chocolate martinis. She said they were martinis. I wondered about U.S. saké; Hachiya said Kentucky and Tennessee had good saké climate, but the people there

These things coming into my memory as I write this story, it would be unnatural for me to omit them.

Plutarch

all make whiskey. In my room the concom left a home-filled basket of oranges, Gala apples, lime & salt cashews, bottled water, chocolate-covered espresso beans, madeleines, Lindt balls, and Valhrona jivaro drops. All weekend I had no occasion for the jivaro fingernail pinch. The con had scheduled a handful of Classics of S-F discussions. In the hall, after Opening Ceremonies, Lauraine Tu-tihasi said *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, which on Monday she was to lead talk of, reminded her of Victor Hugo. Did it explain too much? Before *The Lord of the Rings*, I said, maybe the author (or his editors) felt awkward with fantasy.

The Program Book did list panels and panelists, which has to be mentioned as an achievement after Noreascon IV. Like too many Program Books it did not say "science fiction convention"; it ran an article about the Hospitality Suite, a schedule of filksinging (our home-made idiom, named by a typographical error decades ago that stuck), but it must have been a maze for anyone who didn't already understand. Mike Glyer wrote me up kindly. Graphics were fuzzy, not just photos but fine drawings by Cherry and paid advertisements, the look of throwing things together by E-mail and the Web inattentive of the medium in which they would appear. Participant bios were uneven, the look of — well, you get the idea. Names on badges were printed, too small, in black on blue. The Progress Reports had been weak, which can put people off and hurt attendance. Here and elsewhere rang Tom Whitmore's best advice, *Con committees worry too much about how things are made, and not enough about how they'll be used*.

Friday. Upon me had more or less descended the Fanzine Lounge. I had brought toys for the tables, planets and things for the walls, and three or four dozen current zines. Milt Stevens brought historic ones. I left him with the jigsaw puzzle and the

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platypus. Brett Achorn arrived with a suitcase of Selina Phanara suns for the Art Show. Elizabeth Klein-Lebbink and Jerome Scott, making a calendar of them, had lent two panelsful to display Not For Sale. The Inoues, seeing me labor at sun arrangement, stopped to bear a hand.

That afternoon the Wombat, glorious from his New Zealand tour, gave "What Pippin [another long-time nickname of his] Did on His Summer

With a fatal accuracy of process, a fatal ignorance of things, and no appreciation of the increasing chances of error.

Belloc

Vacation", with slides and stories. Viggo Mortensen had made friends eating with stunties, customarily served last; Orlando Bloom had done his own "skateboard" take. I sought Jacqueline Lichtenberg's discussion of *The Caves of Steel*, not knowing I'd lead this myself at the Worldcon in a few months. No sign of her — at what later proved to be the wrong fireplace. But there was Moira Stern and what she probably thought a small Celtic harp. At my request Cary Swaty, who was recording, tried turning off the amplified sound. Harp and voice better than ever. Stern sang "Completely round is the shining pearl the oyster manufactures; completely round is the steering wheel that leads to complex fractures."

As at various recent cons I'd arranged docent tours of the Art Show, *docent* borrowed from the museum world, where it means someone good at leading people round pointing out things worth looking at. Here we tried scheduling Cherry in the evening, Friday at 8:30 — alas, while I had to put on English Regency clothes. Earlier in the day I learned the sound-equipment was fouled in schedule conflicts; chairman Craig Dyer contributed his

You don't seem to know what being tired is.

Harriet Vane

own machines; we ran anxious tests; all that seemed well. To the ballroom; aieee; the hotel had, despite all asking, put in one of those wretched portable dance floors. But it was a luxury hotel. I had only to lift a finger. A swarm of workers came, with power tools, and removed the offense in moments. Janice Gelb wore a new gown. Marty Massoglia danced with Normalene Zeeman, a librarian who'd told me Thursday it was her first con. A blonde wore striped body paint, bare-armed and décolleté, her face a flower.

Half past midnight, the San Diego for '06 Westercon party. Sandra Childress poured me a Green Dragon. Politely we both did not mention how much I was to blame for the Mah Jongg fad in certain quarters of fandom — Chinese style, I quickly add (*File 770* 142, p. 15). At a quarter of two

Dashoff and I went to the League of Evil Geniuses party. This called for some strolling over the grounds. I don't think Westercon used all 450 acres. We arrived at what we felt was a seasonable hour. Lights on, signs up, door locked. I remarked how the book *Fahrenheit 451* showed "good" writing — technical manuals — and bad, while the 1966 Truffaut film took pains to make all writing bad. Dashoff liked the Seven Sisters women's schools; I told her my mother was a Mills alumna who'd voted not to invite men. We discussed con lore; the reticent learn not, the hot-tempered teach not, as Rabbi Hillel, who was neither, said two millennia ago.

Saturday, "Masquerade Judging" at ten. Explanation of the Novice-Journeyman-Master system, which is based on experience to ease those who may not have much; anyone can "challenge up". David Tackett reminded people they should feel free to ask questions of judges afterwards. See Hillel. The Wombat said, when you don't care to compete try working backstage, it broadens the mind. I who am thought to know words felt free to say *Be visual*. "Stage Presence" at eleven. Alexander It being a common plea of wickedness to call temptation destiny.

Johnson

said you need almost a split personality of your character and yourself; I said, your character is a puppet, you are the puppeteer. Kevin Roche said, use the whole stage. Nola Yergen-Jennings said, get accustomed to your stage clothes; try them in mundane circumstances. From the audience: suspend disbelief. I said, or create belief.

The Business Meeting finally saw a proposal that could get votes to amend north-south site rotation (By-Laws, Article 3); this passed, and we now have North of the 42nd Parallel; Central; South of San Luis Obispo county, California, and points west; and Other, for Australia, Roscoe help us. It needed a serpentine vote, always dramatic. Ed Green was in the chair, Achorn secretary. At the correct fireplace I began on *Fahrenheit 451* by reading aloud. Is it admirable for its message, or regardless? Tom Veal said the book had the liter-



Sue Jones 04

ary quality of showing how people respond to what they're in. I praised Julie Christie's acting in the film, so good both her women characters could be shown close up. Evelyn Leeper volunteered she'd voted *Fahrenheit* first for Best Novel Retro-Hugo. I, *Mission of Gravity*; both, I said, were

Minding true things by what their mockeries be.

Shakespeare

poetic, *Mission* spare, *Fahrenheit* lush. I admired the beautiful seductive falseness of the hypnotic earpieces called Seashells. The book-burning reminded Veal of Chinese emperor Chin Shih Huang Ti.

Meanwhile the Masquerade Director had resigned. This was in fact a relief. Sandra Manning and the Wombat stepped up to the plate. After the show had gone on, I took soundings, and learned that people outside the works hardly knew aught was amiss nor what sweat ran. Applause. Cary Riall remained as Master of Ceremonies. The judges were Janet Anderson, Gabaldon, and me. Anderson also had to be Workmanship Judge backstage. As an idea, that particular double-casting is bad, don't try it: it will probably make the show start late, and frazzle the judges, already under pressure (we're always comparing apples and androids, and with, say, thirty entries, if we spent two minutes on each we'd be out deliberating for an hour). But we managed.

There was naturally a jackalope, with Kokopelli getting into the act (Best Journeyman; Anti-Workmanship Award; Tasha Cady and a host of others, including 2nd-generation fan Ben Massoglia). Best Novice (entering only as "Rogue") was a Legolas from the *Lord of the Rings* films, skillfully showing "the most difficult emotions, fear, anger, joy, sadness", i.e. each harsh and blank. Best Presentation, Novice (and Workmanship Award for belt construction; entering as "Audrey") was "Ultimate Male Fantasy", a belly-dancer balancing a can of Guinness. Most Mystical, Novice (Workmanship Award for attention to detail; Anita Long Hemsath), was "The Crone" in a feathered headpiece, who knelt well and stood strong. Roche, backing on-stage as Fog from *The Fifth Element*, white shorts, double-sleeved blue tunic, gold Floston Paradise emblem, won Best Re-Creation, When the precision makes the moment happen.

Frederica von Stade

Master (Workmanship Award for clever cheats & recycling). Most Commercial, Master (Workmanship Award for millinery; Frances Burns, worn by Diane Harris), was a Gibson girl under a swell hat with a tall drink on a tray, vamping the M.C. to no avail; he took his own glass from the lectern to

explain "She could have gotten my attention with a Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster." Best in Show, and Best Workmanship, was "Chrysalis" (Master; Gail Wolfenden-Steib, Yergen-Jennings), cloaked, dark ruffled masks, silver inside, a final pose on the low platform.

Guinness for me at the S.E. Konkin III memorial party. As I wrote elsewhere, he was partisan, quarrelsome, insistent, and in his way genial. He would make you out to be a Libertarian for saying the word "liberty", but he also made friends. Keith Kato threw the first of three 30th anniversary chili parties (reprised at the Worldcon, then at Loscon XXXI). Dozens of masks on the walls of the costumers' party. At a pirates' party Dyer, whom his wife had sent off to play, poured home-made cordials. At the Nippon 2007 party Musubuchi told me about layout. At 2:15 Lee and Barry Gold were leaving the Main Lodge; filking slept, so I did.

Daytime Sunday, the Business Meeting. Green cried "Christian, you can't set your phone on 'vibrate' and call yourself." Later, "One day I'll use the LASFS Rules of Order and you'll all be sorry." Judy Bemis said "I've been to the LASFS, but I don't know what that means." I said "We don't know what it means." I gave my Art Show docent tour, and took Ctein's. The changing technique of Cherry, who'd taught himself to paint, reminded Ctein of advice from Kelly Freas. Kelly sent a medley of drawings, sketches, and fine-art prints, within reach of most buyers. I liked an artist's proof of "Transition", one of his simplest and best. Look how he shows it's a mask by beaming light through the eyes. But why is a mask in space? Is it an idea of protection whose glittering metal is hollow?

Philip Schulz won a 3rd Prize for s-f *origami* (mostly; some cut, some glued), space ships of wire mesh even. Jim Humble, another for a crouching gargoyle, forefeet back as if to leap, tongue correctly stuck out. George Todd's "Competing to see who can be the least devout.

Montesquieu

"lyst" was a floating half-bubble city whose lightning hit a mesa with columns like Greece. Nancy Stronger won a 1st Prize for "The Mischief-Maker's Key", a blue hand reaching through the key-hole, the key too close. Theresa Mather, another for "Night Flight", coiled dragon and stars on three turkey feathers. Sarah Clemens won a 2nd Prize for "Stigmata", a woman in white floating cruciform amid church ruins, hibiscus for blood. Sylvana Gish won Best in Show for "Echo", bronze salvaged from the U.S.S. *Arizona*. I asked my tour "How can we see loss?" They said "Her face looking up, her clutching hand." Ctein

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brought two photos of iridescent *pahoehoe* rock shot while he was GoH at Westercon LIII (Honolulu, '00), one of Niagara Falls mastered by mist.

At the GoH banquet, Cherry talked of meeting Michael Whelan who'd just illustrated *The Bloody Sun*. Alexander talked of singing music she loved. I talked of participation. In the bar Gelb, Geri Sullivan, Ben Yalow worked at lapsize computers (I believe "desktop"; even you don't believe "palmtop"). Fireworks outside. Yalow said New York's were best in the world. Later Val Ontell admitted "He's right." Green Lanterns with San Diego, victorious unopposed for Westercon LIX. Oscar Meyer wieners at the Chicago for '08 Worldcon party, Bobbie DuFault the chair of the '05 NASFiC (North American Science Fiction Convention, held when the Worldcon is overseas) serving drinks. I said *Fahrenheit 451* was bleakly hopeful. At filking I heard "Got to find the future, 'cause the present's all I see." Michelle Dickey sang her haunting *Alice* song, "Save me, save me, I'm lost in my memory," not what I find in Carroll but fine.

Half past eleven on Monday; to moderate "Is NASA the Answer or the Problem?", Jonathan Post, David Williams, Veronica Zabala. Jim Glass, in the audience, had worked on the F-1. Post said NASA had done great things but went

It is enough to make one sigh deeply.

Shen Fu

bureaucratic. Zabala praised space spin-offs. Williams said NASA research grants funded geology. We talked of the school programs. From the audi-

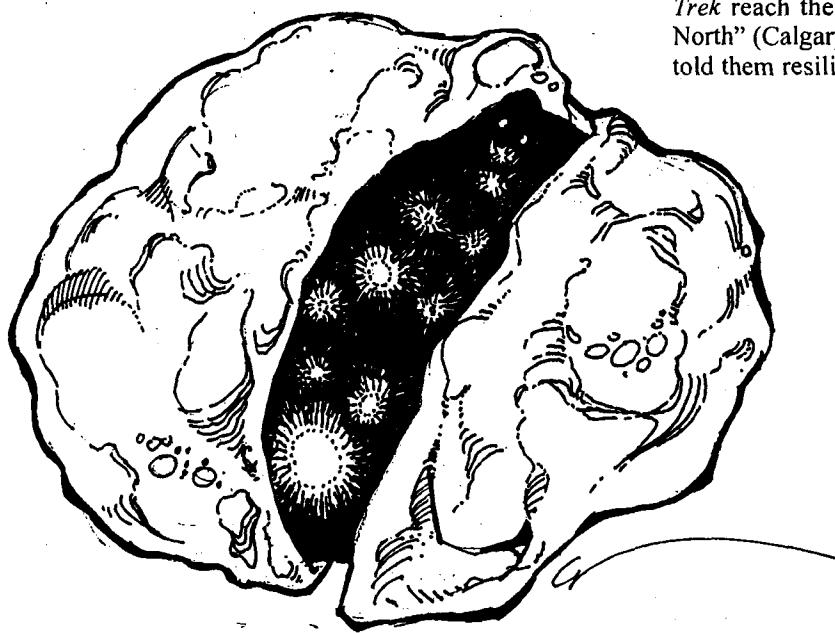
ence, getting in kids is worth much. Post said NASA wasn't fast enough. I said, we have to learn to do things without goading from an enemy. Zabala said, let's get back on the horse. Half past two, no panelists but me for "Did S-F Change Our World?" The audience voted to stay. From one, "Today those born into s-f think it normal." I said maybe the change was that people could be born into s-f. Another, "Some things are no longer fiction." Veal said "Lots of things not in s-f happened anyway." Another noted the software symbiosis; why not lawyers or mathematicians, of whom far fewer among us? Today's seeming growth of diversity we may not have created, but we fed with the fuel in our hands.

There'd been a mock space mission at nearby Challenger Space Center. The Golds went. Their flight directors tried to explain radioactive debris as a solar flare. Lee said it must be from disintegration of a satellite with a plutonium drive, or secret atom-bomb tests, or, when the video library couldn't show Ceres, radioactivity there after the

But there are always at least two points of view.

Heinlein

destruction of the planet between Mars and Jupiter. Astronomy on a golf course with Tony Laconte of Stargazing for Everyone and an 11" telescope, Mike Weasner and the mighty Meade ETX. Weasner told me they saw an "Iridium flare" — a solar-panel satellite in the Iridium network catching and reflecting the Sun. While I helped take down the Art Show, Mather and Marty Massoglia suggested better displays for the Print Shop. Massoglia and Mark Leeper are both origamists; Leeper had given workshops. At the Dead Dog party we wondered if President Kennedy's Moon program helped *Star Trek* reach the air. Next year's Westercon "Due North" (Calgary) had sent ten to look and learn. I told them resilience won.



Connor Freff Cochran

## Two Classics of Science Fiction

I've been talking about them; some have been made discussion topics at s-f cons.

### The Glass Bead Game from YHOS, 2002

For Westercon LV ("Conagerie", Los Angeles, 2002) I suggested discussions of s-f classics. The head of programming took my suggestion and my list of books, which were printed in Progress Report 3 so people could read up and make ready.

The books were Bester, *The Stars My Destination* (1956), Cameron, *The Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet* (1954), Clarke, *The City and the Stars* (1956), Heinlein, *Farmer in the Sky* (1950), Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game* (1943), Schmitz, *The Witches of Karres* (1966), Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), Verne, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870). As the PR noted, two were written by women, two were not written in English, two were written in the same year, two were written before 1900, two were written for children, two had been done in films: a pretty accident.

Of these, Hesse's *Glass Bead Game* (also published in English as *Magister Ludi*) is surely the most neglected among us. Yet it won Hesse a Nobel Prize; it is one of very few good s-f novels by an outside writer; indeed it is a masterpiece.

You are welcome to ponder whether this is a good list, whether any of these books is a classic, or whether in s-f we can have any. Charlie Brown of *Locus* says mainstream writing is about the past, s-f is about the present, no one can write about the future. Perhaps that is so. I believe we can have classics if we make a book, or a painting,

Sound the harp, the pipes,  
To the greening of the world,  
Partisans of dance.  
Anyone marching today  
Tomorrow may sing with us.

or whatever may be s-f, which outlives its own time; which we find merit in even after times have changed. With decades passed since the most recent of these books, that may be more interesting than whether the future actually turned out, or will, as written.

In Hesse's book the glass bead game is what differs from our world. Some hundreds of years from now — he does not say, though to a friend he wrote of imagining the year 2400 (T. Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse* (1965), p. 308) — the world has re-organized. People grew tired of what they came to call the age of wars. Intellectual ability found a new place. The change was

begun, or concentrated, by a toy, a wire frame on which glass beads could be strung in various colors and shapes. The beads were used to symbolize ideas — all kinds of ideas — an architectural design, a theme in a Gabrieli sonata, a line of verse. Over time there grew up a notation, the physical beads fell out of use, the game took on international proportions. The best players were celebrities; the least were precious schoolmasters. The book does not mention, but from hints Hesse surely knew, that similarly knowledge of the Confucian classics, and skill at a kind of essay-writing, were the backbone of China for two thousand years.

By the time of the story a kind of order had formed, like our religious orders, its members renouncing material wealth, family, politics, to serve society by virtue of their training. A Master of Music, and a President of the Order, are important characters in the novel. The alternative book-title *Magister Ludi*, i.e. "master of the game" in Latin, is the name of the office held by the protagonist, in which capacity he among other things led public games with great ceremony. This particular Master of the Game, a man named Joseph Knecht, became a subject of legend. His work excelled, but his career ended strangely. Well after his death a biography was thought possible. It is compiled by another member of the order, writing for the general public. He summarizes the history of the game, tells what is known of Knecht's life, adds with reluctant scholarship the legendary matter, and closes with some of Knecht's student exercises and poetry.

