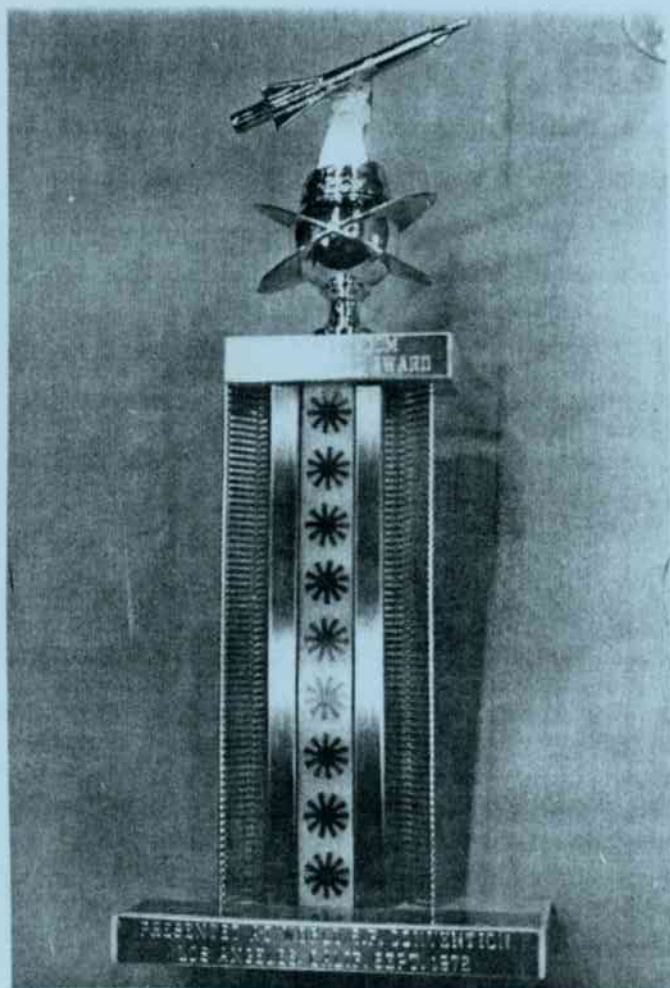


# ScientiFiction

Summer, 1996



The First Fandom Report



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On the cover: One of Lou Tabakow's famous "bowling trophy" Hall of Fame awards. This one is from 1972. Please note how the spaceship is artfully attached with putty.

From the First Fandom Archives

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# It's News!

## SAM MERWIN DIES

Sam Merwin, Jr., former editor of *Startling Stories* passed away recently. He was not a member of First Fandom although his life spanned the days of the lurid pulps.

## SFRA ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCES TOPIC

The Science Fiction Research Association has announced its annual meeting to be held June 20-23, 1996 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. This year's topic is "Science Fiction and the Writer-Editor-Critic." Guests of honor for this meeting are Pamela Sargent and George Zebrowski. The fee for this conference is \$105 until June 1, and \$125 thereafter.

For further information contact:

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## ANALOG, IASFM SOLD

### PENNY PRESS TAKES ALL

Bantam Books has divested itself of all its magazines, including "Analog" and "Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine." Bantam's current owner, a German firm, did not feel that magazines were properly part of its "image," despite the fact that they were bringing in about \$8 million a year in the aggregate.

Penny Press is supposedly dedicated to producing magazines, and intends to keep both titles in print. Decreases in number of pages and issues are, of course, to be expected.

## ARCHON: DON'T FORGET US!

### CON RESCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER

Archon, which formally adopted all members of First Fandom, wants to remind us that it has changed its date to October 4, 5 and 6. As was done last year, all members of First Fandom and their partners will receive free memberships in the con and access to the VIP suite.

This will be Archon's 20th anniversary. For the event the GoH will be Ray Bradbury, the artist GoH will be Ray Harryhausen, the fan GoH will be Forry Ackerman, and the toastmaster will be the irrepressible Julie Schwartz.

As usual the con will be held at the Collinsville, IL Gateway Center and adjacent Holiday Inn. Rooms at the Holiday Inn are \$79 single/double and \$83/triple/quad. Room can be reserved by calling 800-551-5133.

For more information, special needs or transportation to and from the airport please contact:

Jonie Knappenberger

1474 Summerhaven

St. Louis, MO 63146

## **FIRST FANDOM REUNION APPROACHES**

### **MAKE PLANS NOW**

Remember that the First Fandom reunion this year is at Inconjunction in Indianapolis, IN. The con will be held on July 5, 6 and 7 at the Indianapolis Marriott Hotel, 7202 E. 21st Street, Indianapolis, IN 46219. Phone 317-352-1231 for reservations. Rooms are \$67.00 plus tax for up to four

people.

While the Mariott is on the eastern edge of the city and the airport is on the western edge, the convention will provide transportation to all first fans who request it. Attendees with special needs should contact:

Rebecca J. Chike

649 Carmel Way

Carmel, IN 46032

(317)816-0142

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Henry Kuttner will be the recipient of the posthumous Hall of Fame award to be presented at the con.

## **HALL OF FAME PRESENTATIONS TO GO REGIONAL**

### **WORLDCON LOSES OUT**

For quite a few years now First Fandom has been having significant problems with the Hugo awards committees at worldcons. The sequence of events is invariable: First Fandom contacts the individual designated by the con-com as liaison for the awards and politely requests time in which to make the HoF presentation; everything comes to a halt for months; the designated individual offers First Fandom a presentation

slot right after the masquerade judging; First Fandom refuses; nothing happens; First Fandom calls in favors, contacts recipients, applies pressure; a letter finally comes from an entirely different person telling us that the first letter was sent to the wrong individual, and of course First Fandom can have its three minutes.

First Fandom has gotten spoiled by the exceptionally kind posthumous Hall of Fame award ceremonies that regional cons have given it. Rivercon made the main ballroom available; Archon prepared an excellent buffet luncheon as part of the ceremonies. Inconjunction has set aside an hour and a half for our affairs this year.

The difference between the miserly three minutes allotted by Worldcon and the generous times offered by the regional hosts lets us know that the time has come to abandon Worldcon to its commercialism and move the Hall of Fame awards to the regional cons which actively solicit our attendance. Sam Moskowitz has been pressing for such a change for many years now, and it appears that the time to heed his words is upon us.

Remember: the 1997 Hall of Fame awards will be made at a *regional* con. The bidding is now open!

## DEADLINES

The deadlines for First Fandom events and *StF* are as follows:

### First Fandom:

May 31, 1996 -- last date for nominations for 1996 Hall of Fame award.

June, 1996 -- HoF balloting begins.

July 5, 6, 7, 1996 -- First Fandom Reunion at Inconjunction.

December 31, 1996 -- last date for HoF balloting.

### *ScientiFiction.*

July 20, 1996 -- Closing date for Autumn, 1996 ish.

October 19, 1996 -- Closing date for Winter, 1996 ish.

January 18, 1997 -- Closing date for Spring, 1997 ish.

## NECROLOGY

H.L. Gold

Elsie Wollheim

## DUES

Dues in First Fandom remain \$5.00 per year. The number on your mailing label will tell you to the end of which year your dues are paid. Please keep your dues current if you possibly can.