*The Glass Bead Game* is a model of s-f writing. Hesse's subtlety never fails. All the big questions about elitism, practicality, creation, skepticism, the risk of panacea, the place of religion and the nature of allegiance, are handled by implication. Nor does he digress to explain technology. Why should he? The characters take it for granted. The book is first about them, how they strive and succeed and fail; second about their world, what shape it has as a result of its choices.

In a virtuoso display Hesse disdains the technique of throwing us into the middle of things; he puts the explanatory matter in front, and fascinates us by using it to characterize the narrator. By the time the narrator is ready to start on Knecht's childhood our suspicions are roused and the game is afoot. The narrator is sure, but not so smug or stupid as to make the book cheap. Women are

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largely off stage, while Hesse with little touches shows the consequences of that. The detail is telling throughout, and the language even in translation has admirable grace.

The structure of the book is masterly. The student episode of Plinio Designori foreshadows the meeting of Designori and Knecht as adults, and then, the alarm having sounded, Knecht's letter to the Board of Educators, where Knecht in all the power of his mind displays what he reproved Designori for. When we come to the closing matter we burn to know what signs Knecht gave in his youth. They are all there. We need not wonder what difference Knecht made; the presence and tone of the narrator at the beginning tell us. The

end of Knecht's life is as right as any tragedy. In sorrow and horror we were expecting it.

By the miracle of genius this book is not mired in its time. Written in Switzerland, in the middle of Europe, in the middle of World War II, it is not about National Socialism — the one cut at Hitler is made so much in passing that we are jolted into recalling the year 1943 — or Communism, or the West and the East shaking each other awake. Its reception cannot be called silly to an audience who knows the history of *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Even today there are people who say they are founding the Province of Castalia or playing the glass bead game. In this his final work Hermann Hesse, if we may say so, surpasses Jane Austen and reaches the level of Jack Benny. Who can regret the cost?

### *The Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet*

from *Twink*, 2003

In January 2002 the Golden Duck (children's s-f) Middle Grades Award was named the Cameron Award for Eleanor Cameron (1912-1996), who followed *The Wonderful Flight* with four more books about Tyco M. Bass and the little planet Basidium-X, *Stowaway to the Mushroom Planet* (1956), *Mr. Bass's Planetoid* (1959), *A Mystery for Mr. Bass* (1960), *Time and Mr. Bass* (1967). *Flight* has been applauded by Ellen Datlow and Walter Moseley. It was Evelyn Leeper's first s-f book. It has strangeness and charm.

In the mundane world *Flight* has been loved for decades. It is on dozens of children's-book lists. Upon publication *The Atlantic* (Dec 54, p. 98) called it "a perfectly made fantasy.... most realistic description of a trip that two boys make in their own space ship. I felt as if I were right there with them." Four pages earlier the same reviewer praised Dr. Seuss' *Horton Hears a Who*, and ten pages earlier her editors praised Ben Shahn's *Alphabet of Creation*. The *New York Times Book Review* (4 Nov 54, pt. 2 p. 30) said "scientific facts are emphasized in this well-built story. Since they are necessary to the development of the story the reader absorbs them naturally." Just above was praise of Walter Brooks' *Freddy and the Men from Mars*. From mundane reviewers this is high compliment, and these reviewers show taste.

We remember Mr. Bass, who keeps saying "precisely" although he confesses he is like a cook who can't tell anyone else afterward just how he did it. We remember his house on Thallo Street, and his newspaper want-ad written, as Northcote Parkinson taught in *Parkinson's Law* three years later, to draw only one answer, the right one. We remember Mrs. Pennyfeather the hen, and the oxy-

gen urn that went phee-EEP, and the wise men who weren't very wise.

Why did the space ship have to be built by a boy, or two boys, between the ages of eight and eleven? Was it to make children the protagonists of the story, so that children would like it? Perhaps. Perhaps Mr. Bass is the protagonist. The

That wretched color  
Was only a priming coat.  
What a good neighbor.

First Boy, David Topman, and the Second Boy, Chuck Masterson, themselves ask — fifty pages into a two-hundred-page book, when we are well along. By then we know them and their parents, and we have spent the last twenty pages with Mr. Bass, a little old man who is an engineer, a farmer, and an astronomer.

In fact Mr. Bass is not of our planet, he and his ancestors being Mushroom People, basidiomycetous and thallophytic. The boys are going to them on Basidium. Why not get one of the big airplane companies? "Dear me!... A huge rocket ship ... and all the great lumbering men in space suits with oxygen tanks and cameras and radar instruments, would have frightened the poor Mushroom People out of their wits. Then too," smiled Mr. Bass rather dryly, "what president of an airplane company would have believed me? You boys wasted no time in doubting."

We believe Mr. Bass because, by the time he gives this explanation, Cameron has already shown what makes him believable. Chapter 2 introduces him to us, before the boys meet him. We find him on a high stool, writing in an enor-

mous ledger, under a light he invented, surrounded by a clutter of nails and wires and batteries. He finishes his arithmetic and squints through a telescope at his planetoid. "Diameter — thirty-five miles. Yes, yes, there's no way out of it. And yet, if the diameter is so small, how in thunderation has it managed to hang onto its atmosphere?" He is an individualist, an eccentric, but a scientist where it counts. So is the book. We also know about doubting.

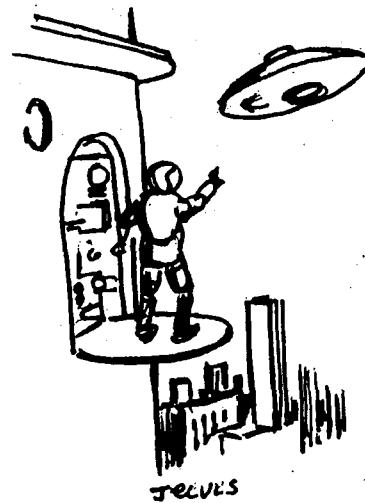
In Chapter 4, David's father, a physician, who thought the want-ad was odd because he knew the town and there was no Thallo Street, went to look. At dinner David said the boys had finished the space ship. "For some reason Dr. Topman's face grew red.... 'You mean [David asks] that you've seen Mr. Bass?'... 'Er — after a manner of speaking, yes. I thought I'd just take a peek in the window, as I couldn't rouse anyone, and would you believe it, the window was flung right up in my face, and a head appeared.'... 'Oh, but Father.... was it Mr. Bass? What did you say to him?' 'Very little. I was rather in a hurry. Now kindly get on with your dinner.'" Cameron's gentle comedy is only one of the gems set in her simple direct language.

At midnight of the day they deliver the ship, the boys blast off. The hour is set by Mr. Bass' calculations, and he is sorry for it. Nor do the boys sneak out their windows; he insists they ask their parents' permission, which to the boys' surprise is given. This is a point mundane schoolteachers recommending the book make much of, thinking with others in their world that an artwork is good if it portrays what they want to promote. Second-rate readers like to recognize their own ideas in a pleasing disguise. In *Flight* the point has literary merit. The flower is that things unsnarl in this adventure; the leaf is that there are many touches of magic unrealism, to reverse an expression. Of course the boys do not sleep through midnight, but get up and go.

On Basidium they meet Mebe and Oru, who would be the King's wise men, as they are called, if they were wiser. But they are painted lovingly, as is everyone in this book, another gem. The king, Ta, proves dignified, gracious, and intelligent. He could easily have been made contemptible — a king! mustn't we jeer? — or without a twinkle in his eye, near the end when we are ready for it — mustn't we revere? But Cameron has imagined what her characters need be if they are to do what her story tells. There are strange plants and clothes. There is trouble, which Mr. Bass has sent the boys to relieve. "Perhaps," the

King responds to them, "you have a new thought ... that we must work with the thing *itself* which is causing the trouble." Their learning, their deducing, their agonizing, and their answer, have the ring of truth for any scientist. Then home.

There is a reason Mr. Bass could not go himself. He had other fish to fry. And there are touches of fantasy. Some are brushstrokes that make the painting what it is. In the first sentence we see David reading *Dr. Dolittle in the Moon* (1928), which A.L. Sirois rightly finds a telling



*reveres*

detail. Those who do not know that book get from the title alone something of David and his household; the rest, a sign. There in particular among Hugh Lofting's tales of a fantastic naturalist is a great deal beyond the possible, but it too is grounded, they all are as we see with a double-take, in science.

John Dolittle knew animals' language because he learned it by observing them. This is explicit in the *Voyages* (1922), and as he progresses from mammals, to fish, to insects, to plants, he would rather preserve his notebooks than his life. Cameron was a craftsman who used to point out that Dylan Thomas' father read him Shakespeare at the age of four. Some of the fantasy in *Flight* seems as if it could have been brought within the possible, but this is like the way Sam Johnson or Ben Jonson blushed for Shakespeare whom they all but idolized, or at least like Lofting.

At the beginning David Topman goes to bed thinking about frameworks and air pressure and velocity (all, we get no other warning, are points of fantasy). At the end there is no ship left — which also kept happening to John Dolittle — but there are two notebooks and a souvenir of Ta. Aren't Cameron's names wonderful? So is the book.

Northbound train at dusk.  
The San Clemente ocean  
Has rusted the sky.

## Dancing and Joking

There was a Starbucks Coffee shop in the lobby of a bank where I had business — or maybe the other way round; on the front of the building, the Starbucks name was above the bank's, and bigger — so I, wanting sustenance, with no soon chance to dine, and a fondness, in such winter as we have, for eggnog laced with espresso, sat and drank. These places broadcast music. "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" can be welcome if sung by Sinatra. I was reading H. Granville-Barker & G.B. Harrison eds., *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (rev. 1960), which I got on the strength of a chapter by Muriel St. Clare Byrne, friend of Dorothy L. Sayers and editrix of *The Lisle Letters* (6 vols. 1981) — yes, I rated her higher than T.S. Eliot, as his chapter confirmed. Suddenly with a shock I heard Joan Baez' devastating "Diamonds and Rust" (1975). I'd only met her once, and since it was in her living room, and I was introduced by a friend, I took occasion to tell her how moved I was by the trenchant beauty of this ballad — I who, as I didn't tell her, so often found all but the shining silver of her voice excessive, and who, as I've told you, concur so vigorously with Nabokov that to call an artwork a true story is to insult art and truth. How do I know if the man in fact called her from a booth in the Midwest? I drank to a falcon's cry in the daisies. "Yes, I loved you dearly," she confessed as freely as she reproached; "if you're offering me diamonds and rust, I've already paid." [Van 501]

A friend told me he was performing at the Magic Castle, so I went last night with the Nivens. This 1908 Victorian house in Hollywood was rebuilt with three theaters for an ingenious private club of Magician and Associate members, now in its 40th year. A Close-Up Gallery seating less than two dozen, a Parlor of Prestidigitation for such feats as made Nate Leipzig and Max Malini famous, and a Palace of Mystery for grand illusions, host five performers a night, one week each, with a dining room, two bars (unless I've lost count), a gift shop, and Irma the invisible pianist, plus a library, classes, and other facilities for members. My friend Alfie was in the Parlor, a 19th Century London street conjurer who had put on black tie for the occasion. He invited two women from the audience to sit at table with him. Each borrowing his magic wand made coins appear and vanish. He pushed four coins through the table, one by one. Borrowing in turn a \$10 bill from a man in the audience, he folded and unfolded it into a \$100 bill. He shredded a corner of a bar napkin, kneaded the shreds into a ball, and helped by the current holder of the wand unrolled the corner whole. Playing-cards from a pack became what cards the women said they should be. By this time he had finished a snifter of brandy; he refolded the bill and dropped it in; it rose, floating through the air and round his hands. Larry muttered "He has an invisible hand [*The Long ARM of Gil Hamilton* (1976)]." To return the bill Alfie unfolded it into a ten again. [519]

Dinner with Mike Glyer and Ed Colbert (little active in fandom recently) at the Islamic Chinese restaurant Tung Lai Shun, 40 W. Valley Bl., San Gabriel. After a cold plate of emperor vegetable, spicy ox tendon, and jellyfish, we ate Beijing lamb, celery with white nuts & lily bulbs, and a couple of green-onion pies. I asked whether the tendency to sermonize had hurt science fiction. Glyer said s-f offered a license for social criticism. Colbert said s-f could explore social issues. I said s-f was an artform: if it was good art it could also explore social issues, if it was bad art they wouldn't redeem it. We talked about literary structure. Colbert and I again marveled how well Patrick O'Brian's sea novels of the English Regency manage the problems that face s-f writers, with sailing-ship technology being so alien now it might as well be space-ships, and O'Brian choosing to write stories that turn upon its operation. Glyer recalled C.S. Lewis' formula *Ordinary people meeting the extraordinary, or extraordinary people meeting the ordinary*. Colbert said Frodo was thus the protagonist of Tolkien's book *The Lord of the Rings* (1955); although Aragorn was a human, and it was his story in many ways, he was extraordinary. [536]

English Regency night at the U. Cal. Los Angeles historical-dance club, a hundred people in the fine rotunda of Powell Library. I put on the costume and taught them things for a few hours. Cabbage soup afterwards in Westwood Village. S, a post-doctoral astrophysicist whose husband flew back to France so he could photograph the Venus transit, not visible here, explained that in recent decades the Sun's diameter had been observed to change. Not much, she said; 20 kilometers out of 700,000; but why? W, a Master's-degree student in mathematics, talked of great piano music. I asked what he played. He said, Beethoven, Chopin, Rachmaninoff. They, like we, are across a great divide from Mozart, I said, and having just read César Saerchinger's *Artur Schnabel* (1957) I could recount how Schnabel, that profound musician, in the 1920s when it was a new thought "would sit at the piano, smoking a cigar and looking nonchalantly round the room while tossing off the most notoriously perilous passages of the Brahms B-flat; and then by contrast summon the greatest concentration and care in producing a *cantabile* passage from a Mozart concerto, whispering 'this is difficult!'". [578]

## Four Moments from Vanamonde

## Forward to the Basics

from *Mimosa*, 2003

FIAWOL, fandom is a way of life, is a hard topic for me, devoted as I have been to the alternative view FIJAGH, fandom is just a glittering — or something — hobby. But let us reason together.

In my undergraduate days Antioch College bloomed into Antioch University. William M. Birenbaum presided. "Back to the basics" was heard, as before and indeed since. We can't go back, he said; and if we could it is not clear we had the basics. To get them we can only and we should go forward.

Today some leading fans have reached age sixty, seventy, eighty. I think this an honor and a wonder. Some have been with us from the beginning. Whatever we are doing has held their interest. All are old enough to know they can find other ways of spending their beer money. However, this is bad, because fandom is graying. We worry we might be lacking somehow because we are too old.



Taral Wayne

In the beginning everyone was seventeen. This was bad. We worried we might be lacking somehow because we were too young.

Science fiction then was an adolescent pastime. It had to be; it was written by Mary Shelley and Rudyard Kipling and Aldous Huxley and Hermann Hesse and George Orwell, and there were all those teenagers who paid for translating Jules Verne.

Now s-f is for fuddy-duddies. Except for permeating popular culture. A 1996 survey found half the U.S. households had at least one person self-defined as an s-f fan. I know because Arnie Katz quoted it while Fan Guest of Honor at Westercon XLIX that year in El Paso. Most of them must be what we'd call readers instead of fans, or the 1996 Worldcon attendance would've been 6.7 million instead of 6.7 thousand, but it's still impressive. As I write, the electronic book service Amazon ranks *Dune* about 200 by sales; *Fahrenheit 451* about 1,100; *Lucifer's Hammer* about 5,400; *Frankenstein* about 11,000; *Tunnel in the Sky* about 15,000; *The Glass Bead Game* about 27,000. Tom Veal's book is about 940,000.

It's true we get no respect. When people disliked U.S. President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, the best way they could think to mock it was to call it Star Wars. In other words, it was science fiction, and therefore sick. Also there was "Ronnie ray-guns". Some of these noises came from us. I didn't vote for him, but I thought this was strange. While Newt Gingrich was Speaker of the House of Representatives, a mundane-politics magazine could think of no better way to mock him than reporting he was at work on an s-f novel. The article was by an s-f author. I thought this was so strange I told *File 770*.

Science itself is strange. One might think it liberating; I for instance joked in *Chronicle* 231 how I hurried to the 2002 Worldcon, unable to leave Los Angeles till noon, catching a jet, and dashing to my panel in San Jose at four, which no human being on Earth could have done a hundred years earlier, not even Phileas Fogg. Yet we have "hard" s-f, and Bridget Landry is lonely as a rocket scientist and master-class costumer, and even James Michener, whose novel *Space* is within an inch of s-f, knew there were more career scientists who worked in the arts than career artists who worked in the sciences.

I don't have to tell you fanzines are strange. Well, I do, actually, but I won't. Fanzines are goners. They were made obsolete by the Internet, or E-mail, or cheap travel, or something. As Lord Chesterfield said, "Tyrawley and I have been dead

*Dancing and Joking*

these two years, but we don't choose to have it known."

We're all goners. No one needs us any more. Earlier the people who showed up came because they needed to. They were good for nothing elsewhere but we didn't notice so we took them. It must be easier these days for worthless people to get by.

Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian student of communications media whose Ph.D. was in English Literature, and who incidentally considered, among media, money, clothes, and clocks, said media only seem to supersede one another. When a new medium arrives, it takes over the burden of being the latest thing. That frees other media, and tends to clarify them, so they come to be employed for what they prove best at. Fewer eggs are put into one basket. The telephone did not replace the letter, nor did either replace going for dinner or a walk, on business or socially.

Science fiction, like science, is the art of the possible. Fantasy is the art of the impossible. Comprise them, in "speculative fiction" perhaps: we are the what-if artform. This is a big basket, but even so it is better not having too many eggs in. Some of my favorite pastimes, and people, are not stfnal, to use our old adjective. I take a good deal of trouble staying involved with others that are.

We have long said fandom is communication. This is true, or had better be, but not the whole truth. When a game is not the only one in town, "nothing better to do" rises from sarcasm to description. I *want* to do what I can find nothing better than.

McLuhan's famous line *The medium is the message*, also expressed as *They became what they beheld*, had a qualification which, unsurprisingly enough, is rarely noted: *if not paying attention*. Users of an alphabet may become alphabetical, neat, segmented, serial, and uniform, but they need not if they bother to remain aware; or they may do so should it suit them, and become something else tomorrow. The artist can lay down a pen and take up a brush.

Beasts go where the other beasts are going.  
Slaves try to do whatever no one stops them from.  
Free people try to do what seems worthwhile.  
Artists know "worthwhile" had better not be too  
materialistic.

We cannot merely call s-f imaginative fiction — any fiction is imaginative — but our what-if art-form stretches the imagination, an exercise of the spirit of play. Some people insist on justifying that. They make s-f a form of prediction, or

protest, or psychodrama. Let us say those are at most Newton physics in an Einstein universe.

Fans are whatiffy people. It was — will you say it or shall I say it? I will say it — one of Forry Ackerman's better puns to call us the Imagi-Nation.

This is where inhabitants of the mundane world fail us. They are forever proclaiming that we live in dreams, that we believe our fantasies. We have of course riposted that it might not be so bad if we

*Done on an icebox in one-word magnets*

von fair & beauteous rite

nothing of wanton

methinks whatsoever comely art is over

there

I say you strike naught

alas

make you to use thence

so this doth beseech

and be thou too thus perchance

and be given the right percentage

that their cries have a strange ring of jealousy.

more dreaming and fantasy might be good.

one; but it is not our program. We del

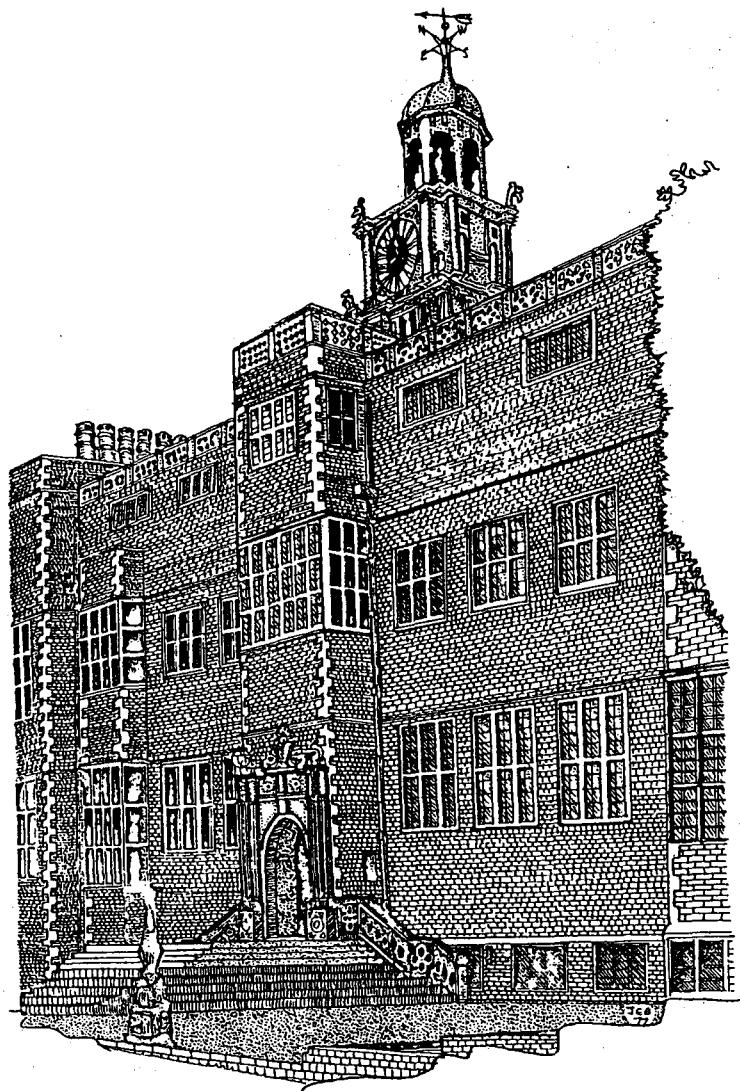
of travel through time, or faster than

did; that their cries have a strange ring of jealousy; that more dreaming and fantasy might be good for everyone; but it is not our program. We delight in tales of travel through time, or faster than light, not because we know how to do it, but because we do not. What fun "Let's pretend we're space pirates" if we really were space pirates? With our full share of faults, we're not so dull.

We are participatory. Our clubs, conventions, fanzines, are not gawkfests. With us fans and pros mingle. We're less interested in whether X and Y are celebrities than whether they can carry on a conversation. An s-f con sells, not admission, but membership, and expects both greenhorns and old hands to make themselves useful. A club may publish books or go bowling but will not cultivate low-lifes who prostrate before high-lifes. A fanzine is most often applauded as a forum for discourse. Outside our world live other versions of these things which rarely win our esteem. We do not begrudge their existence but we wish they were more creative.

The life of *Mimosa* is an honor and a wonder. This zine relishing fanhistory has earned acclaim and been voted a handful of Hugo Awards. If you are acquainted with me in person, or follow my fanwriting, you know I think people are lopsided with the expression *c'est la vie*; if used, it should also fly out for finding a fine sunset, or falling in love, or fashioning a success.

I believe we have grown complacent. I marvel at fanziners who don't go to cons because they don't see any fanziners at cons because fanziners don't go to cons, or conners who yearn for fresh blood while printing clever fliers that never say "science fiction convention". If you do any teach-



John Berry

ting on roller skates suddenly flew round a floor like a champion, then being dragged into a nightclub show was suddenly master of the hardest comedy, a satirical patter-song; no practice; undoubtedly he could just be. These mundane currents influence us. We could yet take on craftsmanship for ourselves, like the feminist slogan a few years ago "Take back the night."

Theorists love contradictory data, which sound the alarm for a more fundamental theory. We used to say science fiction was what *could* happen, until new science falsified old stories that were yet manifestly distinct from fantasy. I've said science fiction is a mood. Fandom also may be. In that sense it may be more a way of life than a guaniferous hobby, oh dear.

I've been promoting a sense of the classic. I hardly suggest we are worse off than in the past, though it would be a surprise if people of another time and place were never superior to us at anything. If a classic is an artwork so great that it transcends its own day, that surviving its time and place it speaks to us after styles have changed and it is no longer buoyed by the currents of convention, then beyond what it may have been to its own people in the past, it can be an inspiration for us to make something great our way in the future. Let us not try to pull down heroes as low as we may feel ourselves. Let us grieve fitly but not defeatingly when they die. Let us try to rise by their example. Forward to the basics.

ing, you know one of the oldest rules, a sometimes harsh rule which is all too true: *A well taught class fills, a badly taught class empties.* It's also a source of comfort — which means "lending strength", did you know that? I looked it up after a funeral — in that it points to something which can be done. In my own affairs I try to keep it in mind, the complement of publicity.

Pro activity has grown complacent. The craftsmanship is weak; compared to say, the 1940s, I believe we're imagining more widely and writing worse. That's not the joys of my childhood, I wasn't around then. Also our field is particularly prone to distraction by dazzle. We get a lot out of shock value — an occupational hazard of living by the sense of wonder. Some of this is right. Where else should be the home for dangerous visions? But not all valuable visions are dangerous. Behind the received wisdom is the received iconoclasm. Eventually when the same rules, however hateful, are broken the same way yet again, another beer begins to look better.

Pretending to disdain skill appears in history now and then. The Roman poet Horace cracked, "Because Democritus believes native genius is worth any amount of piddling art, a good many will not take the trouble to trim their nails." Charlie Chaplin in the film *Modern Times* carefully showed a little tramp too awkward for a factory assembly line, who put-

## I Thought I Had a Pumpkin Bomb

from Trap Door, 2004

Some of the adventures of my misspent youth actually happened.

In 5th Grade, I really did tape a plastic rocketship to an essay I turned in. It stood on its tail, as God and Mr. Heinlein meant it to. I had read all the Heinlein juveniles in the library, having begun s-f with Raymond F. Jones' *Son of the Stars*, unless you count learning to read during nursery school by making my mother read *Through the Looking Glass* aloud until I could too. I really did host birthday parties where we all went to a commercial bakery to watch bread made or a dairy to watch milk bottled. In a 3rd Grade paper on beavers I really insisted on writing "teeeeth", many times, not only in this so irritating poor Miss Leidberg, since deceased, whom I couldn't bear either, that I was transferred to Miss Drucker's 4th Grade where I could happily review *Exodus* and *The Man Who Never Was*. Miss Drucker said a book report only proved what you read, a book review gave what you thought. In 6th Grade, I really did try to lead a class campaign against friction. "Down with Friction", I wrote everywhere. We could stop with magnetic brakes. But I never made one box of Herzls, the pretzel-flavored breakfast cereal (Herzls are yummy), name carefully adjusted when I found that Theodor Herzl my pretended eponym didn't use a T.

In high school I really tried out for Jean in *Rhinoceros* having practiced turning into a rhinoceros for weeks, was rejected grief-stricken, accidentally read Berenger so girls could try for Daisy, and was cast on the spot; the schedule was doubled since there already was a Berenger; then the play was cancelled when he fell sick; all after I no longer attended that school. When a friend published "Gaek! gaek! the snake" in *Concept*, the literary magazine, a gang of us built the Glorious Analog Electronic Komputer for the school fair; I was inside with carts of reference books; our sign said "Secrets of the Universe, 10¢ each"; after many hours someone sent in "What are the secrets of the universe?" and I answered "10¢ each". Later we all admitted it ought to be pronounced *geek*. But the pumpkin bomb we — I'll come to that.

I picked up magic as a hobby, literally and Bruce Elliott's book. We had ten-minute passing periods. I began to look like a pear, because I kept in my trousers pockets a pack of cards, rope, scissors, a few thimbles, balls of colored sponge, and things too fierce to mention. I was on a television show, and despite everything was paid in Holloway candies. Somehow I still like Milk Duds. I taught magic at summer camp, leaving an earlier one in a blaze of glory after leading my cabin to

prizes with a sabot float, I mean really a float, the sheets washed loose in the lake, and with rewritten Flanders & Swann songs everyone laughed at but no one recognized. The toilet paper gag didn't work. We knew our counselor came in late from his night out. We thought he drank. We decided to fill his bed with toilet paper. Befuddledly he would be lost to determine what it was. No lights. His toes would find it. What in the world? He would reach down and catch a piece. Pull at it. Shred. Another piece. Another. Shred, shred. Sitting in mystery on the edge of his bunk. Still at it by dawn. Shred, shred. Diabolical. At sunrise we saw him dead asleep, full length, in the bed we had for *lagnianne* removed to the floor. He never noticed that or the carefully measured toilet paper we had spent hours stuffing into his bedclothes. We never did learn how he reached his bed and not its springs which remained in the usual place. Shred.

At the next camp I was Charlie Davenport in *Annie Get Your Gun*, although I couldn't sing. I made friends with the owner's son and went stealing cherries from trees across the fence. I put on SCUBA gear for the fantastically clear water of a clay-bottom lake. Different lake. I fell in love with a girl counselor and read Thurber to her in secluded spots. That adventure seemed never to happen, but we stayed in touch for years and when she married I met her husband. What did I know?

I'm coming to the pumpkin bomb.

Back in school a friend one day said "I see you all over." I said "There's twelve of me." I cached extra shirts, briefcases, shoes, changing in each of those ten-minute periods. When he asked "Weren't you wearing a different watch?" I said "That was No. 8." I was late for geometry but I kept it up for days. The most interesting thing in

Yet another time  
I taste the most delicious  
Melon of my life.

geometry was simple closed curves. We drew them in complicated intricacies like Shambleau. We were contrary children. We learned the Shaw Alphabet, which I've forgotten, and passed notes in Morse Code until we realized how stupidly we'd trained ourselves to read ink dots and dashes instead of hearing *dah didididit dit dah ditididit dididah dah didididit*. I've forgotten that too, relearned for a 3rd Class license and forgot again. We played four-dimensional tic-tac-toe on blackboards until we grew infatuated with a game someone said was Goban, invented by bored Japanese

## Dancing and Joking

on the sand. You draw squares  $8 \times 8$  and put a mark in one. Opponent marks one. Winner is the first to get five in a row, column, or diagonal; if either plays in an edge square you add one row on each of the four sides. The bookstore had a run on graph paper. In the snack bar we sat round the tables playing Concentration, snapping fingers and calling numbers. We tried hand signs to see if we could manage in silence but kept losing the rhythm. At fourteen I was on the varsity debate team and went out for hamburgers in  $-20^{\circ}$  fondly Fahrenheit. My debate partner, another older girl, introduced me to *Marjorie Morningstar* and musicals. We read, and once actually saw, *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad*. I sawed the Senior Class president in half. That almost didn't happen and she may have a scar.

At home there was a German Shepherd and later a Dachshund. I tried to teach the Dachshund to jump through a hoop. I wanted her to jump through the middle, the proper way. She walked under the rim. Cleverly I rested it on the ground. She walked over it. Resorting to dog biscuits I coaxed her to jump over the rim of the hoop, gradually raising it into the air. After weeks, or decades, although she still just cleared the rim I finally had her jumping two or three feet high. To get her through the middle I rested the rim on the ground. She walked over it. So much for my passing the Mensa exam.

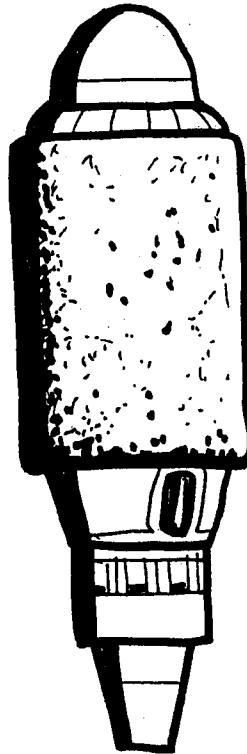
The next school was short between periods, but I somehow did enough magic to meet Bob Passovoy. As a Chemistry lab aide I helped discover a new element. It had to be an element because it didn't react with anything. It was found at the bottoms of test tubes. In "anything" I include sulfuric acid and *aqua regia*, which we mixed on scant excuse. We decided to name our discovery Crud. But this raised a problem. C was taken, Cr was taken, Cu was taken, Cd was taken. None of us knew Latin or German for "crud". Another adventure that didn't happen. Miss Laird was the kind of woman who liked to tell how in Germany with two friends, when she told a Berlin waiter "Dry Martini", and the other two each said "Dry Martini", the waiter brought nine Martinis. Mr. Purvenas the Physics teacher I was harder on, bored, which he couldn't help. I passed notes with a girl who liked e.e. cummings and Marvel Comics. Whenever he nabbed me to come to the board and do a problem I did. I earned a top grade fair and square. The girl moved to Canada. In those days I tutored trigonometry, forgotten, and haunted a university computer lab one neighborhood to the north. I wrote machine language for an IBM 1620, which did arithmetic by looking up tables. I never learned them myself. Alan Frisbie later explained the 1620 was almost named CA-DET, until some bright fellow squeaked "I know

what that stands for: Can't Add, Doesn't Even Try." I met a computer so old it filled rooms, and ran magnetic tape inches wide, with sprocket holes down the middle, in vertical drives that piled tape at the bottoms of wells. Following an article by Victor Yngve, I wrote a program to generate grammatically correct, if nonsensical, English sentences. It was on punched cards, eventually 1,600 of them. In a science fair it took me two levels until a judge said it lacked drama. I never could make it work.

School was more than 99% black. I was Senior Class vice president. I ran on "Who cares who's for president, who's for vice?" No one recognized that either. I had read all the *Pogo* and *Oz* of the Baptist minister father of the girl next door. They had a mulberry tree. I liked the way it couldn't make up its mind how many lobes to grow on the leaves, but we were sad it wasn't a bush. I impressed my rabbi and won a prize with a pastiche in which he recognized Carl Sandburg but not the *Mad* parody. My high school class almost refused graduation. Mr. Pollock the Band teacher said he was tired of "Pomp and Circumstance". It was trite and shallow and he wouldn't. He wanted the Grand March from *Aida*. We actually struck over

this, with signs, in the street. I was helpless. Earlier I had marched with Martin Luther King. I knew what marching was but at politics I wasn't good enough. I had forgotten "Pomp and Circumstance" was Houdini's theme. That might not have done any good. In compromise we had no procession; when parents arrived they found us seated; the band played "More", which it had not rehearsed, while 600 of us walked one by one across the stage. I won a National Merit Scholarship and couldn't get into Oberlin.

At Antioch where everything seemed to be magic I fell out of practice. In my first year I took English IV and learned Gerard Manly Hopkins. A teaching aide said "If you can explain *With up so floating many bells down* I'll read e.e. cummings." I fell in love with China and a woman who kept a rabbit and loved Japan. Mr. Wong in-



*Bill Rotsler*

Bill Rotsler

## Dancing and Joking

troduced me to Confucius and Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu and Mencius and Hsün Tzu and Han Fei Tzu and the great translator Arthur Waley. He laid out a Chinese poem, four lines of five characters each, and seven or eight English versions like the Six Blind Men and the Elephant. Folk dancing drew 300 people every week, including me. I met Alexander Kerensky and Paul Krassner and Timothy Leary and Babatunde Olatunji and Doc Watson. Alan Watts never returned my tape recorder. I scheduled hours of classical music for the radio station and broadcast an experimental program "Studies in Greenred" that took a week making each half hour. I put on a mixed-media evening *Psychlone* with slide-projector controls in the audience; as these hip people sat waiting I asked, by a microphone backstage, "Is this entertainment? Is this *entertainment*? Is this *entertainment*?" I masterminded the Great Barbara & John Lamb Memorial Easter Egg Hunt — they were alive — for which we bought every egg in Yellow Springs (the name is very strange to a Chinese), boiled them, colored them, and hid them. Most were found next day, ahem.

I want to talk about the pumpkin bomb.

In high school we played croquet and read science fiction. I was much taken with Sturgeon's "Skills of Xanadu" and Bester's "Pi Man", and Long's "To Follow Knowledge" the curtain piece of the Conklin anthology *Science Fiction Adventures in Dimension*. We heard you could make a pumpkin bomb. It was simple. You cut open a pumpkin and scoop out the insides. Discard about

a third. Mix the rest with sugar. Refill the pumpkin. Seal the top with paraffin. Let it stand. In a few days, or a week, it will explode.