## 1995 WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION REPORT

By John L. Coker, III

The Twenty-First World Fantasy Convention was held in Baltimore, MD, during October 27-29, 1995.

Guests of Honor included: Terry Bisson, Lucius Shepard and Howard Waldrop (Writers); Rick Berry (Artist); Lloyd Arthur Eshbach (Publisher); and Edward W. Bryant, Jr. (Toastmaster). First Fandom was represented by L. Sprague and Catherine de Camp, Lloyd A. Eshbach, David A. Kyle, and Robert A. Madle. Conspicuously absent were Julius Schwartz, Frank M. Robinson, and Bill Martin.

This year's theme was "Celebrating The Craft of Short Fiction in Fantasy and Horror". Programming included panel discussions, a "Meet the Pros" reception, a mass autographing session, and

the 1995 World Fantasy Awards Banquet. Jack Chalker conducted a personable interview with Lloyd A. Eshbach, with emphasis on the Fantasy Press years. One of the weekend's highlights was a celebration of the life of Roger Zelazny, where he was remembered by friends with readings, memories, and wonderful desserts.

During the weekend, there were opportunities to visit the city. We enjoyed touring the Baltimore Orioles baseball park; dining on chicken and pasta in Little Italy, and crab cakes along the harbor; and visiting the Edgar Allan Poe house and gravesite, where we saw a large black cat sitting near the headstone.

The 1995 World Fantasy Awards were presented, and the winners included:

Best Novella - "Last Summer At Mars Hill" (Elizabeth Hand)

Best Novel - *Towing Jehovah* (James Morrow)

Best Short Fiction - "The Man in the Black Suit" (Stephen King)

Best Anthology - *Little Deaths* (Ellen Datlow)

Special Award, Non-Professional - Bryan Chollin, for Broken Mirrors Press

Special Award, Professional - Ellen Datlow, for editing

Best Artist - Bob Eggleton

Life Achievement - Ursula K. Le



Guin

Best Collection - *The Calvin Coolidge Home For Dead Comedians*, and *A Conflagration Artist* (Bradley Denton)

The 1996 World Fantasy Conven-

tion will be held in Chicago. Guests include Katherine Kurtz, Joe R. Lansdale, and Brian Lumley. For more information: WFC 1996, P. O. Box 423, Oak Forest, IL, 60452.

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## FINAL REPORT

by

Roy Lavender

*Ron had a final report to get out, but his musings kept getting into the most interesting places.*

"Hey Ron, when am I going to get your final report? Project TIFF is only funded for another three weeks and I have to close the books a month later."

I almost cringed, but managed to give Fred a smile. As head of Budget and Financial Planning, he holds the purse strings of every research project at Beetle Memorial Foundation. He is also a nice guy and almost everyone likes him. In much the same way that one likes a big, fuzzy pup that just came in out of the rain.

"Sorry, Fred. I still have to do the debriefing interviews and the entire research team is still on Space Station 4."

I was desperately trying to think of a way to make something of this. Then I had an idea. *Maybe, if I play this right, Fred will get desperate enough to write a budget override that will let me go to Space Station 4 to do the debriefing interviews in person.*

Fred suggested, "Can't you do the debriefing interviews over one of the satellite links?"

"Of course I could, but do you remember what happened the last time we tried that? That female reporter tapped the link and had the results in the papers and on the six o'clock news before the Board of Directors had a chance to read it. They haven't calmed down since..."

I was rewarded for that thrust. Fred's scrawny neck started to color. His good looking blonde secretary calls it spanked baby pink.

She enjoys teasing Fred as much as I do. That's not so unusual. So do the other staff people at Beetle Memorial Foundation, at least those who must submit budget reports to Financial.

Of course she has the most opportunity. I still remember one time when she wore a dress with a slit up one side all the way to her hip. Fred elbowed a stack of papers off of his desk. When he bent over to pick them up, he got his tie in the paper shredder. She came to his rescue with scissors.

The classic was when she let the top of a strapless little summer frock slide a bit. Fred walked into the corridor while looking back over his shoulder. He bumped into the girl who delivers interoffice mail.

She works on roller skates and wears the skimpiest shorts. When she landed sitting on his face, she smiled and said, "Oh, Fred. I didn't know you cared."

Fred was so embarrassed he was still in his office with the door locked when I left work that evening.

I was watching Fred now. His ears began to semaphore his agitation. It wouldn't do to push

him much more; time to offer him the standard way out.

"You can't be held responsible for a VIP on Mahogany Row who released the personnel list for the project. And it sure wasn't your fault that sharp newspaper woman caught the name of a famous sex researcher among the staff. After all, she does the 'Sex Today' for the paper."

Fred's Adam's apple bobbed a few times. He cleared his throat and his voice came back.

"You know that and I know that, but it was still my name on that report."

"That wasn't your fault, either, Fred. You signed the financial part, only when someone removed the pages with the numbers, they left the last page and it had your signature."

I managed to keep a straight face. Fred was into his deep breathing and slowly, his neck faded to its normal fish belly color. He looked so defeated, standing there; his sweating hands were working a few pages of computer printout into a large spitwad.

His eyes were fixed on the newspaper page I keep under the glass on my desk top. I saved it just for the effect it has on Fred. It's a Sunday supplement Science Page from a few months ago. The headline reads, "THREE WOMEN TO EACH MAN." The subhead reads, "They Call It Project



Quickee."

Fred was off again.

"I don't know how that snoopy woman managed to talk our switchboard operator into letting her use the satellite link to interview that sex researcher. They talked for more than an hour before anyone woke up to what she was doing."

I have fond memories of "that sex researcher". A cute redhead, with a spray of freckles across her cheeks and nose. As stereotypically "Irish" as they come. We worked very closely together during some of the early experiments, before Project TIFF moved into space.

Fred was breathing normally now, but I recognized the signs. He wanted something more than just that report. Time to do a little more pushing.

I asked, "By the way, Fred, when is Budget and Financial going to sign off on Interim Report Three? Your left hand is holding up paying some bills because your right hand hasn't signed the report."

Fred is by no means stupid, but you'd never guess from seeing the smile on his long face as he asked, "Why did that phase of the research get the nickname of Project Quickee? I never could get a straight answer to that one."

Fred held a straight four point

average all the way to his MBA, and he paid his way by working full time as a bank teller. That left zero time for social functions. I could see that leading him up to this one could be a problem. I decided to start from the beginning.

"What did the kickoff meeting tell you as to why Project TIFF was started?"

"They told us, when the space stations changed from military to civilian control, there was a big question about maintaining the morale of the civilian crew."

"Did anyone say what was the problem?"

"Not exactly. Something to do with the high cost of rotating the crew back to Earth for R and R." He looked puzzled again, then asked, "That means Rest and Recreation, doesn't it?"

"Yes, that's right. Did anyone say how often the crew should be rotated?"

"I asked, but I got a lot of different answers. Some of the older men on the Board thought once in six months would be often enough. Some of the younger engineers suggested every weekend."

"Did you get any hint why so much interest in Rest and Recreation?"

"Well, I heard some of the younger female engineers talking

about it. They were doing a lot of giggling. When I asked what was so funny, one of them said it was my suggestion that caused it all."