We liked this. What to do with it? Talking it over, we realized that the right person for it was Steve Allen. He had made the *Tonight* show, and goo-goo dolls. His "Question Man", when given an answer, like "Strontium 90, Carbon 14", provided the question, like "What was the score of the Strontium-Carbon basketball game?" If Ernie Kovacs was the Purcell of television, Steve Allen was the Saint-Saëns; he did everything, now and then wonderfully; and over all shone a mild wackiness, his own invention. We could see sending him a pumpkin bomb, and his keeping it on the piano. "Ladies and gentlemen, we have our pumpkin bomb here. It might explode tonight. Maybe it won't." If it blew up while the camera wasn't on it, he could make an event of the cleaning.

*Tonight* had not been in Steve Allen's hands for years.

We made a trial pumpkin bomb. For a first attempt we got a pumpkin no bigger than a breadbox. Autumn. We opened a lid in the top, leaving a rabbet as you would to make a jack o' lantern. Walt Disney's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is correct: originally "jack o' lantern" meant a man ("jack") carrying a lantern, then a will-o'-the-wisp, then a pumpkin hollowed for a light and carved with a face. We mixed the sugar, returned the filling, and sealed. There was a perfect ledge outside the basement. We waited.

## Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day

No sense of the crowded space between,  
Or whether other lamps may burn;  
Seeing what our fire lights,  
Even we pray for what we can't earn.

Chinese "regular verse" [see James J.Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (1962)], established in the T'ang Dynasty about 1,300 years ago, is in eight lines or four, either all lines having seven words or all lines having five. In a four-line poem the second and fourth lines rhyme. Five words in Chinese poetry are far more powerful than in English; there are no nouns or verbs (English does this rarely, as in "She will knight him"), and particles are sparse. The famous proverb *Seven down eight up* would probably have to be translated "Be so resilient that if adversity pushes you down seven times, you will rise again eight times." Also in Chinese a rising, level, or falling tone of voice distinguishes words that have the same consonant and vowel sounds, unlike English where this is used for emphasis, or to distinguish statements from questions ("He got a house." "He got a house?"); hence the student's joke that mismanaging tones would turn "I love you" into "Which of us is shorter, you or me?" The Peking or "Mandarin" dialect has four tones. Tones make patterns in Chinese poetry as stress accents make patterns in English; in a regular-verse quatrain of four 5-word lines, where - is the "first" or high-level tone and + any of the others, R marks the rhyme, and / marks a caesura or break in thought, the pattern is

-- / - + +  
+ + / + - - R  
+ + / - - +

-- / + + - R Those who try such poetry in English manage as well as they can. [Van 459]

Here's an installment of a column for *Chronicle*, whose readers range from the knowledgeable, like you, to those who only pick up the magazine at a bookshop or newsstand.

## It Seemed the Fannish Thing to Do

2004

At this year's Lunacon, the annual New York s-f convention hosted by long-time local club the Lunarians, I had with me Waldemar Kumming's photographs of Torcon III, the 2003 Worldcon (Toronto). Kumming publishes the fanzine *Munich Round-Up*, in German and English, and of course



Sue Mason

after he came home and developed the photos he saw there were people he couldn't name. I gave it a try, and then sought the out-of-town perspective. It was Lunacon's last year at the Klein Bottle Hotel, the Rye Town Hilton, Rye Brook, New York, where the fourth floor is the seventh floor and the green grass grows all around all around. I'm told a World-Wide Web site sells three-dimensional models of Klein bottles. Lunacon XLVIII as usual had a strong Art Show. I particularly liked Donato Giancola's "Fountains of Youth", which in my fanzine *Vanamonde* I called the visual equivalent of Hal Clement.

It's an old rule that *The greater the reality the better the fantasy*. Kelly Freas and Vincent Di

Fate have been bearing this torch. Giancola's realism almost off-handedly supports extraordinary machines, vegetation, buildings, people, that are ordinary to themselves. In "Fountains" six columns float past on anti-gravity engines, which one hardly notices. The people count. At Lunacon I moderated the Clement memorial panel. Not every fan is or wants to be a pro; not every pro is a fan; some are bitten twice. Or more. Clement at one con had been Writer Guest of Honor, Illustrator Guest of Honor, and Fan Guest of Honor, and gave three speeches, taking off one shirt after another. In his stories he is a master of science, which one needn't follow. The people count. Some of the people are aliens.

In this column I'll keep talking about fanzines, the amateur publications by fans, for fans, which are in many ways the blood of our community, and since a picture is worth a thousand words, here is some fanart. Fanartists may be asked to illustrate a particular article — fiction is not the main current of fanzines, there are prozines for that — or may simply contribute a drawing that expresses some idea, mood, or whimsy, which the editor-publisher incorporates into the pages as seems fit. These four drawings first appeared in *Vanamonde*, illustrating nothing in particular. The one by Joe Mayhew was also in an exhibit of fanart at the Millennium Philcon Art Show ('01 Worldcon), which Mike Glyer of *File 770*, Nicki & Richard Lynch of *Mimosa*, and I put together.

A word like "typical" is hard to use about fanart, but all four of these artists are well known. Sue Mason was the 2000 TAFF (Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund) delegate, that year westbound from Britain to North America; she attended Chicon VI, that year's Worldcon (Chicago), the year Joe Mayhew won the Hugo Award for Best Fanartist, which Mason won at Torcon III. Ulrika O'Brien was the 1998 TAFF delegate, eastbound, attending Intuition, the British national convention that year at Manchester. Stu Shiffman was the 1981 TAFF delegate, also eastbound, attending Yorcon II; he won Best Fanartist in 1990. Your local s-f club may receive fanzines you can look at; if there's no clubhouse, and you're meeting in members' homes, they may get fanzines. The Worldcon and many other conventions host a Fanzine Lounge; in 2004 Lunacon didn't, so I held a Current Fanzines *Kaffeeklatsch*. Do-it-yourself activity is where you find it.

Steven H Silver's fanzine *Argentus* (that's right, no period after "H") has been running a section

## Dancing and Joking

about things that have never happened. Last issue had reports of a con that wasn't held. The current issue (Summer '04) has interviews of s-f characters. I promised to interview Hanville Svetz, the hero, or maybe we should say protagonist, of Larry Niven's 1999 novel *Rainbow Mars*. Svetz works for a time-travel bureau eleven hundred years in the future. Niven thinks time travel is fantasy. But Svetz doesn't realize that; he thinks he's a character in science fiction. The results are strange. Sent back to get a horse, extinct in his day, he finds a beast with a horn, fierce except to certain women. The Gila monster he brings has wings and breathes fire. Mars, when he reaches it in the past, having traveled through time and space, is even more complicated. Time paradoxes abound.

I collaborated with Niven on the interview. At the end of *Mars*, Tor Books reprinted his short stories about Svetz from the 1973 anthology *The Flight of the Horse*, which was helpful, although I have *Flight* around someplace. First I re-read everything. Then I made up some questions and sent them to Niven. He sent answers and more questions. I worked over those, and he worked over that, and after a while he and I both liked the result and I sent it off. It was fun. Silver phoned to see how I was doing. I'd been hunting for his phone number to tell him I'd just mailed the interview. He didn't mean to have an unlisted number. But he's with the Northern Illinois Marching to a Different Drummer Telephone Company, so goes unrecognized by the National Let's All Be Together Provided It's With Us Directory-Assistance Service. Or something.

Shiffman was twenty-seven when he stood for TAFF. Allan Rothstein was sixty-two when he died suddenly this summer. He had been Fan Guest of Honor at Loscon XVIII, our local con, in 1991. Glen Orbik put him on the cover of *Batman 78* (September '98; third from right, in fedora hat). After trying to teach kids to read with comic books, the way he'd learned, he became a probation officer, which he remained for thirty-eight years, his health declining at the end. His middle name was Anson, which, considering he was born in 1942, when Robert Anson Heinlein was already an established writer, could have been more than coincidence, but none of us had known of it, including Allan's brother Larry, and Bill Warren of the reference book *Keep Watching the Skies*, one of Allan's best friends. In the 5-7-5-7-7-syllable lines of Japanese *tanka* I wrote,

Among the stars now,  
Laughing at Solomon's jokes;  
Late a final time  
As we see, there at last he  
Never misses a moment.

He really was, as Barbara Hambly said who knew him well for some while, the nicest man in the world.

There was plenty to do getting ready for Westercon LVII (the West Coast regional s-f con, this year at Phoenix). In a series on classics of science fiction, I was to lead discussion of Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. I re-read the book, and in order to see the 1966 François Truffaut movie (I don't have a television set) I borrowed a living room from Barry Workman, who built the bases of the Hugo trophies for L.A.con III ('96 Worldcon). When a film character quoted Lewis Carroll, every-



one joined the chorus, including Barry, his wife Marcia, their son Michael, and their pet iguana Iggy. I thought the film true to the spirit of the book, its choices and changes within an artist's discretion. In this future, houses are fireproof, and firemen set fires; they burn literature. Literature is unlawful, it makes people unhappy. Fireman Guy Montag grows troubled and runs away.

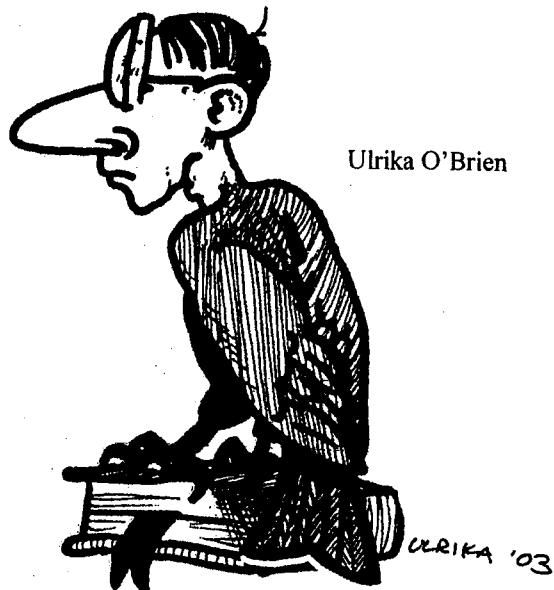
The book is lush with Bradbury's poetry. The film is bleak. Truffaut expands a teenage girl, who attracts Montag and sets him thinking, into an adult schoolteacher who is with us throughout the film; Julie Christie plays both her and Montag's wife, in acting so brilliant we can be shown each woman close up. In the book Montag's captain has read Pope and Shakespeare, quotes them with scorn, and calls Montag a snob. He is terrifying like O'Brien in Orwell's *1984*. In the film he is only shrewd. Nicholas Roeg's cinematography is pioneering and, for a blessing, does not rely upon special effects. "What is admirable about this book?" I asked at Westercon. That we

## Dancing and Joking

agree with it? The great 20th Century writer Vladimir Nabokov used to say *Second-rate readers like to recognize their own ideas in a pleasing disguise.*

Members of the Nippon for '07 Worldcon bidding committee came to Westercon. In honor of science fiction, and the Cassini probe transmitting that weekend, I brought them Saturn peaches, small ring-like fruit, just in season, so delicate only a few survived my airplane flight though the container was kept at my side. For wrapping I used cloth decorated with pictures of Kokopelli, the dancer and joker of Southwest mythology, after whom the con was named. Indeed as the weekend went on, I observed to ConKopelli committee members that it might not have been so clever to invoke him. Brett Achorn, Secretary of the Business Meeting, who drove from Los Angeles while I flew, brought eight of Selina Phanara's cut-paper and collage suns to exhibit in the Art Show. Hiroaki Inoue, the Nippon '07 chairman, and his wife Tamie, helped me put the suns up.

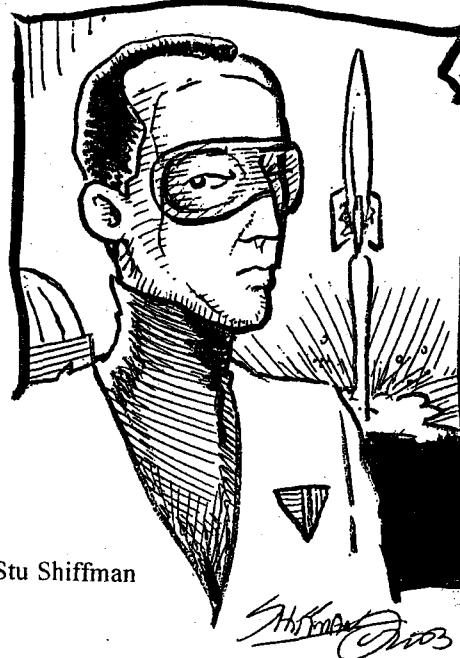
We were at the Wigwam Resort, its luxurious rooms a bargain in July. At night the open parties, which everyone was invited to, were all in a row across a field from the main lodge, a pleasant stroll in the cool after dark. Closed parties were not so easy to find; they could hardly put up signs "This way to my invitation-only party", and the rest of the buildings, scattered over that field, were numbered oddly. Poor Keith Kato, who'd cooked his best in honor of his first chili party at Westercon XXVII thirty years ago, had to wonder while we wandered. The hot topic at the Business Meeting, if that's not a bad way to put it, was a plan to



Ulrika O'Brien

abolish the north-south alternation of zones for the con, so people who wanted the privilege of holding it could bid more freely. After a burning debate — sorry, hard to stop — this passed.

Tom Whitmore, co-chairman of ConJosé ('02 Worldcon), said *Con committees worry too much about how things are made, and not enough about how they'll be used.* This good advice could have been better followed by ConKopelli. However, when things went wrong, the concom was resilient. In one instance I was close to, although without authority, only the people inside



Stu Shiffman

the disaster knew how bad it almost was; others as the show went on remarked how smooth it all seemed; the very discerning vaguely saw it might have been better. If one must pick virtues, that isn't bad. As Fan Guest of Honor, I was treated with the most cordial hospitality, and Illustrator Guest of Honor David Cherry, with whom I shared a ride to the airport afterward, said likewise. Next year, under the name Due North, will be at Calgary.

Robin Johnson, chairman of Aussiecon I ('75 Worldcon), and his wife Alicia, were in Los Angeles. They spent a day at the Getty Museum, its white stone walls and walks dazzling, as were three great Canalettos inside. I picked up the Johnsons at their hotel to go out for Persian dinner. Alicia did not know this food, and Robin had not met it since Isfahan and Shiraz days long ago. That called for *fesenjan*, the pomegranate-walnut stew, which our restaurant made with chicken. Alicia, a rice lover, ordered *adas polo*, with dates. To show how one cook can do on purpose what another recoils from, I had *tadig*, rice deliberately crusted at the bottom of the pot, under *ghormeh sabzi*, leafy vegetables and red kidney beans, and *gheimeh bademjan*, split peas and eggplant. With tea, *polaki*, sugar burnt to caramelize into golden rounds, like coin. Cross-cultural contact is homework for science fiction.

## Dancing and Joking

### Bruce Pelz

(1936-2002)

from *Chronicle*, 2002

at the end a verse, and a note about his fanzine collection, from *Vanamonde*

*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*  
— if you seek his monument, look around you

Born at Orange, New Jersey, he moved to Florida in 1950. In 1953 he achieved Eagle Scout (Council 86 "Gulf Ridge", Tampa). At the University of Florida (Gainesville) he joined the Speleological Society; in 1957 he was part of a local s-f fan club; his first fanzine, *proFANity*, appeared in 1958. He joined the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and in 1959 was a charter member of N'APA (NFFF Amateur Press Ass'n; so written to distinguish from the Nat'l Am. Press Ass'n elsewhere). In that year he went to Detention (17th Worldcon, Detroit) and moved to Los Angeles.

Fans first formed apas (Amateur Press, or Publishing, Associations) to circulate fanzines; eventually some zines were written especially for apas. Fiction we mostly leave to the pros; fanwriting is of life, the universe, and everything, and about as funny. By 1960 we had FAPA (Fantasy Am. Press Ass'n), SAPS (Spectator Am. Press Society), N'APA, OMPA (Offtrails Magazine Publishers Ass'n), and *The Cult*. Bruce was in all of them. This was astounding.

His home was called the Tower. The Granada Hills house where he lived at the end was Tower VI. He was called the Elephant, some say for his good memory; Larry Niven offered another reason in "Flatlander"; but in any event, no ivory tower. It was an engine for open parties, closed parties, and other more or less likely events.

Fans passing through slept there. Bruce fueled the Petard Society (which had a Hoist and Hoistess), the Blackguards (which he formed to show we'd join anything), the Prestigious International Gourmand Society, and the Drinking Readers' Entropic Gaming Society. There were bridge and poker and Hell and Mah Jongg and Gilbert & Sullivan and miniature golf and carousels.

In 1960 he published *I Palantir*, the first Tolkien fanzine. In 1964 he invented APA-L (Am. Pub. Ass'n of L.A.), a weekly (yes!) apa still going on. LASFS started a Building Fund to buy a clubhouse, the impossible dream. Bruce was made Treasurer. As the Committee to Gouge Money Out of the LASFS he thought up endless stunts. The auction was a program in itself. Unsatisfied with Patron Friends, he invented Patron

Saints. The Club incorporated in 1968. In 1966 and 1969 he won the Evans-Freehafer, its service award, one of only two persons to win twice. Enchanted by John Myers Myers' *Silverlock*, he wrote songs about it, and sang them to Myers; he published the first Fiksong Manual — four of them by 1969. In the costume competitions we call Masquerades, Bruce was a sensation as Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd (21st Worldcon, 1963); he won other Worldcon Masquerade awards in 1966 and 1968-1969, and at the Westercon in 1963 and 1965-1968. A photo in Mike Resnick's 1980 fanzine *Masquerade* shows Bruce as Countess Gertrude from *Titus Groan* (27th Worldcon, St. Louis, 1969); he shaved his beard, murmured to a dove that was in fact stuffed, and when his name was announced, the audience burst into applause. He co-chaired the 1969 Westercon.

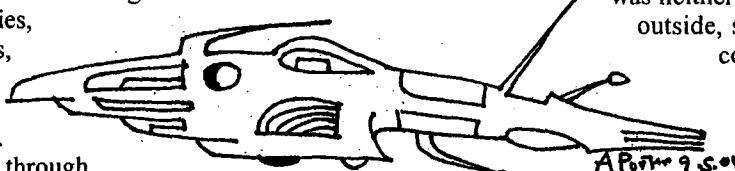
At Heidelberg in 1970 he bid for a 1972 L.A. Worldcon, with the slogan *Sei auf der Seite der Engel* ("Be on the side of the angels") and a superb logograph of them he commissioned from Alicia Austin, although, or because, he was famous for wearing black and cultivating a fierce manner — which I say deliberately: *The Cult* was "the nastiest bastards in fandom", and Jack Harness and Ted Johnstone were, with him, Arson (Harness), Rape (Johnstone), and Bloody Murder (Pelz). He

was neither the last nor first fan spiky outside, soft within. L.A. won; he co-chaired. He invented annual cons in mystery-fiction fandom next door, named for

Anthony Boucher who shone in both worlds. In

1973 the LASFS got its clubhouse, the first ever to do so. In 1975 Bruce invented the local convention Loscon. In 1976 he invented WOOF (World Org'n Of Fanpublishers), a yearly (yes!) apa also ongoing, and chaired the 29th Westercon; he was Fan Guest of Honor at the 32nd (San Francisco, 1979). When his marriage to Dian Girard ended, their divorce party got into Niven's "What Can You Say About Chocolate-Covered Manhole Covers?" She is now Dian Crayne; Bruce married again, in 1974; his widow is his second wife Elayne.

His inventions were only sometimes his alone. He dreamed up things, carried on what others started, worked with co-inventors. He had, as Massa-



## Dancing and Joking

chusetts fan Suford Lewis said, a fruitful imagination.

In 1980 Bruce was Fan GoH at Noreascon II (38th Worldcon, Boston). He'd been inviting fan and pro artists to draw Tarot cards, and collecting the results; for the Worldcon he published the *Fantasy Showcase Tarot Deck*, with a range of styles and moods, and a few extra cards invented along the way. I've told in the fanzine *Mimosa* (no. 26) of Georgette Heyer's English Regency romances, and of Regency ballroom dancing; in the 1980 Worldcon Memory Book, Bruce appears in Regency clothes. Back home he chaired the 10th Loscon in 1983, and in 1986 was Fan GoH (with Elayne) at the 13th. His triumph of this time was as Treasurer of L.A.con II (42nd Worldcon, 1984), which he ran so far into the black that its parent, SCIFI (Southern Calif. Inst. for Fannish Interests, pronounced "skiffy"), had to give money away.

In 1991 he was made a Fellow of NESFA (New England SF Ass'n), the opposite number, or something, of the LASFS. He was Fan GoH at Bouchercon, and appeared in Niven, Pournelle & Flynn's *Fallen Angels*. In 1992 he was Toastmas-

ter at RiverCon (Louisville); for the Magicon Masquerade (50th Worldcon, Orlando) he was Jupiter in Kathy Sanders' "Ptolemaic System" (Best Pageantry, Master class). In 1994 he co-founded FanHistoriCon. In 1996 he was Fan GoH at Lunacon (New York); for L.A.con III (54th Worldcon) he co-edited *The White Papers* of fan and pro writing by Author GoH James White, and invented the Retro-Hugos, which I join Greg Bear in praising. In 1997 he invented the Rotsler award for fanartists, and a touring Fan Photo Gallery. He established a History of Worldcon Bidding exhibit, and inspired SCIFI to donate generously whenever TAFF or DUFF delegates published their trip reports. In 2000 his bid for the 55th Westercon won at Honolulu.

He died with the most fanzines in the world. He collected con namebadge ribbons, ocean cruises, and toy stuffed animals — the chair of Loscon XX (1993) was Chocolate Moose. He inspired an assembly of sweet-wine drinkers, still ongoing, highly populated by Worldcon chairs and treasurers. By his wish he had no funeral; his ashes were scattered at sea — promptly followed by Hurricane Alma.

Both of us have done  
Recondite amusing things  
Until others laughed.  
Catastrophically I find  
Even I don't want the last.

Monday I spent at Univ. Cal. Riverside trying to help the Library with Bruce Pelz' fanzine collection. There are 200,000 on floor-to-ceiling shelves over a hundred standees of wall space (okay, my paces, not Kevin Standee's), plus a few dozen side boxes. I talked with four librarians and seven sorters — cataloguing comes later. One of the four, a preservationist, conferred about staples (any not stainless steel may rust), and the characteristics of home-made publication by hectograph, spirit duplicator, mimeograph, and photocopy; thankfully there was negligible insect damage. Among all but the most senior, who knew, mostly, I expounded fanzines, fans, fandom, and fan activity, taking things from what-is-this? mystery bins. Here was a SMOFcon Program Book [Secret Master Of Fandom, as Pelz said a joke-nonjoke-joke; SMOFcon gathers con-runners]. Here was an undated handwritten letter about artwork, not from Pelz, "Dear Alicia", to me obviously A. Austin. Here was *Squeals from Da Ghodfuzzy*, to me obviously the newsletter of the Costumers Guild West. Here was an unopened *Fantasy Showcase Tarot Deck*, indeed being sealed it could not at this stage be opened. Alone, reaching into the shelves, I saw *Cluster 2* (Dec 43) by Ray Karden; *Proceedings of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies* 137 (Oct 60) by Theodore Cogswell; Catherine FitzSimmons' F/ractional 606.67 (Nov 90) for *The Cult*. Goshwow. [Van 559]

A large, stylized, hand-drawn signature in black ink. The letters are fluid and interconnected, forming the words "Vanamoose". The "V" is particularly prominent, with a long, sweeping stroke. The "a"s are small and tucked in, while the "m" and "o" are larger and more open. The "s" at the end is a simple, curved flourish.

Jae Leslie Adams

## Dancing and Joking

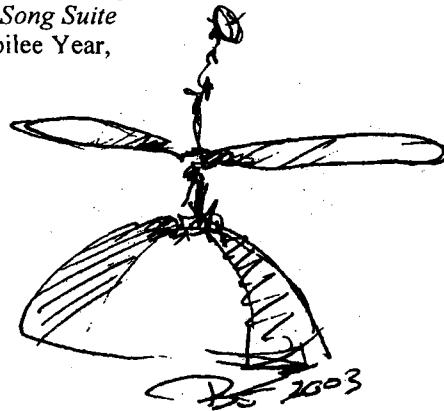
I hope that if I live to be eighty I'll be so interesting.

### Eighty Years is for Strength from Vanamonde

For Black History Month, I went to the African-American Firefighter Museum, 1401 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, across from the Coca-Cola plant built like a ship. This was Fire Station 30 and from 1924-1955 one of two in Los Angeles segregated to blacks. Handsomely restored, it is now Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument 289, its floor polished, its poles through plastic disks so you can look sliding not, its walls and display cases full of helmets, badges, uniforms, photographs, equipment, black pride and white shame. Half a century ago its men, wanting a voice, formed the Stentorians, named for the herald in *The Iliad* with the voice of fifty; today the Stentorians keep L.A. City and L.A. County divisions, whose joint dinner-dance last November was called "Hearts of Fire". I met Arnett L. Hartsfield, Jr., Historian of the museum, who must be in his eighties; after World War II, while serving full time on the fire force, he was graduated in law from the University of Southern California under the G.I. Bill, and found time for that profession during his off days until he retired; when I saw a table in a side room full of plaques and trophies he'd earned — some misspelling his name — he only said "They ought to read 'Hartsfield and his men'." He told of separate bunks and kitchen pots, quotas, the first black Fire Chief in town (Pasadena, 1972 — "and," Hartsfield cracked, pointing to the photo, "he wasn't 'passing'"), twenty-five years later the first black woman to make Captain. He hadn't yet seen *Men of Honor* (2000), the fine George Tillman, Jr., film with Cuba Gooding, Jr., as Carl Brashear, the first black Master Diver in the Navy, but he recited a poem [by Dudley Randall, 1914-2000] that kept repeating "*It seems to me*, said Booker T..... *I don't agree*, said W.E.B.", in cheerful praise and parody of Washington and DuBois. I was embarrassed I'd never heard it before. He said he was embarrassed he hadn't written it. Don't forget to tell people, he asked me and everyone on a tour that came by, what a good career this is. [Van 458]

We went to Griffith Park for P's 81st birthday, a Sunday afternoon concert in the part where the Zoo used to be. Caves and old cages are still there. In the Los Angeles way we had many cars. I was too late for the First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church children's choir, but heard a suite from Britten's *Gloriana* (we tried dancing to the pavan but the phrasing's all off), Grainger's "Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon", Vaughan-Williams' *Folk Song Suite* — this Criticism was a tribute to Queen Elizabeth II in her Jubilee Year, although Britten wrote *Gloriana* for Coronation in 1952 and H.M. didn't like it — and as encore Neil Hefti's "Li'l Darlin", the muted voice of one trumpet soaring out; then the Merry-Go-Round, the only full-size Spillman Engineering machine still in operation and the only four-abreast, all-jumping-horse Spillman extant. Built in 1926 for Mission Beach in San Diego, it came to the Park in 1937. It has 68 horses hand-carved and jeweled with tails of real horse-hair, two chariots also hand-carved (isn't English wonderful with *chariot* and *car* both, and *cart* and *carriage* if you want?), a painted ceiling, and at the side a mighty Stinson Military Band Organ with 256 wood pipes and three moving figures in 18th Century clothes: two ladies who ring bells and one gentleman who conducts. We had balloons, one of Mylar with *Happy Birthday*, and what a girl had calls a c'boy hat. Afterward, since we broke up without going to supper, I ate Thai noodles, out of a ceramic dish like a banana leaf, with the late summer sun pouring in, and five bamboo stalks in a bowl of colored chips. Noodles are for long life. [488]

Dinner in Downey for Len Moffatt's 80th birthday. We were forbidden to bear gifts, which I dodged by drawing from my pocket and blowing up a suitably lettered balloon. It was, if I may say so, a handsome dark green, and according to rule was bigger than his head. "What rule is that?" "I just now made it up." Len remarked that he and *Weird Tales* both began in 1923; so also, an elaborate gag observed, had the Milky Way candy bar, an early example of the sweetness of s-f. I proposed his health in a limerick revealing how hard it was to rhyme Moffatt (I did manage "quaff it"). He sang about flying saucers. At my end of a long table, the children's corner, June's No. 1 son Bob Konigsberg reported on vinifying, Connor



Bob Eggleton

Freff Cochran told industrial tales, and Ed Green admitted HEROwism [Torcon III the '03 Worldcon made him chairman of the Hugo Eligibility for the Rest of the World committee — not its real name — on work first published in English] and described the blasting-cap diet. Forry Ackerman having expressed some hope of attending, we saved him a seat, though by the time I had to leave, while the night was young, he had not yet escaped celebration of his 87th across town. [550]

Reading Wang Yang-ming, *Instructions for Practical Living* (1527; Wing-tsit Chan tr. 1962), and A.P. Chan & M. Freeman tr., *Tai Chen on Mencius* (1990; Tai Chen 1724-1777), the most remarkable thing may not be Chan's scholarship, nor the delightful appearance of Ruth Fuller Sasaki and D.T. Suzuki to footnote his pp. 68-69, but Freeman at age 80 translating Tai Chen, after having made a career in the insurance business for twenty years — in Communist China! — and at age 90 collaborating with Chin to finish. Wang and Tai were both neo-Confucians, but Wang in the view of a man like Tai was almost a Taoist; it is wonderful to see each of them criticize, I mean regret failings of, the great neo-Confucian Chu Hsi (1130-1290). In their beautifully-put passages are the Confucian doubts about Taoism and Buddhism. If one grows fond of quietness, Wang worries, one may tire of activity, and who will shoulder the burdens of society? If one frees oneself of desires, Tai worries, will one not grow unable, for all one's transcendent merit, to exercise compassion? [561]

Confucius' Birthday  
How shall we be good?  
Had we best keep rules?  
Will they make us slaves?  
Are the icon-smashers fools?

- o O o -

These reports for *Chronicle* go under the name "The Worldcon I Saw".

## The 2003 Worldcon

The 61st World S-F Convention, at Toronto August 28th - September 1st, was Torcon III. The weekend held many resonances with Torcon II in 1973. The first Torcon was in 1948.

Attendance of 4,800 compared well to 3,600 at ConAdian, the previous Canada Worldcon (Winnipeg, 1994), despite Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, it's-the-economy-stupid, and much else. After all, we who put on these cons, and many who go, do it for love. Not just fans, but pros too, confess such things. In the Hugo Awards, nominating ballots were up 1/6 from last year, voting ballots down the same; the ratio to total

Remember?! Each sight  
Of yellow roses her voice,  
Scent of them her face;  
Each luxurious petal  
Sends me her insistent heart.

members (both Attending and Supporting can nominate and vote) of nominating ballots was up, ratio of voting ballots about the same. In the Art Show 78 artists, 41 Canadian, exhibited 910 pieces; sales C\$28,000 (1/4 at auction) plus C\$10,000 from the Print Shop.

Bantam, the publisher of Author Guest of Honor George R.R. Martin, announced it would give a US\$500 prize, in the on-stage costume competition we call the Masquerade, for the best entry

based on his writing. Illustrator GoH Kelly Freas, laid up with a busted hip, sent a spectacular Art Show exhibit, and as the Program Book noted, his Little Green Man from *Martians Go Home!* is the banner for the Toronto Public Library's Judith Merril Collection. He'd had the remarkable presence of mind *not to try to break a fall with his hands*.

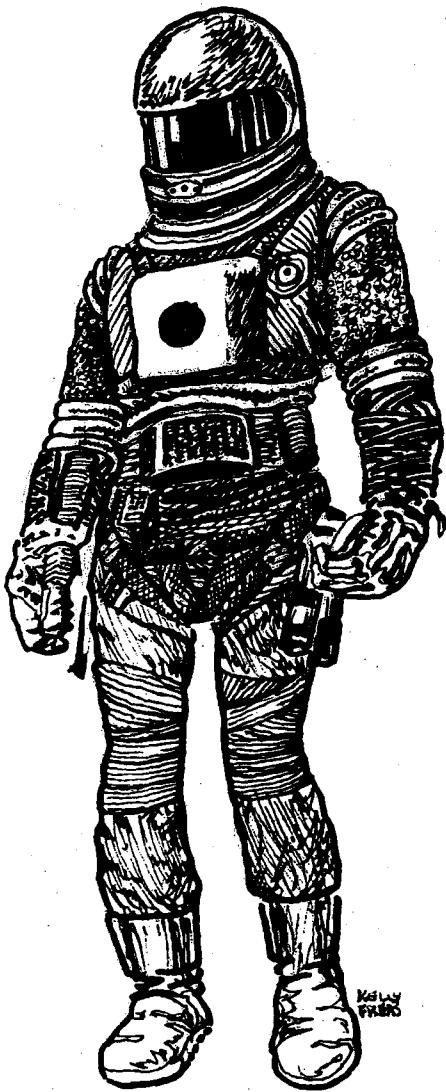
I had the honor of describing Fan GoH Mike Glyer for the Program Book. On Thursday, I had great fun building a Glyer exhibit, with copies of his fanzine *File 770*, his staff jacket as chair of L.A.con III ('96 Worldcon), and the Pilgrimage of Mike Glyer from the *Six Time Hugo Loser* T-shirt Janice Gelb put on him at Chicon IV ('82 Worldcon) to a still-life by his wife Diana of the Best Fanzine and Best Fanwriter Hugos he's won since. I should've taken the version with the ceramic loon. Under the Geri Sullivan rule *Bring toys* I got a NASA mobile of spacecraft, and a 5-foot vertical banner "Explore, dream, discover," signed Mark Twain, with pictures of plants and pencils and our planet.

Somehow I registered with the con, and my hotel, the Crowne Plaza. I was rooming with Jack Speer and Art Widner, both of First Fandom, those happy folk who arrived no later than the first Worldcon in 1939. Widner had said "Don't get us a room at the Royal York." I said this was because he was such a Socialist he didn't want to

## Dancing and Joking

stay at a royal anything. I was much too kind to point out that in the usual hotel-room whirl we got a crown.

At 11 p.m. Karen Haber & Robert Silverberg were in the Royal York lobby. I told Haber he looked dapper. She said, "He is dapper." The Los



Angeles for '06 Worldcon party served suitably shaped sugar cookies, broken, as "rocket parts". Rival Kansas City served sour-cream cookies shaped like jazz-music instruments. The Charlotte for '05 NASFiC bid threw a Zen and Chocolate party. There was chocolate fondue; no Zen, which was funny. At the Cincinnati Fantasy Group party Linda Bushyager and Leah & Dick Smith wondered with me about the price of modern virtues. "S-F is no longer as transparent," I said; "look at the Heinlein juveniles." Leah Smith said "Yes, or 'Scanners Live in Vain.'" And so to bed.

Again I had arranged docent tours of the Art Show, walk-arounds led by some perceptive articu-

late person, fan or pro. As Teresa Nielsen Hayden suggested last year we gave each tour a helium balloon, to identify it and for fun. The docents were Jae Leslie Adams, fanwriter and calligrapher; Phyllis & Alex Eisenstein, collectors; me; Jack Krolak, Masquerade photographer; Nielsen Hayden, Tor Books editor, with Ctein, world-class master of dye-transfer photography; Larry Niven, pro writer; and Taral Wayne, fanartist.

Friday morning at 11 Adams was on first. On her tour I met Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer of *Banana Wings*. Adams told how a calligraphy teacher said "Try making marks, not letters." Just then we heard Filthy Pierre across the hall play the Hallelujah from Handel's *Messiah*. Erin McKee saw how Mai Nguyen painted a bamboo stalk in one brush stroke. Adams pointed out a bowl by Lenora Rose Heikkinen, dark-bodied with pale high relief, tactile to the eye. Was any calligraphy useful today? Adams said, certificates. Art Show co-chief Suzanne Robinson wore a big soft-sculpture top hat, from which she produced a toy rabbit.