"Your suggestion, Fred? I don't remember seeing your name in connection with crew selection."

Fred got that kicked puppy expression he is famous for.

"I didn't get any credit, Ron, but I did save them a lot of money."

"How was that?"

"There was a long list of requirements that applicants had to meet. All about experience and training and physical health and mental health...you know."

I nodded.

"Then there was another list of things to help decide between applicants who met all the requirements. They knew they would have many more qualified applicants than they could take. All I did was add a bottom line."

I had to raise my eyebrows to get him to continue.

"Between two equally qualified candidates, Budget and Financial Planning would favor sending up the one weighing the least."

The light dawned. I grabbed his hand and shook it.

"Fred, you are a genius. You may never get the credit you

deserve, but allow me to shake the hand of the man responsible for the immense success in staffing the stations."

I didn't want to encourage him with any more of his questions, so I didn't add, "And indirectly for bringing about Project TIFF."

He got an embarrassed smile, but I could see he was about to repeat his question, so I went on.

"Yeah, Fred. Since physical strength has little meaning in zero "G", three out of four of the crew on the stations are female, averaging five feet tall and around eighty five pounds."

He nodded. The smile was gone. He pointed a shaking finger at the newspaper page under the glass on my desk.

"That's all the facts there were behind that headline."

I kept my expression under control and asked him, "You know about action and reaction?"

"Sure. Like when one billiard ball hits another. The second ball flies away."

"Right. That's what the Selection Board was worried about. The staff psychologists gave them figures and estimates based on the history of coed crews on ships and long range patrol planes. After that, they accepted the idea that, in any service where there are both men and women, in one way or another, couples are going

to get together. Some of the more straightlaced had trouble accepting the idea that people are going to act like people. Some of them didn't come around to agreeing to the project until the dollar figures were laid out in front of them."

"Next, some worry wart noted that among the numerous known positions that a couple might attempt, the force of gravity is a common factor. The Selection Board became concerned that with the least impact between partners, they would drift apart. It was predicted that this would lead to a high level of frustration and ultimately to either frequent R and R flights back to Earth, or, even more expensive, replacement of entire crews.

"That's where the Board decided to authorize a study of the problem and started Project TIFF. There were even a few early experiments here at the labs, using volunteer subjects. The subjects were suspended on long ropes. They tested a variety of belts and springs designed to simulate the force of gravity. Those tests only served to strengthen the theory that frustration was inevitable."

Fred nodded.

"I heard something about those experiments. Wasn't one couple injured?"

"Yes. Well, maybe injured isn't the right term. One pair of

volunteers found the natural frequency of a poorly designed device. It went into free oscillation and could be kept going with a minimum of exertion on their part. They were in an advanced state of debilitation when rescued. That stopped all experiments with mechanical devices as a substitute for gravity.

"One outcome of that failure was to revoke the privacy rule. From then on, two observers were required to be present at all times. Another result of the abrupt cancellation of that phase of the project was to advance the next phase by three months."

"Yeah," Fred agreed, "I remember using the funds recovered from that first phase to get the second phase started and to lease the first plane. They called it ballistic flight. I never understood that term."

This wasn't going to be easy, but I gave it a try.

"Fred, can you visualize getting thrown very high in the air, like a baseball, or better, like a cannon shell?"

His eyes went out of focus.

"Yeah. I'm looking down on a pasture field with a lot of cows in it."

I had a little trouble with that one, but I think I kept my face straight. "Good imaging. Notice how you're floating? Like gravity

doesn't exist any more."

The unfocused stare blended into a wistful expression.

"I remember how it was while I was in the air after coming off the high board, only the wind gets you if you don't do it right."

I patted his shoulder.

"Right, Fred. You're getting it. Now suppose an airplane is surrounding you and it is flying on exactly the same path, so you are protected from the wind. You can just float in mid-air, there inside the plane. That is ballistic flight."

His face lit with comprehension.

"That's what they meant when they talked about simulating zero 'G' by using ballistic flights, wasn't it?"

"That's right. The experimenters were trying to find out what would happen when a couple tried to make love in zero-g."

"They stopped almost at once. What went wrong?"

"Well, first of all, there was that two observers requirement. That made some of the subjects less than spontaneous. Then, even the best plane we had available only gave a little over forty seconds of free fall, or zero-g, before the couple was smashed back to the floor with a four-g pull up. That's when one of the female researchers named it 'Project

Quicke'."

Comprehension came over Fred's long face like dawn on the desert. He exclaimed, "That's why the subjects all signed that letter to start Phase Three and move the project out to the station. They didn't want to waste all that time just flying around in order to get those few seconds of experiment. It was wasting budgeted funds."

"That's right," I agreed, then led him right back to the main subject.

"Now that you understand and can sign off that interim report, there will be funds available and I can start those interviews."

I put on my 'serious business' expression.

"Since you don't want to risk using the satellite link, it will have to be face-to-face interviews. That means all of our test subjects return to the surface, or I go up to the station. Either method will work, so it is your choice."

He bit.

"Oh, sending you up would be preferable. It would save a lot of money."

I managed to keep from dancing on my desk and only agreed with Fred that sending me up to the station would be best. What I knew, that Fred had yet to find out, was the conclusion that would appear in the final report.

While it is true that gravity is a common factor in all known positions, it only means that one or both of the partners must constantly support themselves against its force. That can seriously strain back muscles.

In zero-g, infinitely more positions are practical. Without the burden of gravity, a degree of enthusiastic cooperation is achieved that can only be dreamed of, here on the surface. In practice, it is seldom realized.

One immediate result, none of the researchers are willing to come back to the surface. Every member of the research team has found a niche in other work going on at the station that will keep them on the station after Project TIFF closes down.

*Maybe, if I play my cards right, I can also find a job that will keep me on the station after I complete my debriefing interviews on Project TIFF, the acronym for Techniques for Intercourse in Free Fall*

## REVENGE OF THE SCI-FAN

I remember when I got my first phone call from Horace Gold.

Ray Beam found his address somewhere and passed it on to

me about a decade ago. I wrote Horace a polite and restrained letter telling him that *Galaxy* had been the first zine I purchased with my own money, that I felt he had been instrumental in founding a new form of stf, that I thot he was God and that I wanted to have his babies.

A few weeks later he phoned me at my office. I think the event caused me to have kittens. I couldn't tell, though, those mewling noises might have come from me.

Horace was one of my heroes, right up there with John Campbell and Tony Boucher. I admired many authors, but this trio not only knew the authors and the illustrators, but carefully worked with them to construct wonderful issue after wonderful issue of the three magazines I most admired. As a matter of fact, *Galaxy* could have been my favorite magazine if it could only have had covers by Hubert Rogers.

Horace started talking at me; the words rolled out as if he had known me forever. It took me just a little while to realize that he seldom talked *with* one. He felt that what he had to say was just too important for dialogue. Time passed and Horace went on, telling me how he felt the work de Camp had done on "None But Lucifer" was the result of John Campbell not knowing just what to do with the story, how Evelyn had

divorced him, married a non-Jew and become fabulously wealthy, how he was going to rewrite "NBL" on his own, how I should shut up and just listen to him.