My tour was at 4. John Douglass' space ships like model airplanes looked realistic. How? What they were models of didn't exist. The Illustrators of the Future contest brought its winners, a nice concentration of monochromes. In Eiji Yokoyama's cover for Resnick's *Stalking the Unicorn*, the mind of a man in a trench coat and a slouch hat, on a city night, held a unicorn above, growlers below. Adams let water colors freeze into patterns at 20° fondly Fahrenheit. Karen Tristao, in human hair on flannel, made peaceful dead children like the *memento mori* of 16th Century Europe. Jean-Pierre Normand's cover for Trudel's *Les bains de Bétegeuse* showed a ship blazing to a space station, the mass of the ship backlit by a strange sun. There was the picture Kelly made for the Program Book. Not on the Book; a staff computer glitch, late attended to, went uncured. Kelly, as famous for his compelling women as for his ships, had painted a space goddess, nude, breathing stardust. Fifty years ago someone would have made him cover her. I believe the con chair.

And there was Benoit Girard. This talented Québécois had published *The Frozen Frog* and disappeared. I drank whisky with him at Con-Adian. Now we went to a party in the Fanzine Lounge for TAFF (the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund) and DUFF (Down Under Fan Fund). He said "No one will remember me." I said "With you in tow I'll be a hero." He walked in and was surrounded. Two floors up Leah Smith was celebrating her 30th year in fandom. Torcon II again. Some alternation was needed between these parties. Lise Eisenberg had written 50,000 words in 30 days for National Novel Month. Did a teacher as in Daniel Pinkwater's autobiography who told kids "I don't care what you paint" enfranchise them? The Tor

party had a Starscape edition of *Peter Pan* illustrated by Charles Vess. Nielsen Hayden said "I know what to do: get her a copy of *Fascinating Womanhood*." Walter Jon Williams said "I'm not sure I know her that well."

Sunlight, Saturday; a few minutes with Speer over the daily program sheet. Programming had set to work so late that the Pocket Program, forced into print too early in the process, was a rough guide. At 10 my first panel, "The Nature of Sentience" with David Brin, Rob Sawyer, Peter Watts, Eliezer Yudkowsky. No moderator was designated. Apparently none at any panel through the weekend. Not a good idea. Here Brin said "Let the audience be the moderator." Maybe if they'd all been David Brin — no. Watts asked what good sapience was. I said self-awareness helped us decide better than brute force. Brin said we could anticipate the future or we could be resiliant. Not a bad description of Torcon III. From the audience: what of heroism and martyrdom? Sawyer said "Sapience is necessary to drive the Universe. My books say we're better than Neanderthals because of sapience." He won the Best-Novel Hugo.

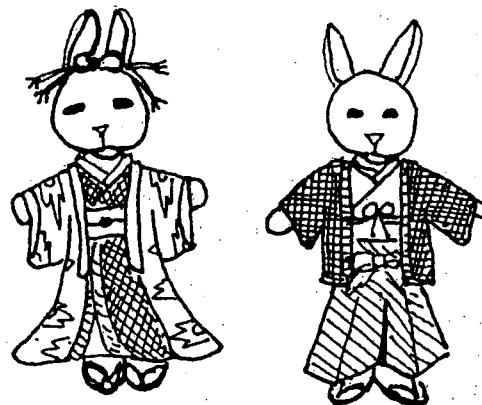
At 2 p.m. "Death of the Person or Death of the Personality" with Shane Tourtellotte and Yudkowsky. Sawyer could not attend. I was elected moderator, and kept nosing back to how s-f treated our topic rather than what technology would surely come soon. Yudkowsky said he seemed to be an adjective. Buckminster Fuller had said *I seem to be a verb*. From the audience: "I'm a psychometrist, and we can't find personality." Tourtellotte said if we could make a copy it would no more be the original than a cloned body would. In the Dealers' Room I saw a new hardback edition of *The Space Child's Mother Goose*. Priscilla Olson, Programming chief of Noreascon IV the seated '04 Worldcon, was planning panels.

If the greatest fanwriter ever wasn't Walt Willis, who is many fans' vote, it may have been Harry B. Warner, Jr. Both are gone now. Warner's *All Our Yesterdays* of fandom in the 1940s, and *A Wealth of Fable* of the 1950s, are unequaled. Over a lifetime he seemingly wrote to every fanzine, articles certainly but also the letters of comment fanziners thrive on. Be the fanzine great or small, famous or faint, he found something worth saying, and worth printing. He may have sent twelve thousand such letters. Glyer, Richard Lynch of *Mimosa*, Lloyd Penney the '98 CUFF (Canadian Unity Fan Fund) delegate, Speer, and I sat on "Fandom through the Eyes of Harry Warner". Lynch said he showed good judgment in history. Glyer said he was able to report events he hadn't attended in person. Penney called the letters a model of temperament and fellowship. I said he didn't require the spark of disagreement.

Speer said his writing was little different early and late. Moshe Feder in the audience noted Warner's wit, and the feat of publishing *Horizons* for seventy years.

The Kelly Freas Slide Show was on at 5. I had the slides and a sheaf of Kelly's notes. While I was helping Laura pack things for the Art Show, and a box of his Hugos for the 50th Anniversary of the Hugos exhibit, someone remembered I began leading docent tours when Kelly sicced a con committee onto me. Maybe the slide show could be revised into a form I could present. It would at least give Torcon III something. With the flurry at the Freas home, my dashing for the revised package, and more flurry at the con, I hadn't compared the slides and the notes. Of course at 5:01 I found them not in quite the same order. I knew the pictures, and could talk about them as art, but couldn't always recall the stories they illustrated, or when. The audience helped. I don't think I sweated away more than three pounds.

White tie for Hugo Night, our great event of the year. Toastmaster Spider Robinson brought his guitar, which he introduced as Lady Macbeth. He thanked Tom Doherty of Tor for permission to call the con Torcon, a jest few of us had neglected. Takayumi Tatsumi, who last summer and fall edited special issues on Japanese S-F for *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* and *S-F Studies*, gave the Seiun Awards for best work translated into Japanese. First Fandom placed into the Hall of Fame posthumously, for the 75th anniversary of



Trinlay Khadro

the first Buck Rogers story, Philip F. Nowlan, and among the living Philip José Farmer. The Sam Moskowitz Award for achievement in collecting went to Rusty Hevelin.

Enter Dave Kyle to give the E. Everett Evans "Big Heart" Award. We had rehearsed that I should assist. He put on a propeller beanie he'd put onto the head of Robert Bloch at Torcon II, and I coming to stand by him put on my own. This with formal dress pleased the crowd. I

## Dancing and Joking

stepped back while he explained our community's highest service award. Suddenly I realized he'd given it to me. Our discussion had not been the whole truth. A subtle man.

The rocket ship of the Hugo trophy was gold-plated for this 50th anniversary. The base, each Worldcon's privilege to design, was a maple leaf for Canada, of local wood. Rose & Guy Lillian the '03 DUFF delegates gave Best Fanartist; intercontinental fan Mary Kay Kare accepted for Sue Mason. Mike Glicksohn, who'd co-chaired the Toronto for '03 bid, gave Best Fanzine to *Mimosa*. Normand gave Best Pro Artist; Sharon Sbarsky accepted for Bob Eggleton, having hair long enough to flip as he would have. At Millennium Philcon in 2001 Connie Willis for Best Novel had said "This is the big one," then teased forever until the tech crew threw a subtitle under her video image "Knows we're running twenty minutes ahead of schedule." Now Martin, who hasn't won this award, though Willis has, joked at length about who had a big one. Some laughed, some didn't catch the reference, some planned a riposte.

At the South Africa party I found Marala fruit cream and a better address for the fanzine *Probe*. At the Scandinavia party I found Johannes Berg, Vince Docherty chair of Interaction the seated '05

PREDESTINATION?  
HA! WITH THE QUALITY  
CONTROL SITUATION,  
WE MIGHT AS WELL  
HAVE FREE WILL!



AT 02

Alexis Gilliland

Worldcon, and many kinds of *aquavit*. The Nippon for '07 Worldcon party was jammed. Peggy Rae Sapienza, chair of BucConeer ('98 Worldcon) and this year head of Volunteers, was the new U.S. agent. A note from Sachiko Shibano spoke hopefully of husband Takumi's health. He has been peerless in the Japanese s-f world. Filksinging, our own brand of music, was lively at 3 a.m. A book sang "You should know I'm not an

easy read. Come on, baby, turn my pages." Eric Layman sang powerfully and *a capella* "I don't know the time of the closing of the shears, but I'll

Evelyn Leeper Having Called Darrell  
Schweitzer the Only Person to Rhyme  
"Cthulhu" in a Limerick

"Hey, Abbott! I think it's Cthulhu!"  
"Such blubbering never will do, Lou.  
When we met Frankenstein  
The box office was fine;  
You knew our next would be a lulu."

see that my thread runs true." Nate Bucklin said "We've got half of these memorized, usually the first half."

On Sunday a robot vacuumed the Green Room, like *The Door Into Summer*. At 11 "What to Expect in a Masquerade" with Krolak, Toni Lay, Carole Parker, and the Wombat. We explained the Original and Re-Creation divisions, the Novice, Journeyman, and Master classes. Lay recalled the *Star Wars* Imperial Walker opening the show at ConAdian, a Novice Re-Creation, where the Wombat had judged. Some in the audience asked about competing. We all had stories. The Business Meeting confirmed Los Angeles beat Kansas City for the '06 Worldcon; Seattle beat Charlotte for the '05 NASFiC; a motion to restore Worldcon-bid voting to 2 years in advance, from 3 years as now, passed subject to ratification next year.

English Regency ballroom dancing, 2 p.m. The appeal of these dances may be my fault, but don't forget Georgette Heyer's Regency romances. S-F authors could profit from her mastery of the telling detail and the light touch. The room we were assigned was impossibly small. Convention Center liaison Glenn Glazer appeared. We went out into the hall. Con Center techmen reset the elaborate sound system and gave me a microphone. Despite the hour, which excluded anyone getting ready for the Masquerade, I was kept very busy. There is something to be said for dancing to Mozart. Even Beethoven wrote dance music.

With the Masquerade much was muddled, but all was redeemed by fine work on stage; 16 awards were given among 33 entries. The judges were Eileen Capes, Fan GoH for the seated '05 Westercon (Calgary); Suford Lewis, head of the Noreascon III Masquerade ('89 Worldcon); pro writer Terry Pratchett; Master-class costumer Jacqui Ward; Workmanship Judge backstage, Vicki Warren, head of the Millennium Philcon Masquerade. The magic came through this art form we invented, simplicity in "Saucer for Sale" (Most Original, Novice), orchestration in "Trumps of Amber" (Master; Best in Show). The Martin prize was well earned by "Winter is Coming" (Best Presentation, Journey-

## Dancing and Joking

man). And our diet is coming back into balance, with inspirations from books, pure originals, recreations of film or video, entries of one person or two dozen.

Joe Siclari, chair of MagiCon ('92 Worldcon) and now spinning a World-Wide Web fanhistory project, had never been to a Keith Kato chili party. Silverberg had come and gone, leaving judgment

Reaching through the fence  
Across my path, or yours,  
Bougainvillea?

that the hot chili was really hot. This was true. Craig Miller, now vice-chair of L.A.con IV, told of a predictions panel in 1972. "Harlan Ellison came closer than anyone. He said we'd be slaves of phones that could reach us anywhere." The "Thanks a Mint" party from ConJosé ('02 Worldcon) migrated to the Fanzine Lounge. Kim Graham had won a Chesley Award (of ASFA, the Ass'n of S-F Artists) for her everyone-sculpt-it dragon in the ConJosé Art Show. A Klingon stormed the Christian Fandom party, where no proselytizing is allowed, with tracts "Klingons for Christ". He spoke only Klingon. Marty Helgesen spoke English louder and slower to make sure he understood. This was a fine moment.

The Baen Books party, 5 a.m. Paul Chafe said science was too hard. Andy Trembley, mostly recovered from "Trump of Amber", said internal consistency maintained suspension of disbelief. Toni Weisskopf confessed editing was a mystery. I allowed that if a writer submitted something good, the editor might be unable to afford making it excellent, but why rely on an editor for this? We talked of whether editing meant fault-finding, and Tennyson's "Better to promote the good than to rail against the ill." By 7 sleep was winning and I sadly went.

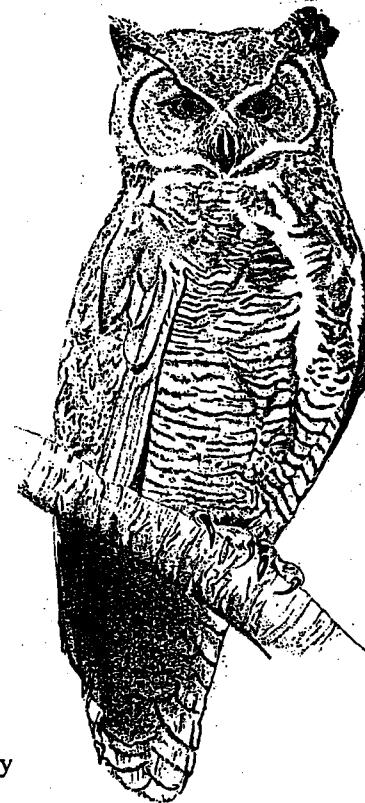
At Closing Ceremonies, Noreascon IV struck. Among its party decorations had been inflated rocket ships seven feet tall. Ruth Sachter realized their highest and best use. Pam Fremon smuggled one in. Amidst the closing, and the ceremonies, with the now current '04 Worldcon committee on

*The Cal Tech M.L. King, Jr., Writing Contest  
Theme, "The Audacity to Believe"  
(not in competition)*

we can be free, if  
we can be, despite, because  
we can be free — we

the floor, it gave Martin a rocket, who thus indeed had a big one. He posed ecstatically. Taking down the exhibits and the Art Show, there was Hi-roaki Inoue, chair of Nippon for '07, wrenching

pipes with us. Widner, pointing to some newspaper coverage, said s-f was losing its nerve. He was right, but the paper was wrong. Dinner at Chiado Portuguese restaurant with Nicki & Richard Lynch, the Smiths, and Kathryn Daugherty last year's Programming chief. Pears poached in Madeira with saffron tempted me to try them with



Steve Jeffery

a 10-year-old Bual. Of course they were too sweet. I said fanzines were sustained by a joy in writing, as with panels and conversation.

The Dead Dog party runs until the last d. is d. For Torcon III it was hosted by the Minneapolis in '73 Worldcon bid. They lost to Torcon II, but why stop? This has gone on thirty years. Somehow I had never signed up as a post-supporter. Ctein gave me a membership card and a penny. Of course it was Canadian. I was to give it back at the con; that was their financing. Blog, a fanish drink invented long ago in Liverpool, was served. Of course it was St. Paul, Minnesota, blog, which being conservative was non-alcoholic. "Congratulations," said Ctein, "you will have had a wonderful time." Ellen Battle had flown from British Columbia across Canada to her first Worldcon, meeting other fans and her favorite authors, whom she found mingling with everyone else. I love s-f cons.

## Within Us, Without Us

parochial and other notes, mostly from *Vanamonde*; at the end, one from *Emerald City*

As an s-f reader I prize imagination and aptness. It's delicious when an author uses just the right word, sets an incident that moves his story just the right step. In s-f, I know what's right largely because I'm told, by the writer himself. Human nature he and I have in common. The customs of the world he has imagined, the nature of the aliens if any (none in e.g. Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy, where crucially even the Mule is human) he may introduce, he shows me. In our whatifffy literature — speculative fiction — imagination dreams up a subject to whatif about: aptness shows how things might be, should that whatif occur. Call these, if you will, the gems and the setting which compose a jewel. Tim Powers is one of our best writers, and *Declare* (2001) at the World Fantasy Convention well won Best Novel. He makes believable that whom you meet might be found where they are presented, acting as they are said to do, and the manner of saying is fit. How neatly is drawn Andrew Hale with the facility of languages his adventures need in him. How deftly is revealed that a British spymaster — more than one are in this book — whom we fear, then detest, has the force of personality his position requires. In the dark of espionage, where people risk their fortune, their safety, their life, for loyalty — and may change it! — how sharp are the lines that etch their emotions and their gripping uncertainties. The *djinn* — well, Powers showed in *Expiration Date* (1996) what a master he is of verisimilitude; to give us impossible things, he conceives their anatomy, so we can bump them or be shocked to pass through them: that conception is here. He has an almost Shakespearean urge to joke, which is exquisite and which pays — the Beirut smiting scene is painful, hilarious, inevitable, and before a dozen pages turn, vindicated. With these beams he builds an arching, vaulting story. *Declare* like a Brahms piano concerto, when it thunders, when it sings, flashes and soars. [Van 454]

Chuck Jones (1912-2002), thoroughbred of the Warner Brothers cartoon stables, creator of Marvin the Martian, directed film versions of two Norton Juster classics, *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1961, J. Feiffer illus.; CJ 1970) and *The Dot and the Line* (1963; CJ 1965, winning Best Cartoon Academy Award; he earned three, plus a fourth for Lifetime Achievement). I've seen some of his cels for *Dot*, as fine, and faithful, as his drawing of Daffy Duck is delicious. His Associated Press obituary (e.g. N.Y. Times 24 Feb) noted that his rule for two more creations, the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote, was *No dialogue ever, except "Beep beep"*, and that Ray Bradbury, asked at his 55th birthday what he wanted to be when he

grew up, said "I want to be 14 years old like Chuck Jones." Mick La Salle in the San Francisco Chronicle (27 Feb) urged that Jones' greatness came from entertaining kids and adults both. This must be true: look to our lodestar Shakespeare, who reached everyone. Jones was acute; he liked to say "No one but Tex Avery had as perfect a sense of timing as Friz Freleng," and to quote a child's retort "You draw *pictures* of Bugs Bunny" for its evidence that artistic success brings a creature to a life of its own. Bugs Bunny, the pest, is the hero; Elmer Fudd, the human, is the butt of the jokes; the wabbit is smarter than the man, so our follies are satirized; but the comedy succeeds because Fudd is sympathetic.



Marc Schirmeister

So is Marvin, in whom this is a still higher achievement since he is an alien, and since we even more want him to lose because he would wipe us out. For all their scheming, they are innocent. How can there be deftness, a light touch, in the slapstick of these cartoons, a world of explosions and disaster unlike even Donald Duck in Disney? But there is, of course. R.I.P. [461]

As fans of the English Regency know, young gentlemen in that day made a Grand Tour of Europe, often accompanied by a tutor: an entertainment, and a finishing school. It took a few years. Last month I went for the first time to the Getty museum, where part of an exhibit *Italy on the Grand Tour* looked

through the eyes of Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803), British envoy to the court of Naples 1764-1800 and husband of That Hamilton Woman. Among his guests, besides touring British, were Mozart, with whom he played violin, and Goethe; his four volumes on Etruscan, Greek, and Roman antiquities appear to be the first color-plate art books in history; he saw the uncovering of Pompeii, and his careful observations of the volcano were published by the Royal Society. I could not attend a concert study of him, with slides, readings, live music, and mime in period costume, Emma Lewis Thomas the Univ. Cal. Los Angeles dance scholar kindly crediting me in the program book, but I saw the dress rehearsal, and another in the afternoon just before. On the tram from the parking caverns into the hills I kept shifting between "How inaccessible this is" and "How convenient they make it for anyone who takes the trouble". At three the wide expanses of white stone were dazzling. In summer they must be fierce. I helplessly asked for "Hamilton" until I learned his part was called "Naples and Vesuvius". The Getty itself is supposedly modeled on the Villa of the Papyri at Portici. In the Research Institute, I found a handsome display, and in a separate theater people hard at work, those who knew me eventually astonishing the guards. After supper and anecdotes the theater had filled, recalling the dress rehearsal for Handel's *Water Music* (1717) that jammed traffic three hours. With a Pole who sat next to me I marveled over authenticities and anachronisms. I liked two dancers as the first Lady Hamilton and the second, day and night like the originals, Catherine (d. 1782) who became one of the finer harpsichordists in Italy, and Emma (b. 1765) whose "attitudes", performed in classical drapery, enchanted gentlemen and drew guarded remarks from ladies. Then thirty miles across town for Greek folk dancing. [466]

Stars surprising me,  
Too bright to leave me alone,  
Anchoring night and space,  
Real distances longer than  
Venus commands suffering.

A.E. van Vogt called R.A. Lafferty the most original writer in s-f (*S-F Review* 23, 1977). There's a tribute. Lafferty is gone now (1914-2002). He was a strange dreamer, a strong drink. He published 200 short stories and 20 novels, if that's what they were. He won the World Fantasy Life Achievement Award (1990), and a Hugo for "Eurema's Dam" (1972); he was nominated for three other Hugos and seven Nebulas. His best may be *Past Master* (1968) and *The Fall of Rome* (non-fiction, 1971). *Okla Hannali* (1972), an Amerind novel, is celebrated. Small presses reprint him; you can get *Does Anyone Else Have Something Further to Add?* (short stories, 1974; repr. 2000) or many others. He worried about men who knew everything, machines, manipulation; they made him mordant, and Gene Wolfew says he was the favorite of Joe Mayhew (*Locus* 496, 2002). Damon Knight in the original-story anthology *Orbit* ran nineteen by Lafferty, and introduced the collection *Lafferty in Orbit* (1991), attracted, I fear, by satire, praising diamonds most for their hardness. Even the title *Past Master* is a jest; the expression is "passed master", i.e. one who has passed the test — "of the guild or public opinion", W. Follett, *Modern American Usage* p. 312 (1966) — and earned recognition, but Sir Thomas More has been brought centuries into the future, because or in spite of his mastery. At the end, re-reading just now, I cried. Lafferty beginning *Rome* starts on mosaic chips in the Empire, catches himself with *Dimitte nobis rhapsodia nostra*, "Forgive us our rhapsodies", and sails away. Knight did have another side. In the "Arcs & Secants" part of *Orbit* 18 (p. 249; 1976) he printed from Lafferty "the following poem about Ms. Wilhelm:

"Oh Kate has gone to writing pomes!  
Hi ho!  
She writes them bright without the bromes,  
She piles them up as tall as tomes!  
Hi ho! The Gollie Woll!  
She routs the temper of the times,  
Hi ho!  
She cuts the strings that worked the mimes,  
It doesn't matter if they rimes.  
Hi, ho! The Gollie Woll!

"This was a contribution to a round-robin letter circulated among a few *Orbit* writers. Mr. Lafferty later withdrew from it, alleging unparliamentary remarks and stuffiness." R.I.P. [485]

R. Zabor, *The Bear Comes Home*, earned the 1998 PEN/Faulkner Prize. It drew some very decent reviews in the mundane press. I find that the Feb 98 *Fantasy & Science Fiction* noted it, Charles de Lint indeed leading the bill with it in "Books to Look For", and seeing its virtues: "an excellent ... lyrical author.... how ably he's managed to capture the sound of music... a fully realized character who just happens to be a bear" (p. 39). I confessed at the time [*Var* 231] that when Zabor's bear comes in from his street-animal act, saying he can't take it any more, and his human roommate gets them two bottles of Anchor Steam Beer, Zabor won my heart. Shucks, that was enough to leave me pleased with Victor Gonza-

## Dancing and Joking

lez. Shucks. But there's more to *Home*. It's wonderfully done, including parts not to my taste. I think it the best fantasy novel of 1997, and I'm grateful to Fred Patten for calling it to our attention. [499]

My father, if someone seemed surprised who perhaps should not have been, used to say "You were expecting maybe Heinie Manush?" When at length I asked what this could mean, I was told *He was an outfielder for the St. Louis Browns in 1928*. I liked baseball but it spoke to me by instinct; I never developed the knowledge and love of every detail; that may have been because my heart was with the Chicago Cubs: a difficult love affair, one comes to feel that there are things one had better not know. Anyhow, I never pursued this remark. I knew there had been St. Louis Browns. I knew "Heinie" for Heinrich was like "Hank" for Henry. Beyond that was vague. The expression seemed comical to my father. Many things did. I skipped it. And yet, or perhaps as a result, it stuck in my mind, and I came to utter it, as those of you acquainted with me in person have heard with no more explanation. In civility one should sooner or later look up such things, and I'm happy to tell you that Henry Emmett Manush, 1901-1974, appears in *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (Macmillan, 10th ed. 1996), and M. Shatzkin ed., *The Ballplayers* (1990). He was no slouch, indeed he entered the Hall of Fame in 1964, where his plaque reads *Slugging outfielder for six Major League clubs. Batting champion of American League at .378 with 1926 Tigers. Lifetime average of .330 in 2,008 Major League games. Had 2,526 hits.* In 1923, his first year, playing for the Detroit Tigers, his batting average was .334 — behold this pastime where a success of 3 in 10 is good, 4 in 10 nearly impossible; in 1926, replacing Ty Cobb at center field, he beat Babe Ruth for best in the League, going 60 for 9 in a double-header on the last day. He went to the Browns in 1928, playing left field, and to the Washington Senators in 1930. In 1934, when President Roosevelt threw out the first pitch in the 3rd game of the World Series, Manush captured the ball in the scramble for it amongst the players; in the 4th, he was the first player ever ejected from a World Series game when, after being called out — not what this meant during the English Regency — he in protest pulled the umpire's bow tie, which was fastened by an elastic band, and let it snap back. Another reason to tie one's own. [535]

In a way he simplified. From his first masterpiece, *And to Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street* (1937), he was the wizard of complicated anatomy, contraptions, landscapes, and names. After a dozen superb books — *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* (1947), *The King's Stilts* (1939), *Horton Hatches the Egg* (1940), *McElligot's Pool* (1947), *Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose* (1948), *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* (1949), *If I Ran the Zoo* (1950), *Scrambled Eggs Super!* (1953), *Horton Hears a Who* (1954), *On Beyond Zebra* (1955), *If I Ran the Circus* (1956) — his *Gerald McBoingBoing* for UPA (United Productions of America) also won the 1951 Best Animation Oscar — the very title *The Cat in the Hat* (1960) was a simplification, and the text had a vocabulary of only 225 words. *Green Eggs and Ham* (1960), on a bet with Bennett Cerf, had 50. Drawing, he said, came easy for him, and writing hard; "I stay with a line until the meter is right, and the rhyme is right, even if it take five hours," J. & N. Morgan, *Dr. Seuss & Mr. Geisel* p. xix (1995); at his best the result is right as rain. The plainest people, the wackiest creatures, flourish organically. He started in the 1920s as a satirist, a haunting distraction, but here too hear him: "What's wrong with kids'

having fun reading without being preached at?" (Morgan, p. 81). As a fantasist he is among the finest citizens of our dual empire, with a nod, when he passes, to science fiction. He loved *Krazy Kat* and wore bow ties. Vanguard published *Mulberry Street* after twenty-seven rejections. Let us rejoice. [564; 100th anniversary of his birth]



Franz Miklis

Ray Charles (1930-2004), blind by 7, orphaned by 15, was before age 30 known as "the Genius" and one of the great popular artists of America. His music was soul, jazz, rhythm 'n' blues, even country, which should not be thought foreign to black folks; unequaled in song, gifted at any keyboard. He won twelve Grammy Awards, including Best R&B three years in a row ("Hit the Road, Jack", "I Can't Stop Loving You", and "Busted"), most recently in 1994; the National Medal of Arts; a star on Hollywood Boulevard; his rearing at the St. Augustine, Florida, School for the Deaf & Blind got him into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame, along with Ernest Hemingway and John D. MacDonald. White folks were electrified

The Sun is long up. by "What'd I Say" in 1959; asked about rock 'n' roll, he said Elvis  
The woman and the cat sleep. Presley was doing what Presley saw on Beale Street; he sang the  
I read a page more. Beatles' "Yesterday" in 1967, and "Eleanor Rigby" in 1968. Hoagy Carmichael & Stuart Gorrell wrote "Georgia on My Mind" in 1931;

after Charles, who was born there, made everyone hear it in 1960, it was made the State song in 1979. He had an Emmy Award nomination for a television show honoring Irving Berlin's 100th birthday; he was one of the Claymation raisins for the California Raisin Advisory Board; he was a generous philanthropist. He performed for President Clinton, President Bush, and the 2001 World Series (*Van 443*). He loved chess, and indulged a fondness for Häagen-Dasz Rum Raisin ice cream. I always liked "Born to Lose" better than "I Can't Stop Loving You", and "Ruby" better than "Georgia", but then I once sat in a Hungarian restaurant for three hours, interviewing a woman and drinking six double espressos. *R.I.P.* [579]

This review of *The Best of "Xero"* appeared in *Emerald City* (2004) under the title  
Distilled Spirit of a Classic Fanzine  
notes in parentheses and brackets, by me, were printed there

Patricia & Richard Lupoff's *Xero* won the 1963 Hugo Award for Best Fanzine. Now Tachyon Publications of San Francisco has brought out *The Best of "Xero"*, in hard covers, illustrated, a labor of love. I ran the Fanzine Lounge at the 2004 Worldcon, and made sure to put a copy on display. It's a fine piece of work, which I commend to you.

In the s-f community we've published amateur magazines, by and for each other, since before the first World Science Fiction Convention (1939). In the 1940's we adopted the late Russell Chauvenet's word "fanzine". By the 1950's we established the Hugo Awards, including Best Fanzine along with Best Short Story, Best Professional Artist, and the rest. Fan activity is one of our bright sparks. Likewise fans and pros mixing it up.

*I now come to a matter which has caused me a semi-sleepless afternoon, vide-licit Steve Stills' [Avram Davidson, here quoted from the letter column, knew the artist was Steve Stiles, and how to spell videlicet] vertical cartoon strip by name "Lin Carter's Fantastic Bunny Rabbit" (it will never catch on with the syndicates, Lin & Steve): Why are rabbits called bunny? Bulfinckle [Bulfinch's Mythology + Bullwinkle the Moose of Jay Ward's cartoons] says of this only, "A pet or familiar name for rabbits, conies, or squirrels." That's a big help. If anyone can tell me why rabbits are called bunny I'll tell him why cats are called pussy.*

Davidson, Carter, and Stiles all contributed to *Xero*; Stiles, who in 2004 was on the Best Fan-

artist ballot, then drew with a stylus on mimeograph stencils, the technology of the day. Pat & Dick Lupoff typed stencils in their Manhattan apartment, printed them on a machine in Noreen & Larry Shaw's basement, collated by hand, and lugged the results to s-f cons or stuffed them in mailboxes. The machine had not been *given* by Damon Knight, A.J. Budrys explained in a letter after a while, but *lent*. Eventually drawings could be scanned by electrostencil, a higher tech. Colored ink joined colored paper, sometimes wildly colored. *Xero* could be spectacular.

Knight later founded the Science Fiction Writers of America; he and Budrys were each later Writer Guest of Honor at a Worldcon. James Blish won two Retrospective Hugos in 2004; in *Xero* he reviewed Budrys' *Rogue Moon* (not reprinted by Tachyon), and Kingsley Amis' *New Maps of Hell*. You'll also see Anthony Boucher, Harlan Ellison, Ethel Lindsay, Fred Pohl, Rick Sneary, Bob Tucker as "Hoy Ping Pong", Harry Warner — fans and pros mixing it up. Roger Ebert, later a movie critic, contributed poetry, often free-style, or formal and funny in his fanziner's version of Browning's "Last Duchess":

*This crud  
I print for you disgusts me; the thud  
Is of your fanzine dully falling.*

Earlier in 2004, I happened to be at dinner with Ann Monn, Tachyon's layout artist and typographer on the *Best of Xero* project. She, editor Jacob Weisman, and the Lupoffs were all striving at it. One problem was selection. Another was the giving of some context to a cuisine whose

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meat was freely salted with in-jokes. A third, kin to both, was the treatment of graphics.

You might not recognize her wizardry without seeing the originals. The letter column was "Epistolary Intercourse", edited by Pat; for one issue it was illustrated by an abstract face in red and blue, which Monn reproduced in black & white somehow. The original of the Eddie Jones cover included in *Best of Xero* was orange and blood-red. Less dramatic, but probably still harder, were the stylus drawings, like Andy Reiss' "Harlan Ellison Playing Skittles". Bhab Stewart (yes, with an "h"), who became art editor for *Xero*, with everything from caricature to montage, is well represented. Then there's where to put what, and the sizes, and the shapes. I'm impressed.

Did I mention comic books?

They were a thread through *Xero* from beginning to end. Roy Thomas, later editor-in-chief at Marvel, wrote of Bulletman, Captain Midnight, and other Fawcett folk; Don Thompson, later of the *Comic Buyers Guide*, wrote of the Spectre and Doctor Fate. The book jacket is Larry Ivie's "New Rendering of the Old 'Atom'", also done in gold on the cover. Walter Breen applauded the combi-

nation of "comic books and genuine intellectual-ity" (not reprinted); F.M. Busby, whose *Cry of the Nameless* won Best Fanzine in 1960 — another of us active both as fan and pro — wrote, "The idea of a sophisticated sercon [“serious and constructive”] fandom centered around comic books just naturally breaks me up" (not reprinted). You be the judge.

*Doctor Fate and the Spectre* were, of course, too super to last, even in an age of flamboyant comic book superheroes. But ... nowhere in science fiction, even in the cosmic settings of Doc Smith's Lensmen series ... do you find such lavish backdrops for the action. Even fantasy can't match them.... it is a new, startling and, for a time, fascinating thing to find stories in which there are no limits, where every card is wild.

Fanzines roar along today, on paper, on the Web, or both. Some folk who wrote letters to *Xero* have also had letters in my fanzine. It's bracing to realize how s-f, and fandom, have been around long enough that we can cultivate a sense of the classic, of what was done before our own time which we find to hold interest, even nourishment, for us whose times are changed.

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I was Marjii Ellers' successor reviewing Worldcon Masquerades for *Locus*.  
In 1994 *Locus* went to photos only, and I went to *Chronicle*.

## The 2001 Worldcon Masquerade

"Millennium Philcon", Philadelphia

It was a night of comedy, a night of dragons, a night of space explorers, and it started on time. Director Victoria Warren did that and much else right: a printed program, a video feed to Marriott hotel rooms, and next day official photographs ready and a full listing in the convention newsletter. Another craft of a Masquerade Director oft taken for granted is arrangement. When by luck of the draw two-thirds are purple, or twelve in pressure suits, only skillful sequence makes a show. This year amid big entries, and really big entries — sixteen on stage in Northern Lights' superb "Seeking Hope", and as many again to build it — Gunther Anderson with "Full Circle" won best in his class by himself. As Bill Rotsler used to say, quantity of labor has nothing to do with art.

Luck. It was a welcome memorial of Poul Anderson to judge with his daughter Astrid Bear. Esther Friesner went everywhere: she was Toastmaster, she was at the judges' table with us, her swordplay class had followed my Regency Dancing. I might remark upon her introduction of the

Hugo Awards had she not commanded *we shall never speak of this again*. Blunt and kindly Bobbi Gear, Zelda Gilbert who knew costumes outside as well as in, made up the panel, with Bobbi's husband Marty as Workmanship Judge. Nor was I

Glitter for many  
In a season of good will.  
Finding gleams to bring,  
Though some dishes must stay closed,  
Shines abroad what good one can.

the only fanziner involved; Cheryl Morgan, who beat this review into publication with *Emerald City* 73, was a Den Mother backstage. But she slipped up some facts, so read *Chronicle*!

Bill Ernoehazy's gang continues to rise; "The Empire vs. The Brood" (Best Invasion, Journeyman) made good use of the stage, and Ernoehazy himself moves well. Paul Dellechiaie, the neatest Novice, won hearts in a *Babylon 5* character as he arrived, waved once, and left ("Vir Kotto"; Best

Re-Creation in Class; Workmanship Award for hairpiece). Eugenia Horne blamed Champagne ("The Sugarplum Fairy — Off Season"; Most Staggering, Journeyman). We were then all staggered by what proved Best in Show, "Fridays at Ten" (Master; Amanda Allen and a host of others), a spectacular tribute to *The Twilight Zone*. The famous theme, the famous emblems, a dimension not of sight, not of sound, but of mind; a cigarette-smoking Rod Serling — he incidentally having been, like me, an Antioch boy; and, as  $E = mc^2$ , the floating man, and the others flew up one by one, famous episodes: the wind-up woman, the man finally alone with his books at world's end whose glasses broke, and "It's a Good Life", whose dreadful Anthony, one of the two best kids that night, gestured commandingly at us judges; all with expert timing, in scrupulous grays for this classic of black-and-white television, and without the slightest need for anyone in the hall to have seen or remembered any of its programs. Here was a triumph.