Finally he got down to business. He told me he had chosen me for the phone call not because of the letter I had written him, but because I was a practicing psychologist and just the person to write a book about the breakthrough psychotherapeutic technique he had invented.

I winced at this. I knew that he had gone through some service-connected emotional problems after the Hitler War, and that these problems resulted in severe behavioral disturbances. I had no idea that he had any kind of a background that would enable him to find his way through the labyrinth of the human psyche and develop a treatment technique, much less an effective one. Heck, for all I knew he had dreamed up another "Dianetics."

He offered to send me the tape recordings of his treatment technique, but explained the basic paradigm in such nebulous terms that I was a little concerned. I agreed to listen to the tapes anyway, he agreed to send them and the call ended.

In a few weeks the Postal Service delivered a monstrous box to my office crammed full of tapes. The tapes were crammed full of garbage.

Horace's treatment technique boiled down to this: the patient talked about himself in the third person; the therapist listened. This went on for eight to 16 mind-and-butt-numbing hours at a stretch. The result was supposedly a "cure," or at least a remission of symptoms.

Despite the fact that such treatment at the then going-rate of \$45 an hour would be horrendously expensive, I suspected that the patient would "get well" if only to get away from the omnipresent therapist. I have always felt that guests begin to smell after about a week, and therapists after 30 hours.

But I dutifully listened to a few of the tapes. The volume Horace sent me amounted to hundreds of hours of real-time interaction, and I just didn't have the time to spend listening to them. Still, I had promised him I would listen and try to understand what he was doing. I even made an honest attempt to get one of my patients to talk about his problem in the third person. I beg to report utter failure. My patient, whose problem was truly sad, but enough to make one break out into gales of laughter despite what it meant to him, had developed such an expectation of rejection that very little could be done to help him. By the time I used Horace's technique I was grasping at straws.

Bad grasp. If the technique



had any usefulness at all it lay in the lengthy therapy sessions and not in the therapeutic paradigm itself. Neither I nor my patient could afford to spend the time or the money keeping one another company for eight hours at a stretch. I closed the box on the tapes, took my lumps with the patient, and went on with my life and my practice.

"This is Horace Gold!" the voice, always gruff, was almost venomous. "Where in hell is my book?"

I tried to explain, as gently as possible, that I had spent the past year trying to forget those damned tapes and the silliness they contained. Still, it's hard to tell someone you admire that he sent you a pile of garbage. Well, it's hard to tell anything to someone who never listens to you.

Horace demanded that I return his tapes. He was going to send them to Ike Asimov, a man who truly appreciated his greatness.

It took me all of 10 minutes to get the stuff in the mail to him.

Yeah, I was a little upset. Here was my first ear-to-mouth meeting with H.L. Gold and it turned into an embarrassment of the first water. Still, maybe it was for the best.

I was living in Gallup when the phone rang again.

"This is Horace Gold!"

Ye gods, what had I gone and done this time? I braced myself for the worst.

Horace acted as if the incident with the tapes had never happened. As a matter of fact he acted as if we were old friends. He old-friended me for about an hour, reminiscing about the past, telling me how he disliked the revived *Galaxy*, and finally telling me that the future of science fiction publishing lay in reprinted stories for women.

"Are you writing all this down?" he demanded.

"No."

"Well, are you recording it?"

"No."

"Bob Heinlein used to record all my calls. Why aren't you taking notes?"

"Because I edit *ScientiFiction*, not *The Horace Gold Home Journal*."

"Do you know I hate you?"

"Good. Then maybe you won't keep asking me to take notes."

"Shut up and listen."

And off he went for another hour. He wanted membership in First Fandom, he offered to send an autographed photo to anyone who would write him a note, he told me again about Evelyn and "None But Lucifer." He carped that

I wouldn't shut up and listen to him, and let me know that talking to me was torture. Then we said good by to one another.

The last phone call I got from him was about two months ago. I was in the midst of my radiation treatments.

"This is Horace Gold!"

Well, I managed to survive cancer, I could survive a call from Horace.

The call was surprisingly pleasant. He wanted to talk about his correspondence with Alfie Bester and Bob Heinlein. Bester, he confided, was very depressed after his wife died and it was reflected in his letters.

"You know that party scene in 'The Demolished Man'?"

"The eye in the stein?"

"Shut up. I had to rewrite it seven times to make it fit on one page. And when the book came out they ran it over two pages so it lost all its impact."

He then made the offer to send me his complete file of correspondence with Bob Heinlein for publication if I could get permission from Ginny. I promised to read what he sent me, but not publish it without such permission. He refused to send me the Bester file because he felt it was too depressing.

Then he threatened to kill me

if I died on him and we said goodby to one another.

I didn't know that was our last goodby.

A few weeks later I received the Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, Version 8. I immediately went browsing through it to see what was in the section on science fiction. There was a biography of Horace. I printed it out and sent it to him; he had wanted a copy of a biographical entry on him which had been published in Great Britain. I wasn't about to pay for a book search for a vanity item, but I thought he might like to know that he was still remembered.

I never got the Heinlein file, Horace died before he could send it to me. I would have liked to see it. Heck, I'd still like to see it. I suppose that will never happen. Meanwhile the revised *Galaxy* has died again, hopefully it was a mercy killing for it was a ratty thing without merit. The reprint stl magazine for women never materialized.

I won't get maudlin about Horace. He was an interesting man, and he did some very important things with science fiction. He was a pretty good writer and he was hard to talk to on the phone. Still, I'll miss those phone calls.

By the time this goes to bed I should be back on schedule. I apologize for the lateness of the

past two issues, but it was unavoidable.

Yes, I know I left a number of matters out of the previous issue. It was the old problem of having too much material for 16 pages but not enough for 20. *Mea culpa*. Those matters have returned. I also know that the last issue had a terrible problem with pagination. Ray discovered it after he and Bill Beard had put all the copies together. It seems that Office Max had mis-collated the issue. Ray trusted them. That made two mistakes. It happens.

I got comments, both pro and con, concerning printing fiction, but not many either way. I figure that leaves me latitude to interpret your likes and dislikes almost any way I wish. When Roy Lavender's piece came over the transom I let it cool for about a month while I took care of medical matters, and then read it. I liked it, the price was right, so I bought it. I hope you enjoy it.

I am delighted that you enjoyed Ben Jason's article so much. First Fandom has an obligation to print such important historical material so future generations have some written record of what happened in the important formative years of fandom. Ben was initially reluctant to entrust his mss to me; I'm very glad he changed his mind.

We need more material. Of all types. John Coker is always kind enough to send me photos and con reports. Most of you are delightful and accomplished letter-hacks. I can always find something to write about. But we need more articles, more reminiscences, even more opinion pieces. Write! That's an order.

I watched "Waterworld" and "Judge Dredd." The former was no more than a remake of "Road Warrior" without the road. It was a pretentious and silly bit of business which lent itself to wise-cracks and silly comments throughout. The only really good character was Dennis Hopper ("Don't just stand there *kill* something!"). The latter film was much more fun since it didn't take itself particularly seriously. "Judge Dredd" is a comic book, and the movie did a halfway decent job of animating it. There were a number of chuckles for the confirmed Judge Dreddnik, and Sly Stallone's lack of acting ability was a definite plus in his title role.

Ray and I spent a week together during which we drove down to Payson, Arizona to visit Hank and Martha Beck, and Stan and Joan Skirvin. I hadn't seen Martha since Archon. I hadn't seen Stan and Joan since a Cincinnati Fantasy Group meeting some 40 years ago. Out of the six

of us three had cancer and one was tethered to an oxygen machine. I promptly named the gathering "Onconocon." Sometime during the weekend I sneezed.

"Gestetner," Ray blessed me.

Some things never change.  
Ain't it wonderful?

I received a pack of things from an outfit called "FANDATA Publications." They wanted to sell me a Fandom Directory ("lists over 20,000 fans, collectors, clubs, fan publications...") for \$22.95 plus \$4.00 s&h. Cruise Trek wanted me to take an ocean voyage, on my dime, to the Caribbean along with "several of the actors who have appeared in *Star Trek*." Dragon Con wanted me to attend, on my dime again, to see Mark Hamill. PHANTASMcon '96 wanted me to attend, usual rules, a con devoted entirely to "Phantasm."

Do fans really have lives?  
After reading this mess I kinda doubt it.

Please note: I have a new e-mail address. The only BBS in Gallup closed up shop sometime in February and I have been scrambling frantically to find another access node. This particular one is a local operation and it's remarkably speedy. It uses the PINES e-mail system which is

sufficient for my needs, and I don't think I'll have the crashes with this node that I had with the previous one.

## FANZINE REVIEW

*ASTERISM* The Review Journal of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Space Music, Jeff Berkwitz, Publisher/Editor, P.O. Box 6210, Evanston, IL 60204. Published quarterly at \$6.00 per year subscription.

Thus far I've received two issues of this digest-size lithographed zine, and I have no idea why it's being pubbed. I suppose back in the '50s we might have defined "science fiction music" as being a theremin score; I don't know what we would have defined as "fantasy music" except maybe the percussive outrageousness of the Sauter-Finnegan group.

I have the same problem today. Is "science fiction music" the theme from "Star Trek," the soundtrack from "2010," from "Heart Beeps?" Is "fantasy music" the theme song from "Bewitched?"

As far as the editor/publisher is concerned such music is anything that was supposedly written to be companion music to a book, to a story, or to a vague idea which may or may not have much to do with either science fiction or

fantasy.

As a small magazine which contains the musical preferences of the editor it isn't bad at all. I recommend it if you are interested in the stranger fringes of New Age and modern rock (whatever that may be), or if you like music which is supposed to have some tenuous tie-in with science fiction and fantasy. For the money, though, I feel you'll get better reviews over a broader spectrum of music from one of the commercial mags like *Stereo Review*.

At least this zine is well produced and published. Considerably more work goes into it that I feel it's worth, and for that alone the publisher is to be praised.

## DINOSAUR DROP- PINGS

Dear Mark --

I thoroughly enjoyed Ben Jason's colorful history of the Hugos and hope to see similar articles in future issues of *SiF*. Incidentally, is Julie Schwartz planning on penning any more of his wonderful reminiscences? Now that *Amazings* gone, perhaps *SiF* could publish similar articles, though I'm sure they'd have to be markedly shorter than the original three.

Congratulations, Jack! I hope it's a big beautiful building deserving of your name.

Best regards,

Sean Donnelly, Sustaining Patron

Dear Mark,

The Winter ish sank before I retrieved it to read a couple of days ago so I didn't know you've been ill. I'm sorry to learn this and hope you are on well on the recovery route.

Have just written regrets to Inconjunction. I scrunched the vertebrae in December, four days after recovering from the Oct-Nov muscle wrench. Cannot reach or bend. Very tedious.

Enjoyed Archon so much as did daughter between bronchial attacks. Granddaughter enjoyed reading and room service.

Grandson taking course on science fiction in high school and course on the Internet at local college. When I was in school this trash was sneered at.

Yours

Jane C. Raymer

*[I'm doing pretty well, Jane. Thanks for the thoughts. I enjoyed chatting with you at Archon. Alas, I don't think I'll be able to make Inconjunction this year either. My medical bills are pretty horrendous. -- Mark]*

Dear Mark:

Thanks for the latest *SciencifiCtion*, where the best news was that you are recovering from cancer. Congratulations. More and more people recover from a plague whose name was once hardly mentioned. No doubt, it will eventually become no more serious than measles, as once more humanity fights back.

My wife and I decided that, since our four children are grown and don't live at home any more, we should move into a smaller house. What an upheaval! Despite which, I had three books published last year. A new collection of short stories ("Common Clay") has emerged from St. Marten's Press this year.

Now, I'm writing my life story, and realizing how much of it, happily, has been wrapped up in good old science fiction...

All cheer!

Brian Aldiss

*{Thanks for the congratulations, Brian. While most of the progress against cancer has been empirical in nature I noticed that researchers finally discovered how to make cancers susceptible to the body's natural defenses -- at least in mice. At the same time a vaccine against AIDS has also been effective -- also in mice. It looks as if the world is being made safer even as we speak -- at least for mice. -- Mark}*

Dear Mark,

Many thanks for another interesting FF report. I hope the cancer has succumbed to treatment and you are no longer doing the Albuquerque run.

We've just come to the end of a long tiring few weeks. Even more so for Val than for me. I have been attending hospital twice a week for physiotherapy on my broken ankle, (I feel downstairs last September) and Val was having to do all the driving until I got back to it. The physio ended and I was signed off. The ankle is still tender, I can walk without a stick, but not very far and it won't bend as far as it should. Must feel lucky it wasn't my neck.

On Saturday we went for a run down the coast to Filey. The fog was thick as soup, down to about four car lengths. We had a drive around Filey, caught a glimpse of the sea when the fog lifted for five minutes, then set off home. Back on the Scarborough road, the fog was thick as ever. One of those road maniacs came up behind me, twice he tried to squeeze past me on roundabouts, then finally his impatience got the better of him, he started overtaking on a straight stretch -- and suddenly a stream of cars going the other way appeared out of the fog. He swerved back in and I only managed to avoid the clown by braking violently. He narrowly



escaped a head-on collision with the other cars. Idiots!

John Rupik came over for the weekend and removed unwanted utilities from my PC (Corel Draw, Word Perfect, etc.) And installed Ami-Pro -- which is a much more powerful and much more user-friendly utility. Within a few days I was doing more with it than I had done all the time I had Word Perfect installed. Right now I'm re-typing my aircraft lists on the PC so I can have double files on both Beeb and PC. The only snag is the Beeb keyboard is a much better one than the lightweight one on the PC. I'm typing this on the Beeb, whereas the PC keyboard tends to be lightweight and less pleasant to use.

Current panic over here replacing all the media breast-beating on the Dunblaine massacre, is the panic over "mad-cow" disease. This threatens to bring about a full scale slump in various UK industries. Farmers cannot sell their beef cattle and no doubt the already high suicide rate among farmers will soar. That is bad enough, the knock on effect has already begun. Abattoirs are laying off men. Supermarkets are off-loading beef and delivery firms are feeling the pinch. Cold storage facilities will become unused and pretty soon ancillary industries will feel the pinch -- did you know that chicken stock cubes and gelatin products (among many others) also use beef extracts? The list of

such products is surprisingly long. A worse panic lies ahead when someone realizes that all milk comes from cows and all milk deliveries and milk products become *persona non grata*. Who needs enemies when disasters lie in wait?