Most Original, Novice, was "Couture by the Numismatic Society" (Rebecca Morris, Jake Swank): Morris' houri costume, and Swank's matching vest, were made wholly of coins. Later I learned from the Workmanship Judge that Zoë Morrow's "Cash-Conscious Couture" (Best Workmanship, Journeyman) was hand-sewn from recycled bills. Joni Dashoff and Judy Bemis, well-known convention staffers who among other things were together the at-con treasury for last year's Worldcon at Chicago, wore a bovine suit with dollar signs, carrying forward a gag from the Chicon VI Masquerade, named only "Mascot" to save the joke for when we saw they were a Cash Cow (Most Humorous, Novice).

Betty Bigelow, Lynn Kingsley, Greg Sardo, and Julie Zetterberg built "Carnevale on Mars" (Best Choreography, Master; Workmanship Award, creativity and attention to detail), reds and oranges and handmasks that a dancer brought to life like Ray Bradbury, one of many extraordinary entries that each might have been the best; among its presenters on-stage was Dave Howell of the literary con "Foolscap". Then Gunther Anderson, not our first spaceman nor yet our last — as it should be — who met a towering black monolith, turned on terrible videos, and devolved into a monkey (Best Journeyman; Workmanship Award, creative use of materials). "Pre-Emptive Strike" (Best Master; Workmanship Award for beading; incidentally, largely the invention of Rae Bradbury), an earlier version of which I saw in New York at a Lunacon, brought on Darth Maul of *The Phantom Menace* with a string of jokes he said he expected and might as well get over — each illustrated: Darth Tall, Darth Small, Darth Y'All — pause — Darth

Stall; Darth at a Ball, Darth Fall, Darth Sprawl; Darth Brawl; Darth Appalled; my list hardly complete. It was excellent. It brought



Teddy Harvia

down the house. "That," said the M.C., "took unmitigated gall," only to be battle-axed in resentment by Darth Gaul, as we roared.

For a change of pace came "*Matsuri no Shinda*" (Most Elegant, Master; Workmanship Award, design and construction of collars). Sandy and Pierre Pettinger, renowned for huge entries full of chaos and danger, showed they could be gorgeous in little, deftly, in this Japanese mood. Best Novice was "A Little Romance" (Alison and Michael Moran, April Korbel), with a pathetic Tim Burton figure and a nightmare bird following round. "The H-Mercs", meant to open the show, was late, but we all wanted to see what Brian Healy, whose insectoid machines took Best in Show at the Baltimore Worldcon in 1998, would do. His armed and armored spacemen found a twelve-foot-tall Thing, and poked it. Famous last words. It was a dragon, it was alive, and it destroyed them. Brr. This was Most Terrifying, Master; the dragon was Best Workmanship in Show, and next day was manhandled to the History of Costuming display in the Convention Center (thanks, Carl Mami).

What could close a show like this? We soon found out. In "Seeking Hope" (Best Transformation, Master; Workmanship Award for engineering) a Chinese boy fled from warlords into the mountains. He had fetched a spear he could hardly hold. Despondent he prayed and slept. Enter, to him, slowly and inexorably, the largest dragon yet, gleaming and glittering, but a source of help. The dragon circled the stage and was gone. The boy had grown. Wondering with confidence, he saw a weapon in his hands he was man enough to use. He charged. What a night.

## Dancing and Joking

*Argentus* wanted interviews of fictional characters. We did suppose you had read the Svetz stories.

### Interview with Hanville Svetz

Larry Niven, co-author  
from *Argentus*, 2004

*Hanville Svetz is the protagonist in a series of Larry Niven time-travel stories. Five were collected in The Flight of the Horse (1973), later reprinted at the end of the novel Rainbow Mars (1999). Niven thinks time travel is fantasy. But Svetz doesn't realize that; he thinks he is a character in science fiction. The results are strange. Svetz works for the Institute for Temporal Research eleven hundred years in the future. He has traveled into the past, or something, many times.*

*ARGENTUS.* How long have you worked at the Institute?

*SVETZ.* By the Institute's calendar, eight years, 1100-1108 A.E. That's "atomic era"; we date things from the first controlled atomic explosion,



Julia Morgan-Scott

in the middle of your 20th Century. Once, looking for a horse — they're extinct in my own day — I went back to -750 A.E. I've been trying to get seniority from my earliest date in service, which would give me 1,900 years. Or there's sequential time. If I spend months on a mission, and return to the moment after I left, that's a lot of man-hours which don't show on the calendar. So

far I've been paid by sequential time, which seems only fair.

*ARGENTUS.* What's it like to travel in a time machine?

*SVETZ.* The time machine doesn't travel, really. It's underground at the Institute. It sends an extension cage back in time, then pulls the cage home. Inside the cage, gravity is funny. Otherwise it isn't bad.

*ARGENTUS.* While you were on Mars, the beginning of a song came to you. Have you any other muse — do you play, sculpt, dance, weave?

*SVETZ.* I'm pretty good at filking — making up verses to fit stolen music. When the Secretary-General's Gila monster died of indigestion, I went back to medieval England trying to replace it, and served as a troubadour. It helps to carry a decent machine translator. Zeera Southworth, who also works for the Institute, says if I can sing, I can dance. She's better at dancing, I'm better at singing.

*ARGENTUS.* You used to say you didn't like exotic creatures. But you've brought more home for the Vivarium than anyone else. On Mars, where you met so many intelligent races it was a wonder they all lived on one planet, you seemed to get on with Lord Pfee and with the green giant Thaxir. Do you think you've changed?

*SVETZ.* I believe I'm developing an affinity for exotic creatures. Partly it's been self-defense. Partly it may be living with Wrona, who becomes a kind of evolved wolf when the tides distort Earth's magnetic fields.

*ARGENTUS.* What exactly is your relationship with Wrona?

*SVETZ.* That is a part of my private life. One day we hope to return her to her own timeline.

*ARGENTUS.* Maybe we can talk about all these creatures. When you went to get a horse, the animal you brought back had a horn —

*SVETZ.* Please don't start saying horses have no horns. Mine does.

*ARGENTUS.* — and was fiercely antagonistic, except to certain women. The whale you found was white, trailing a corpse of a bearded man with one leg. The Gila monster had wings and breathed

fire. Wrona, when you met her, was a woman. When you and she got back to your time — it was forward, not back, for her —

SVETZ. Don't worry about it. Just ask your question. These things hang everybody up, unless you talk in equations like the temporal physicists.

ARGENTUS. — she was a female wolf, or something like a wolf. Have you ever wondered why, traveling back in time, you keep meeting such odd creatures and events? Could there be something odd, something fantastic, about time travel itself, that might bear on this effect?

SVETZ. My boss, Ra Chen, asked me that once. But he and the researchers hadn't done their homework. It shows in my mission orders too. When I go back to some earlier time, it doesn't look the way I was told, and I have to improvise. I admit it isn't easy for them. Wars and natural disasters wipe out records they need, or people throw things away when there's a change of fashion. On the Mars mission it started getting to me. I was falling in love with Miya Thorsven of the Space Bureau, and I was afraid it was all some kind of fantasy. But things kept happening, and we all had so much to do, I let it go. Afterward the research director put in a long memo, but I haven't read it.

ARGENTUS. Ra Chen calls you his best agent. You seem able to think of things others don't. Your improvisations have been pretty good, if it doesn't embarrass you to hear that. How do you do it?

SVETZ. Thanks. I can't tell you much. It always feels like I should have known right away, but it can take forever. I have to go down all these blind alleys first. I eventually get it.

Along the highway we saw "Old River So. Co." Must have been old; no water in sight, admittedly at night. Then a sign "Old River, pop. 140". About six hours' drive south, near June & Len Moffatt's house is an Old River School Road with a school on it. Truth in life. Arriving at 4 a.m. where we were to sleep a little, we were duly welcomed and hastened in. I nearly burst out laughing. On a shelf with books and videos was a foot-high statue like the colossal Great Buddha bronze of Amida in Japan, classically draped robes fallen open at the chest, curved back so different from how I was taught one should sit — and a dog's head! P. Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen* p. 71 (1965) has a talk by Yasutani-rōshi on this most famous Zen kōan, by the T'ang Chinese master called Jōshū in Japan, "Does [even] a dog have Buddha-nature?" "Mu [nothingness]!", source of the joke by a girl I once knew, "Does a cow have Buddha-nature?" During the weekend I tried off and on to rhyme "Dido". Eventually I made:

There once was a Libyan Queen Dido.  
Who wanting Aeneas cried "Bide, oh!  
"Forget all your quest,  
"Just love me and rest."  
But he said "My duty's my guide, oh."

[Van 433]

ARGENTUS. Zeera Southworth was your mission leader in 16th Century Brazil. You brought her a Portuguese silver coin for repairing an electrical circuit. She found the silver was alloyed with base metal, beat the coin into shape with the butt of a blaster, then had you transmute the metal into gold with your trade kit to put into the circuit. When did it occur to her that, gold being more malleable and ductile than silver, especially pure gold, she could have saved a lot of work by transmuting first? How long was it until she would talk to you again after that?

SVETZ. I'm not sure she ever tumbled to it. While she was pounding at the coin, and swearing, I was asleep in a chair. If I hadn't been so tired I might have thought it through. I had tapping noises and a woman's voice in my dreams. And she might have been angry with me about something else unspecified. That happened a lot.

ARGENTUS. There are time-travel paradoxes in every one of your published adventures. You've been in them; you've caused them, or uncaused them; you've nearly been killed by them. Can you explain?

SVETZ. No. We're still trying to figure them out.

ARGENTUS. Well, thanks for your time, if that's not a bad way to put it. What's next?

SVETZ. After the Mars mission I sometimes think I'd better retire quick. But the Chinese guy who owned the Gila monster spoke to me oddly. He said I would live in interesting times. It may take me forever to visit all of them.

## 237 Talking Statues, Etc.

from *Vanamonde*

*Vanamonde* is published in APA-L, an invention of Bruce Pelz which you met a few pages ago. Amateur journalism, a hobby unrelated to s-f, originated apas in the late 19th Century; we fans started the first s-f apa in the mid-1930s to exchange fanzines; since then, many, some lasting a little while, some for decades; our first, FAPA (Fantasy Amateur Press Ass'n), still goes on. FAPA is quarterly; APA-L appearing weekly was breathtaking when it began forty years ago, is extraordinary today. Over several years *Van* has also acquired a much wider circulation, which presents an interesting challenge. In an apa, comments on what other contributors publish are indispensable. An issue of *Van* has to reply to the previous distribution of APA-L, maintain the quick interchange of good apa writing, and at the same time be worthwhile for readers who don't see the other side of the conversation. Less than half of *Vanamonde* is apa comments (the rest, reviews, essays, verse, things I've been reading, drawings & letters people send); if I do my work, they may be the best part.

2004

Perhaps a barbarian is one who supposes nothing dissimilar to himself is any good, and acts accordingly. [Van 594]



Tim Powers

Throughout history I think learning to read and write well enough for these to be easily enjoyable — the fun of the fluent — has taken some trouble. Under aristocracy, fluency was noble. In the early flush of revolution, everyone wanted it. [592]

Someone who, upon seeing one of us with an s-f book, asks "Gosh, are you allowed to run loose without your keeper?" invites for answer "No. Heh heh heh. I've escaped." [586]

I can imagine a businessman understanding "I hire a star, and put her on a stage, and sell tickets." Our way is simpler, but lacking sharp definition, and indeed amounting to a collection of opportunities for people to amuse themselves. [583]

I too have heard that elephants seek fermented fruits to get drunk. I suppose they get drunk to forget. [579]

After the architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) said *Form follows function*, people were so materialistic about it that "functional" came to mean *ugly*, and there was a reflux. His law isn't so bad with a broader definition. By Hertz's Corollary, *What is perceived, rightly or wrongly, as having no function, will come to have no form*; therefore also *If you see a desired form in disrepair, don't merely urge people back to it, but show its function.* [568]

2003

Between carelessness about the past, and finicky precision, lies a broad happy land. [554]

You have been consistently worth reading, by the fannish ideal recounting your adventures and exchanging comments in such a way as to amuse others whom you do not require to share your interests. No more have you limited civil treatment to the civil. You have promoted a sense of fanhistory, of aptness, of humor, and (dare I say it) of art. [552]

A fine song about Heinlein's "Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag" (1942), with many worthy touches like "overpaint me", "criticize", and the delicious irony "You're through, Hoag". Your using the

melody of Bernstein's "Cool" in *West Side Story* (1957) invites imagining a stage dance scene, perhaps of violent well-mannered men in business suits carrying full-length mirrors. [546]

I prefer praise or blame for my achievements or faults, instead of for e.g. being Caucasian, or heterosexual, or male, liking better to be treated personally than thingly. [542]

Part of civilization is resources with which to meet boredom. [534]

To give up understanding, and rely only upon sympathy, is a weed that bears bitter fruit. [515]

Certainly I travel on the outside of my suitcase. What is your topology, Sir? [510]

2002

"Does fantasy need to be historically accurate?" is one of those breathtaking question-beggars. Art Widner has been asking for years why so much fantasy is set in the past, or some world like Earth's past. Then here's this *need* business again, as if authenticity were a burden, which maybe fantasy was brave enough to escape, or noble enough to be immune from, instead of a resource in the artist's hands, a chisel, a palette, a trombone. [499]

Isn't punch "one of strong, two of sweet, three of sour, four of weak"? What's five? The bowl? The recipe? Heat? [492]

I imagine that the more enjoyment of something depends on skill in doing it, the less people worry over other qualities of the participants. Consider chess tournaments and debutante balls. [486]

Nero Wolfe even more than Archie Goodwin is a character for whose treatment I fear in the hands of television. How deftly is Wolfe portrayed in Rex Stout's books. He is not bombastic; if he were, or were any kind of fool, his tale would sink into the meanness of anti-intellectualism. I should think an actor would relish the opportunity to play either man as Stout made them, or for that matter, anyone in the great "charade" scenes in Wolfe's house, where a criminal, maybe a murderer, is exposed in company, often despite the criminal's and others' powerful attempts at concealment, by uncontrollable expressions of human nature. [478]



Marie Rengstorff

Any age can be golden, if we go for the gold. [470]

In fact you were too prone to arrive for the start of breakfast. [467]

Here is a joy in working as an amateur. One must contrive good results with no more time and labor and money than can be put to something secondary. I joke this is the shoot-an-arrow-into-the-barn-wall-and-paint-a-target-round-it method, but it improves one's perception of what one is about. [458]

Do you think I drop  
All we have in common when  
No touch of our hands  
Chances over empty time?  
Even that reminds of you.

## *Two good playgrounds*

### **APA-L**

*Amateur Publishing Association of Los Angeles*

### **LASFAPA**

*Los Angeles Sciencefiction Fans' Amateur Press Association*

Since the earliest days science fiction fans have been amateur writers. We've written letters to the professional s-f magazines and each other; minutes for our clubs, and program books for our conventions, that showed literary quality; and amateur magazines to discuss life, the universe, and everything. By the 1940s we called these fanzines. By the 1950s when we invented the Science Fiction Achievement Awards, called Hugos after s-f pioneer Hugo Gernsback (who liked the term "scientificition"), we put in Hugos for Best Fanwriter, Best Fanartist, and Best Fanzine along with pro writing and illustrating.

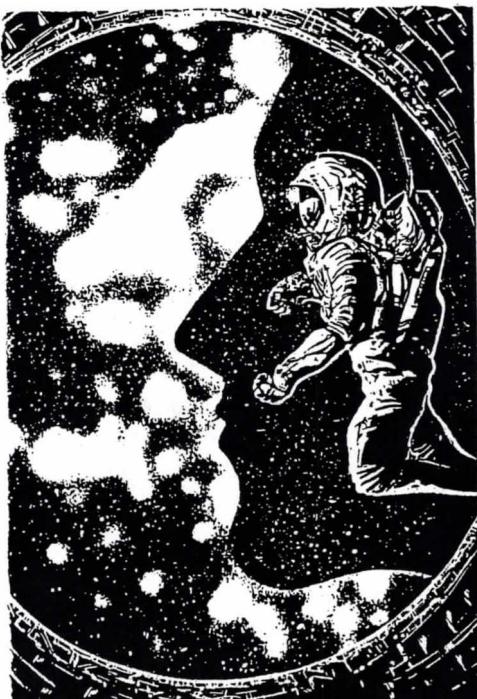
In the 1930s we founded FAPA, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, still ongoing. Members sent copies of their zines to a central officer, who would collate them and send them round. Later came dozens more apas, some lasting, some not, with various names, rules, and jokes. An apa is a conversation in print. People comment on each other's zines, and comment on the comments. Lately the Internet has begun to breed electronic forms. Paper may well keep a place, for what it does best.

APA-L was founded in the 1960s, LASFAPA in the 1970s. APA-L appears weekly, LASFAPA monthly. Each has a history of contributions from out of town and even overseas. With *apa* being *amateur publishing (or press) association*, contributors in theory print their own zines, but some contributors arrange a local agent to handle printing and mailing.

The central (and only) officer of APA-L is the Official Collator. Collation is every Thursday night at the clubhouse of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society just after the weekly meeting, officially not a LASFS activity, but with a room in the clubhouse by custom. No formal membership or written constitution,

no minimum publishing activity, no dues. Find out from the OC how many copies of your zine are needed, get them to the OC by collating time, and you're entitled to that week's issue of APA-L (called a "distribution", or "disty", or "distywistypoo") and the next if you are local, or that week and the next two if you're out of town, or that week and the next three if you're out of the country. APA-L will be distributed to you in person, or mailed however you have arranged. Like to draw? Contribute an accepted cover, and get the same entitlement. Want a look first? You may have a few recent back disties ("speculative copies") from the OC. At the moment the OC is Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore St., No. 105, North Hollywood, CA 91606, U.S.A., (818)761-9401, [hooahahpubs@earthlink.net](mailto:hooahahpubs@earthlink.net).

LASFAPA once had an Official Editor, but for some time this position has been called Little Tin God. LASFAPA is collated on second Fridays. Dues, \$2 annually. Minimum activity, 2 pages every other mailing, or every third mailing if you're out of the country. Spec copies on request. There is an Official Organ, called *Wurlitzer*, with constitution (the "Tin Commandments"), membership roster, current copy count, and other things. At the moment the Little Tin God is also Marty Cantor.



***Try 'em, you'll like 'em***