On a happier note, ERG 134 is shaping up although it isn't due out until July. I've drawn the cover, started the Ergitorial, done an article on Crackpots, and prepared pieces on DYNAMIC Science Stories and the X-10. Reviews and Locs also under way. I have to get cracking as we have further dollops of visitors on the horizon and we also plan a few days holiday down at Yarmouth and a trip to North Wales.

All the best,

Terry Jeeves

*[The use of beef extract in gelatin is well known to Orthodox Jews; it's what keeps the product from being kosher. We had a similar-but-not-identical veterinary problem in New Mexico/Arizona last year with a plague of vesicular stomatitis in horses. It resulted in a stoppage of not only the horse-trading business, but of cross-state rodeos, horse shows, and other activities. Emergency inspection stations were set up at all border points. The infection seems to be under control this year, but only quick action managed to isolate it. -- Mark]*

Dear Mark,

Thanks for the spring issue of *ScientiFiction*. It's good to see that your cancer responded to therapy, tedious though it was to wait around to pay thirty-three visits to the linear accelerator.

On a different topic, I wonder why, when they refused to give Gernsback a Hugo, they didn't make up something else for him, a plaque with the rocket ship, for example, and a few words of recognition. Not doing something seems curiously ungracious.

When I first started reading science fiction I made a point of seeking out the Hugo award winners but I rapidly became disillusioned: many of the people who vote are not well-informed about the nominees and even fewer are discerning.

But it could be much worse: look at the Oscars!

Sincerely,

Catherine Mintz, Sustaining Patron

*[We assume it's responded, Catherine. The rule is that I still have cancer until it's been in remission for five years. Seems we spend all our time just waiting around, eh? I admit that I didn't watch the Oscar ceremony, that I didn't see "Braveheart" and that I could really care less. Hollywood, like sf, seems to do not much more than re-do old ideas. Your point, tho, is*

*well made and well taken. -- Mark/*

Dear Mark:

Sorry to hear that you had cancer and had to suffer through the treatment. Join the crowd. However, I am puzzled by your comment that "...we are going to find ourselves serfs to the health care corporations if something isn't done Real Soon Now." My experiences during the past two years have led me to just the opposite conclusion.

A little more than two years ago I found that I had prostate cancer. There were no outward symptoms, but a routine blood test showed a very elevated PSA reading. My primary physician looked at it, turned pale, and said I should see a urologist. My primary physician is a member of a small group which has a contract with USHealthcare, one of the largest health care corporations. (Which in turn has a contract with Medicare.) So I am subject to the rules of the huge corporation, but my daily connection is with the small group located in the complex of offices that surrounds Hahnemann Hospital. Getting a referral from the secretary, I went up the street to the urologist, who did his usual diddle and said I'd better get a biopsy. Now a biopsy on the prostate is not the most fun thing in the world, but it is something you have to do. Indeed the cancer was there, so I now proceeded to

nine other diagnostic tests to determine the stage of the cancer. Was it still inside the prostate, or had it spread to other parts of the body? No spread so we decided on radiation therapy.

The therapy was much like yours: 10 minutes five days a week for about two months. A total of 6,800 rads of 10 MeV x-rays. (To appreciate this number, 300 rads is the average lethal dose for full-body irradiation.) Naturally the radiation damaged the bladder and lower intestine. After it was all over the cancer was completely eradicated. All I had to do was recover from the treatment. Which took quite a lot of time. But when most of the effects had died down there was still a great deal of pain in my legs. The radiation oncologist said it couldn't be his fault. So I was sent to a neurologist, who mumbled something about diabetic neuropathy combined with a stenosis (which means a pinched sciatic nerve). He sent me to a pain specialist who gave me an epidural block -- an injection of steroids in the back close to where the nerve is being pinched. It eased the pain for a day or two, but clearly was no cure.

So I said I had to take charge of this mess and told my primary physician that it was time to consider surgery. She said something about it being a high risk operation because of my age and diabetic condition, but I said I

didn't want this pain for the rest of my life. So she sent me to an orthopedic surgeon up the street, who sent me to get an x-ray and MRI scan two doors down the street. The surgeon looked at the MRI for 5 minutes and said your spinal cord is compressed so that it looks like an hour-glass, and we have to operate to get rid of parts of the vertebra (a bilateral decompression laminectomy). In due time I checked in at the hospital across the street, they put me to sleep for a few hours and when I woke up there was no more pain in my legs. After three days they sent me home, where I lay around for a while, and now, a month later, I'm almost all better.

I have gone into all this detail because I want to emphasize that at no time did I have difficulty obtaining referrals to see specialists or to have test procedures done. When I read editorials in the papers criticizing HMOs, the major complaint is their supposed reluctance to refer the patient to specialists or for expensive tests. But never have I experienced this. I have gotten my money's worth, many tens of thousands of dollars worth. I've been inside the MRI machine three times; dozens of doctors and medical students have had their fun diddling my prostate with their fingers.

Not all my doctors were angels; some were uncertain diagnosticians, some hung on to me longer than I wanted. The

patient must take some responsibility in dealing intelligently and forcefully with the doctors. But when I found the right surgeon, I knew right away who he was. He was the one wearing ostrich leather boots. The moral is: if you want good medical care, live where the doctors are. People like to retire to Florida, but they come running back to Philadelphia when they need a doctor. In this city we have six major hospitals, five medical schools. And don't knock HMOs as a whole until you've experienced them.

Regards and good health,

Milton Rothman

*(Milt, I too had no problem with tests or referrals, and the quality of care I have been receiving is quite good. Still, as a 57 year old self-employed individual with a six-figure mortgage who is trying to restart a career from scratch, I became essentially medically indigent. I found that my insurance carrier was less than accurate in specifying which doctors and hospitals were preferred providers, doctors and hospitals tended to prevaricate when asked if they belonged to my health plan, their corporations overbilled me for services and demanded payment upon submission of claims to my carrier, and generally filled my mailbox with drek. Had it not been for the \$2500 catastrophic out-of-pocket limit which my insurance imposes, I would have been broke*

*by now; as it is I'm only semi-broke. With your Medicare and Medigap policies you're pretty well insulated from the problems of the self-employed individual who may have insurance coverage but who has to deal with thousands of dollars in medical bills while he is unable to work. I could also mention how I have to subsidize your medical care in addition to all my other concerns, but I would not be so churlish to do so. Anyhow, I'm glad to learn that you're doing better, and hope you continue to improve. -- Mark)*

Dear Mark --

I was glad to note in the Spring issue of *ScientiFiction* that your health is improving -- and your radiologist is doing very well! I like your sense of humor.

My older son, Terry, is a science fiction fan, and so are my grandsons. They live in Madison, Wisconsin, but they might like to be in Anaheim when my award is presented. I assume that they will be permitted to attend the Worldcon if they wish to do so.

Are you sending out press releases on the award? I think the two papers here might be interested.

Cordially,

Frank Kelly

*(Frank, I'm certain that your older son and grandsons will be per-*

*mitted to attend Worldcon if they pay their membership fee. We will do our best to get them passes to attend the award ceremony, but nothing is certain when dealing with Worldconcoms. I wish I could send out press releases, but I just don't have the time to do so. -- Mark/*

Mark --

On April 2, after spending a day as an election judge, I was reading the newspaper and experienced very sharp pains in my left hand, wrist, upper arm and shoulder. Nancy hustled me over to the ER at the Capitol Regional Medical Center where they pumped me full of pain stuff and then nullified it all by letting a certified sadist install a catheter. Anyway, determining my chances at less than 50/50, I was transferred to St. Mary's Medical Center where, about 10 PM on April 3, they sliced me open, split my sternum, and relocated five pieces of vein from my left leg to various areas in the chest. They sewed me up about two or three in the ayem. Good stitching.

Am told I have a very rare blood type (AB+) which helps me heal quite a bit faster than the normal weirdo, so they sent me home April 8. I suspect they needed the bed for another paying patient.

Re the Spring ish. I take it you

weren't getting enough Locs. Or is there another reason (outside of normal screw-up) for the very creative layout?

On gun control, I really think that either firearms of all types should be completely banned (except for the constabulary) or that anyone demonstrating proficiency should be allowed to carry sidearms in full view; *never concealed*. Repeat fire weapons should be banned and I might remind you that I was an early advocate of Cleveland Amory's "Hunt the Hunters" organization.

Note to Ray: Several decades ago I recall a conversation (while pounding nails in your house) re copyright law. I said then and still believe that copyrights should be for the life of the owner and be allowed to be willed one time. Did not ever believe that there should be such a thing as corporative/company copyrights. If there is more than one person responsible for a creation, the copyright ownership should be determined by mutual consent and/or arbitration.

SeeYaInIndy,

Hal Shapiro

*/Sorry to hear about your heart attack, Hal, and am glad to see you're doing better. Three days after being discharged you were writing the above letter. It took me close to a month to recover from my surgery. Just shows you're a*



*better man than I am. -- Mark)*

Hi:

I have what you might call a "lost" movie from the thirties, the original "Rocky" with Roddy McDowall and Gale Sherwood, whom I briefly dated (dinner, walking San Francisco streets, hearing her promise never to ever lose contact, etc.) When I was a G.I. stationed with the Adjutant General's office at the Presidio (and would you believe I even sang at the Stage Door Canteen, the K. Of C., etc.?) I understand that due to its age I have legal rights to such a movie, but with the proposed change and extension in copyright laws would it suddenly become illegal to even own it; or for that matter any one of 60 or 70 Krazy Kat cartoons I also have on film?

Like Roddy McDowall I was also visited by the FBI for collecting old movies; that is, when I had the dough, before I remarried, went on another whirl of trips, and then was helping out a family member buy a house in Lyndonville by the lake, pay off trucks and cars, etc. Oh yes, the FBI came in threes, one of them asking if I could help him obtain a movie called "Cowboy" which I've since seen on TV.

I have several thoughts about the proposed extension and change, as follows:

(a) There has lately been criticism of too many lawyers, and not enough cases to go around, especially with so many new attorneys coming into the picture every year. This proposed retroactive change would certainly greatly increase the possibilities for litigation;

(b) The change would insure greater and extended profits to corporations which own most of the copyrights anyway, and whose concern is the bottom line, and certainly not that of the public, scholars, bibliographers, teachers, historians and creators;

(c) It will also benefit heirs in the second and third generations, since they will see in it something more for nothing, the idea that seems to have replaced the work ethic everywhere. Look at the popularity of casinos and state lotteries;

(d) Bringing up "world saver" Edmond Hamilton recalls the unfairness that persists between the old writing field and that of movies and TV which are credited with first, themes and innovations lifted bodily from old pulps as if they had never existed. Look at "Star-gate," making tons of money now, the poor Clark Ashton Smith with the same key ideas in his "City of The Singing Flame," is as if he had never been. Think of the money Hamilton could have made if his stories had been made into comic books and cult movies as in



the case of Howard.

Bates and Campbell, incidentally, received only \$200 apiece for rights to the stories on which "Day The Earth Stood Still" and "The Thing" were based.

It seems to be a case of growing misplaced power on the part of corporations such as Disney, such as its lawyers descending on a school for having a program using Mickey Mouse without authorization; or locally here, right now, the film academy winning a suit in five figures against a restaurant using the name OSCARS.

It's bad enough as it is, but they're greedy for an extension of that power as well, throwing a wet blanket to further smother spontaneous creativity over an entire nation.

But perhaps I'm digressing since the instances mentioned may come under the heading of trademark infringement (and how long does that last, as in the case of a character such as Conan or Mickey Mouse -- forever? They'll get you even for a parody!)

So they have you both ways, coming and going. They've got it so that Kinko's (after losing a suit), won't even Xerox a little photo of you if it was taken by a studio -- or even a letter you had in a paper if that paper is copyrighted! That's how bad it is, and they want more power.

That's another angle you may not have thought of.

Tougher and/or extended copyright laws will further compromise the making of movie and TV documentaries and histories because of more rights that can't be secured or bought as, for example, from Fred Astaire's widow, denying slips even to Ted Turner's TNT when he was putting together a film biography of the dancer. So that will insure more lost history for everybody.

Best regards ever,

Larry Farsace

*[Yet in the midst of all this, Larry, the copyright laws are becoming unenforceable. I can copy anything I wish with my personal copier and computer. Even audio and video can be easily copied with the right equipment. In some ways the proposed extension of the copyright law is no more than a finger in a dike already fractures by technological advances. -- Mark]*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*[Ray is a very economical writer, he tends to present the bones of the issue without fleshing it out much. If you will bear with me, I intend to amplify his message with*

*some inserts and asides.)*

In February I decided to take a trip to visit Mark. On February 28th I left the ice and snow of Indiana for the ice and snow of New Mexico. *(I told Ray that spring didn't come to New Mexico until March, but he insisted on coming down in February...)* US Air provided me with a direct flight via Pittsburgh.

Mark and Sally met me at the Albuquerque airport, and drove me to Gallup. *(It was an interesting drive home. When we got to Grants, which is about half way between Albuquerque and Gallup, and stopped to put gas in the car, an employee of the truck stop stomped in shaking snow from her coat and announced that there was a blizzard roaring toward us from the west. I asked where it was coming from and she told me she had just arrived from Blue Water some seven miles away where visibility was nil. We were pretty concerned when we got back on I-40, and especially when the snow hit as predicted. I had to slow down to about 35 mph for some 10 miles after which the weather cleared considerably. We never did have blizzard conditions and there was no snow on the road by the time we reached Gallup.)*

I first got acquainted with Mark's animals. *(Therein lies a story of its own. Buddy, our Doberman, was pleased to meet*

*Ray, but kept forgetting that this functioning male was a guest of the pack. From time to time he would growl at Ray, and I or Sally would scold him for doing so. To atone for his sin he would then place himself right next to where Ray was sitting on the couch and stick his head in Ray's lap, begging for both forgiveness and attention. This annoyed Ray who was trying to drink his martinis or talk to Mary Ann on the phone, or both. Tagalong, the part-blue heeler accepted Ray with aplomb. Of course Tag thinks he's ten feet tall, and isn't bothered by much. Buddy's off-again on-again behavior worried us since it isn't nice to have your dog rip out your houseguest's throat, but he finally accepted Ray as at least a temporary pack member.)*

Mark looked quite well and was in good spirits considering his recent surgery and treatments. I took the next day to rest up from the trip and talk with Mark. On March 1st Mark and I took a leisurely drive to Payson Arizona where Hank and Martha Beck live. *(I brought along my portable bar for the trip filled with gin and Irish. Ray told me that Martha would see to our liquid needs, but I told him that one never misses what one brings along. I was right; Martha and Hank no longer drink, and Ray and I subsisted on the contents of the bar-in-a-box.)* The drive was very scenic with many signs to watch for Elk. Unfor-

tunately, the only Elk I saw during the trip was Mark.

*(Payson lies in a valley toward the end of the Tonto National Forest, to get to it one has to descend from the Mongollon Plateau. The trip is beautiful, and downhill most of the way, so it's easy to go a bit too fast. Apparently the forest is filled with elk who travel in herds, and the Forestry Service is worried about what might happen when car and elk meet. So there are a lot of large signs warning about the critters. Elk, like deer, only travel in the dusk so I wasn't too worried. Ray, on the other hand, enjoyed shouting "WATCH OUT FOR ELK!" whenever I tried to pass someone or do something else connected with driving the car. Out of deference to Mary Ann I let him live.)*

When we arrived Martha fed us as usual. Every one should have a Greek mother. *(Martha fed all of us; that includes Hank. I had never met Hank before, and found him to be a pleasant and intelligent gentleman. He doesn't talk too much; it's hard to get a word in edgewise with a mess of ten jabbering, but when he does he always has something pertinent to say. I know that Martha will say "Of course he's bright, he married me," but the truth is I have oft met couples whose intellects didn't mesh. Hank is not only bright, but has excellent taste and is quite a craftsman as you will read about later.)*

Then she put Mark and myself to work finding the problems with her computer. We finished that and had an evening of discussion. *(We had a little discussion before and during work on the computer as well. I had just sat down at the keyboard when both Martha and Hank began telling me what to do, each telling me something different. Since it was obvious that neither knew what was going on I finally reared back on my hind legs and invited both of them to shut up and let me do what had to be done. Bless them, I hated to holler at hosts, but their machine wasn't recognizing the hard drive and that meant things were Real Bad.)*

Hank and Martha have an unusual house. It is in the shape of an octagon with a private apartment attached to one side. This is where Mark and I stayed. The apartment was heated with a wood stove. Mark volunteered to keep it stoked at night. *(No, I didn't volunteer, I was stuck with the job. Ray took the bed for himself and left me the convertible couch which is in the living room along with the wood stove. I haven't had much experience with wood heat, but when my nose started freezing at 0300 hours I figured I had to do something. My successful attempt at fire-making made me official Keeper Of The Stove for the weekend. Of course Saturday night I made the fire too hot and we roasted for a few*

*hours. I would make a lousy barbarian.)*

The next day we awakened to the usual logger's breakfast that Martha serves. *(Oh, is that what it was? I couldn't tell because of the brown blur that obscured most of the table. When it finally dissipated it turned into Ray with a platter heaped full of food in front of him. I managed to find a few crumbs for myself.)* Later that morning Stan and Joan Skirvin arrived. They had driven up from Scottsdale for the day. It had been 20 years since I had seen the Skirvins and longer than that since Mark had seen them. This was sort of a reunion of the old members of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group. *(I think I hadn't seen Stan and Joan for about 40 years, although I spoke with Stan about five years ago when I was in Phoenix. Ray was certain he hadn't seen them for 10 years, and was floored to discover it had been two decades since. Fortunately, neither had changed much in the course of four decades except to get much older, but then so have we all.)*

Martha mentioned that she had information that H. L. Gold had passed away. Since Mark had talked with him a short time before our trip, we considered it a rumor. We talked till late that night when the Skirvins had to start back to Scottsdale. *(And the conversation ranged all over the place. Joan is very interested in*

*cacti and other succulents as is Sally. She suggested some sources of Southwestern plants for us. Since then I got Sally a copy of the Plants Of The Southwest catalog, and she wants to plant all sorts of exotic grasses in our yard.)*

*(Every time ten get together the meeting seems to turn into a con. After the Skirvins left and the Becks settled down for the night, Ray and I sucked on the Mr. Jameson's finest and held our own dead dog party. Ray ran through all the television channels for me, I wandered around the apartment uncovering prints and paintings, we did the usual bit of smoking that has to be done whenever officers get together. Then we retired to our separate beds, and damme if we didn't spend the next hour talking some more! I finally slept, with a little too much whiskey in me, and Ray swore the next morning that he had to check to make sure I was still alive.)*

After another good night's sleep we arose to another of Martha's gargantuan breakfasts. Soon it was time to start back to Gallup. Martha insisted that all guests must take a piece of art work with them. Hank is a master framer and most of the pieces were very tastefully framed. Mark picked a print of two wolves because of his love for animals. He couldn't find one with sheep. *(And everyone knows that sheep*

*are notorious liars.)* I picked a painting that was unframed. It was a scantily clad dancing girl on a stage. Martha told me that it was a cover painting for one of Bill Hamling's paperback books.

We had another very nice scenic drive back to Payson. Still no Elks, other than Mark. *(But we did stop briefly at the Payson Zoo. We were unwilling to pay the \$4.00 per head admission or spend the time at what seemed to be a pretty dinky place. When I got back home I checked it out and discovered that the majority of the animals in it were trained for motion picture work. Next time I intend to stop there.)* When we were settled back in Gallup we proceeded to verify the news about H.L. Gold. After receiving no answer from Horace's phone. We contacted Forry Ackerman. Unfortunately, Forry confirmed that Horace had passed away. He also told us of the passing of Sam Merwin.

I returned to Indiana, via Pittsburgh, on March 5th. The weather had not improved. When I unpacked, Mary Ann looked at the above-mentioned painting, and commented "I hope you are not planning to hang that in the living room!". Before I could answer, Wesley chimed in, "If you need some place to hang it, Dad, You can hang it in my room!".

I talked with Rebecca Chike, Chairperson of Inconjunction XVI.

She told me that about 15 First Fandom members have notified them that they plan to attend. If you plan to attend and haven't notified her yet, please do so. I hope to see many of you in Indianapolis this coming July.

Ray

## CLOSING THOTS

And so another ish comes to an end. I know this one follows close on the heels of the previous one, but that's because we're back on schedule. Thanks to all of you for putting up with the previous delays.

I was pretty worried about Hal Shapiro's condition, so I spent some of my own money and phoned him. He's still sore after the operation, but is in good spirits. Fortunately he sustained no damage to his heart.

I regret that I will probably not be at Inconjunction; I have this unnatural urge to go somewhere with my wife that does not have a con attached to it.

See you all later.



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